



Franco Nero
IS

DJANGO



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DJANGO

1966

CAST

Franco Nero Django
Loredana Nusciak Maria
José Bódalo General Hugo Rodriguez
Eduardo Fajardo Major Jackson
Ángel Álvarez Nathaniel, the saloonkeeper
Gino Pernice (as **Jimmy Douglas**) Brother Jonathan
Remo De Angelis (as **Erik Schippers**) Ricardo, Rodriguez gang member
José Canalejas (as **José Canalecas**) Rodriguez gang member
Simón Arriaga Miguel, Rodriguez gang member
Rafael Albaicín Rodriguez gang member
José Terrón Ringo
Luciano Rossi Klan member
Ivan Scratuglia c.s.c. Klan member
Gilberto Galimberti Klan member (uncredited)
Lucio De Santis Whipping bandit (uncredited)

CREW

Directed by **Sergio Corbucci**
Produced by **Manolo Bolognini** and **Sergio Corbucci**
Story and Screenplay by **Sergio Corbucci** and **Bruno Corbucci**
Screenplay in collaboration with **Piero Vivarelli** and **Franco Rossetti**
Director of Photography **Enzo Barboni** A.I.C.
Camera Operators **Idelmo Simonelli**, **Gianni Bergamini** and **Gaetano Valle**
Assistant Cameraman **Fernando Gallandt**
Assistant Director **Ruggero Deodato**
Production Manager **Bruno Frascà**
Edited by **Nino Baragli** and **Sergio Montanari**
Continuity **Patrizia Zulini**
Fire Arms **Remo De Angelis**
Set Designer and Costumes **Giancarlo Simi**
Costumes **Marcella De Marchis**
Set Decorator **Francisco Ganet**
Make-up **Mario Van Riel**
Hair Styles **Grazia De' Rossi**
Properties and Furniture **Francesco Bronzi** c.s.c.
Music **Luis Enriquez Bacalov**
Sound Engineer **Dino Fronzetti**
Still Photographer **Angelo Novi**
English version **Geoffrey Copleston** (as **G. Copleston**)



THE D IS SILENT: A LEGEND IS BORN

by Howard Hughes

When spaghetti westerns became popular worldwide in the 1960s, it wasn't solely due to the films of Sergio Leone. Many directors thrived in the genre and created distinctive, successful works of popular cinema, some of which have come to epitomize spaghetti westerns as much as Leone's work. One such director and film was Sergio Corbucci's 1966 western *Django*, starring Franco Nero in the title role. Corbucci directed 13 spaghetti westerns between 1964 and 1975. He co-directed his first western (billed as 'Stanley Corbett') with Albert Band. *Massacre at Canyon Grande* aka *Red Pastures* (*Massacro al Grande Canyon*, 1964) was a traditional range war/revenge western, starring Robert Mitchum's son James. Corbucci directed his next western, *Minnesota Clay* (1964), under his own name. Cameron Mitchell starred in the title role, as a notorious gunfighter who is trapped in a gang war, as he tries to prove his innocence on a murder charge, even though he's going blind. *Johnny Oro* (1966), starring Mark Damon, was made before *Django*, but released afterwards, and was known internationally as *Ringo and his Golden Pistol*. Thereafter, the huge success of *Django* in Europe allowed Corbucci noticeably bigger budgets. *Navajo Joe* (1966) starring Burt Reynolds, was produced by Dino De Laurentiis and released internationally by United Artists. *The Hellbenders* (*I crudeli*, 1967) starred Hollywood legend Joseph Cotten as a renegade Confederate colonel. The snowy western *The Great Silence* (*Il grande silenzio*, 1968), starring Jean-Louis Trintignant and Klaus Kinski, had trouble finding international distribution. Alberto Grimaldi's production of *A Professional Gun* aka *The Mercenary* (*Il mercenario*, 1968), a big budget Mexican Revolution adventure starring Franco Nero, was Corbucci's biggest international success when it was released by United Artists. The more offbeat *The Specialist* aka *Drop Them or I'll Shoot* (*Gli specialisti*, 1969), starring French rock singer Johnny Hallyday, again struggled internationally, but fared better in Europe. The Corbucci-Nero team's last film together, *Compañeros* (*Vamos a matar, compañeros*, 1970), was another great success and a third Mexican Revolution western. *What Am I Doing in the Middle of a Revolution* (*Che c'entriamo noi con la rivoluzione?*, 1972) with Vittorio Gassman and Paolo Villaggio, also enjoyed success in Italy. *Sonny and Jed* (*La banda J&S - Cronaca criminale del Far-West*, 1972) starring Tomas Milian, Susan George and Telly Savalas, and *The White, the Yellow, and the Black* aka *Samurai* (*Il bianco, il giallo, il nero*, 1975), with Eli Wallach, Tomas Milian and Giuliano Gemma, had their moments – and the latter did especially well at the Italian box office – but were a far cry from Corbucci's best work.

Django stands as the first of Corbucci's 'mud and blood' trilogy, that continued in an even bleaker vein in *The Great Silence* and *The Specialist*. The films share wintry settings and costuming and are reactionary anti-westerns in their depiction of villainy and heroism. All three pit a hero who is incapacitated for the final showdown against baddies who have no concept of honor or a fair fight. The plots to all three are derivative of *A Fistful of Dollars* (*Per un pugno di dollari*, 1964), itself inspired by Akira Kurosawa's samurai movie *Yojimbo* (*Yojimbo*, 1961). In *Django* the hero is caught between two rival factions in a border town in the Southern United States. The adversaries are former Confederate Major Jackson and his private army of red-hooded, racist Ku Klux Klansmen, and Mexican General Hugo Rodriguez and his army of budding revolutionaries. Corbucci adds a revenge element to the brew, with Jackson responsible for the death of Django's wife Mercedes Zaro.

