THE SWINGIN' DOORS...

In this issue of WESTERNS... ALL'ITALIANA! we have a new contents page and a new layout style. Thanks for this and the entire edition have to go to old friend and long time contributor Eric Mache. Eric has contributed articles, resource material and outstanding artwork to this publication since 1984. Back in the spring of 1989 Eric was able to interview one of the greats of the Spaghetti Western genre, Tomas Milian. He was also able to speak to the well-respected actor John Steiner who also appeared in a number of Italian Westerns and adventure films. I have to take a moment here and thank Eric for the idea, the time and the money spent in putting this issue together. I think it is the best issue we have ever produced and is truly a professional job. Eric has asked me to give thanks to a number of other people who aided him in this project; Joyce Chase, Patrick O'Brien, Craig Ledbetter, Rene Hoggner, Gert Michelson, Mike Ferguson and Tim Ferrante. This issue would not have been possible without their help.

Latest news on the Western front is ZORRO on the Family Channel being filmed in Spain. Although it is a U.S. production you might keep an eye open for actors that may have appeared in the Spaghetti Westerns of the '60s and '70s. THE LAW AT RANADA finds veteran cowboy actor Glenn Ford filming in Old Tucson. The Turner Network is working on two westerns. A remake of THE THREE GODFATHERS with Johnny Cash, Richard Farnsworth and one of my favorite actors, Woody Strode. The other is GRIZZLY ADAMS - THE LEGEND LIVES ON. I have heard a Hopalong Cassidy movie was filmed this year and that a new Lone Ranger TV series is being planned with Tonto being treated as an equal partner. Also, another and probably last Gunsmoke movie called THE LAST APACHE is being filmed for TV. With PARADISE and THE YOUNG RIDERS doing okay in the ratings maybe the Western has a chance to comeback.

I was going through some back issues of WAI recently and came across a survey we did back in July/August 1986 in issue #8. We asked for article suggestions. Here's a recap of those results. The underlined subjects are what we've delivered so far.

More career articles...more photos ... Italian attitudes towards American films ... Robert Woods profile ... Tony Anthony profile ... George Hilton profile ... Giuliano Gemma profile ... a compilation list of soundtracks (Spring '90) ... Italian Western vocal song translations ... heroines in the Italian Western ... mid-sixties Spaghetti's ... Bud Spencer article ... Terence Hill filmography (Summer '90) ... more Van Cleef, Eli Wallach, Leone, Bronson (Summer '90).

I think we've done a good job in filling those requests and we will continue to bring you whatever is possible.

Adios amigos,

Jom
Hunt Powers, aka Jack Betts, starred in 8 Italian Westerns beginning in 1966 with SUGAR COLT. In 1967 he starred with George Hilton in LA PIU RAPINA DEL WEST. He disappeared from the Italian Western scene until 1970 where, within a period of a year, he starred in 6 Westerns for Miles Deem. These films were shot on a very low budget, reusing the same cast members. Guest stars like Klaus Kinski and Gordon Mitchell were often used to boost sales. Hunt Powers gave an excellent dark, mysterious portrayal of Django in ONE DAMNED DAY AT DAWN... DJANGO MEETS SARTANA, DJANGO & SARTANA'S SHOWDOWN IN THE WEST, and DJANGO STORY. The same type of character was repeated in ON YOUR KNEES, STRANGER and SHOWDOWN FOR A BADMAN. Despite the budget limitations, these were very entertaining films. Unfortunately, only A FISTFUL OF DEATH, easily the worst of the Miles Deem series, has appeared on U.S. video.

Hunt Powers has had a long history of acting on American TV, randomly using both his names. Recent reruns have included appearances on an early PERRY MASON and KOJAK. Perhaps his greatest success was on the daytime soap opera ONE LIFE TO LIVE where (as Jack Betts) he played the evil Ivan Kipling, who spent many episodes terrorizing a pre-WHO'S THE BOSS Judith Light.
In February 1989, Tomas Milian returned to his New York theatrical roots to appear in the INTAR Hispanic American Arts Center production of SUENOS. It was a multi-layered, heavily symbolic play combining dance, song, poetry and drama. Tomas Milian's part was that of a Latin American dictator falling from power. His comedic portrayal was superb and he obviously poured everything he had into the role.

It struck me how many years had gone by since Tomas Milian's last Italian Western as I watched him reverse his typical role in SUENOS. His dictator role was usually reserved for adversaries like Orson Welles or Eduardo Pajardo. To see him playing this role instead of the usual rebel leader was indeed strange.

I was lead to the dressing room after the show and found an obviously exhausted Tomas Milian sitting alone. He was very surprised and flattered that a fan of his older action films would stop by. He graciously consented to an interview. A week later we met at his agent's apartment and Mr. Milian was noticeably refreshed and relaxed.

WAI: I understand you started off in the theater around 1958?


WAI: Now you're back doing SUENOS.

T.M.: I am not known here in America. I started off in theater because it's easier to get a part and work in theater. Then as I am starting this new part of my life, my "American" career, the best way to keep your self busy and trained is in the theater.

WAI: So it's not a preference of theater over films?

T.M.: No, it's not. I love them both ... or hate them both. I don't know.

WAI: Can we go over some of your Westerns?

T.M.: Yes, of course

WAI: There is a book called WESTERN MOVIES that lists a film by Jaime Jesus Balcazar called LONG NIGHT IN TOMBSTONE. A film turned up recently on television called NIGHT OF HATE starring you and Fernando Sancho, and other identical credits. Was this the same film?

T.M.: Yes. The original title was LA LUNGA NOTTE DE TOMBSTONE.

WAI: So this is not a Western. It
was a modern day robbery film.

T.M.: Yes.

WAI: Your first Western was THE BOUNTY KILLER (U.S. title: THE UGLY ONES)?

T.M.: Yes. I was coming out of my first five years in Italy and after doing all the intellectual movies. I wanted to come to America to continue my career here, but I didn't have any money ... always the same story, because I was under contract with Cristaldi who was giving me a monthly allowance. I had to do a movie to be able to make some money and they offered me this one. But the character that I was supposed to portray was just a bad Mexican guy. He was just plain bad for the American to shoot. I called the producer and the director and I told them that I wanted to work on the part with them and give a reason why this Mexican was so bad, right? Then I put a kind of social motive behind his bad attitude towards life, and that's how I did it.

WAI: You really overshadowed the other star, Richard Wyler who was, I believe, an American actor who went over to Italy...

T.M.: Exactly. He was trying to be another Clint Eastwood.

WAI: SENTENZA DI MORTE ...

T.M.: Oh... I forgot I made this movie. Again, I needed the money. I made a lot of money in my career, but I spent a lot of money. To tell you the truth, the financial troubles are what have kept me alive as an actor, because it is what's made me work.

WAI: Was it your idea to become an epileptic albino or was it actually written into the script?

T.M.: No, it was my idea. These characters are always created by me, with the exception of the movie with Visconti, BOCCACCIO 70, because he had it very clear in his mind how he wanted this guy.

I never saw SENTENZA DI MORTE. I didn't see this movie because I was following a certain line for my career and SENTENZA DI MORTE was a compromise. My agent tried to convince me to do it. They gave me a free hand to do the character, and then if I would have portrayed that character very recognizable, I thought it could have hurt my image.

WAI: THE BIG GUNFIGHT was probably your biggest success here in the States.

T.M.: Yes. As far as distribution is concerned.

WAI: Lee Van Cleef was coming off the Eastwood movies and was a big name here. How did you two get along? You had a good rapport between your two characters on screen.

T.M.: He was very detached. He was
not very sociable. But he's a good person. He had many problems at the time too. So I respected his privacy.

(At this point in the conversation Tomas Milian notices a still from THE BIG GUNFORD. It is the scene where he taunts the woman rancher's men in the pigsty while she is in the house trying to seduce Van Cleef.)

T.M.: You see this scene here? Let me tell you, this was real shit! This was mud, pig's shit, cow's shit, dirty rotten food. They didn't want me to fall in there, because they said I was going to get sick. But I thought the scene demanded it as they didn't have time to prepare some nice chocolate for the big star to fall into, so I threw myself into it.

WAI: You always had the advantage of good supporting actors and technical people on your films. Ennio Morricone's score for THE BIG GUNFORD was probably one of the best Italian Western scores ever written.

T.M.: Very good score, yeah.

WAI: Were you ever approached to work with Sergio Leone?

T.M.: He once called me and I said no. He offered me a part that I didn't like because it was a nasty character.

WAI: Several of your Westerns had political overtones...

T.M.: Well, there's always a political message in the good ones. I mean, in TEPEPA (BLOOD AND GUNS), the one I did with Orson Welles, that's really very political and written by a very, very political man.

WAI: I recently saw VIVA CANGACEIRO and noticed how similar the basic plot was to TEPEPA. Ugo Pagliai and John Steiner played similar roles, while you played characters from poor backgrounds who raise themselves to positions of revolutionary leadership. VIVA CANGACEIRO seemed a little more colorful than TEPEPA.

T.M.: Yeah. CANGACEIRO was written by Bernardino Zapponi who is the writer for the Fellini movies. TEPEPA was written by Ivan Della Mea, in collaboration with Franco Solinas who did THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS. He's dead already. But he did all the movies for DeCorba. He was a very good writer.

WAI: Was VIVA CANGACEIRO a remake of the earlier version?
mentality into your movies at this time even though many of them were period films.

T.M.: Well, I have been a hippie too. I've been many things in my life. All through my characters. What happens is sometimes I carry the character to my house after the movie is over and I become a little bit what I was playing costume-wise.

