

# LONDON CALLING

**GABRIELA RODRIGUEZ'S WORK ROUTINE IS MEASURED BY HER COFFEE CONSUMPTION.**

IN THE PRODUCER'S OWN WORDS

Gabriela Rodriguez has worked with the Mexican filmmaker Alfonso Cuarón for the better part of two decades, and has the distinction of being the first female producer of Latin descent to earn an Oscar Best Picture nomination, for Cuarón's semi-autobiographical feature *Roma* (2019). She's currently an executive producer on the series *Disclaimer*—written and directed by Cuarón, and starring Cate Blanchett and Kevin Kline—which is shooting in London as the first project of an overall deal between Apple TV+ and Cuarón's Esperanto Filmoj, which Rodriguez heads. She describes a typical work routine, fueled by caffeine, but not of the typical British variety.



PHOTOS COURTESY ALEJANDRO CHAVEZ

Growing up in Venezuela, I wanted to be a producer since I was 13 years old. I didn't even know what the job entailed, but now that I've been doing it for so many years, I realize that my 13-year-old self was right.

I'm incredibly privileged to be able to work doing what I love. Based out of London, I run Alfonso Cuarón's production company, Esperanto Filmoj. Currently my working life revolves around juggling our development slate, while also being on set every day for the past five months—with many more to go. Truly, no two days are alike as of late.

That's why when I was asked to describe what a day in my life looked like, I had to stop and think about how to describe it.

I've noticed that since I started running Esperanto Filmoj—where my responsibilities include developing an extensive and eclectic slate of projects while also producing the project that Alfonso is currently directing—I have definitely been drinking a lot more coffee. So I thought what better way to summarize my work-life balance than by describing how I take my coffee that day?

**So, the Gaby coffee rulebook proceeds as follows:**

### Small & Potent

If I'm holding a very small cup of coffee on set, it means it's a double espresso kind of day, and that I *need* highly concentrated coffee. It's likely already a tough morning—apart from the fact that I'm not a morning person, so every morning is already tough. When COVID cases are high and the crew is forcibly reduced, or when the set is taking longer to light, or a location is proving tricky to shoot in because of neighbors or weather conditions, then that's a day when the strongest coffee consumption starts before call time. I'll probably carry on at that rate during the day.

### Medium & Mellow

If I have a medium-size cup of coffee, it means that the day started well. We have a full crew, our DP and director like the set, and actors are ready on time. This scenario means I can add milk to my coffee. On days like these, I can also have meetings (mostly on Zoom) with my Esperanto team, and we can talk about our slate of projects that are at different stages of development or production. We get to plan pitches, discuss literary and scripted submissions, and strategize on the best way to move each project forward.

It's a great privilege to actively be on set producing a show directed by Alfonso Cuarón with Emmanuel "Chivo" Lubezki and Bruno Delbonnel as DPs, and at the same time, be able to work with a team that is developing and overseeing our other productions. It's truly a first for me, and I never thought that I would be able to juggle so much.



### Spiked!

Lastly, if you find me with a *carajillo* (my all-time favorite drink—a shot of espresso with Licor 43), then it's likely that I am having a very relaxed weekend and can spend some time reading submissions and listening to podcasts. These past few years I've realized that my favorite way to unwind is through podcasts. I can spend an entire day listening to a series, like binge-watching a show, and at the same time be able to cook—although I am a terrible cook—and organize drawers, closets or any version of a menial task that can help me clear my head.

Up until five years ago, I didn't drink any coffee, but now it's the engine that keeps me going at work. However, what truly keeps me sane is my weekly canasta card game with my gal pals, which is genuinely the biggest highlight of my week. ■