

Nailed

A COMEDY THRILLER FEATURE FILM

BY SAMI SWILKS

Suburban nail technician ZOE ADINO, tries to turn a new leaf by leaving her deadbeat husband, but when she accidentally kills him, she must evade her past, and a bitch slap from lady-law, in order to live her best life.

AFTRS
MASTERS OF SCREEN 2022

NAILED
Opening Sequence Excerpt
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Pleasant FLAMENCO tunes caress us as we--

FADE IN FROM BLACK

1 EXT. CASA DE LA PARAISO - MAJORCCA - SPAIN - DAY 1

CLOSE ON the glamorous heiress ZOE ADINO (25) as she grips the bannister of her mansion, overlooking the beautiful, white sandy Mediterranean. She's determined, passionate yet bound by the rules of her stifling upper class world. With a pensive gaze, equal parts brooding and devastated, a single tear drop slides down her cheek.

NOTE: the italicised dialogue is delivered in Spanish, with English subtitles.

DAVIDE (O.S.)

Zoe, I found you.

Zoe, bewildered, turns 180 degrees to find DAVIDE FUENTES (30), brutishly handsome, long wavy hair, her classico romantico lover, standing across from her on the other side of a rooftop pool. He's fully clothed (which will be important in a moment).

ZOE

Davide?

Zoe shrinks into a small and fragile creature.

ZOE (CONT'D)

You shouldn't have come!

In pure, orgasmic slow-motion, Davide walks toward her, down the steps and into the pool, through the pool, then, he pulls himself out of the water, on her side. He shakes the droplets off his body like a dog, then places his hand tenderly under her chin.

DAVIDE

*I cannot stay away from you.
Despite the barriers they raise to
keep us apart.*

(dramatic beat)

*Every moment I breathe... I need
you.*

ZOE

*But...you are a pool boy, and I am
an heiress! It could never be.*

Davide closes his eyes, clenches his fists close to his face-

DAVIDE

You cannot fight love Zoe!

It's too much for Zoe to bare, she spins out of his grasp, trips over her own feet, and collapses to the ground.

ZOE
What about Andre?
 (beat)
He will kill us!

DAVIDE
Then...

Davide gathers his resolve, steps over Zoe's body, directing his voice out for all the world to hear.

DAVIDE (CONT'D)
 (eyes narrowing)
...we will run.

He pulls Zoe to her feet. He bends her backwards and kisses her passionately. Nothing else in the worlds exists beyond their love...Except of course, for ANDRE ADINO (35), Zoe's husband. A scar over his eye that runs to his chin, a Cuban cigar dangling out of his mouth, he spies on the pair through binoculars, from a not-so-far-away balcony, eyes wide with fury.

ANDRE (O.S.)
 Zooooooo....

CUT TO--

2 **INT. NAIL SALON - GLEN WAVERLEY, MELBOURNE - NIGHT - 2023 2**

A kitsch suburban daydream that the 90s vomited out, then forgot about cleaning.

RACHEL (O.S.)
 Zoe?

The real ZOE ADINO (25), a too-young suburban wife, unworldly yet determined in spirit, more cunning than she seems, with a monocle magnifying glass over one eye, stares doe-eyed at a wall-mounted television. A telenovela, LA PASION DE MARIA, plays onscreen, subtitled. Zoe is absorbed, placing herself inside the show.

RACHEL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Zoe?

ZOE
 (staring at the screen)
 Hmmph?

RACHEL (O.S.)
 ...My nails?

Freshly painted red nails, adorned with gorgeously intricate paintings of the scales of justice, tap on the arm rest. Tracking up they belong to RACHEL (40s) a lawyer type, cynical, wealthy.

Zoe snaps out of it, back to reality. Back to her life. For a moment her daydream felt real. Zoe takes the monocle off, in the process, she fumbles a bottle of nail polish, knocking it to the ground. She shocks herself, and accidentally knocks over several more.

ZOE

Oh shit-

Zoe bends to pick them up. Her long acrylic nails make it hard to gather the little bottles up off the floor.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Just put...
 (drop)
 ...your hands under-
 (drop drop)
 ...the ah, the ah-

RACHEL

I got it.

Rachel places her nails under a UV light dryer.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

And I thought soaps were dead.