WAI: Since you worked in the theater in New York early in your career, was Orson Welles a hero of yours?

T.M.: No, not at all.

WAI: Was he difficult to work with?

T.M.: Very difficult. But I am difficult too. So it was a little bit of an ego fight. I am the type of an actor that puts everything I have into any film and do it as if it is the most important movie in the world. In my career, if I have done something that is considered a B-movie, for me it's a plus-A movie in the way I approach it. It's very frustrating because often the director was not very good. You try to put so much seriousness and professionalism into the thing but you can see this is not well received; that they don't care. That's where my temperament and

T.M.: No. I remember having a tremendous fight with the producer of that movie ... a fight I didn't win. I wanted to do the first part of the movie with a beard and the producer just went hysterical. Foam was coming out of his mouth because he wanted me without the beard in the beginning so I would look younger and the people could see the passing of time. So when I became invaded by the saint, like the voodoo thing that I did, I would have wanted to have a beard with all that wild hair.

WAI: Eduardo Fajardo played your adversary.


WAI: Is he Mexican or Spanish?

T.M.: He's Spanish.

WAI: You made both CANGACEIRO and TEPEPA in 1969?

T.M.: TEPEPA was 1968 - during the hippie revolution. I did my revolution in the movies.

WAI: You brought a lot of the hippie
difficulty come out. So I try to oblige them to take it seriously. Orson Welles obviously didn't give a damn about going to Spain to do Westerns with this young actor Tomas Milian. Obviously he was doing it for the money. But for my dignity I wanted him to behave like he was doing it because he liked the script and the movie. So he started being very difficult and I just grabbed him by the balls, not literally, and had a talk with him.

WAI: John Steiner played the young doctor who wanted to kill you in TEPEPA. How was he to work with?

T.M.: He is a nice man, a very good actor. He was just in the movie I did with Damiano Damiani, with Elliott Gould, called THE PERFORMANCE. He plays Elliot Gould's agent.

WAI: I understand that TEPEPA is one of your personal favorite films.

T.M.: Yes, it is, with the exception of one shot where John Steiner kills me by sticking the thing in my heart. There were two shots - one medium shot where I was very much into it, and then a close-up that was taken just before lunch. I didn't have the power at the time to protest that I was not in the same mood as the shot before. And I felt betrayed because I was forced to do it. And when I saw it there were the two different moods in the same scene.
When TEPEPA came out in Mexico (and they are very difficult when foreigners touch their story), I heard that they stood up and applauded at the premiere. They were very proud of that movie.

WAI: Did you like FACE TO FACE?

T.M.: No. I didn't like it because it was very difficult to work with Volonte. Besides, my character, who was supposed to be very violent before the movie starts, begins the movie when he's wounded. So Volonte's character had an arc and mine becomes flat. Mine starts already wounded so it became almost passive for the rest of the film. They just said I was a very famous bandit, etc, etc, but you never see the bandit. That's why I don't love the movie.

WAI: SE SEI VIVO SPARA (DJANGO KILL) was one of your most violent and controversial films. What were your experiences with this movie?

T.M.: Let's see... I think in that movie the director wanted to do his thing. It was like working with Antonioni in a way because Giulio Questi is an intellectual revolutionary. He's been an assistant director, writer, everything. He did that movie in collaboration with Franco Arcalli, a very intelligent man and editor of Bertolucci's 1900 and THE CONFORMIST. He was a genius that man. He was Giulio's best friend and they worked on SE SEI VIVO SPARA together. He edited it. Giulio's a very creative, crazy man. As I said, it's like working with Antonioni because he likes the images more than the acting. I tried to do my best.

WAI: It was quite surreal.

T.M.: Yes. We did the film with
very, very little money. I was almost not paid.

WAI: The editing was way ahead of its time; very choppy.

T.M.: Franco Arcalli - he was the best.

WAI: The violence was very explicit, especially for the time. The scene of you being tortured was almost identical to the scene of you being tortured in Lucio Fulci's film BEATRICE CENCI.

T.M.: Italian directors love to torture me because I am very difficult (laughs).

WAI: RUN MAN RUN was a continuation of the Cuchillo story.

T.M.: Yes. Because THE BIG GUN DOWN was a big success they tried to exploit the success of Cuchillo.

WAI: I didn't think it was as good as THE BIG GUN DOWN. It was too episodic.

T.M.: Yes. I didn't like it.

WAI: How was Donal O'Brien to work with?

T.M.: Donal O'Brien is a nice man, a very sweet man. A good person.

WAI: Did you ever have aspirations to be a singer?

T.M.: Yes, but that's something you shouldn't mention to me.

WAI: You sang the RUN MAN RUN theme song.

T.M.: Yes, but I don't ever want to hear that again.

WAI: Alberto Grimaldi. You worked with him in THE BIG GUN DOWN and FACE TO FACE, but he wasn't involved in RUN MAN RUN. Was he approached as producer and just didn't want to do it?

T.M.: He just didn't want to do it.

WAI: Grimaldi was working with Bertolucci and Fellini and getting away from Westerns.

T.M.: Yes. Now Grimaldi has been in America for many years.

WAI: How was Susan George to work with in SONNY AND JED?

T.M.: Oh, fantastic! Fantastic!
She's a very good actress.

WAI: You had a great chemistry on screen...

T.M.: Yes, yes. You know what happened with that movie? The producer was supposed to give me an extra $60,000. This was a lot of money at the time. He was supposed to give me $60,000 when the movie was sold to America but he didn't tell me that the movie was sold to America. Somebody told me it was playing on 42nd Street in New York City. I called my agent, William Morris, and I said, 'What should I do?' and they said, 'Go to the movie house, photograph the marquee, and ask the manager of the movie house for a letter that he showed the movie.' So I went to 42nd Street at 8:00 a.m. and they told me that the manager was coming back at 11:30 a.m. I went back at 11:30 a.m., photographed the marquee and met the manager. I had long hair to here, like in the movie, a headband, and I came in asking for this man. He comes out with a cigar, you know, very fat, big, and I said, 'Sir, I am the actor of this movie that you're playing here tonight.' He said 'Get out of here.' I said, 'Sir, please... look at the poster and look at me!' He said 'Get the fuck out of here!' So he sent me away, I didn't get my money, and the producer went to prison. Not because of that but because he owed money to everybody. His name was Roberto Loyola.

WAI: Did you ad lib any of your lines?

T.M.: I always change my lines. For example, usually in these movies where the directors are not intellectuals, but they are action directors, they don't care very much about the lines. The writer writes the lines, but for me to say a line well I have to feel it. So I just adapt the lines to the way people talk. In the series of movies I did later with Monnezza and Nico Giraldi, the action movies, those were almost all my own dialogues. I wrote them.

WAI: Do you do your own dubbing?

T.M.: Well you have touched a very touchy subject. In the first part of my career I didn't, because my Italian was not good enough. I started dubbing myself when I started doing the Westerns, with the exception of THE BIG GUNDOWN in English. They didn't even tell me or
ask me to do it. Of Italian characters I dubbed Bertolucci's LUNA in Italian and with that I won the Nastro D'Argento (Italian Oscar). Then I dubbed Antonioni's movie IDENTIFICATION OF A WOMAN, so because of the dubbing that's why I'm now working in America where dubbing doesn't exist. Lately, for the last five years the Italian movies that I do, I do it if I dub myself in the English version and in productions that they shoot in English like SALOME, where I played King Herod. PERFORMANCE with Elliot Gould, HOME IN ROME with Valerie Perrine and all the American movies I'm doing here. I won't work anymore in any movie in Italy if I have to be dubbed. That's the main reason I'm working in America. No more compromises.

WAI: You worked with Franco Nero in VAMOS A MATAR COMPANEROS!

T.M.: He was very self-conscious of his looks. I remember Franco was going to make-up. Franco was, at the time I think 23, 24 years old or something like that. He was in make-up 3 hours, and the make-up man was painting wrinkles and putting gold in his mustache and things. I said, 'Franco why do you want to look older?' He said, 'You know why? Because when I am old, when I am 50, the audience will always see me in the same way. It will look like I never aged because I'm going to be an actor forever.' Isn't that incredible?

There was a scene in COMPANEROS where they put Franco in a noose and I was supposed to climb onto the pole. Franco's hands were tied behind his back and he stood on top of a barrel with a noose around his neck. I was supposed to climb on the pole and loosen the noose a little, and while I was doing it I sang a little song to him. I invented something like (he sings) 'Beautiful eyes... blue like the sky.' And what I did was... he couldn't help himself, poor thing... I took his eyelid here and pulled it until it showed all the white. Franco was terrified because his public was going to see the hero's white stuff inside his eye. So I sang my song and I opened his eye as much as I could, and that night he couldn't sleep. He didn't let the director, Sergio Corbucci, sleep either. He kept calling, 'Sergio, please let's do that scene again... I didn't have the courage of stopping... Tomas Milian is going to ruin me... he's crazy!' But I like Franco very much. I really do.

WAI: Did you get along well with Giuliano Gemma?

T.M.: He's a wonderful person. As a matter of fact, I was very surprised to find an actor like that in the movie we did THE WHITE, THE YELLOW, AND THE BLACK (THE SAMURAI KID). I played the Hispanic/Japanese.

WAI: You played this character in several movies.

T.M.: Yes. He was always a son of a Japanese mother and a Spanish father. Giuliano said to me, 'Tomas, try as much as you can to make people laugh, because the more you make people laugh it's better for me and it's better for the movie.' He
was just total cooperation. A really wonderful person.

