

# FILM REVIEW: Gina Rodriguez Plays Kidnap Victim in 'Miss Bala'



'Miss Bala'

By Kam Williams  
For The Skanner News

**G**loria (Gina Rodriguez) is a Hollywood makeup artist sorely in need of a break from her abusive boss. The straw that broke the camel's back

came the day he condescendingly responded to her resourcefulness with the insulting, "Honey, we're not paying you to think."

So, on her way out the door, Gloria stole a couple of bags of cosmetics for her lifelong friend,

Suzu (Cristina Rodlo), who is about to enter the Miss Baja beauty contest. Suzu still lives south of the border in their hometown of Tijuana with her little brother, Chava (Sebastian Cano).

Not long after arriving, the BFFs head out to a disco to attend a party sponsored by the pageant. But the two are soon separated when a gunfight breaks out between the police and La Estrella, a drug cartel led by the bloodthirsty Lino Esperanza (Ismael Cruz Cordova).

Gloria ends up in the maniacal mobster's clutches, and is unwittingly duped into blowing up a DEA safe house with three agents inside. She's subsequently apprehended by Agent Brian Reich (Matt Lauria) who doesn't believe a word of her improbable alibi.

He forces Gloria to

prove her innocence by infiltrating Lino's gang in order to help the U.S. government bring down the vicious crime syndicate. Of course, that's easier said than done since she's a beautician unschooled in undercover detective work.

That's the captivating premise established at the outset of Miss Bala, a frenetically-paced remake of the 2011 Mexican action thriller of the same name. The film was directed by Catherine Hardwicke, whose adaptation of Stephenie Meyer's vampire romance novel "Twilight" netted around \$400 million at the box office.

Here, Hardwicke has crafted a compelling cross of "Taken" (2008) and "Miss Congeniality" (2000). The movie's relentless sense of urgency is reminiscent of the former, while the protagonist's grudging participation in a beauty pageant is similar to Sandra Bullock's fish-out-of-water performance in the latter.

A two-fisted tale of female empowerment featuring a riveting roller coaster ride you'll never forget!

Excellent ★★★★★  
Rated PG-13 for violence, profanity, sexuality, drug use and mature themes

In English and Spanish with subtitles  
Running time: 104 minutes  
Production Companies: Sony Pictures Entertainment / Canana Films / Misher Films  
Distributor: Columbia Pictures

To see a trailer for Miss Bala, visit [TheSkanner.com](http://TheSkanner.com).

# Gardening with the Pharaohs: A Pharaonic Garden Reflection



Garden image from the Tomb of Nebamun, Eighteenth Dynasty

**L**ast month I visited the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry to see their stunning exhibit, The Discovery of King Tut. King Tutankhamen reigned in the New Kingdom, specifically the 18th Dynasty, a period known for its splendor. One of the most magnificent, but also overlooked elements of 18th dynasty, were their sacred gardens.

The earliest recorded gardens were seen in Egypt in about 3,000 BC. Many Egyptian gardens were considered sacred and designs were based on religious beliefs which determined the layout and plant species chosen. Egyptian gardens consisted of terraces, lakes, canals and even menageries. In royal gardens, such as those creat-



Dr. Jasmine Shanelle Streeter  
Veterinarian

ed by King Akhenaten at Amarna and King Thutmose III at Karnak, ibex, antelopes, turtle doves and the royal animal, the lion, were kept.

The effort and skill it took to create beauty in a terrain that consisted of desert and a flooding Nile river were remarkable. Gardeners of the time dealt with unique challenges, such as removing sand blown in from the desert. Because rainfall was unpredictable, water was collected and conserved in lakes and pools. These

See DR. JASMINE on page 10

## Book cont'd from pg 6

in that she's racially mixed and has conveniently published a very timely autobiography which also lays out her political platform.

**“**The book is very engaging and reads like she actually wrote it herself

In it, we learn that Kamala's father, Donald, was from Jamaica and taught economics at Stanford, and her mother, Shyamala, a cancer researcher, was born in India. The book is very engaging and reads like she actually wrote it herself, unlike most celebrity bios nowadays.

She reflects fondly on a culturally rich childhood growing up in the Bay Area until the age of 12 when her mother took a job in French-speaking Montreal. In high school, Kamala developed an interest in becoming an attorney, and decided to attend Howard University (where she would join the debate team and pledge AKA sorority) because it was the alma mater of her hero, Thurgood Marshall.

After graduation, she returned to Oakland to study law at UC Hastings

before kickstarting her legal career. She enjoyed a meteoric rise from assistant prosecutor to San Francisco District Attorney To California Attorney General to U.S. Senator.

Because she spent so much time representing the state in criminal cases, Kamala positions herself here as a political progressive, ostensibly to convince skeptics of the criticisms she now levels at the justice system as racist. Overall, I'd say this opus serves as a persuasive introduction to a charismatic candidate likely to be in the presidential race for the long haul.

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## Hazardous Beauty

by Portland playwright  
Bonnie Ratner  
Directed by  
Josie Seid

featuring local artists,  
Quigley Provost-Landrum  
and Trish Egan

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During the 2016 Fertile Ground Festival, audiences called Hazardous Beauty "Wonderfully provocative, witty, complex and brilliant. It was awesome to see two strangers meet and peel through the world's stereotypes and misconceptions to reveal the hearts of two such richly talented, yet scarred individuals. Brava!"

Part of Fertile Ground: A City-wide Festival of New Works.

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