ZOE

They're romantic.

JANINE (O.S.)

They're reductive.

JANINE (35) Zoe's colleague, older sister-like, broken by the reality of the world but still warm and loving, works on another CLIENT's nails.

JANINE (CONT'D)

But that's just my opinion.

Janine accidentally smudges her client's nail.

JANINE (CONT'D)

God dammit.
 (threateningly to the
 client)
 Don't move...I have to start over.

Zoe peers across-

ZOE

Let me see!

Zoe grabs a tiny brush, re-positioning her monocle. Janine moves out of Zoe's way, as Zoe bends down to take a look at the mess.

JANINE
(mockingly)
Here comes the wunderkind.

With expert precision, Zoe corrects the mistake, painting a perfect, multicoloured pink flower over the smudge. It's not conventional nail art. Zoe's a maestro. Every nail polish, a note. Every nail, Zoe's symphony.

ZOE
(to the client)
What do you think?

CLIENT
(eyeing Janine)
That I'm going to start booking you instead.

Janine rolls her eyes. Zoe returns a wink.

RACHEL
Well, I've got to go back to the office.

Behind them, Rachel withdraws her hands from the dryer and admires her nails once more.

ZOE
This late?

Zoe moves to the counter to take Rachel's payment.

JANINE
(to Zoe)
Why are you surprised?
(to Rachel)
Zoe's husband's a lawyer too.
Bloody famous one 'round here.

RACHEL
(surprised)
Who? Might know him.

Zoe's eye slightly twitches. We'll come to know her reflexive forced smile, and how when she's under pressure, it spreads across her face.

ZOE
Andy... Adino.

Rachel smirks.

RACHEL

(beat)
...oh.

ZOE

(politely)
Cash or card?

Rachel takes out her Platinum Amex, and taps it on the machine. The till pops open.

RACHEL

See you next week Zoe.

Zoe's face is frozen in that smile. She watches Rachel leave. Janine watches too. And when Rachel is out of earshot--

JANINE

Rude bitch.

Janine shuffles back to her client.

Casting a side eye to a distracted Janine, Zoe reaches into the open till and subtly takes out some cash. Nothing huge, but enough for us to feel this isn't the first time. Zoe stuffs it in her apron pocket. Pretending as though nothing happened, Zoe walks to the wall of nail polishes, admiring them.

Zoe runs her perfectly manicured nails along the shelf until she lands on a purple shade--

MATCH CUT:

3 INT. PHARMACY - NIGHT 3

Zoe runs the same finger along a shelf of pregnancy tests. She checks around her, ensuring that no one sees, and taps one into her open handbag. Zoe makes haste from the store.

4 INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT 4

Zoe pushes a trolley aimlessly up the aisle, occasionally tossing in items from the shelf.

Zoe reaches the cold meat section. Tossing up between a chicken, or a slab of steak. She looks at the prices. She puts the steak back, then, making sure no one is around to see her, lets the chicken plonk into her handbag too.

5 EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT 5

Zoe meets with a HOODED MAN in a dimly lit car. Concealed by the veil of night, one thing is very obvious, the exchange of cash.

6

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

6

It's windy, cold. The air blows around Zoe. She puts her grocery bags down. She brushes her hair behind her ear.

Zoe sits down and patiently watches for the ad to change on the bus stop. The glow of the bus advertisement illuminates her face. It rolls over.

On the bus-stop advertisement, glorious white sandy beaches and clear blue water. It's reminiscent of LA PASION DE MARIA. The ad reads:

NYSA RESORT WHITSUNDAYS
Start fresh in paradise.

Wind blows through Zoe's hair like a sea-breeze. She is drawn into the image. Absorbed by the dream of a holiday.

DAVIDE (O.C.)
(whispered on the breeze)
Zooooooe...

Zoe's phone rings pulling her out of the moment. She fumbles, knocking a bag of groceries to the ground, she upends her tote until she finally finds the device.

ZOE
(stoney faced)
Hi Andy.
(beat)
The bus is about to come-
(beat)
Ok. I'm sorry. Yes, you're right.
It's late. I'll get an Uber.
(dead inside)
I love you too.