WAI: Eli Wallach was also in that movie.

T.M.: He was very good to work with too.

WAI: It was a good cast combination, but it jarred your fans a bit. I remember seeing the film when it came out and I was expecting Ringo meets Cuchillo meets Tuco, but ...

T.M.: That's why I have never had tremendous success because when the fans start loving something I do too much, I always appear like a punch in the stomach (in a different kind of role) and then it's 'Oh my God!' They don't want to see me that way, but I force them to prepare themselves that this is not going to be forever.

WAI: That can be said of your PROVIDENCE character as well.

T.M.: Yes. Those are good movies.

WAI: The first film, SOMETIMES LIFE IS HARD, EH PROVIDENZA? was a pretty straightforward Italian Western comedy, while the second one HERE WE GO AGAIN, EH PROVIDENZA? was much wilder.

T.M.: Yes. The first PROVIDENZA movie was supposed to be just a plain, funny Western. But then all those surreal things happened, like me imitating the bird, when all of a sudden we started singing. In Italy when you go to see GUYS AND DOLLS, you'll hear Marlon Brando's voice going 'wa wa wa ...' because he's dubbed by an Italian dubber and everybody speaks with Italian voices. The songs, though, they have to respect the voice of Marlon Brando, because they don't have an orchestra or the dubber maybe doesn't know how to sing. Then you hear only the songs in Marlon Brando's voice singing. There was a scene in the first PROVIDENZA movie that was very boring. It was supposed to make people laugh but it embarrassed me. It was a scene I couldn't confront and I had an idea. I said to the director, 'Giulio, why don't we do these scenes like they do the American musicals here in Italy where all of
a sudden the actors start singing an American song? He said, 'Oh you're crazy Tomas!' I said, 'I talk to the girl singing, she talks to me singing and the fat guy sings with a basso voice.' I fell in love with the idea and now I didn't want to do the scene if it was not with the singing. The production stopped and they had to call the producer. The producer had to rush from Rome in a car because Tomas didn't want to work because he wanted to sing a scene. They thought I was totally crazy, but I finally convinced them and we did it. When the movie was a big success they wanted to do the second PROVIDENZA movie and for this movie they made me dance, they made me sing and everything.

WAI: The last Italian Western you did was THE 4 GUNMEN OF THE APOLCALYSE directed by Lucio Fulci. You worked with Fulci in several films.

T.M.: Yes, three movies. This one, BEATRICE CINZI and DON'T TORTURE THE DUCKLING. He claims BEATRICE CINZI is the best movie he's ever done and he is my biggest fan.

WAI: You played the bandit in 4 GUNMEN OF THE APOLCALYSE...

T.M.: Yes. That was another special appearance; another ten days. When I was going very big in Italy they used me a lot in special appearances. This is a good movie.

WAI: How did you come up with the bandit character? What were your influences?

T.M.: I don't know. I just did it there. The whole thing, the costumes, etc., are selected by me all the time. I dress myself. On very rare occasions I let myself be dressed. On THE BIG GUNNOWN I was dressed. I didn't have so much power. After the Westerns, around 1969, I started taking possession of the whole character.

WAI: This was not your typical Mexican bandit. You had crosses painted under your eyes and fed the other characters drugs like a sadistic hippie cult leader, like Charles Manson. Did that have an influence?

T.M.: Yes, it did. I did all those things while I was there. Playing that character and having Michael Pollard there in front of me. What Michael Pollard represents in the American movie fed my character. You know Michael Pollard did BONNIE AND CLYDE. And his films with Dennis Hopper influenced my character. I just let go and it comes to me.

WAI: This was not a typical Western script either.

T.M.: No, no. This is Lucio Fulci. Lucio Fulci is a very ... you know, he loves all that (violent) stuff. So if you have a director that you know, you can flirt with his
morbitity. Then that feeds me and makes a flow to feed his morbitity, you know what I mean? That's the way I work.

WAI: Your character was very similar in looks and action to the one you played in THE BOXER (RIpped Off) in 1969. You did 4 GUNMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE in 1975, right?

T.M.: Yes, what I probably did was because that character didn't have a lot of space and the movie was not so successful, I said I would feed it into this character.

WAI: Any comments about Fabio Testi?

T.M.: What should I say about Fabio? He looks good and he's a decent actor.

WAI: He was a model when he started.

T.M.: You know how Fabio's career started? I was supposed to do THE GARDEN OF THE FINZI-CONTINIS with De Sica but I had a Western to do. I didn't want to leave the Western and I said no to DeSica. They were going to give me a lot of money and I was going to go to Almeria and have a ball and I was feeling all the people wanted me in the Westerns. So I thought, why should I go to do THE GARDEN OF THE FINZI-CONTINIS with the little shorts and playing tennis? (laughs) So I said no, and they got Fabio Testi for the part. Since that moment Fabio Testi came out. He's a very nice, good hearted and healthy person, like a farmer, but he has a strong sense of humor. Sometimes it's a little heavy. Once he said to me, 'Tomas, you don't know how much I admired you since I was a little boy.' I said, 'Come on, Fabio, give me a break!' That's his type of humor. It made me feel so old!

WAI: Where were you living around the time you did the Westerns?

T.M.: In Italy. My wife and son were in Italy, and the rest of the family are in Florida.

WAI: How did you get involved with THE LAST MOVIE with Dennis Hopper?

T.M.: Well, I have been a friend of Dennis Hopper since 1957. Our Link was James Dean.

WAI: You knew James Dean, too?

T.M.: Well, it's a long story. I didn't know him, but it's as if I did know him. We had the same agent, Jane Deacy, when I came to New York. She called me. I didn't look for her. She called me to sign me and I saw Jimmy's picture on top of her desk. I found out that she was his agent and she asked me to sign with her. Then I got to know Dennis and we became very good friends. After I went to Italy I didn't see Dennis anymore. In 1969 I received a telegram from Dennis that he wanted me in THE LAST MOVIE. Jimmy Dean's presence was with us in the sense, for example, Dennis named the bar Jimmy's Place and things like that. Kind of a very magic experience.

WAI: It was a strange movie. I saw it for the first time recently.

T.M.: Yes, a very strange movie. Very strange shooting, very strange atmosphere and very strange everything. The real movie, nobody shot it. The real movie was what
was going on while we were doing that movie. That was really a movie.

WAI: Dennis Hopper seemed to be at his wildest at that time. He was living a really crazy lifestyle.

T.M.: But that's what the movie was about. It was what was happening while they were shooting that movie.

WAI: Getting back to the Italian Western, there have been several attempts to revive the genre with Giuliano Gemma's Tex and Nero's Django Strikes Again.

T.M.: Let me tell you something. I called Sergio Corbucci about a year ago in a moment of nostalgia I had of Spain, the horses, and that beautiful, special feeling when your mind is one with the landscape, just running horses. So I said, 'Sergio, why don't we go back and do a Western?' He said, 'Oh my God, the public doesn't go to see them anymore. And then I gave him an idea. I said, 'Let us appear, all of us again, in a certain way, older.' Then he said 'No, no.' Okay, so what I heard now, I read that he wants to do a Western.

Tomas Milian has recently finished several new films including: The Performance with Elliot Gould, this year's Revenge with Kevin Costner and Anthony Quinn, Cat Chaser with Kelly McGillis, and Home in Rome with Valerie Perrine. He just completed The Will to Live with Dominique Sanda which was shot in San Francisco and will soon be working in Havana with Robert Redford and directed by Sidney Pollack. This new phase of his career is a conscious effort to completely break with the type cast comedy roles he played in Italy under Bruno Corbucci's direction. Consequently, many of the roles are those of heavies. It is great to see a revitalized Tomas Milian actively on the film scene again. Perhaps one day he will make that Western he mentioned and include the right ingredients to really revive the genre!
1966 - "THE BOUNTY KILLER" - Italian title
"EL PRECIO DE UN HOMBRE" - Spanish title
"PRICE OF A MAN" - English foreign release title
"LES TUEURS DE L'OUEST" - French title
"OHNE DOLLAR KEINEN SARG" - German title
"THE UGLY ONES" - U.S.A. title
Production: An Italo-Spanish Coproduction: Discobolo Film - Tecisa/Discobolo
Associate Producer: Giuliano Simonetti
Screenplay: Jose G. Maesso, Eugenio Martin, Don Prindle, Biancini
Story: From the novel "THE BOUNTY KILLER" by Marvin H. Albert
Photography: Renzo Barbieri
Director: Eugenio Martin
Music: Stelvio Cipriani
Running time: 96 minutes
Eastmancolor - Panoramic Screen
Cast: Richard Wyler, Tomas Milian, Ella Karin, Hugo Blanco, Glenn Foster,
Manolo Zarzo, Lola Gaos, Riccardo Canales, Mario Brega

1967 - "SENTENZA DI MORTE" - Italian title
"SENTENCIA DE MUERTE" - Spanish title
"TODESURTEIL" - German title
"DEATH SENTENCE" - English title
Production: B. L. Vision
Screenplay: Mario Lanfranchi
Photography: Toni Secchi
Director: Mario Lanfranchi
Music: Gianni Ferrio
Running time: 90 minutes
Technicolor, Techniscope
Cast: Robin Clarke, Tomas Milian, Richard Conte, Enrico Maria Salerno,
Adolfo Celi