Corbucci cast newcomer Franco Nero as the taciturn hero, Eduardo Fajardo as Major Jackson, José Bódalo as General Rodriguez, and Loredana Nusciak as Maria, a woman Django saves from both gangs. Nero's face was weathered for the role by make-up artists Giulio Natalucci and Mario Van Riel. Check out his clean-cut appearance in *The Wild, Wild Planet* (*I Criminali della Galassia*) and *The Third Eye* (*Il terzo occhio*), both made in 1966, to see just how much Corbucci aged his 24-year-old leading man. The supporting cast included master-at-arms and stunt arranger Remo De Angelis (billed as Erik Schippers) as Rodriguez's henchman Ricardo, Gino Pernice (billed as Jimmy Douglas) as Klan pastor Brother Jonathan, Angel Alvarez as the saloonkeeper Nathaniel, Jose Terron as scar-faced, snagged-toothed Ringo and a host of familiar spaghetti western faces among the heavies: Ivan Scrataglia, Rafael Albaicín, José Canalejas, Lucio De Santis, Simón Arriaga and Luciano Rossi.

Django is a former Union soldier, now a gunrunner and arms dealer, who carries a demonstration model in tow, which he keeps hidden in a coffin. Corbucci's West is a bleak, drab post-Civil War landscape, muddy, bloody, unforgiving and sparsely populated. The film was an Italian-Spanish co-production, between B.R.C. Produzione Films (Rome) and Tecisa (Madrid). Corbucci's assistant director was Ruggero Deodato, who went on to become a controversial director in his own right. The Italian title sequence sheds more light on who concocted the film's plot. Story, screenplay and dialogue is credited to Sergio Corbucci and his brother Bruno. Additional credits for the screenplay include Franco Rossetti, Jose G Maesso and Piero Vivarelli. The English language titles have the Corbucci brothers billed for story and screenplay, with additional screenplay credits only for Vivarelli and Rossetti. Geoffrey Copleston, a Manchester-born actor who appeared in Italian films, is credited with writing the English version of the dialogue, which deviates from the original Italian script – the English language dialogue is more literal and prosaic, the Italian more poetic and resonant.

Corbucci began filming in late 1965 in Italy, at the beach and inlet at Tor Caldara, Anzio Cape, and on the saloon interior at Elios Film, Rome. At the beginning of 1966, Corbucci's *Django* crew shifted to Spain and then returned to film more footage at Tor Caldara and on the western street exterior at Elios Film until February. The western set looks very different to how it had appeared as Coldstone in Corbucci's *Johnny Oro*, with the street now churned-up with mud and the buildings weather-beaten and ramshackle. The art direction and sets were by Carlo Simi (billed as Giancarlo Simi), who had worked on Sergio Leone's *A Fistful of Dollars* and *For a Few Dollars More* (*Per qualche dollaro in più*, 1965). His attention to detail is a key ingredient in establishing the film's mood and setting.

The location at Tor Caldara is now a nature reserve – Riserva naturale di Tor Caldara. It's 44 hectares of beach, an inlet, a volcanic, sandy clearing and a stream surrounded by woodland oaks, to the south of Anzio. It boasts unusual fauna and flora and is a protected World Wide Fund for Nature site. Scenes in *Django* shot at Tor Caldara include all the action that occurs near a rope bridge (Django rescuing Maria, Django being captured and tortured by the Mexicans), the mud flats in the title sequence, and the cemetery scenes. Corbucci had already used Tor Caldara extensively in his mythical epics *Goliath* and *The Vampires* (*Maciste contro il vampiro*) and *Romulus and Remus* aka *Duel of the Titans* (*Romolo e Remo*), both 1961, his western *Johnny Oro* and the swashbuckling drama *The Man Who Laughs* (*L'uomo che ride*, 1966). It was an extremely popular filming location for Italian filmmakers and appears in dozens of genre films, from sword and sandal epics and spy movies, to Second World War movies and costume adventures. The filming locations in Spain were near Madrid. A wagon being pursued by Mexican soldiers and an ambush of Rodriguez and his men by Mexican soldiers were filmed at the rock formations at El Jaralón and La Pedriza, Manzanares El Real. The attack on the Mexican outpost at Fort Cerriba was filmed at a rural complex in Dehesa De Navalvillar, to the southeast of Manzanares El Real. A corral and ranch set at Uceda, Finca El Soto (Guadalajara) had appeared in *Minnesota Clay*. In *Django* it was used for scenes with a ranch, corral and watchtower, when Major Jackson uses live Mexican peons for target practice.

The film's title sequence is one of the most famous spaghetti western introductions of all time. A man trudges through the rain, across desolate mudflats – this is part of the Tor Caldara location. It was pouring with rain and cold the day of the filming and Nero recalls that after he had wandered off over the rise, he returned to find the crew had packed up and gone. Django is dressed in a long Union greatcoat, a black hat, army trousers and boots, and fingerless gloves and a scarf against the cold. Over his shoulder is slung his saddle hung with a lantern, pouch and canteen – Django doesn't have a horse and unlike conventional western heroes, spaghetti or otherwise, at no point in the film does he ride one. Most significantly, behind him he tows a coffin on a rope through the mud, which is revealed later as the easiest way for him to transport his lethal armament, a belt-fed machine-gun. Like the sets, the costumes were designed by Simi and the wintry tailoring



throughout the film evokes fashions from Sam Peckinpah's *Ride the High Country* (1962) and André De Toth's *Day of the Outlaw* (1959). The Klansmen in particular wear red scarves or hoods, to denote their allegiance to Jackson's faction.

