PITCH DECK / FICTION

Joanna

An unexpected love.
A state secret.

Created and written by

Branca Duboc Pedrinha

Illustrative concept art • 2026 edition



What if dictatorship returned?

In an alternate reality, Brazil suffers another military coup in late 2022. AI-22 institutionalizes political persecution.

Eight years later, a chemistry student investigates her father’s disappearance and discovers that the man she falls in love with bears scars inflicted by the same perpetrator.

An investigative romantic thriller in which each revelation transforms the protagonists’ relationship.



The project

Format: Fiction feature film • 120 min (original estimate)

Genres: Romance, thriller, mystery, drama and action

Tone: Realistic, engaging, with occasional humor and mounting tension

Audience: Young people and adults, classes A, B and C

Market: Streaming, cinema, broadcast and pay TV

Project registered with the National Library, according to the original materials.



The past is not buried.

Eight years after her father disappears following his arrest under a new Brazilian dictatorship, a brilliant chemistry student devises a plan to involve the heir to a pharmaceutical empire in a clandestine investigation. Little does she know that he was also a victim of the general who took her father away — and may become the love of her life.



One investigation. Two destinies.

In 2030, Joanna and Beto are kidnapped and forced to investigate the disappearance of two Health laboratory employees in 2022. The clues lead them toward a clandestine operation and a general linked to both their pasts.

As they fall in love, the secrets surrounding their own kidnapping threaten to tear them apart. To survive and reveal the truth, they must confront the power that scarred their families.



An alternate history

2022: Fictional coup and AI-22, a reference to AI-5. Henrique is arrested in Petrópolis after uncovering something serious at Health. Jô is 12.

2030: The investigation brings together chemistry students Jô, Beto and Sílvio.

Resolution: The operation is dismantled; amnesty allows Henrique to return.

Epilogue: Marriage, a child and the “Democracy Now” movement, echoing the 1984 Diretas Já campaign.



The disappearance

In late 2022, soldiers led by General Igor raid the home of 12-year-old Jô in Petrópolis and arrest Henrique on political charges under AI-22. Before being taken away, he tells his wife he has uncovered something serious at Health laboratory.

Eight years later, Jô, now 20, is a brilliant, reserved, pale chemistry student. Beto transfers from another university and unsuccessfully tries to approach her. Their classmate Sílvio soon befriends Beto, the nephew and sole heir of Pelliccione, owner of Health.



Clues and passion

Jô and Beto are mysteriously kidnapped and forced to investigate the disappearance of two Health employees in 2022. The clues lead through Pelliccione’s home, laboratory files, a witness and the Health Sciences Center (CCS) at Fundão.

Jô discovers that Igor is Beto’s stepfather and deduces that he tortured him as a teenager. She understands his emotional scars and the link between fear and his asthma attacks. They surrender to their passion. To protect him, she pushes him away and leaves a clue revealing that she helped mastermind the kidnapping.



The truth has a price

Separated from Jô, Beto suffers, pieces together the clues and realizes Sílvio’s involvement. At her home he finds a letter revealing the truth and her feelings. She has already left for the port with the final clue. Igor captures Jô and Sílvio to lure Beto. A stranger frees Beto and helps him rescue Jô.

The couple exposes the ongoing criminal operation and those behind it. Sílvio kills Igor in a life-or-death struggle and also dies. Beto takes control of Health and shuts down the operation. After the amnesty law, Henrique returns and makes the final revelations.



Democracy Now

One year later, Jô and Beto marry and have a child.

Four years later, everyone joins the “Democracy Now” movement to remixed Brazilian protest songs from the 1970s.

The ending connects personal healing with collective hope, evoking the 1984 Diretas Já movement for direct elections.



Joanna Torres de Carvalho

20 years old / Chemistry student

Brilliant, determined and reserved, Jô grew up in the shadow of her father’s disappearance. Her intelligence is the main tool in a carefully planned investigation.

Behind her tough exterior is a sensitive woman who allows herself to love when she recognizes in Beto the scars of the same violence.

Suggested casting in 2021: Bárbara Bárcia.



Illustrative concept image; casting not confirmed.

Roberto Pelliccione

23 years old / Chemistry student

Sole heir to a pharmaceutical empire, Beto is kind, protective and sensitive. Violence suffered in adolescence left emotional scars and asthma attacks associated with threatening situations.

His relationship with Jô leads him to confront his past and the responsibility that comes with his inheritance.

Suggested casting in 2021: Gabriel Leone.



Illustrative concept image; casting not confirmed.

Sílvio Rocca

22 years old / Chemistry student

Son of Estevam, who disappeared at the same time as Henrique. Outgoing and playful, he hides deep resentment and will do anything to hold those responsible accountable.

His friendship with Beto conceals a decisive role in the investigation.

Suggested casting in 2021: Rodrigo Simas.



Illustrative concept image; casting not confirmed.

Carlos Pelliccione

50 years old / Businessman

Beto’s uncle and owner of Health, he runs a pharmaceutical empire. A pleasure-seeker attached to family and wealth, he has an ambiguous character and explosive temper.

His laboratory is at the center of the suspicions driving the investigation.

Suggested casting in 2021: Eduardo Moscovis.



Illustrative concept image; casting not confirmed.

Igor Neves

65 years old / General

Commander of the operation that took Henrique away, Igor is the main antagonist. He grew wealthy under the dictatorship and exercises power through violence and intimidation.

He is also Beto’s stepfather, linking the young man’s personal trauma to the persecution of Jô’s family.

Suggested casting in 2021: Antônio Fagundes.