1967 - "LA RESA DEI CONTI" - Italian title
"EL BACON Y LA FRESCA" - Spanish title
"COLORADO" - French title
"DIE ABRECHNUNG" - Original German title
"DER GEHEIMTE DER SIERRA MADRE" - German theatrical title
"THE BIG GUNFIGHT" - English & U.S.A. title
Production: An Italo-Spanish Coproduction
Producer: P.E.A. - Alberto Grimaldi (Rome), Tulio De Micheli (Madrid)
Screenplay: Franco Solinas, Fernando Morandi, Sergio Donati, Sergio Sollima
Photography: Carlo Carlini
Director: Sergio Sollima
Music: Ennio Morricone
Running time: 108 minutes
Cast: Lee Van Cleef, Tomas Milian, Walter Barnes, Nieves Navarro, Gerard
Herter, Maria Granada, Roberto Camardiel, Angel Del Pozo, Luisa
Rivelli, Fernando Sancho
1967 - "FACCIA A FACCIA" - Italian title
"VON ANGESICHT ZU ANGESICHT" - German title
"LA DERNIERE FACE A FACE" - French title
"IL ETTAIT UNE FOIS EN ARIZONA" - French title
"FACE TO FACE" - English title
Production: An Italo-Spanish Coproduction
Producer: P.E.A. - Alberto Grimaldi (Rome), Arturo Gonzalez (Madrid)
Screenplay: Sergio Sollima, Sergio Donati
Photography: Rafael Pacheco, Emilio Foriscot
Director: Sergio Sollima
Music: Ennio Morricone
Running time: 108 minutes
Technicolor
Cast: Gian Maria Volonte, Tomas Milian, Yolanda Modio, William Berger,
Angel Del Pozo, Aldo Sambrell, Antonio Casas

1967 - "ORO HONDO" - Italian title
"SE SEI Vivo SPARA" - Italian title
"ORO HONDO" - Spanish title
"SI ESTAS Vivo, DISPARA!" - Spanish title
"TIRE ENCOR, SI TU PEUX" - French title
"TOTE DJANGO" - German title
"IF YOU WANT TO LIVE, SHOOT!" - English title
"DJANGO KILL" - English title
Production: An Italo-Spanish Coproduction: GIA Cinematografica (Rome),
Hispamer Film (Madrid)
Screenplay: Franco Arcalli, Giulio Questi
Editing: Franco Arcalli
Lighting: Franco Delli Colli
General Organization: Alex J. Rascal
Director: Giulio Questi
Music: Ivan Vandor
Running time: 120 minutes
Cast: Tomas Milian, Piero Lulli, Milo Quesada, Marilu Tolo, Roberto
Camardiel, Raymond Lovelock

1968 - "CORRI, UOMO, CORRI" - Italian title
"CORRE, COCHILLO, CORRI!" - Spanish title
"SALUDOS HOMBRE" - Spanish title
"LAUF, MENSCH, LAUF" - Original German title
"LAUF UM DEIN LEBEN" - German title
"COURS, HOMME, COURS" - French title
"RUN MAN RUN" - English title
Production: An Italo-French Coproduction
Producer: Pomilio - Mancouri - Chretien
Screenplay: Pompeo De Angelis, Sergio Sollima
Photography: Guglielmo Mancori
Director: Sergio Sollima
Music: Bruno Nicolai
Running time: 120 minutes
Eastmancolor, Cromoscope
Cast: Tomas Milian, Donal O'Brien, Linda Veras, Marco Guglielmi, Jose
Torres, Edward Ross, Nello Pazzafini, Gianni Rizzo, John Ireland
1968 - "TEPEPA" - Italian title
"VIVA LA REVOLUCION" - Italian title
"TROIS POUR UN MASSACRE" - French title
"TEPEPA, LE REBELLE TOURMENTE" - French title
"ES LESE DIE REVOLUTION" - German title
"LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTION" - Original English title
"BLOOD AND GUNS" - U.S.A. video title
Production: An Italo-Spanish Coproduction: Filmamerica SIAP (Rome), PEFSA (Madrid)
Producers: Alfredo Cuomo, Nicola Pomilia
Screenplay: Franco Solinas, Ivan della Mea, Giulio Petroni
Photography: Francisco Marin
Director: Giulio Petroni
Music: Ennio Morricone
Running time: 107 minutes
Technicolor, Techniscope
Cast: Tomas Milian, Orson Welles, John Steiner, Jose Torres, Ana Maria Lanciaprima, Paloma Cela, Rafael Hernandez, Angel Ortiz

1968 - "O CANGACEIRO" - Italian title
"VIVA CANGACEIRO" - German title
"THE MAGNIFICENT BANDITS" - English title
Production: An Italo-Spanish Coproduction: D.I.A. (Madrid), Tritone Filmindustria (Rome), Medusa Distribuzione (Rome)
Screenplay: Rafael Romero Marchent, Jose Luis Jerez, Bernardino Zapponi
Photography: Alejandro Ulloa
Director: Giovanni Pago
Music: Riz Ortolani
Running time: 102 minutes
Eastmancolor, Techniscope
Cast: Tomas Milian, Ugo Paglisi, Eduardo Fajardo, Leo Anchoriz, Jesus Guzman, Alfredo Santa Cruz, Claudio Scarchilli

1970 - "VAMOS A MATAR, COMPAÑEROS" - Italian title
"LOS COMPAÑEROS" - Spanish title
"LES COMPAGNONS DE LA GLOIRE" - French title
"LASST UNS TÖTEN, COMPAÑEROS" - Original German title
"ZWEI COMPAÑEROS" - German theatrical title
"COMPAÑEROS" - English title
Production: A Spanish-Italian-German Coproduction: Atlantida Films (Madrid), Tritone Filmindustria (Rome), Terra Filmkunst (Berlin)
Screenplay: Sergio Corbucci, Dino Maiuri, Massimo de Rita, Feriz Ebert
Photography: Alejandro Ulloa
Director: Sergio Corbucci
Music: Ennio Morricone
Running time: 121 minutes
Technicolor, Techniscope
Cast: Franco Nero, Tomas Milian, Jack Palance, Fernando Rey, Jose Bodalo, Iris Berben, Karin Schubert, Eduardo Fajardo, Gerard Tichy
1972 - "LA BANDA J & S CRONACA CRIMINALE DEL WEST" - Italian title
"HIJOS DEL DIA Y HE LA NOCHE" - Spanish title.
"DIE ROTE SONNE DER RACHE" - German title
"FAR WEST STORY" - English title
"J & S - CRIMINAL STORY OF AN OUTLAW COUPLE" - English foreign release title
"SONNY AND JED" - U.S.A. title
"BANDERA BANDITS" - U.S.A. video title
Production: An Italo-Spanish Coproduction: Roberto Loyola Cinematography
Orfeo Cinematography, Terra Films Production
Screenplay: Sabatino Ciuffini, Mario Amendola, Adriano Bolzoni, Jose Maria
Porque, Sergio Corbucci
Story: Sergio Corbucci
Photography: Luis Cuadrado
Director: Sergio Corbucci
Music: Ennio Morricone
Running time: 98 minutes
Technicolor
Cast: Tomas Milian, Susan George, Telly Savalas, Rossana Yanni, Franco
Giacobini, Eduardo Pajardo, Herbert Pux, Lara Betti

1972 - "LA VITA, A VOLTE, E MOLTO DURA, VERA PROVIDENZA?" - Italian title
"PROVIDENZA! MAUSFALLE FUR ZWEI SCHARGE VOGEL" - German title
"ON M'APPELLE PROVIDENCE" - French title
"YA LE LLAMAN PROVIDENCIA" - Spanish title
"IT'S A TOUGH LIFE, EH PROVIDENCE?" - English working title
"SOMETIMES LIFE IS HARD, EH PROVIDENCE?" - English release title
Production: An Italian-French-German Coproduction: Oceania Produzioni
Internazionali, Unidis, Theater Le Rex, Terra Filmkunst
Screenplay: Giulio Petroni, Regnoli, Marino, Castellano, Pipolo
Photography: Sandro D'eva
Director: Giulio Petroni
Music: Ennio Morricone
Running time: 100 minutes
Technicolor
Cast: Tomas Milian, Gregg Palmer, Janet Agren, Dieter Eppler, Stelio
Candelli, Maurice Poli, Hans Terofal, Franco Baltrame, Elmo Caruso

1973 - "CI RISANO, VERO PROVIDENZA?" - Italian title
"EL BRUTO, EL LISTO Y EL CAPITAN" - Spanish title
"NOUS Y REVOLLA, N'EST-CE PAS, PROVIDENCE?" - French title
"LIFE IS GREAT, EH PROVIDENCE?" - English working title
"LIFE'S A LAUGH, EH PROVIDENCE?" - Alternate English working title
"HERE WE ARE AGAIN, EH PROVIDENCE?" - English release title
Production: An Italian-French-Spanish Coproduction: Oceania Produzioni
Internazionali, Producciones Cinematograficas Dia, Les
Films Corona
Screenplay: Castellano, Pipolo
Photography: Alejandro Ulloa
Director: Alberto De Martino
Music: Ennio Morricone, Bruno Nicolai
Running time: 90 minutes
Technicolor
Cast: Tomas Milian, Gregg Palmer, Carole Andre, Luciano Catenacci,
Manuel Gallardo, Yu Ming Lun, Angel Ortiz, Rick Boyd
1974 - "IL BIANCO, IL GALLO, IL NERO" - Italian title
"LE BLANC, LE JAUNE ET LE NOIR" - French title
"STETSON - DREI HALINKEN ERSTER KLASSE" - German title
"IL BLANCO, EL AMARILLO Y EL NEGRO" - Spanish title
"THE WHITE, THE YELLOW, THE BLACK" - English title
"THE SAMURAI KID" - U.S.A. title
"SAMURAI" - U.S.A. video title
Production: An Italian-French-Spanish Coproduction: Tritone (Rome), Filmel (Paris), Mundial (Madrid)
Screenplay: Mario Amendola, Sergio Corbucci, Santiago Moncada, Renee Asseo
Photography: Luis Cuadrado
Director: Sergio Corbucci
Music: Guido & Maurizio De Angelis
Running time: 104 minutes
Technicolor
Cast: Giuliano Gemma, Tomas Milian, Eli Wallach, Manuel De Blas, Jacques Berthier, Romano Pupo