The titles are accompanied by the dramatic ballad 'Django'. The music was composed by Luis Enriquez Bacalov, conducted by Bruno Nicolai, with lyrics by Franco Migliacci and Robert Mellin. The song was performed with emotional gusto by American-born soul singer Rocky Roberts, who later had a major hit single in Italy with 'Stasera Mi Butto'. This resulted in him starring (as himself) in a popular Italian *musicarello* 'Beach Party' film *I'll Try Tonight (Stasera mi butto)*, 1967 directed by Ettore Maria Fizzarotti, which was filmed at the smart seaside resort Coppola Pinetamare, near Castel Volturno, north of Naples. An Italian language version of *Django's* title song was also recorded by Roberto Fia and this was released as a 45-rpm single in Italy on the Parade label, with an instrumental version as the B-side.

The film's opening scenes introduce the gang war that divides the territory. The landscape is bleak and wintry, with crinkled autumn leaves and sparse vegetation. Corbucci's cinematographer Enzo Barboni (later of 'Trinity' films fame) photographs Tor Caldara in a way to make it appear much larger and more expansive than it is. Django arrives atop a bluff and looks down into a canyon (another Tor Caldara location) where he observes a woman being punished by a quartet of Mexican bandits. She is tied to the wooden frame of a rope bridge spanning a shallow gorge and flogged with a cruel-looking whip of knotted rope (wielded by Lucio De Santis). Their sadistic pleasure is interrupted by a volley of shots and all four Mexicans are killed in cold blood by five of Jackson's Klansmen. No whipping for the woman from them – they plan to burn her on a cross, as punishment for fleeing to the Mexicans. Finally Django feels the need to intervene. The Klansmen (including Gilberto Galimberti and Attilio Severini) and their spokesman (Ivan Scratuglia) recognise Django as a northern interloper, and in a shootout Django dispatches the woman's tormentors, one of whom (stuntman Giulio Maculani) ends up sliding into a pool of quicksand below the bridge. Django discovers her name is Maria and she discovers he has a personal matter to settle in town, so for the time being they become travelling companions. This opening scene introduces Django's ominous musical theme and is accompanied by extracts of Bacalov's unsettling 'Town of Silence' and 'Fango giallo' (Yellow Mud) soundtrack cues. It also establishes the gulf between the locals and the outsider: the fanatical Klansmen murder the Mexicans, but Django kills the Klansmen in a fair fight.

Eventually, Django and Maria trudge into the film's main set, the Elios Studios western street, a desolate settlement perched in a quagmire. The street is littered with frontier ephemera, ramshackle planking, a water tower, fences, poles, wagon wheels, barrels, wicker baskets, hitchin' rails, chains and a grappling hook. The only inhabited building appears to be the 'City Hotel and Saloon', run by Nathaniel and his five gaudily dressed

showgirls – bored, cold and restless in the nowhere town. The cluttered saloon interior includes a well-stocked bar, general store provisions, and a stove and chimney, plus potted palms yearning for more exotic climes. Nathaniel on violin, accompanied by one of his employees on piano, play a grating version of Bacalov's serene 'Blue Dark Waltz'. This music plays as Django and Maria make their way down the muddy main street – in some prints their entrance to town takes place in daylight, in others by night – watched from an alleyway by Jackson's spy in town, the pseudo-cleric Brother Jonathan (Gino Pernice). This forsaken ghost town, a 'dead city', with a perpetually whistling wind and almost-at-capacity cemetery, is one of the great spaghetti western settings and a fitting locale for Corbucci's ruthless tale of revenge, where even the winners lose.

Howard Hughes writes about film, history and music in print and online. He is the author of a range of film books including Cinema Italiano: The Complete Guide from Classics to Cult and Once Upon a Time in the Italian West: The Filmgoers' Guide to Spaghetti Westerns.

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DJANGO: CONTEMPORARY REVIEWS

These original reviews which met the film's Italian theatrical release in 1966 have been compiled and translated by film historian and critic Roberto Curti. The critics were in unanimous agreement about the film's gruesomeness...

The race to the horrific and the sadistic is getting more and more revolting. Colt guns are not enough anymore, and here's a machine-gun which kills people by the dozen. Kicks in the face were cheap parlor tricks, so here we have a severed-and-swallowed ear. The hooting and hollering songs sung by saloon girls were too delicate, so here they fight and roll in the mud. All this, and more, happens in *Django*. The sinister, funereal hero drags along a coffin behind him, with a machine-gun hidden inside: he never smiles and has a tremendous mission of death (wholesale killings, like in concentration camps); his fiancée doesn't move a muscle when rivers of blood spurt in front of her. In short, Corbucci took lessons from Sergio Leone and Gualtiero Jacopetti. Horrors from beginning to end: everything is rotten, men and scenery, all marked by rot. Men are wild beasts, without a flash of humanity; the scenery looks like the end of the world is near. What nostalgia for the western – the real one!

(Uncredited, *Corriere d'Informazione*, 12 May 1966)

With Sergio Corbucci's *Django*, the "Italian-style western" has reached the pinnacle of exasperated violence. Technically accomplished, the movie thrives with sadism in massive doses. Not even counting the many lightning-fast killings, it features someone who has his ear cut off and then is forced to swallow it before he is killed, plus whippings, quicksand deaths, and a funereal ending amid the crosses of a graveyard. Add to that the look of the protagonist, Franco Nero, a grim avenger until the very last sequence. The beautiful Loredana Nusciak is his partner, and she's undoubtedly a woman who is not scared by blood.

(Uncredited, *Corriere della Sera*, 12 May 1966)

Italian-Spanish as usual, Sergio Corbucci's color western *Django* relies on well-known patterns for its story. The protagonist is the standard avenger, frowning and quiet, enemy of barbers and soap alike. A novelty, however, is that, in addition to a woman, he drags along a coffin, which contains not a body but a machine-gun, a weapon which at the right time

he uses with lightning-fast skill – so much so that in certain scenes there are countless dead people on screen.

