WorldScreenings: ZDF Enterprises Places Bets on ANA. all in. - TVDRAMA

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5-6 Minutes

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The high-stakes world of gambling provides the backdrop for ANA. all in., a new drama being sold in the international market by ZDF Enterprises. Inspired by actual events, the thriller is about a criminal lawyer fighting a corrupt system to clear the name of her brother who has been accused of murder.

In this video, Susanne Frank, Director ZDFE drama, provides a special behind-the-scenes look at ANA. all in. We hear from lead actress Maribel Verdú, creator and author Roberto Santiago and scriptwriter Angela Armero, as well as co-stars Unax Ugalde, Biel Montoro, Victor Clavijo, Natalia Verbeke and Marìa Zabalza.

The 6×48-minute series is produced by RTVE in co-production with Tomasol, DeAPlaneta and ZDF Enterprises, and supported by Gobierno de Navarra. The drama is created by Roberto Santiago, the writer behind the hugely successful Los Futbolismos series. His writer/director film credits also include The Longest Penalty Shot in the World, El Club de los Suicidados and Road to Santiago. RTVE has the distribution rights for Spain, Portugal and LatAm.

ZDF Enterprises came on board the co-production during the development phase. Part of the appeal, according to Robert Franke, VP ZDFE drama, was the fact that it was based on a book by Santiago, "a very well-known and talented Spanish writer." He adds, "We were immediately fascinated by the first outlines of the series. It is a great detective thriller with a strong female character. And we were very pleased when Maribel Verdú confirmed her role as Ana Tramel at a very early stage."

The central character of Ana Tramel is a brilliant criminal lawyer who has hit the lowest point in her life. Her behavior is self-destructive, and instead of saving lives and delivering justice, she appeals traffic violations and other fines at her best friend Concha’s firm. A call from her long-lost brother launches her back into action: Alejandro has been arrested, accused of murdering the manager of the Gran Castilla Casino. He needs her to defend him.

Ana meets Lieutenant Moncada, who is leading the investigation, while visiting her brother in jail. The chemistry between them is immediate. During their interview, she discovers Alejandro has a family: his wife Helena, a young Russian stripper, and a 2-year-old son, Martin.

Ana launches her own investigation with her team and learns that her brother is addicted to gambling and drowning in debt. She decides to take on his case and don her robe again, after a five-year absence from the courts, to take on the corrupt gambling corporation.

"ANA. all in. is a detective thriller set in a captivating multiplot story," says Frank. "There is thrill and excitement but also the drama of individual characters. It’s a kind of David vs Goliath story! Besides the authentic depiction of the gambling world and its societal problem of compulsive gambling, women play an essential role in the series, and motifs such as sisterhood, dysfunctional families, difficult relationships, loyalty and friendship are tackled."

The events, characters and locations featured in ANA. all in. are based on real-life events. In the words of Ana Tramel: "You could make things up about gaming, but the truth is much more shocking."

"Roberto personally took up undercover investigations in the gambling industry and really got involved very deep, which was not always safe to do, in order to write a book as close to reality as possible," Frank adds.

"The global gambling market is expected to reach revenues of over $525 billion by 2023," says Franke. "So this is a topic that concerns the whole world. At the same time, the gambling industry is an attractive and international setting for a series. Even more, as the story is based on real events and reflects the underlying drama of the gambling world—the addiction behind the dazzling surface! It reveals new and relevant social aspects."

"People tend to see only the glamorous aspects and not the dark side of gambling," Franke adds. "ANA. all in. is an investigative thriller and offers a fresh view of the gambling industry. Compulsive gambling is a relevant topic. It is a global phenomenon, and in today’s reality, due to Covid-19, the revenues out of gambling, and in particular online gambling, are steadily increasing. This is one of the main diseases of the century, but people rarely address this topic. ANA. all in. combines a thrilling murder case with the dark side of gambling and the strength of a female character."

See ZDF Enterprises’ Spring 2021 Showcase here.