1975 - "I QUATTRO DELL'APOCALisse" - Italian title
"LES QUATRE DE L' APOCALYPSE" - French title
"VERDAMMT ZU LEBEN - VERDAMMT ZU STERBEN" - German title
"THE FOUR GUNNIES OF THE APOCALYPSE" - English title
Production: An Italian Production: Coralta Cinematografica
Screenplay: Ennio De Concini
Story: Francis Bret Harte
Photography: Sergio Salvati
Director: Lucio Fulci
Music: Franco Bixio, Fabio Frizzi, Vince Tempera
Running time: 105 minutes
Technicolor
Cast: Fabio Testi, Lynne Frederick, Michael J. Pollard, Harry Baird, Tomas Milian, Adolfo Lastretti, Bruno Corazzari, Giorgio Trestini, Donal O'Brien

(WESTERN RELATED)

1971 - "THE LAST MOVIE" - U.S.A. title
"CHINCHERO" - U.S.A. edited version title
Director: Dennis Hopper
Running time: 108 minutes
Cast: Dennis Hopper, Julie Adams, Peter Fonda, Kris Kristofferson, Sylvia Miles, John Phillip Law, Rod Cameron, Sam Fuller, Tomas Milian

(Tomas Milian plays the part of a priest in a Peruvian village where an American film company is filming a Western.)

1976 - "IL TRUCIDO E LO SBRINO" - Italian title
"VICTIM AND TORTURER" - English title
"A FREE HAND FOR A TOUGH COP" - English title
Production: An Italian Production
Director: Umberto Lenzi
Cast: Tomas Milian, Henry Silva

(The title credits are played over a scene from an Italian Western. It turns out that Tomas Milian is watching the scene in a movie theater. This is an action-cop film in a modern-day setting.)
The Critics Say...

Sentenza di Morte (Death Sentence)
Italy, 1967
Director: Mario Lanfranchi

Young ex-bandit Cash is searching the South-West for the four men who killed his brother Vincent after a robbery some years ago. He finds one man, Diaz, now a respectable farmer, drives him out into the desert and, after Diaz has spent a tormented day and night without water, kills him. Cash finds his next man, Montero, a gambler in a dusty little town, plays him at poker until the gambler is penniless, then challenges him to one last hand on which each man will stake his life. Cash is the winner and departs in search of Baldwin, a sadistic bandit, dressed as a priest and spouting heresy and madness, who realises who Cash is and comes looking for him. He tortures the young man to make him reveal the whereabouts of the loot from the robbery, but Cash has the last word and one last lucky bullet. His final target is O'Hara, a demented albino bandit with an obsessive lust for gold and women with yellow hair. Cash uses both as bait, lures O'Hara into a shoot-out at a cemetery, and leaves him sprawled in Vincent's reopened grave—also the gold's last resting place.

More of the tongue-in-cheek, ritualised gunplay that passes for revenge drama in the Italian Western. The Techniscope process frames all the geometric clichés quite efficiently, at least in the exteriors; within the peculiarly wide-open spaces of some bar-room interiors, the restless camera-shifting only emphasises the odd proportions and bare furnishings of the sets. But the revenge motive is singularly lack-lustre; the film in the main forgets about its characters to burrow through a series of unrelated incidents that serve little purpose and to pile on bizarre details (an albino outlaw as neurotically sensitive as Curman's Verden Fell, and epileptic to boot) to no point at all.

RICHARD COMBS

Faccia a Faccia (Face to Face)
Italy/Spain, 1967
Director: Sergio Sollima

For health reasons Brad Fletcher resigns from his post as a New England history teacher and travels to the Southwest. In the semi-civilised territory of the Last Frontier his principles bring him into direct conflict with outlaw leader and killer "Beauregard" Bennett, whose life he saves by removing a bullet. An unlikely friendship develops between the two men, and as Beau's conscience begins to trouble him, Brad becomes increasingly violent and ruthless, until eventually he replaces Beau as head of the outlaw band. After a robbery attempt has been sabotaged by Siringo, a volunteer outlaw really in the pay of the Pinkerton Agency, Beau leads the remnant of the gang—together with their women and children—across the desert, where they are pursued by a determined band of vigilantes. In a final, triangular showdown, Brad wounds Siringo but is himself shot by Beau. And recognising that Beau is now committed to the principles of law and order, the Pinkerton man allows him to escape and begin a new life.

A personality switch between a bandit leader and a dying university professor might have made an interesting variation on more familiar Italian Western themes, but here the script is so tediously predictable that interest fades well before the halfway mark, despite competent performances from Gian Maria Volontè and Tomas Milian. Though the collapse of the professor's high-mindedness is plausible enough, the corresponding improvement in the character of the gunman is much less convincing. Some very obvious cuts (from imminent rape to a train robbery, for instance) may be partly to blame, but the treatment is in any case a little short on imagination.
Cangaceiro, O (The Magnificent Bandits)
Italy/Spain, 1969  Director: Giovanni Pago

To avenge the destruction of his farm by government troops, Espedito, a young peasant, forms his own band of rebels to fight the Brazilian army, now advancing ever deeper into the Sertão in their attempt to wipe out the cangaceiros. When Vincent Heflin, a Dutch adventurer, strikes oil at Agua Branca in the heart of the cangaceiro area, the government dispatches a consignment of troops to the area, but they are ambushed and slaughtered by Espedito. Under government orders, Heflin offers Espedito guns and government assistance in freeing the poor, in return for his joining the Brazilian army. Espedito agrees; Agua Branca is duly captured, its inhabitants slaughtered and an oil plant set up; while Espedito is rewarded with a free pardon and a house near Agua Branca. The government, however, plott secretly to murder him, and it is Heflin, admiring Espedito's courage and his championing of the poor, who warns the bandit of the betrayal. The attack is averted and Espedito and Heflin finally part firm friends.

Poorly dubbed but intermittently entertaining Italian 'Western', which transposes the traditional struggle between folk-hero outlaw and repressive establishment to the politically more modish setting of South America. Although photography and direction are variable, Na Ondesia provides a stylish, pastiche-Brazilian score, and there are striking performances from the likes of Tomis, Heflin as the shaggy-haired rebel leader and Ugo Pagliari as a guileful European provocateur in the mould of the Brando character from ¡Queimada! 

NIGEL ANDREWS

Vamos a Matar, Companeros! (Companeros)
Italy/Spain/West Germany, 1970  Director: Sergio Corbucci

With Mexico torn by revolution, Yolof Peterson, a Swedish mercenary, arrives in the village of San Bernardino, where he and General Mongo, leader of a group of bandit-revolutionaries, plan to appropriate a fortune deposited there in a safe. Unable to blast the safe open, Peterson decides to cross the border to rescue Professor Xantoros, a revolutionary leader who is being held prisoner by the Americans and who is the only person to know the combination; to keep an eye on him, Mongo sends along one of his men, Basco, a true revolutionary who thinks the money is to be used to buy guns for the revolution. Together—despite some differences of opinion when Basco learns what Peterson is really after, and despite some narrow escapes from John, a sadistic arms smuggler who has a personal grudge against the Swede—they bring Xantoros back to Mexico, much improved by his captivity and pacified by his diet. Despite warnings from both men, Xantoros decides to surrender himself to Mongo, who has captured some of his student disciples and is using them as hostages; so Peterson and Basco go to the rescue and wipe out Mango and his men. Peterson then obtains the safe with Xantoros' blessing, only to find that the wealth it contains is symbolic—an ear of corn. While Basco forms an alliance—revolutionary and marital—with Lola, one of Xantoros' disciples, Peterson consoles himself by taking a valuable statue of San Bernardino from the church. Basco objects, but the sudden arrival of John and his henchmen forces them again into alliance to deal with them. During the fracas, Xantoros is killed and the statue is destroyed. About to leave empty-handed, Peterson decides after all to throw in his lot with Basco, Lola and their handful of revolutionaries when he sees cohorts of soldiers marching against them.

Nasty, brutish, and not particularly short, Companeros is very much the same hollow mixture as Corbucci's A Professional Gun, with the good guys wiped out their adversaries wholesale without turning a hair, while Jack Palance's villain sneers with a will but never really gets around to employing the hungry-looking hawk he keeps on hand with crossbow, and the feed of the unsuspecting horse. Saddled with some embarrassing revolutionary sentiments by the dubbed dialogue, the student revolutionaries (who include the deaf-and-dumb boy from Tristana) are an exceptionally grumbly crew, so it is perhaps just as well that their activities appear to have been curtailed by cuts which make the action somewhat more bearable.

TOM MULLEN

"The Last Movie" (1970), United American Video, $7.95:
The movie you've been hearing about for years but probably have never seen, the Italian-Spanish prairie exercise that opened yesterday at the Astor. This is the mixture as before, with perhaps ope notable exception. The story—an expert gun-toter is hired to track down a rapist-killer—moves on a simple, straight, clear line.