The latter are, indeed, the story's stick in the mud. The way the avenger's enemies are killed, and their exceptional number, can make the movie truly gruesome, if one takes it seriously; and its atrocity is such that it could cause a justified dismay in the most sensible viewers. But this reiterated excess of cruelty lacks measure and verisimilitude, and shifts the film from the realistic to the grotesque, with the result that every now and then, among the diverse emotions, there is even room for a healthy chuckle.

(Uncredited, *La Stampa*, 7 April 1966)

Directed by Sergio Corbucci (who is one of the initiators of the genre, along with Leone and Tessari), this "Italian western" stands out only because of the emphasis – to the limits of what's tolerable, and beyond – on sadistic violence which, unsupported by any ideal motive, is hardly justifiable, even spectacle-wise. The only (relative) novelty is the primordial but very effective machine-gun which the protagonist drags along, hidden in a coffin. The latter, after all, is the symbol of *Django*: the amount of dead bodies that pile up on the screen is such that it suggests a financial contribution on the part of funeral parlors. The lead is an actor new to us, Franco Nero. Alongside him, Loredana Nusciak.

(Aggeo Savioli, *L'Unità*, 10 April 1966)

TEXAS, ADIOS

1966

CAST

Franco Nero Burt Sullivan
Alberto Dell'Acqua (as **Cole Kitosch**) Jim Sullivan
José Suarez Cisco Delgado
Elisa Montés The girl
Livio Lorenzon Alcalde Miguel
José Guardiola McLeod
Hugo Blanco Pedro
Luigi Pistilli Hernandez
Gino Pernice Bank employee
Antonella Murgia Burt's mother
Giovanni Ivan Scratuglia (as **Ivan Scratuglia**) Dick
Silvana Bacci Paquita, the barmaid

CREW

Directed by **Ferdinando Baldi**
Produced by **Manolo Bolognini**
Story and Screenplay by **Ferdinando Baldi** and **Franco Rossetti**
Director of Photography **Enzo Barboni** A.I.C.
Camera Operator **Gaetano Valle**
Edited by **Sergio Montanari**
Assistant Director **Renzo Rossellini**
Production Design **Eduardo Torre de la Fuente**
Art Direction **Luigi Scaccianocce**
Costumes **Giancarlo Simi**
Make-up **Duilio Scarozza**
Stunt Director **Remo De Angelis**





CUT TO THE ACTION: THE FILMS OF FERDINANDO BALDI

by Howard Hughes

Italian writer-director Ferdinando Baldi created some of the most financially successful spaghetti westerns ever made. In a career that took off in the early 1960s and lasted until the late 1980s, Baldi worked all over the world with some big names. His films are rarely dull and like Antonio Margheriti and Enzo G Castellari, Baldi was successful in a wide range of genres, though mainly in war films and westerns. From David versus Goliath's biblical confrontation and way-out spaghetti westerns, to in-your-face 3-D excitement and Rambo-style superheros, Baldi was certainly a 'man of action'.

Baldi's first international success was as co-director of the biblical epic *David and Goliath* (*David e Golia*, 1960), when he collaborated with Richard Pottier. Ivo Payer was a typical peplum hero as Israelite David, who faced super-warrior Goliath, the Philistines' secret weapon (as played by the towering performer Aldo Pedinotti, billed as 'Kronos'). Orson Welles made a brooding King Saul, in one of his various guest-starring roles that make these outings so enjoyable. It was filmed on location near Zagreb and in Jerusalem in Palestine. Baldi continued in the same vein on further epics and costume adventures, such as *Kingdom of Violence* (*Sfida al re di Castiglia*, 1963), *The Tartars* (*Taras Bulba, il cosacco*, 1963), starring Vladimir Medar as Taras Tulba, and *The Son of Cleopatra* (*Il figlio di Cleopatra*, 1963). Baldi directed Hollywood legend Alan Ladd in *Duel of Champions* (*Orazi e Curiaz*, 1961), which told the story of the duel between two sets of brothers, the Horatii and the Curiatii, to settle the war between Rome and Alba. Baldi co-directed this one with future James Bond film director Terence Young. These epics, some of which had considerable budgets and multitudes of extras, demonstrated that Baldi knew how to orchestrate action on a grand scale. But these were strictly formula vehicles, with little sign of Baldi's own stamp.

More interesting were two Roman Empire epics that Baldi directed in Yugoslavia, produced by Moris Ergas – *In the Shadow of the Eagles* (*All'ombra delle aquile*, 1966) and *Massacre in the Black Forest* (*Hermann der Cherusker - Die Schlacht im Teutoburger Wald*, 1967). Baldi was billed as 'Ferdy Baldwin'. Cameron Mitchell starred in *Eagles* as Tribune Marcus Ventidius, who battles barbarian hordes in Pannonia, a province in the outer reaches of the Empire. The barbarian tribes unite against the Roman eagle (the battle scenes are

impressive, deploying many extras and dangerous stunts), until Ventidius puts down the rebellion and peace is restored. Vladimir Medar played chief Magdo, Beba Loncar was his daughter Helen and Aleksandar Gavric was insurrectionist-in-chief Batone, who tortures Ventidius by making him run across burning coals. In *Massacre*, Mitchell played Consul Sessina, a lesser role, as the story concentrates on Arminius (Hans Von Borsody) of the Cherusci, once Rome's ally, now its nemesis. The Black Forest massacre (actually the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest) sees the Germanic warriors ambush the legion, which is lost in the marshes. Sessina leads a campaign into Germany across the Rhine and discovers the skeletal remains of the legion, left as a macabre shrine. There's an impressive massed attack by Arminius's army on a Roman outpost, involving a battering ram and fiery oil, which Baldi handles well. Loncar and Medar were back, in different roles, and Antonella Lualdi was Tusnelda, Arminius's woman. Both films, which were obviously shot back-to-back in Yugoslavia, share casts, sets (including a splendid Roman forum set, a wooden Roman fortress and rustic Barbarian camps) and have lovely scores by Carlo Savina. Little seen today, they are set (and filmed) in windswept, wintry hinterlands that are brilliantly evocative of time and place.