The line goes dead. Zoe lowers the phone from her ear. The bust-stop ad rolls over again and features a new advert:

It's none other than ANDRE ADINO (35), thinks he's an alpha but is actually an omega, featured against a blue background, wearing a red suit, and holding a cricket bat alongside the super:

Hurt on the Job?
Smash em' for six!
Call 03 8091 5555
Attorney Andre Adino
We'll get you money, now!

Zoe blows her hair out of her face.

7 INT. ADINO HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

7

Zoe limps through the creaking front door, arms full, breathless, wincing.

ZOE

Andy?

ANDY (O.C.)

In here Pookie Bear.

She walks through their old, two story home. The floorboards creak under foot. The walls bare images of Andy and his sporting achievements. Images of ANDY and ZOE on their wedding day, totally surrounded by his FAMILY.

Other images tell the story of a shy suburban girl. Zoe alone as a child, Zoe alone as an adult. The same style of dressing. The same fake smile (that we saw her give Rachel).

Zoe finds Andy in the kitchen, it's in a state of disarray with cables and wires, mid-renovation.

8 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

8

CLOSE ON a gas stove, a small pot sits on top of it. Andy, has his back to Zoe, stirring the contents of the saucepan. She nervously eyes the pot.

ZOE

Noodles?

Andy, out of shape, warm *enough*, but aloof and content with mediocrity, half turns to see her.

ANDY

I improvised.

Zoe dumps the groceries on the benchtop.

ZOE

How was your day?

ANDY

Busy.

(beat)

Where've you been?

ZOE

Janine asked me to close, we were busy too-

ANDY

I love when you say that.

ZOE

Why?

ANDY

Well....you're a nail technician
bub, it's not exactly a law
practice is it?

Zoe flinches at his slight.

ZOE

I guess not.

Andy switches the gas stove knob to 'off' but it's still
hissing.

ANDY

Have you noticed that?

Zoe hasn't. She's too focused on unloading her groceries.

ZOE

(absentmindedly)
On what?

Andy twists the knob to 'on' - the gas hisses loudly. He
turns it 'off' again. Nothing.

ANDY

Weird.
(staring at the stove)
I'll be in my office baby.

Andy walks past her, but not without slapping her on the ass.
Zoe jolts upright.

CLOSE ON the raw whole chicken, as she slaps it down on the
bench-top.

9 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

9

A freshly washed Zoe sits on the edge of her bed, her leg
bouncing anxiously. Her phone, diary, a book, make-up
sprawled out around her. She peers at the pregnancy test,
waiting...waiting...waiting...She looks up at her reflection
holding her own gaze. She gathers everything into a tote bag.
She checks the pregnancy test again. Off Zoe's panicked gaze.

10 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

10

Zoe turns off the gas nozzle. It continues hissing. The meal
is set. Candles are lit. Zoe sits at one end of a table and
Andy at the other. A chicken pot roast in the middle. Andy
shovels down his meal while Zoe pokes at her food.

ANDY

Wine?

Andy isn't offering her. Zoe obediently stands, unscrews the lid of the bottle, and walks to Andy's end.

ZOE
How is everything?

ANDY
Good. Good. A little dry, but good
bub.

Zoe begins to pour. He stares into her eyes. She stares back into his. This goes on until she's filled it to the brim. She puts the bottle down, but just as she goes, he grabs her arm.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Hey, I checked the account.

ZOE
Yeah?

ANDY
I know you got the groceries at
5:32, but you got the Uber at
6:45... what were you doing in
between?

Zoe's been here with Andy before. She hides behind her trademark fake smile, maintains composure.

ZOE
Shopping.

ANDY
Shopping?
(beat)
What for?

ZOE
Window shopping.

ANDY
Window shopping? What's that?

Andy's eyes narrow on Zoe.

ZOE
You look at things, but you don't
buy them. Because that'd be a
waste, wouldn't it?

ANDY
It would, yeah.
(beat)
You weren't out drinking with
Janine, were you?

ZOE
No.

ANDY
 Promise? Cos wine isn't good for
 making a you-know-what.

Andy gestures at her tummy.

ZOE
 I promise.

Zoe smiles. Andy stares at her, then he lets go of her arm.
 Zoe returns to her end of the table. Andy resumes eating and
 drinking. Eating, drinking, eating, drinking.