The man among men this time, looking meaner than all the others combined, is Lee Van Cleef, and, as usual, he is one tough hombre. The color photography of the settings is very good, indeed, often striking. The shooting and the pummeling is plentiful as ever, and as methodical. The musical score, with its ear-splitting cacophony mixed in with a little Beethoven, sounds like Judgment Day.

The picture was filmed in Italy and Spain. It has performers from both countries and a sprinkling of American players, headed by Lee Van Cleef, who speaks English. The other voices are dubbed. The film also has one excellent performance, that of Tomas Milian, as a feisty Mexican fugitive.

Otherwise, we're at home abroad on the same old range as before.

H T
Sonny & Jed

(La Banda J. & S. Cronaca Criminale Del Far West)

(ITALIAN-COLOR)

Confused oater reworking the lovers-as-criminals myth. Derivative, overdone, mostly boring.

Jed ............... Tomas Milian
Sonny .............. Susan George
Francesca .......... Telev Savalas
Linda .............. Rossana Yanni
Aparacio .......... Franco Giacobini
Garcia .............. Eduardo Fajardo
Merrill ............. Herbert Fux
Donna Aparacio .... Laura Beti
Alto Arecu Francesco Alvarez De Luna,
Werner Pochat, Luis Alier, Pilar Climent,
Taliers Mario and Pedotti Ruggero

The K-Tel conglomerate specializes in, among other things, bringing inexpensive pictures to the attention of the presumably broad, "common man" audience thanks to saturation TV advertising on a region-by-region basis. "Sonny & Jed," an Italo-made oater that is as confused as it is inept, should provide at least minimal sales mileage via the K-Tel releasing formula.

Film was lensed three years ago presumably as another attempt to rework the lovers-as-criminals myth. Set in the far west at about the turn-of-the-century, pic has a way of continually betraying its Italo origins (a smalltime photog in a western settlement keeps saying "per favore" instead of "please"). That plus chaotic dubbing and generally unconvincing performances and overwrought script makes "Sonny & Jed" dubious for even its probable U.S. destination, in drive-ins or at the bottom of the bill.

Jed (Tomas Milian) is a bruitish, boorish, whore-mongering outlaw who, per customary screen rationalization, kills by the dozen and robs by day or night to benefit the poor peasant Mexican villagers at the expense of their Yankee and Mexicali overlords. Sonny (Susan George) is a big-eyed, virginal rancher who harvests a yen for the outlaw life. The pair meets, he abuses her, they eventually marry and form a joint robbing combine, they fight and finally she abuses him. That's pretty much the whole film.

Under Sergio Corbucci's unsteady direction (he also had a hand in scripting from his own story), Tomas emerges as an overbearing slob without redeeming qualities. George, although always an eyeful, is wasted in a role calling for a gun-toting cutsey-pie, a sort of violent Goldie Hawn.

Given script limitations, characters are not developed so the central romance engenders yawns rather than audience identification. Script is also irresolute since once the pair joins, much of the minimal tension departs the plot. Also, one series of violent encounters and absurd robberies (two against a whole town's posse, for example) pall, little is left except to end film on a reasonable upbeat but abrupt note with George leading Tomas up a mountainous escape route, vowing retribution for his earlier chauntness attitudes. George, incidentally, seems to be making a career out of onscreen abuse at the hands of males (a la "Straw Dogs").

Telev Savalas puts in a routine appearance as a big-time law enforcement man bent on trapping the criminal pair. He doesn't succeed, but not for lack of cigar-chomping glowers and deep-voiced depredations. Luis Cuadrado's photography is competent although locations are obviously continental and not Western. A big minus is Ennio Morricone's insistent score which sounds as though it were originally intended for a soft-drink commercial. Remainder of cast, a mixture of Spanish, German and Italian performers, carry out respective chores with accents intact.

La Vita. A Volta
E Molto Pura,
Vero Provvidenza?
(Life is Tough. Eh Providence?)

(ITALIAN-FRENCH—WEST GERMAN-COLOR)


Providence .......... Tomas Milian
Hurricane Kid ......... Gregg Palmer
Stella ............... Janet Agren

Comedy western all'Italiana is the new and budding offshoot of Italian cinema after "Trinity is Still My Name" racked up a gross of some $8,000,000 here in the past season and established a fun formula for wily producers who know where the gold is hidden. "Life is Tough, Eh Providence?" should be a headstrong successor to "Trinity" wherever the trendsetter cleaned up.

Directed by Giulio Petroni, grotesque oater is as exuberant as it is corny. The film is bloodless, but full of hand-to-hand violence. The language is often familiar and laugh-provoking. It contains enough inventive gags and gads for more than one feature.

In its own right, "Provvidenza" presents an outlandishly costumed bounty killer, Tomas Milian, who makes his living from rewards on the head of Hurricane Kid - a slow-witted giant played by Gregg Palmer, who was brought over from Hollywood as a look-alike for Trinity's Italian sidekick, Bud Spencer, playing an American cowboy. Comparison favors Spencer, but Palmer walks off with honors for the most stylish and longest beech ever heard on a soundtrack.

It's all there, saloon beauty Janet Agren (who is stunning), Confederate outlaws, early God-fearing settlers, crooked sheriffs, and the gaming tables. Original to "Providence" is a conveyance for its bounty hero that is nothing less than a self-propelled, horse-drawn, dilapidated Wells-Fargo stagecoach with more defense and attack contrivances in it than a Rube Goldberg invention.

Clever comic strip performance by Milian and craftsmanship of director Sergio D' Eva, art director Sergio Canevalli and composer Ennio Morricone heighten production values. Farce oater is primarily aimed at children and youth masses with more than enough mayhem and simple comedy fantasy to get parents away from the tube for an indiscrimination family outing to a downtown or nabe cinema. Spicing away soft spots in escalating scripts would help abroad.
Review
Verdammt zu leben – verdammt zu sterben.
(1975)
by Craig Ledbetter

It's a shame I had to see this film in a foreign language (German) because there was a lot of characterization and dialogue going on and I couldn't make heads or tails of it. Even so Verdammt zu leben – verdammt zu sterben is a delightful western that concentrates on both the beauty and harshness found in early Western times.

The film opens with what looks like a typical Lucio Fulci bloodbath as masked gunmen slaughter an entire town. The only survivors being the sheriff (Donal O'Brien), who is oblivious to the chaos and his four prisoners (Fabio Testi, Lynn Frederick, Harry Baird and Michael J. Pollard). The next day they are put on a wagon and sent on their way. Here the tone lightens as we see the four characters interact with one another. They meet up with a band of Mormons and share food and water. Soon after, the bandit Chaco (Tomas Milian, in a slimy performance reminiscent of a younger version of character actor Rip Torn) is introduced and the light tone turns quite dark. In no time at all he ties up both Testi and Baird, has all four chew on Peyote so they offer no resistance and cruelly rapes Lynn Frederick. He shoots Pollard in the leg (Pollard sat around in a drunken stupor while Chaco committed his evil acts) and rides off to meet up with his gang. The band of four becomes three as Pollard dies from his wound. Eventually they end up at a mining town as winter sets in. Frederick is now quite pregnant from Chaco's rape (though she and Testi have become lovers) and dies giving birth to a boy. Testi rides off and dispatches Chaco and his men, then disappears.

Nothing radical here, but for folks who think Fulci can only direct entrail pulling scenes, need to discover his westerns. He has the services of his best cinematographer, Sergio Salvati who shot Fulci's best Horror Films, and is able to capture the countryside quite poetically. The snow covered mining town is breath taking. Tomas Milian doesn't have a lot of screen time but when he appears, dominates it completely. Far and away one of his nastier portrayals (though for the ultimate Milian scum performances see Almost Human or Assault w/a Deadly Weapon), Milian shows no remorse, no matter how reprehensible the atrocity. Michael J. Pollard gives a typical zen performance (he and Dennis Hopper were probably using the same drugs about this time) and disappears early. Testi does well as a happy go lucky gambler who has to come to grips with a lot of personal changes (his slow acceptance of Frederick's child works quite well) in the course of this 90 minute film. Finally, the score by Bixio, Frizzi & Tempera is mediocre at best with several vocal tunes that would be right at home on an easy listening radio station.
JOHN STEINER
INTERVIEW
Interviewed by Eric Maché

WAI: TEPEPA was the first movie you made with Tomas Milian?

J.S.: It was not only the first movie I did with him, but it was the first movie I ever did in Italy. That was when I came to Italy in 1967. I came there for a private reason, and I just suddenly found out that I was famous there because of MARAT SADE that I had done in 1965. The only place it had been played and was well known was in Italy. So everybody knew who I was. I got offered a lot of work, and for one reason or another I never really wanted to do it or was unable to do it. The final film that was offered to me was TEPEPA. Everyone said, "You should do this because Tomas Milian had only just begun to be known as a big star in Italy, and he was very well respected because he made a lot of movies with Antonioni, Visconti, and so on..." So TEPEPA was really his first big film in Italy. He'd done THE BIG GUN and DANCE WITH ME and had quite a lot of personal success with them, but TEPEPA was the big-money earner for him. That's what really put him into a big level in Italy. Tomas was, of course, in those days, much more temperamental than he is today. He's also lived his life, so he's rounded off a bit. He was not more vain, because vanity is something a person carries with them to the grave, but he was much more conscious of being maybe a symbol of something that wasn't necessarily him. Today, and this is a big difference, he's much more happy with himself. So whereas in TEPEPA he was playing a character, today he's playing himself much more. He's rounded out, he's gotten a bit heavier, his hair is thinning. But he doesn't mind that at all, he let's all that hang out, and has come to terms with it.

WAI!: How old were you when you made TEPEPA?