Baldi also directed an interesting spy film, *Suicide Mission to Singapore aka Goldsnake 'Anonima Killers'* (*Operazione Goldsnake*, 1966). With its suave hero and authentic, exotic location filming in Singapore, this resembles the James Bond films and the 'Kommissar X' spy series that came out around the same time. Iva Zanicchi provides a Bondian theme song, 'Goldsnake'. It's helped by the fact that the production secured the use of a very nice silver E-type Jaguar and a twin-engined British jet fighter, the Gloster Javelin. Less impressively, the villains travel in a VW camper van. 'Stanley Kent'/Stelio Candelli played agent Kurt Jackson, who's on the trail of Professor Wong Li and his secret formula microfilm. Yoko Tani played Annie Wong and Annabella Incontrera was villainess Evelyn. In a superb bit of action, Tani (in leather jacket, crash helmet and goggles) guns down Incontrera and her henchmen with a machine-gun.

A Way-out West

Baldi's grounding in action genres made him a natural for westerns and he made 10 between 1966 and 1981. While he made some textbook tales of revenge and avarice, he also made some of the most bizarre spaghetti westerns too. His debut western, *Texas, Adios* (*Texas, Addio*, 1966), was released in Italy at the end of August 1966. *Django* had been released in the spring of that year and Nero had another western, Lucio Fulci's *Massacre Time* (*Le colt cantarono la morte e fu... tempo di massacre*), out the same month. In *Texas, Adios*, Nero starred as Burt Sullivan, a sheriff who travels with his younger brother Jim from Texas across the border into Mexico, to bring in Cisco Delgado. As in *Massacre Time*, revenge is complicated by the revelation of unpleasant home truths.

Texas, Adios, the second of Nero's proposed three-picture deal with Manolo Bolognini's BRC Produzione in Rome, has many connections with Corbucci's *Django*. It was even released as *Django der Rächer* ('Django the Avenger') in Germany. As well as Nero, several crew members and supporting players reappeared from *Django*. Enzo Barboni was director of photography, Giancarlo Simi designed the costumes and Remo De Angelis directed the stunts. Gino Pernice, Ivan Scratuglia, Silvana Bacci and Lucio De Santis all appeared in both films. Burt's brother Jim was played by former stuntman Alberto Dell'Acqua, who acted under a variety of names, including Cole Kitosch and Robert Widmark, while chief villain Delgado was the respected Spanish actor José Suarez. The supporting cast included many familiar faces from spaghetti westerns, including Livio Lorenzo and Luigi Pistilli. Baldi filmed in Italy (at Cinecittà Studios' western set), near Madrid (Delgado's stronghold is the crumbling plaza at Nuevo Baztan) and in the iconic landscape of Almería, a region Baldi would revisit in subsequent westerns. The Mexican-flavored score by Spaniard Antón García Abril includes fiestas, a thundering electric guitar 'riding' theme (as horsemen gallop hell for leather down winding Almería canyons), trumpet Deguellos and the sentimental title ballad 'Texas, Addio', sung by Don Powell. This action-packed outing from Baldi also features a subplot of Mexican women being forcibly taken by Delgado's thugs and transported by cart to his hacienda, a kidnapping theme which was developed in Baldi's later westerns. On a purely visual note, the pointed arrow design seen on the Nero and Dell'Acqua's jacket pockets in *Texas, Adios* also reappears in later Baldi westerns, such as *Little Rita of the West* (*Little Rita nel West*, 1967) and *The Forgotten Pistolero* (*Il pistolero dell'Ave Maria*, 1969), suggesting a reuse of resources.

Baldi's *Little Rita of the West* (aka *Rita the Kid* or *The Crazy Westerners*) was an unusual musical spaghetti western starring 22-year-old pop singer Rita Pavone as western heroine Little Rita. She shoots it out with outlaws and gunslingers, in parodies of popular spaghetti westerns of the era, including *A Fistful of Dollars* (*Per un pugno di dollari*, 1964), *For a Few Dollars More* (*Per qualche dollaro in più*, 1965), *A Pistol for Ringo* (*Una pistola per Ringo*, 1965), *Ringo and His Golden Pistol* (*Johnny Oro*, 1966) and *Django*. Wedged between these shootouts are a series of pop songs, ballads and 'song and dance' numbers that make this western a unique experience in the genre. Imagine *Carry on Cowboy* (1965), with songs and Lulu. Baldi concocted the original story and it was again produced by Manolo Bolognini, was photographed by Enzo Barboni, and featured actors that were becoming Baldi's stock company, including Remo De Angelis, Livio Lorenzon, Pinuccio Ardia and Gino Pernice. Terence Hill played Rita's love interest in the film, gunman Blackie aka Black Stan. Hill was then cast as the lead in Baldi's 1968 western *Preparati la bara!*, an official prequel to Corbucci's *Django* known variously as *Django*, *Prepare a Coffin*, *Viva Django!* and *Django, Get a Coffin Ready*. It follows Django Cassedy and his transformation from hired bodyguard to executioner and avenger, when his wife is killed during a gold shipment hold-up. Five



years later, Django poses as a hangman to free outlaws who have been framed by the law. The finale has Django facing his enemies in a graveyard and offers a twist on Corbucci's original, by having Django forced to dig his own grave by the villain, until he unearths a coffin (which he'd buried earlier), with his machine-gun hidden inside. Personnel carried over from the original *Django* included cinematographer Enzo Barboni, co-scripter Franco Rossetti, producer Manolo Bolognini and stunt director Remo De Angelis. Baldi's *Hate Thy Neighbor* (*Odia il prossimo tuo*, 1968) was one of the director's lesser works, made with many of the same cast, and on many of the same sets and Italian locations, as *Django, Prepare a Coffin*. A straightforward revenger, its best moments are imaginative sadism, including hand-to-hand combat in a gladiatorial arena.

