

and chest. Ron blinks, touches the target and walks off. Our view pulls back to reveal a row of identical targets. The silhouettes stand in a running pose. Ron strides toward the trees.”), alternate Spanish and French audio tracks, optional English, French and Spanish subtitles, a music video using a Prince number, and a passable 5-minute promotional featurette, which includes a gratifying interview with the real cop that Washington is representing in the film.

Dollars More on Blu-ray

The problem is that for two-thirds of **For a Few Dollars More**, it is a great and even thrilling movie, but the final third is awkwardly and haphazardly constructed. The story is technically adequate, but it is an emotional letdown, in which the heroes just sort of blunder into failure when they try to infiltrate a gang of bank robbers. They get thoroughly beaten up when they ought to just get killed, and then get out of their predicament by pure luck. The film is superbly shot and always entertaining, but compared to the sublime satisfaction that the other two Sergio Leone/Clint Eastwood westerns deliver narratively as well as stylistically, it is a distinct letdown.

20th Century Fox Home Entertainment and Kino Lorber Incorporated have released an elaborate Blu-ray presentation of the 1965 feature (UPC#738329226862, \$30). The picture transfer looks terrific. We reviewed a DVD in Aug 07 that came from the same restoration, but the improved crispness of the BD image and the wonderful DTS sound—the film’s remastered 5.1-channel track has a marvelous dimensionality for both the music and the sound effects—readily enhance the viewing experience.

The film runs 132 minutes and includes a couple of minutes of by now standard footage that had been left out of the original theatrical release because, among other things, it gave Eastwood’s character a name. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, and there are optional English subtitles. Carried over from the DVD we reviewed are the two trailers, twelve radio commercials, a 12-minute then-and-now montage of the locations and a 7-minute interview with Eastwood. Additionally there is another trailer, a nice collection of promotional materials and production photos in still frame, a 5-minute segment on the restoration, a 3-minute appreciation by Ernest Dickerson, a nice 20-minute summary of the film’s attributes by Christopher Frayling, a fun 19-minute piece by Frayling about the film’s advertising graphics around the world and other memorabilia (including the original script), an insightful 11-minute collection of retrospective interviews with three people who worked on the film, and a 14-minute appreciation of the film and examination of its locations by Alex Cox.

An excellent and knowledgeable commentary by Frayling that also appeared on the DVD has been carried over. Additionally, there is a fresh commentary by the always insightful Tim Lucas. “Sergio Leone maintained that he made films about friendship, about the friendships between two men. He was an only child who often wished for a brother, and the films he made became a form of wish fulfillment.”

Lucas reacts to the film as it plays out, talking about the story and the backgrounds of the cast and crew, but also pointing out technical details and paying close attention to the music, too. “The music in the background conjures suspense through monotony. The chord and its tone are stretching rather than changing. But it is subject to influence. When a sleeping bandit stirs, his restlessness triggers the introduction of another sighing instrument. The music seems to be gathering force, preparing to conjure something. **For a Few Dollars More** was the first time that Sergio Leone had Ennio Morricone compose and record the film’s music before he began filming, and this, I believe, is the reason behind this film’s tremendous leap in musical imagination. Morricone was not tailoring his music to the action on the screen, Leone was tailoring his images and, indeed, his actors’ performances, to Morricone’s music, which the maestro could now approach from the pure advantage point of composition. He read the script and scored what he experienced in his imagination.”

Sleazy in a good way

The commentary team of genre enthusiasts Adrian J. Smith and David Flint use the word, ‘sleazy,’ at least a dozen times to describe the 1975 giallo thriller, **Strip Nude for Your Killer**, an Arrow Video Blu-ray release (UPC#760137228981, \$40), but as they constantly admonish the listener, the film is ‘sleazy in a good way.’ We reviewed a Blue Underground DVD in Nov 05. The movie is a highly satisfying entry in the giallo format, with a killer dressed from head to foot in black leather systematically eliminating the employees of a small modeling agency. The hero, played by Nino Castelnuovo, is a photographer, who begins having an affair with his assistant, played by Edwige Fenech, amid the carnage. Castelnuovo’s character is actually quite a jerk, and it is Fenech’s character who pretty much saves the day. The killer is the last of the suspects still standing, but the story is logical and the film is an ideal working of the giallo attributes, with lots of gratuitous sex, an attractive Milan setting, great outfits and terrific production designs inspired by the fashion world milieu. The musical score, by Berto Pisano, seems to utilize a number of different approaches (at times veering into a Blaxploitation vibe), but is consistently appealing, even if, as Smith and Flint point out, it is not always consistent with the drama.