J.S.: I was 26. Tomas and I became great friends on that movie. I must say it was a wonderful, wonderful experience. Most of the time I have not had such happy times. I suppose in my entire career, and I've made about 80 movies, I don't remember having such fun as I had on TEPEPA, except maybe with the exception of 2 or 3 other movies in the whole of my career. So TEPEPA I remember with great fondness - it really was wonderful. It was also a wonderful time to be in Spain, it was in September which was the off season.

WAI!: Was it filmed in Almeria?

J.S.: That's right. It isn't the most wonderful place now, of course. It's become highly developed with hotels and resorts. When we were there it was still very simple, and again, some funny and amusing things happened. Even Orson Welles -
Orson and Tomas didn't get on as great buddies. There was no direct confrontation, but I think Tomas was always sort of convinced that Orson couldn't stand him, which I'm sure was not true at all. I remember the first day I shot with Orson. He would do everything he could to get the limelight, to have the shot, to push everyone else out of the scene, which I suppose, is natural - you know, an actor is basically driven by that kind of thing. I remember the first day he wanted me to stand in front of him and then walk backwards into the camera so the camera remained on his face the entire time. I got a frightfully stiff upper lip and began to shout and scream, but the funny thing was, from that moment on we became quite friendly and I must say he gradually unraveled during the whole film, and what was there was quite fascinating. First of all, you meet this incredible man with this incredible reputation, and you realize that really at heart he was just a little boy.

WAI: I understand he was in it for the money.

J.S.: Well, what he was doing was, he was constantly trying to make his 'dream pictures.' Indeed, on his last day, a very funny scene happened. He was leaving and we knew it was his last shot, and I was sort of hanging around to look for a moment to say goodbye to him. Suddenly I realized he'd left. I thought that was strange. I first got wind of it because I could see his car. We were shooting up on top of a very high hill with a great canyon or valley in front of us. I could see the big black limousine which he had, leaving and going across the valley with a cloud of dust after it. Suddenly there was a shriek from the camera department. Apparently he had made off with about 6,000 feet of color stock. He'd stolen it to take off to Paris where he was finishing something else he'd been working on for years and years. He would make all these movies to get enough money together to complete another scene in his movie.

WAI: He seemed like he was pretty much sleep-walking through these roles.

J.S.: Oh yes. I think so. A lot of better-known actors before and after him have done that with these kinds of movies. He felt that it was a bit beneath him, but he couldn't resist the money, and the money was probably quite good. They were still paying pretty well in those days. It was probably tax-free too. I got the feeling he wasn't working very much in those days and indeed he worked less and less as time went on. But he certainly maintained a lifestyle, and to do that you needed money. But you know, the 60's were really the last years in which actors could really be actors, certainly in Europe, and live with the mansions and the cars, the secretaries and things like that. After that the salaries started to disappear and they couldn't do it anymore.

WAI: Was Petroni trying to make a political statement with TEPEPA?

J.S.: Well, there was a time in Italy when the Communist Party was rising to power and becoming very popular. Everybody in the film industry was paying lip service to social justice, of which there was very little in Italy, so it was pretty natural. There still is very little, but things have calmed down. I mean the Communist Party is no longer quite so important or a popular cause to belong to. But in those days it was, and it was very important that everybody in the
movie business was either a card-carrying member or had sympathetic leanings towards the land and progressive ideas. I certainly don’t think that was the case with Tomas, because Tomas has been a staunch Catholic his whole life, I mean, his Cuban origins I think testify to, you know, he’s been running from it (Communism) a long time. Actually, I’ve noticed that most people who’ve had anything to do with Communism remain like that for the rest of their lives. They won’t touch it because they know the real nature of the business. However, in Italy it was a very romantic thing in those days and Solinas, who had written the script for TEPEPA, was your classic product of those times, and would write things about the injustice to the peasants and how the military were sucking the country dry, you know, and they loved that sort of story. I think in Giulio Petroni’s case, I think he was just making a Western. It was popular to have those sort of undertones to your movie and that’s why they were there. I don’t think he was necessarily or particularly dedicated to a view one way or the other. I think he was just trying to make a movie and do it the best he could.

WAI: He had a lot of good technical support. The movie still holds up well to this day.

J.S.: Oh yes, it’s not bad. It is a good movie. It’s a little long, I think the middle section could possibly be cut out.

WAI: Your part was very unlike any of your subsequent ‘villain’ roles.

J.S.: I don’t know how cleverly I’ve handled my career. To be absolutely honest with you, I’ve never really thought about handling a career properly. I literally took one acting job after another and that was that. I took it if I liked to do it, and I took it for the money. Now when I started with TEPEPA they gave me the young lead and I knew the company that made it actually took a contract out on me on another two movies. Those movies never got made. I arrived in Italy, right at the very end of the boom, and it was in ’71 or ’72 when suddenly Nixon stopped tax concessions and made it difficult for Italians to sell their movies to television in the United States. That was the thing that really stopped Italian film production. There were one or two revivals of the Western like MANGAFA (A MAN CALLED BLADE) that was made a bit later in about ’74. That’s when they tried out the formula again and it didn’t have very much success.

We were talking about why I was playing the baddies. I think director Damiano Damiani is responsible for that. I made a film for him with Franco Nero called THE CASE IS CLOSED - FORGET IT. It had really extraordinary success. In fact, there were two movies that had done this for me in Italy and really rocketed me to the position I’ve held ever since. One was this particular title and the other is the first cop movie that Maurizio Merli made. The movie was ROMA VIOLENTA and I played a delinquent from the streets of Rome. Now I have a very English cut you know, and people have always considered me as an English lord or a butler, or that kind of uniformed, buttoned-up kind
of guy. But in this movie with Maurizio, and indeed also the one by Damiano Damiani, I was playing a real vulgar, tough, hard, vicious criminal - somebody who didn't give a fuck about anything or anybody. In the Damiano picture I had three life sentences for three different murders and I was doing dirty work for the Mafia for some privileges in jail. There is an incredible scene where I bleed to death a witness to a vital court case which the Mafia wanted silenced. I farted, I burped, I slapped people around... it was an incredible part. People were stopping me on the streets, and then I followed that a year later with ROMA VIOLENTA. In this one again I was a ferocious killer who ended up machine-gunning a group of school children on their way back home from school. People were actually convinced that I was an Italian actor off the streets of Rome. Now I had a phenomenal success with that movie and I didn't even want to do it. I mean I read the script and I said, 'I can't machine gun kids, it's really just the pits!' I said to my agent, 'Well, ask for this money and if they give it to us I'll do it.' I really didn't think they'd pay, but they paid every penny of it. So I was stuck and had to do the movie. I did four days on that movie and I think I had more success with that than anything else in my career in Italy. It was just incredible. So from then on, because of those two movies, that's how I became the bad guy, and it stuck. So I wasn't about to complain if they were going to pay me well to be a bad guy.

WAI: You also worked with Maurizio Merli in MANNAJA (A MAN CALLED BLADE).

J.S.: I got along very well with Maurizio.

WAI: You know he died recently.

J.S.: Yes I know, poor guy, of a heart attack. I'd seen him and actually spoken to him. He had a good copy of one of the movies I had made, because he had copies of all his movies, and I wanted to stick it on a show reel. That's why I called him, but that was two years ago, and then suddenly I heard last year he had dropped down while playing tennis and had a heart attack. Again, the pressures on actors. I don't care anymore because I'm doing other things now, and I've got other interests which I find as consuming. I hope I'll have as much success there as I've had as an actor. It's not as bad anymore, but I suffered much from the pressures. So if you have been an actor, and had even a small moment of glory it's very difficult to start taking a second seat. Then you suddenly realize people don't even know who you are anymore, or at least they pretend they don't, especially when you're recognized in the street and you say, 'Why the fuck are they not employing me anymore?' But I think this can be a terrible, terrible pressure on people. I'm sure that's what got to Maurizio. You know, he had a very good run for his money. He was never the world's greatest actor, but he looked good, and that's what it's all about really.

WAI: Are there any good stories you can remember about filming MANNAJA?

J.S.: Not really. I just remember...
quarreling badly with the production manager, who's since become a good friend of mine. What he used to do was, I managed to get into my contract that I had my own caravan, and what would happen was I would arrive on the set and there would be no caravan for me. They'd say, 'We'll get it for you tomorrow.' Then I'd arrive the following day and there'd still be no caravan. 'Sorry about the caravan, John, but it will be here the third day.' So you arrive the third day and it's still not there and you say, 'Right, I'm not working.' And then it arrives. But they've gotten away with three days of not having to give you your caravan. Then the following day it's not there anymore, so you have to start the process again. But of course, you have to be careful because you know, you can shout wolf once, but they're clever. I mean, they keep you always at the point so that you are always in a situation where they just simply wear you down. So although I should have had a caravan for the movie I never did get one. It was quite fun. I quite enjoyed it. It was a good year that year, so MANNAJA started off a very good year.

WAI: Did you get along well with Donal O'Brien?

J.S.: Oh yes, I've known Donal for years and years. I've seen him privately quite a lot. The second ZANNA BLANCA film was made with Donal. I must say that the first ZANNA BLANCA film makes the rounds every year. It's been an incredible money-spinner for the producers. That has gone on and on. But then again this was another big contribution to my career.

WAI: Were your two ZANNA BLANCA films shot back to back?