Baldi's *The Forgotten Pistolero*, also known as *Gunmen of Ave Maria*, demonstrates an emotional power rare in the genre outside the big directorial names. An ambitious melodrama based on the Greek tragedy *Orestes*, Baldi's adaptation has two gunmen, Rafael (Peter Martell) and Sebastian (Leonard Mann), who were childhood friends, unravelling a murder mystery in the town of Oxaca. Rafael is of lowly peasant stock, while Sebastian has aristocratic blood, but identifying the murderer of Sebastian's father, General Carasco, is key. Though it's primarily a spaghetti western, there's also a fine sense of opulence, bloodlines and aristocratic superiority. Baldi's aided by Roberto Pregadio's score – the magnificent main themes, with its eerie whistle, trumpet and tolling bell, is one of the most famous spaghetti western theme and has been widely reused in TV programming and advertising. The film is worth tracking down for that reason alone. Baldi's most successful western of the period was *Blindman* (1971), which cost \$1.3 million – not a bad budget for a spaghetti – but raked in \$15 million worldwide. Tony Anthony starred as a nameless, blind gunfighter, who is hired to escort 50 mail-order brides to Lost Creek, Texas, for the miners working there. In his way are Mexican bandit brothers Domingo and Candy (Lloyd Batista and Ringo Starr), who kidnap the women and take them to Mexico, where their sister Sweet Mama (Magda Konopka) runs a putrid bordello. The spectacular location filming in Almeria makes this a memorably grubby outing.

Fights, Camera, Action!

Following two pretty awful 'Trinity' clones *Carambola* (1974) and *Carambola's Philosophy: In the Right Pocket* (*Carambola, filotto... tutti in buca*, 1975), starring Paul Smith and 'Michael Coby'/Antonio Cantafora, Baldi and Anthony teamed up for another unique pseudo-western, the genre-hopping *Get Mean* (1975). The fourth and last of Anthony's 'Stranger' films (following *A Stranger in Town* [*Un dollaro tra i denti*, 1967], *The Stranger Returns* [*Un uomo, un cavallo, una pistola*, 1967] and *The Silent Stranger* [*Lo straniero di silenzio*, 1968]), this one transported Anthony's freewheeling mercenary from the American wild west, through space and time, to war-torn medieval Spain, as he's hired to escort Princess

Elizabeth Maria De Burgos (Diana Lorys) back to her native land – for a \$50,000 reward, of course. The region is divided by a power struggle between the Moors and the Barbarians, who seek the Treasure of Rodrigo. This is a very different 'western', with superb, authentic Moorish settings and architecture, while the Barbarians, with their beards, braids and horned helmets, resemble Vikings. Many aficionados don't class *Get Mean* as a spaghetti western, but it's representative of how filmmakers such as Baldi injected something new and fresh into the tired and fading formula.

Baldi and Anthony reunited in the early 1980s for their biggest success, the 3-D western *Comin' at Ya!* (1981). Anthony starred as HH Hart, whose wife Abilene (Victoria Abril) is kidnapped on their wedding day by two outlaw brothers, Pike and Polk Thompson, played by Gene Quintano and Ricardo Palacios. This trail of revenge plays out like a semi-remake of *Blindman*, with some spectacular 3-D special effects, and the style appears to have influenced Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill* films (2003-2004). Its success kick-started the 3-D revival of the early 1980s, and it took \$12 million in the US alone. Quintano and Anthony later worked together (as director/producer) on the Almeria-shot TV movie *Dollar for the Dead* (1998) starring Emilio Estevez, which was heavily indebted to spaghetti westerns.

Outside of his westerns, Baldi dabbled in other popular genres. In 1967, before making *Little Rita of the West*, he directed the 'musicarello' *Io non protesto, io amo* ('I Don't Protest, I Love'), starring singer Caterina Caselli. She teaches primary school children Roman history via songs, but falls foul of the school's neighbour, Baron Francesco Mari Calò (Livio Lorenzon), who is attempting to court Caterina's widowed mother. Caterina becomes a star thanks to the Baron's cousin, Salvatore (Tiberio Murgia), a record promoter from Chicago, when she ditches her old-fashioned style and becomes a 'Beat' sensation. For a film introduced by a talking ass strolling along a beach, this is pretty entertaining. There are some good songs, including an Italian-language cover of the Walker Brothers' 'The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine (Anymore)'. The film was again produced by Bolognini for B.R.C. Produzione Film, and was picturesquely shot on the stunning Amalfi coast and the ruins at Paestum. Terence Hill, billed under his real name Mario Girotti, was Caterina's love interest, Gabriele, a medical student.

When Baldi directed *The Corsairs* (*I pirati dell'isola verde*, 1971), a pirate movie shot in Spain starring Dean Reed and Annabella Incontrera, he adopted the pseudonym 'Ted Kaplan' for the first time. Baldi made an Italian crime film, *The Opium Connection* aka *The Sicilian Connection* (*Afyon oppio*, 1972), which featured Ben Gazzara as an undercover agent (who investigates heroin production and trafficking) and location filming in Turkey. Baldi also directed the giallo *Nine Guests for a Crime* (*Nove ospiti per un delitto*, 1977), starring John Richardson, Dana Ghia and Arthur Kennedy, an island-set tale of bed-hopping

infidelity, murder and revenge – it's a bit like Mario Bava's *Five Dolls for an August Moon* (*5 bambole per la luna d'agosto*, 1970), only better. Both *Opium Connection* and *Nine Guests* open with an horrific scene of someone being buried alive. Baldi also directed two very different films set on trains – the sleazy *Terror Express* (*La ragazza del vagone letto*, 1980) and the comedy *The Travelling Companion* (*La compagna di viaggio*, 1980).