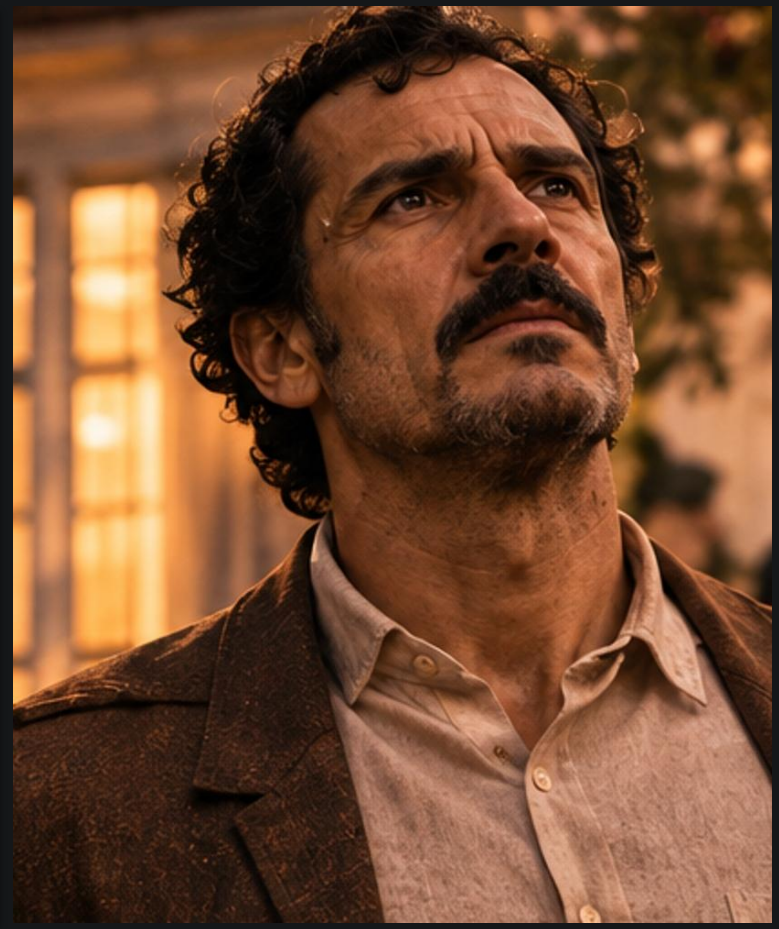
Illustrative concept image; casting not confirmed.

Henrique and the disappeared

Henrique: Jô’s father and a Health employee. His discovery triggers his arrest and an eight-year investigation. His return after amnesty completes the puzzle.

Estevam: Sílvio’s father, who disappeared at the same time. His absence fuels his son’s quest for justice and radicalization.

The witness and the stranger: Key figures in the trail of clues and the rescue.



Petrópolis and Rio de Janeiro

Petrópolis: Jô’s home and the setting of Henrique’s arrest. The Casa da Morte (House of Death), cited in the original deck, remains a historical reference to assess.

Fundão Island: UFRJ and the Health Sciences Center (CCS), spaces for social interaction and investigation.

Port district: Praça Mauá and warehouses as references for the decisive port sequence.

Health and the Pelliccione mansion: Science, wealth and secrets.



Setting references



Petrópolis • residence



UFRJ • Fundão



Port district



Pelliccione mansion

Reference photographs reused from the original pitch deck; locations to be confirmed.

A recognizable dystopia

Cinematography: Contrasts between shadows, golden light and monumental architecture. Sepia and red suggest memory, danger and resistance.

Costumes: Contemporary, evolving subtly through 2030; Jô in muted tones, Beto in casual clothes, Igor in austere attire.

Production design and props: Documents, archives and technologies consistent with the period. Contemporary vehicles and settings, without recreating the 1970s aesthetic.



Suspense, romance and memory

Lupin: Mind games and twists.

The Hound of the Baskervilles: Mystery, deduction and investigation.

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society: Romance and memory amid oppression.

Proposed soundtrack: Brazilian protest music from the 1970s, remixed in the epilogue. Selection and licensing to be determined.



Between love and freedom

Romance, mystery and mind games drive a suspenseful narrative filled with revelations and twists.

The alternate reality brings the memory of dictatorship closer to younger generations. The defense of democracy and human rights emerges through the characters' journeys, without losing sight of entertainment.

Potential markets: National and international production companies, co-producers, distributors and platforms.



Created and written by

Branca Duboc Pedrinha: Writer and screenwriter, with degrees in Business Administration from UFF and Journalism from FACHA. Author of Barbosa Lima Sobrinho, the Nationalist and the series Between Lives (formerly Coalition Point).

Credits listed in the 2021 materials: Rafael Tonassi (agent); Arthur Menezes de Jesus (review); Cláudio Duek (director) and Extreme Stories (production company).

Current agency, directing and production affiliations are subject to confirmation.

Budget and execution

2021 budget reference: BRL 1,500,000 / USD 300,000. Historical figures, not updated.

Original schedule: 24 months.

Year 1: Research, hiring, preparation, casting, locations and filming.

Year 2: Footage selection, editing, soundtrack, sound, finishing and promotion.

Update the budget for the contemporary version, including music rights, production design, action and contingencies.

The threat to democracy

Brazil is going through one of the most delicate moments in its history, with the rise of a conservative far right backed by the ruralist congressional caucus and the Armed Forces. In this context, public social policies are restricted and the threat of another coup hangs over the country. The Brazilian people have lost faith in democratic institutions, overcome by a sense of powerlessness and repeated political disappointments, forgetting the exercise of citizenship, both through voting and public demonstrations — an important mechanism for social and political transformation.



Original author's reflection • 2021

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