Basically, the film, directed by Andrea Bianchi, panders to the sex and gore that are at the heart its marketing, right down to the title, but its style

and narrative are not short changed in the process, so the little devil that sits on your left shoulder and whispers bad suggestions into your ear will be very pleased.

The film is available with both an Italian track and an English track, with optional English subtitles. We preferred the Italian because it matches the spirit of the film, but the English track is workable most of the time. The 98-minute film begins with a teaser sequence that can be presented in standard color, or bathed in a blue tint, which works much better considering the nature of its content, even in relation to the rest of the murder-soaked movie. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The color transfer looks fabulous and is more consistent than the DVD, which looked great most of the time. The monophonic sound is crisp. An excellent 23-minute profile of Fenech goes over her entire career, utilizing many film clips and photos. Additionally, there are two trailers: a brief collection of promotional materials in still frame; a very nice 15-minute interview with Castelnuovo, who talks about the film, about his career and about Italian cinema (he also starred in **The Umbrellas of Cherbourg**, and compares Fernando Di Leo and Lucio Fulci to Jacques Demy); a 19-minute interview with co-star Erna Schurer, who talks about her entire career; a 22-minute interview with bit player and production designer Tino Polenghi, who talks about his career and about working on the film; and a so-so 44-minute interview with assistant director Daniele Sangiorgi, who talks about his memories of the film and Bianchi, as well as other experiences he had during his career, including a few cute anecdotes about working on sex films.

On their commentary, Flint and Smith talk about the performers and the crew, and about the story, although, while celebrating the sleaze, they actually start to get down a little bit more on the narrative and plotting than it really deserves, as ridiculous as some scenes are when you really start to think about them. Nevertheless, it is an enjoyable talk that embraces the film for what it is.

“It’s 1975 and it’s a very different world. Machismo, and the whole—you can’t make excuses for this stuff because that was the way it was.”

“You have to understand that standards were different at the time, and standards will probably be different in the future. We can’t just expect every film that comes out to fit.”

“You can’t be judgmental. There’s no point. You’ve just got to look at it within its context.”

“This is not a film that has a great subtext to it. It’s not a film that’s really trying to say anything. There’s an element of fandom for these movies that seem almost a little bit ashamed of watching them for what they are, so they have to make them seem like they’re more intellectual, more serious somehow. There’s nothing wrong with a great, trashy exploitation movie.”

Saucy comedy

Pretty much the sauciest pre-Code romantic comedy we can ever recall seeing, the only possible reason why the 1930 RKO Radio Pictures production, **Professional Sweetheart**, is not more widely known is that it was buried for the subsequent 30 years of prudery, and forgotten. But now it has been released by Warner Home Video as an *Archive Collection* title (UPC#883929672349, \$22), so it is time to start passing it around and getting out the word.

Directed by William Seiter, it is clear right off the bat that the film is well made, as it opens in a radio studio where a performer is singing, while the viewer follows the actions of bickering radio executives in silence behind the glass. Ginger Rogers stars as a popular singer who is chafing under a contract that calls for her to be morally pure. She wants to smoke, she wants to drink, and she wants to go to Harlem to dance, but her advertising sponsor won’t let her. She even laments that a friend ‘got into trouble,’ while she’s never had the chance to. Not only does she parade around quite a bit in slinky silk underwear, but there are flagrant references to sexual activity throughout the film. Running 73 minutes, the gist of the story is that she is married in a publicity stunt, but falls in love with the guy and decides to quit the radio business altogether, driving competing advertisers who want to sign her to a fresh contract to distraction as they fall over each other coming up with elaborate schemes to reel her back. Norman Foster co-stars, and there are a gaggle of wonderful character actors filling the other roles, including Frank McHugh, Allen Jenkins, Zasu Pitts, Gregory Ratoff, Franklin Pangborn, Edgar Kennedy and Sterling Holloway. The African-American actress and singer, Theresa Harris, also has an unusually major and positive part, initially appearing as Rogers’ sassy maid, but then landing the singing slot as her substitute while the producers try to get Rogers’ character back. Watching Foster respond to the earthy nature of her singing on the radio is worth the price of the disc.

The film is by no means perfect, particularly in that it gets wrapped up at a point where most movies would be shifting into an amusing final act, but the performances are marvelous, the individual scenes are expertly staged, and the film readily demonstrates, with great delight, that people thought just as much about sex in those days as they do now.

The full screen black-and-white picture is in reasonably good shape. There are occasional flurries of scratches, but a lot of the footage is clean and sharp. The monophonic sound is adequate and there is no captioning.