Baldi worked again with Tony Anthony on the 3-D sci-fi/adventure/horror *Treasure of the Four Crowns* (*Il tesoro delle 4 corone*, 1983), which opens with a *Star Wars*-style receding blurb, but is mostly inspired by another Harrison Ford movie, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981). Anthony played JT Striker, a thieving soldier of fortune who assembles a team of specialists to storm the Temple of the Crowns – a mountain fortress with a sophisticated defence system that is the stronghold of Brother Jonas (Emiliano Redondo) and his death cult of followers – to steal Visigoth crowns. It was shot in Spain and Ennio Morricone provided the up-market score. The lengthy opening sequence features Striker dodging vultures, snakes, dogs, crossbows, skeletons, spears, swords, maces, great balls of fire and other contraptions of death. Like John Wayne, Anthony was at his best wearing a cowboy hat and this film reinforces this.

Baldi's last three films were jungle action movies, in the style of *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (1985) or *Code Name: Wild Geese* (*Geheimcode Wildgänse*, 1986). Baldi wrote and directed them under the pseudonym 'Ted Kaplan'. *War Bus* (1986) was a variation on John Ford's *Stagecoach* (1939), relocated to the Vietnam War. A disparate group of missionaries, renegade US Marines and a South Vietnamese major effect a tactical withdrawal to safety in Da Nang through enemy territory in a bright yellow elementary school bus. Innumerable North Vietnamese soldiers get mown down or blown up in this well-photographed shoot-'em-up, which benefits from non-stop action and a good cast, including stuntman Benito Stefanelli as an Australian soldier and Daniel Stephen, Romano Kristoff and Urs Althaus as the tough marines. Baldi followed this with *Ten Zan – The Ultimate Mission* (*Missione Finale*, 1988), which was shot on location in North Korea. It featured the illegal trafficking of women, who are then used in DNA experiments trialling deer serum in the creation of the master race (!). Mark Gregory (of *Thunder* [1983] and *1990: The Bronx Warriors* [1990: *I guerrieri del Bronx*, 1982] fame) was cast against type as the chief villain, with Sabrina Siani (from *Ator the Fighting Eagle* [*Ator l'invincibile*, 1982] and numerous other 'Conan' rip-offs) as his sadistic sidekick Glenda. Frank Zagarino and Romano Kristoff go in to rescue the women and blow the laboratories, in another passable action flick with some great hardware (including amphibious personnel carriers) and explosions. Baldi's final film was *Just a Damned Soldier* (*Un maledetto soldato*, 1988), which cast Peter Hooten, Mark Gregory, Romano Kristoff and Goffredo Unger as mercenaries in another explosive Far Eastern adventure. This time a mercenary strike force steals a huge shipment of unrefined

gold ore from the Superspace industrial complex of millionaire warlord and arms dealer Andrew Tiedemann (Benito Stefanelli) in Cambodia. The strike force is working for the Afghan government, while Hooten's character and Tiedemann are former allies who are now sworn enemies. The mercenaries kidnap Tiedemann's girlfriend, Helen, who switches sides and helps them attack Tiedemann's jungle camp stockade and arms dump. There's a very good synthesizer score by Elio Polizzi, which adds depth to the straightforward action. The 'kaboom!' special effects are often shown twice, for maximum impact. It was shot in the Philippines and these final films prove that when it came to orchestrating action, Baldi was still as good as anyone. When he passed away in 2007, at the age of 80, he left an interesting canon of films that delivers plenty of bangs (and other pyrotechnics) for their bucks.

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TEXAS, ADIOS: CONTEMPORARY REVIEWS

Compiled and translated by Roberto Curti

Unshaven, a cold stare, an iron fist and an ultra-fast Colt, Franco Nero is the star in the umpteenth festival of violence, centered on two brothers' revenge against the man who killed their father. Burt and Jim leave Texas and, once they reach Mexico, they immediately find the man they were looking for, the terrible Cisco, who is ruling the land with the law of his gun. At this point, it is clear that the bodies will pile up, saloons will be torn down one after another, and the bad guys will invariably have the worst of it, starting with punches in the teeth. The final twist is that Jim is actually Cisco's son: so, it's just right that both get killed in the end. The film follows faithfully the by-now usual pattern of the Italian western, which, all things considered, allows the viewers, with the same ticket price, to pay for an ever-increasing number of dead bodies on screen.

(Uncredited, *Corriere d'informazione*, 22 September 1966)

Franco Nero, the star of *Texas, Adios*, is dubbed by the sweet and menacing voice of Enrico Maria Salerno, who has lent his voice to many grim heroes of the Italian western. But this new character doesn't use it that much when it comes to proving himself: he just needs his guns and fists. So, after cleaning White City, the Texas town where he is the sheriff, he can boldly leave for Mexico. He must punish Delgado (José Suarez), who 20 years earlier killed his father. He will succeed in the final showdown, after silencing the reasons of the heart: among other things, the bandit reveals that he is the true father of the hero's brother Jim. The story, scripted by Rossetti and Baldi, is shot masterfully by director of photography [Enzo] Barboni, in color scope. Director Ferdinando Baldi, who already directed biblical flicks and naïve dramas, carries to its predictable outcome a film once again over-abundant with violence. It should also be noted that, as the villain dies, a new revolution breaks out in Mexico, the ideal start for a new film in the series.