ANDY
 (between mouthfuls)
 You shouldn't be working.

ZOE
 I like my job.

ANDY
 A king doesn't make his queen work
 babe.

Zoe eyes his glass, emptying.

ZOE
 I do it for me.

Andy clears the back of his throat then loosens his collar.

ANDY
 For you?

ZOE
 I'm good at it.

ANDY
 We both know you're not-

Andy grabs at his throat, like he could be choking, but
 isn't.

ANDY (CONT'D)
 Did you do something differently?

ZOE
 New spice mix.

Andy wheezes, keeps trying to clear his throat.

ANDY
 I think... I'm allergic or
 something?

Andy chugs down more wine, seemingly it clears his problem.

ANDY (CONT'D)

What was I saying? Quit-quit-quit-ting.

(his eyes are wide with
confusion)

I want you to-

Andy's sweating. He splutters. Andy gulps down the rest of his wine as though food is still stuck in his throat. But then, Andy brings his wine glass down, hard. It drops to the floor and smashes on the tiles. He stares at it in wonder. His arm falls down by his side. He tries to move it, but the arm flops back down again.

ANDY (CONT'D)

W-what have you...?

Andy finds Zoe standing above him.

ZOE

Ok. I need you to relax.

Zoe puts a vile of liquid ketamine beside his dinner plate. He eyes the ketamine, then eyes Zoe.

ANDY

Wh-wh-at?

ZOE

It's just going to put you to sleep. It's perfectly safe, I got it from a doctor...well, he got it from a doctor...well he stole it from a vet, but-

Andy is turning red.

ZOE (CONT'D)

When you wake up... I'll be gone.

ANDY

Zoooh?

ZOE

This is the only way Andy.

Andy begins to loudly *sniff, sniff, sniff, sniff*. He looks around himself, searching for the source of an odour.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Stop crying Andy!

Andy's eyes dart toward the kitchen, eyeing something off-camera. *Sniff, sniff, sniff*. His eyes grow wide with fear.

ANDY

Nhhhhhhh-smllllllllll!

Zoe is oblivious to whatever he's smelling. On Andy's *sniffle, sniffle-*

ZOE
Shhh. Don't cry.

ANDY
ZERRR! SMELLLLLLLLLL! KER-CHENNNN!!

CLOSE ON a small gas leak from the stove in the kitchen. But Zoe's found her stride now, and can't smell a thing.

ZOE
Don't try to stop me!

ANDY
HMMMMMph...kishennnn! Gassshhhhh!

Despite his best efforts, Andy slumps down even further into his chair.

ZOE
I want more from this life. I want,
a fresh start. I want more-

Andy, with zero bodily autonomy, tries to move but his chair tips over. He crashes on the ground. A dead weight, his eyes frantically dart to the candles burning brightly, totally engulfing him.

ANDY
ZOOOOOHHHHHHH-

ZOE
Good bye Andy Adino.

Tracking with Zoe she takes off her wedding ring, and places it on the dining table. She swiftly rushes for the door. She stops.

ZOE (CONT'D)
You'll find love again Andy.

ANDY
(drooling, incapacitated)
GEHERHbhbhbhbhak.....

Zoe softly weeps, reminiscent of our opening scene, then makes her exit.

11 EXT. GLEN WAVERLEY - SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 11

Zoe, tote bag over her shoulder, breathless, crying, yet dignified and triumphant, struts to the road. Nothing can stop her. Not now. A Taxi pulls up playing *Reggaeton music*, window down.

DRIVER

Did you order a taxi?

Zoe casts her eye to the house one final time.

ZOE

Yes.

12

INT./EXT. TAXI - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

12

Zoe swiftly clambers in with her things, anxiously looking over her shoulder.

DRIVER

Everything... ok?

ZOE

Perfect.

The taxi peels away from the curb, Zoe keeps watching the house, waiting for Andy to come after her. Fearful she should have used the whole bottle of ket. Slowly, her freedom washes over her like a wave.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Can you turn it up?

DRIVER

(now excited)

Check this out.

The taxi driver cranks the volume of his subwoofer, it's a heavy bass. The whole car vibrates. Zoe is too numb to care. She's still looking at the house, saying a solemn farewell to the life she once knew. All she can hear is the Reggaeton Track.

