

**Rob Freese's
BEST OF THE
SPAGHETTI
WEST**

ARROW VIDEO

(\$39.95 Blu-ray) 3/15

DAY OF ANGER (1967) 8881/2

D: Tonino Valerii. Lee Van Cleef, Giuliano Gemma, Walter Rilla, Christa Linder, Yvonne Sanson, Lukas Ammann. 114/86 mins.

Van Cleef is Frank Talby, a gunfighter returning to the town of Clifton to claim a fortune stolen during a heist years earlier. He meets bumbling Scott Mary (Gemma), a street cleaner constantly bullied by the townsfolk, and eventually trains the young man in the way of the gun. Talby ruthlessly takes the town over until he has killed everyone standing in his way, then spends his time in his raucous casino in the center of Clifton. After taking his revenge against his tormentors, Scott feels torn between his allegiance to Talby and his loyalty to Murph (Rilla), the man who has taken care of him since he was a young boy. **Day of the Gun** is a lean, mean, fast-moving vengeance story of the highest order. With his menacing swagger and a sinister glint in his eye, Van Cleef owns the screen whenever he's the center of the action. His character has an interesting arc, too, as he goes from being what we originally perceive as the picture's good guy to being the main villain. Gemma, as always, is excellent as the put-upon spittoon jockey turned gunslinger, while Rilla is great as the stableman who has a few tricks up his sleeve. (There is a lot of talk about Doc Holiday and his legendary sidearm that supposedly went missing after his death.) Riz Ortolani's score is a winner, and most western fans will probably recognize the theme that was reused in **Django Unchained**. Arrow Video's release is spectacular, delivering both the full Italian version as well as the U.S. version that played Stateside theaters. (The Italian version includes both the Italian and English dialogue tracks, while the shorter U.S. version sports only the English soundtrack.) Extras include a deleted scene, international trailers, a 2008 interview with director Valerii, interviews with screenwriter Ernesto Gastaldi and Valerii biographer Roberto Curti, plus a booklet by **Spaghetti Westerns** author Howard Hughes. Also known as **Gunlaw**, **Day of Anger** was originally available via Wild East but that copy is long out of print. This one's a real treat for fans of Wild West Cinema.

WILD EAST PRODUCTIONS

(\$19.95 DVD) 3/15

DOUBLE FEATURE

THE WILD AND THE DIRTY (1968)

8881/2

D: Enzo G. Castellari. Andrea Giordana, Gilbert Roland, Horst Frank, Enio Girolami, Pedro Sanchez, Manuel Serrano. 91 mins.

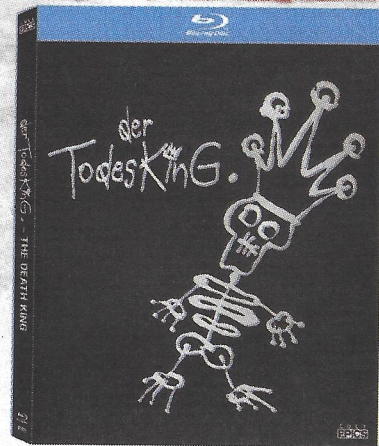
Returning home after the Civil War, Johnny Hamilton (Giordana) learns that his father has been killed by a bandit named Santana (Serrano) and his mother has married his uncle Claude (Frank). He is told that his uncle killed Santana, avenging his brother's death. Johnny is constantly harassed by two criminal types, but his friend Horace (Roland) is always nearby and ready to lend a helping hand. Eventually Johnny discovers the truth about his father's death, that he died at the hands of men trying to steal gold he had earmarked for the Confederacy. Johnny is soon on the vengeance trail, six-guns blazing. Yes, this is Castellari's retelling of Shakespeare's **Hamlet** by way of the Wild West—and it works. Also known as **Johnny Hamlet**, the film is infused with a surreal quality throughout and even delves into some of Johnny's crazy dreams. (One particularly fantastic scene is played out in a graveyard inside a cave.) At one point Johnny befriends a traveling troupe of performers, which adds a weird flavor to the proceedings. Visually, Castellari delivers something a little bit different while still meeting genre expectations. Extras include trailers, a still gallery, and an on-screen interview with director Castellari.

CHACO (1971) 8881/2

D: Luigi Mangini. George Eastman, Lincoln Tate, Furio Meniconi, Vincenzo Norvese, Antonella Steni, Jesus Guzman. 85 mins.

Chaco (Eastman) is a Mexican peon about to be hanged for seducing a young woman. He escapes and returns to Mexico, where bounty hunter Roger (Tate) tracks him down and captures him for return to the States. As they begin the trek back, Chaco is falsely accused of the murder of two men. The bounty hunter soon comes to realize Chaco is innocent, and they go after the men responsible. Of course, nothing is easy for our intrepid heroes. While this picture—also known as **Bastard, Go and Kill** and **Bastards, Go and Kill Chaco**—is certainly enjoyable to watch, it doesn't really offer anything new to the genre. Eastman (real name: Luigi Montefiori) does a superb job in the title role and is completely engaging. It's curious that he never became a bigger star than he did, having also appeared in a number of other westerns, including **Django Kills Softly** (1967) and **Django, Prepare a Coffin** (1968). He was certainly better than the plethora of '80s exploitation titles he worked on with Joe D'Amato. (For the record, I thought he achieved David Hess villain status with his performance in Mario Bava's 1974 thriller **Rabid Dogs**, aka **Kidnapped** [VS #63].) An alternate credits scene and a still gallery comprise the extras. 8

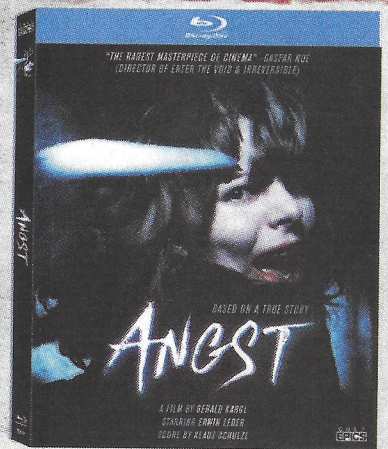
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MONDO NERO

Elsewhere in the spaghetti west, Blue Underground intros the 1967 Franco Nero showcase **Man, Pride and Vengeance** (\$29.98 Blu-ray, \$19.98 DVD), directed by Luigi Bazzoni. Extras include interviews with star Nero and camera operator Vittorio Storaro, film historians' audio commentary, trailers and more.