(Uncredited, *La Stampa*, 2 September 1966)

ABOUT THE RESTORATIONS

Django is presented in its original aspect ratio of 1.66:1 with Italian and English mono audio. Scanning, grading and restoration work was completed at L'Immagine Ritrovata, Bologna. The original 35mm camera negative was scanned in 4K resolution on a pin-registered Arriscan.

Texas, Adios is presented in its original aspect ratio of 2.35:1 with Italian and English mono audio. Scanning and restoration work was completed at L'Immagine Ritrovata, Bologna. The original two-perf Techniscope 35mm camera negative was scanned in 2K resolution on a pin-registered Arriscan with a wet gate. The film was graded on Digital Vision's Nucoda Film Master at R3Store Studios, London.

For both films, thousands of instances of dirt, debris, scratches, picture instability and other instances of film wear were repaired or removed through a combination of digital restoration tools and techniques. Some instances of picture wear remain, in keeping with the significant restoration challenges presented with the condition of the original elements.

The mono Italian and English language tracks were remastered from the optical sound negatives. The audio synch will appear slightly loose against the picture, due to the fact that the dialogue was recorded entirely in post-production, as per the production standards of the period.

All original materials used in these restorations were accessed from Surf Film.

Restorations supervised by James White.

L'Immagine Ritrovata Simone Arminio, Gilles Barberis, Valeria Bigongiali, Julia Mettenleiter, Alessia Navantieri, Charlotte Oddo, Caterina Palpacelli, Davide Pozzi, Elena Tammaccaro, Giandomenico Zeppa

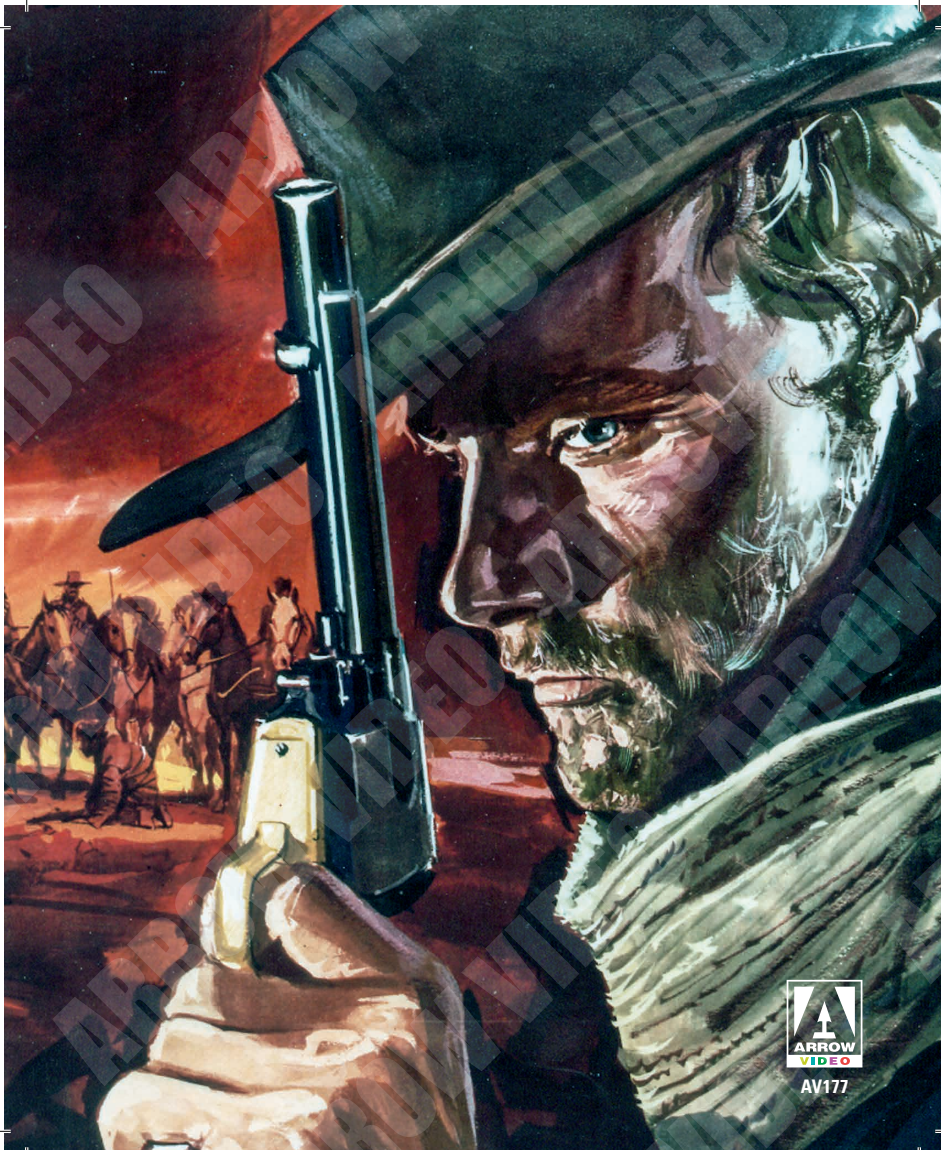
R3Store Studios Gerry Gedge, Jo Griffin, Andrew O'Hagan, Rich Watson, Jenny Collins

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Technical Producer **James White**
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SPECIAL THANKS

Alex Agran, Alberto Dell'Acqua, Lars Bloch, Michael Brooke, Federico Caddeo, Stefania Carnevale, Alex Cox, Nori Corbucci, Roberto Curti, Ruggero Deodato, Chris Edwards, Austin Fisher, Gilberto Galimberti, Manlio Gomasasca, Kevin Grant, David Gregory, Howard Hughes, C. Courtney Joyner, Michael Mackenzie, Franco Nero, Anthony Nield, Ian O'Sullivan, Henry C. Parke, Stephen Prince, Jon Robertson, Mike Siegel, Garwin Spencer-Davison



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