Then suddenly, before her eyes, there is a flame. Followed by, A MASSIVE EXPLOSION.

Smoke, fireball - *kaboom*. Her house goes up in flames. Total chaos ensues like suburbia just turned into a warzone. But the driver, and indeed Zoe, can't hear anything over the subwoofer.

ZOE

(to herself)

What the fuck-

DRIVER

(over the music)

Excuse me?

ZOE

(screaming)

KEEP DRIVING!

The Reggaeton track carries us off Zoe's look of pure horror to--

13 INT. PUBLIC BATHROOM - DAY 13

A MONTAGE!

1. We're tight on Zoe's hands, as she presses on acrylics.

Snip!

2. Scissors cut her long frizzy hair into a bob - it's very uneven.

Zoe groans.

3. Zoe's hands gingerly buttons up a black blouse.

4. We're tight on Zoe's lips as she applies a shade of pink.

5. Zoe paints her acrylics a bright purple with kaleidoscopic pink polka dots. Not essential for a dramatic disguise, but essential for Zoe.

7. Zoe withdraws a thick wad of cash from her tote.

14 EXT. NUNAWADING NEW & USED CARS - DAY 14

An anxious Zoe stands in front of a rusty-red 1990 Toyota Camry. Cash changes hands into the car dealer.

Zoom!

The Reggaeton Track continues playing...

INTERCUT:

15 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY AND NIGHT 15

The Rusty-Red Camry flies past other vehicles at speed. Zoe fights back tears. Through the windshield, she sees a sign:

Thank you for visiting Victoria!

Zoe chews her nails, eyes red from crying. She cracks into a smile, then begins to uncontrollably cry.

At night through the windshield, another a sign:

Welcome to Sydney!

Zoe laughs maniacally. The Reggaeton track stops abruptly...

The car is now parked illegally on the side of a highway, cars honk at Zoe as they zip past a sign:

Thank you for visiting Sydney

And through the windshield we see Zoe dry-retching into a mound of dirt. She's tired. Flails her arms about. Kicks the dirt. Vomits some more.

Later...

Day transitions to night, she's back on the road and the track picks up where it left off. Though Zoe, now, simply stares at the road ahead, catatonic, emotionless, nothing left to give. A somewhat mad look in her eyes. That same smile...

Through the windshield we see a final sign:

Welcome to Queensland, the Sunshine state.

16 EXT. FERRY - PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY

16

Zoe hasn't changed her clothes. She sits as the rickety ferry pulls away from dry dock. She subtly waves goodbye to the Rusty-Red Camry in the carpark.

Crystal blue water, scorching sunshine. Zoe plays with a sandwich, not really eating it.

MAN (O.C.)

Are you gonna finish that?

Zoe is startled again from her daydream. She finds the FERRY OPERATOR (50) staring down at her. He's tall, thin, and intimidating as all fuck. He gestures to the sandwich.

ZOE

Oh. This? Um. No.

He doesn't move or attempt to respond.

ZOE (CONT'D)

You can have it if you like?

The Ferry Operator's calloused hand snatches it from Zoe, but he throws it in the ocean.

ZOE (CONT'D)

That was a perfectly good-

MAN

The gulls-

He points to a sign: *Don't Feed the Seagulls.*

MAN (CONT'D)

You can't leave food out, otherwise
they-

On cue, a seagull craps on a glamorous FEMALE PASSENGER (20s) who's taking a selfie with her FRIENDS. She lets out blood-curdling scream.

Zoe looks at the Ferry Operator, the Ferry Operator looks at Zoe.

MAN (CONT'D)

That's on you.

He walks back to the cabin. The screaming continues as Zoe hides her face from the girl.

CLOSE ON a brochure beside Zoe reading:

NYSA Resort - *find a better you.*

17

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

17

The ferry continues onwards but we're close on Zoe's sandwich floating on the surface of the water. A SEAGULL swoops down and lands beside the sandwich, happily pecking, getting that bread, floating on the surface of the water. Blissful. Content.

A GOLDEN TREVALLY breaches the surface of the water, and grotesquely snatches the seagull, dragging it beneath the surface.