J.S.: No, they were shot one year after the other. They did the first one, then they went back to the same place in Austria. The second one was not as good as the first. It was also less amusing to make. Those were two movies, though, that I had a lot of fun on. There was quite an amusing story actually. At that time Raymund Harmstorff was a very big star in Germany. He had just finished a television series in Germany called SEA WOLF which is another Jack London story, and he was adored, and I mean adored by your middle-aged
German women. They all creamed their knickers for him! Anywhere we went in any of the German speaking countries in Europe, they were all throwing themselves on the floor for Raymund. Of course, this tends naturally to give an actor a fairly full opinion of himself. Franco Nero, who I must say, I made four movies with, and I've always found him totally coherent, is one of the most professional people I've ever met. I've got a lot of time for Franco. I think he's a very, very good boy. A very hard working, tough, down-to-earth professional and I like him very much. Anyway, Franco was defending himself as the lead in *ZANNA BIANCA* and Raymund felt that he was a visiting star. So there was a kind of contest on between the two of them as to who could out do the other. The second day I noticed Raymund turned up in lifts, he'd put in his boots. Franco is very quick to catch on to anything like this, so the third day he comes back with even higher lifts in his boots. At which Raymund returns with a very big hat. So the next day Franco comes back with an even larger one. And then, throughout the entire film, they spent each day trying to find some new trinket, or wider ribbon, or longer feather, or extra pin, or piece of metal, or whatever it was to pin onto these hats so they could appear always larger than the other one.

WAI: Both of these *ZANNA BIANCA* films were directed by Lucio Fulci. After searching for these films for a long time I was expecting some bloody Western from 'the king of gore,' but I was surprised to find these were family films.

J.S.: Yes, well, that's what they are. I got to know Fulci on *ZANNA BIANCA* and have since been a great friend of his. Fulci is an extraordinary man. Life hasn't treated him very kindly. He's had a very hard life. I think his family life has been very difficult. He's had some terrible disappointments and some pretty wicked blows. But he's a man of enormous wit. He's a great character and always smoking his pipe and it's filthy dirty and blowing. He always curses and swears and jumps up and down and gets wildly excited. But he's a very kind man. He's a passionate sailor, which I love. I would love to have a boat, but have never made enough money to do that. I used to go sailing with him. He loved horses and had a couple of race horses at one time, but more than anything else I just loved to hear him talk. I mean, he's a most
cultured man. He's also contributed to quite a lot of famous Italian movies. He was a comic writer for a long time. He collaborated with Pepino de Felipo who worked quite often with the comedian Toto. That writing combination is probably the best Toto ever discovered. Very often you will find on these pictures that one of the script writers had been Lucio Fulci. So he's had an enormous amount of experience. Then he had his boom on the horror movies where he invented a fair amount of new effects. You know there was a kind of war between him and Mario Bava. Did you see the film I did with Mario Bava? THE SECRET WITH THE EVER-TICKING CLOCK or something?

WAI: Yes. It was released here as BEYOND THE DOOR 2.

J.S.: Oh. It may have been. I think that was one of the last films Mario Bava made.

WAI: Getting back to Fulci ... he had done a couple of very violent Westerns before and after the ZANNA


J.S.: He did that a year after ZANNA BIANCA.

WAI: I did find it very odd that he could have made such wholesome family fare flanked by such extreme violence. You know that blond-haired kid in the second ZANNA BIANCA film? Was he really as obnoxious as he came across or was it the fault of the dubbing?

J.S.: Well I think he was obnoxious. You know what they say 'There's nothing worse than filming with children and animals.' Renato Cestie, wasn't it?

WAI: Yes.

J.S.: He has grown up to be a rather spoiled, silly young man. He did look quite good as a kid. I just remember the objectionable parents that he had who were defending him and trying to get as much money as they could out of the production. Good luck to them. That's what they're there for. But yes, he was as objectionable as he sounded.

WAI: Fernando Rey was in the first ZANNA BIANCA. He was quite a highly regarded actor.

J.S.: Yes. At the time, Fernando was having a pretty good run for his money. Bunuel had become a very popular cult director, everybody was looking at his movies. Of course, Fernando, who was one of his favorite actors, had a very big boom on that. I think Fernando was just trying to make as much money as he possibly could. He's an excellent actor, and here I think he was trying to get money, and I know that for 4 or 5 years he really never stopped just making one after the other. Even that boom came to an end.

WAI: Do you always do your own dubbing?

J.S.: I probably do it most of the time in English. They only do
it if they get there first and do it quicker. It's been done to me once or twice, and I've usually kicked up about it and ended up by being paid. In the films we've been talking about it's been my voice. Sometimes in certain movies I've said 'All right, do me.' The big problem is they want an American accent. There is an obsession with marketers and film salesmen that unless a movie is with all American voices, the American public won't understand it or want to listen to it. I mean, it got to a ridiculous point in the case of Malcolm McDowell in A CLOCKWORK ORANGE where Stanley Kubrick had to fight like mad to keep Malcolm's voice. They wanted to dub him. This is famous yet they claim to know better. This will always remain a huge problem. Unless you're Peter O'Toole they want to hear American voices. So sometimes I have actually willingly said, when I realize there's going to be a fight on it, 'All right, do it with an American accent if you want.' But on the whole I've done most of mine.

WAI: You worked recently with Tomas Milian again in one of your most recent films.

J.S.: Yes, in WOUNDED KING by Damiano Damiani. I have a very, very small part in it. I must say Tomas was very sweet and very nice, and it was wonderful to work with him again.

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Un apasionante relato del cariño entre un viejo, un niño y un perro.

NOTA:
A partir de ahora el Espronceda proyectará este programa en todas las sesiones de tarde y noche.
1968 - "TEPEPA" - see Tomas Milian filmography.

1973 - "ZANNA BIANCA" - Italian title
       "WOLFSBLUT" - German title
       "WHITE FANG" - English title
Production: Italian, German, French Coproduction.
       American Cinema
Screen Adaptation: Peter Welbeck,
Story: "White Fang" by Jack London
Director: Lucio Fulci
Music: Carlo Rustichelli
Cast: Franco Nero, Virna Lisi, Fernando Rey, John
       Steiner, Missaele

1974 - "IL RITORNO DI ZANNA BIANCA" - Italian title
       "WOLFSBLUT 2" - German title
       "CHALLENGE TO WHITE FANG" - English title
Production: Italian, German, French Coproduction.
Coralta Cinematografica (Rome)
Terra Filmkunst (Berlin)
Les Films Corona (Paris)
Director: Lucio Fulci
Photography: Silvano Ippoliti
Music: Carlo Rustichelli
Cast: Franco Nero, Virna Lisi, John Steiner, Raimund
       Harmstorf, Yanti Somer, Werner Pochath, Harry
       Carey, Jr., Hannelore Elsner, Renato DeCarmine,
       Renato Cestie

1977 - "MANNAJA" - Italian title
       "L'HOMME A LA HACHE" - French title
       "UN HOMBRE LLAMADO HACHA" Spanish title
       "AXE" - English working title
"A MAN CALLED BLADE" - English release title
Production: Italian
Devon Film & Medusa
Screenplay: Sergio Martino
Director: Sergio Martino
Photography: Federico Zanni
Music: Guido & Maurizio De Angelis
Cast: Maurizio Merli, Martine Brochard, John Steiner, Donal O'Brien
Here in the midst of this Tomas Milian special edition we take time out to examine one of his most curious titles. FACCI/A a FACCI/A (FACE TO FACE) was produced in 1967 at the height of the Italo-western craze. A follow-up production to THE BIG GUN DOWN, Sergio Sollima once again directed, Sergio Donati again scripted and like wise for the producing chores for Alberto Grimaldi. Oh yes, maestro Ennio Morricone scored the expansive story surrounding Tomas Milian, Gian Maria Volonte and William Berger. What a cast! What production credits! And Morricone to boot!!

While all this may appear to be a spaghettiehead's dream, you'll be swallowing some rather boring moments of exposition, character development and generally uninspired gunplay. Problem begins in that we have a pair of lead characters whose pasts, presents and futures are of little concern. Implausible opening has a meek, violentless Volonte, here portraying Professor Brad Fletcher, saving a ruthless Milian's (Beau Bennett) bacon and unwittingly helping him to escape the law. Having done this, a peculiar relationship develops. Milian leads a hoard of murderous cut-throats who are faultlessly loyal. Volonte, now wanted for stupidly setting Milian free, becomes absorbed into this new realm of robbery and violence. He's the square peg in the round hole, an intellect amongst blithering idiots.

The story becomes somewhat complex with sub-plots aplenty. Sparing everyone a Bill Connolly-styled dissertation that would run eight pages, the myriad of storylines come full circle with a mildly satisfying finale. I was so desperately hoping for a passion-filled showdown seething with vengeance. Nope, we get a sappy trio recklessly kicking sand about in the desert and
making their minds up on who's gonna get whom.

Tomas Milian can't be faulted here. Nor can Volonte or Berger. The Sollima/Donati script serves up gelatin and leaves the viscera for another day. Milian as Bennett could have been a mean-assed bastard but the character is so sinfully underplayed and under-developed. Sure, he kicks a couple of butts and takes a few names here and there. Volonte brass-ringed the grisliest scene in the pic. Pulling the sheep's clothing off a Pinkerton spy, he extracts a pistol from his vest, pokes it point blank against the poor schnook's head and KABLAM!! A riveting moment indeed.

Obviously a bigger budgeted western than most from that period, FACE TO FACE offers spotty moments of Sollima brilliance, a weakling script if only for the absence of strong, mother fucker lead characters, and a sometimes shining score by Ennio Morricone. Sometimes because it does little to weave a thematic tapestry as his landmark DOLLAR scores accomplished so miraculously.

WAI RATING: 2 PISTOLS.