



ISSUE NO. 3
Sept/Oct. 1985



THE SWINGIN' DOORS....

Welcome to this third edition of WESTERNS ALL'ITALIANA. Our page count this time is twenty! Hardly the 'Newsletter' format we originally intended. Which brings me to this announcement. You may have noticed the dropping of the word 'newsletter' from our cover. Originally this smaller publication was to fill in the gaps between our bigger issue but the material and steadiness that we're able to get outta a bi-monthly format warrants the elimination of one large issue each year and six smaller ones. So, welcome to WESTERNS ALL'ITALIANA...a bi-monthly publication of varying lengths! This month ya get twenty pages...next couple of months ya might only get ten! Whatever the case, we don't feel as though it's a cheat on anyone with a yearly subscription of \$3.50! Tom and I have already begun work on issue #4 so look for that edition to be mailed in the first week of November. Now, where does that leave our larger yearly edition? Consider the double-issue #3/4 as the last one. The Newsletter was a revitalization as prompted by Tom Betts who offered his help and with that we have become an all-new six times yearly fanzine! Wow! What next?

Unless you're a candidate for the use of a seeing-eye dog, you MUST have noticed our brand new logo that adorns our front cover!! This stunner was designed and drawn by WESTERNS ALL'ITALIANA boffo reader, Richard Landwehr. Richard lives in New Orleans and has been a long time supporter of this 'zine. We feel proud to have been a recipient of his remarkable artistic talent.

T-SHIRT NEWS! (Just in time for winter, right??)

We have had two T-shirts specially commissioned by WESTERNS ALL'ITALIANA. These are white, high-quality (no Pakistan-made junk) shirts that sport enlarged ad reproductions from DAY OF ANGER and THE UGLY ONES. The repros are silk-screened in black onto the white T-shirt and look FANTASTIC!! This is a O-T-O (ONE-TIME-ONLY!) offering and orders will be taken until the next issue of this wonderful fanzine you now hold! Price and such as follows!

Each T-shirt is \$9.95 and includes first class mailing back to you. Due to the small amount that will probably be ordered, the price is a touch steep...we know. Or if you're in a money saving mood, you can order both shirts for a combo price of \$17.50. When you order, please be sure to specify the movie you want on the shirt and the size!!!! Don't get confused and think you get both movie ads on one shirt!! It's either DAY OF ANGER or THE UGLY ONES!!

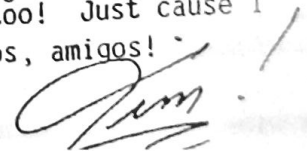
SIZES AVAILABLE ARE SMALL, MEDIUM, LARGE and EXTRA LARGE. Send order requests to: WESTERNS ALL'ITALIANA T-SHIRTS, P.O. Box 186, Keyport, New Jersey 07735 and be sure to make all checks or money orders payable to TIM FERRANTE!! Real important you do that.

Some of you are probably awaiting a record offering for the new Intermezzo records. We have come to the conclusion that it would be far less work for yours truly to make special arrangements with the folks in Italy and make all of you wait for weeks and weeks while the records get shipped here and then out to you. May I make this suggestion to everyone? If you still wish to get the new releases from Italy and get them as quick or even quicker than I could send them, request a catalog from SOUNDTRACK ALBUM RETAILERS, P.O. Box 7, Quarryville, PA 17566. Tell Jim Reed over there that I sent ya! They're in the business of records and keep the titles in stock.

You might want to look over the enclosed flyer from reader Rene Hogguer. He requested that I offer his services to the readership so look over his list of music he's specially assembled. I have not heard any of the tapes so cannot comment.

That about wraps up things for now. Tom and I are sure you're gonna love this edition of WESTERNS ALL'ITALIANA. And you're gonna love the next one too! Just cause I said so!

Adios, amigos!



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CONTENTS

All-New Cover Logo!.....	Richard Landwehr
Cover Art.....	Curtis Sneed
The Swingin' Doors.....	Tim Ferrante
Companeros.....	Wm. Connolly
Variety Reprints.....	subm. by Robt. Bahn
More Missing Scenes.....	Keith Hall, Jr.
Movie Tie-In Books.....	R. Bahn/T. Ferrante
Day of Anger.....	Earl Hudson
Die Slowly, I Love It! (Pt. 2)...	David Everitt
Let Them Rest.....	Eric Mache
Mark Damon Profile.....	Tim Ferrante
Classified Ads.....	Readers!
Soundtrack 45rpm Sleeve Reprint..	Back Cover.

WAI Issue # 3. September/October 1985.

Lee Van Cleef
has been
dirty,
"ugly" and
downright
mean...
now
watch him
get
violent!

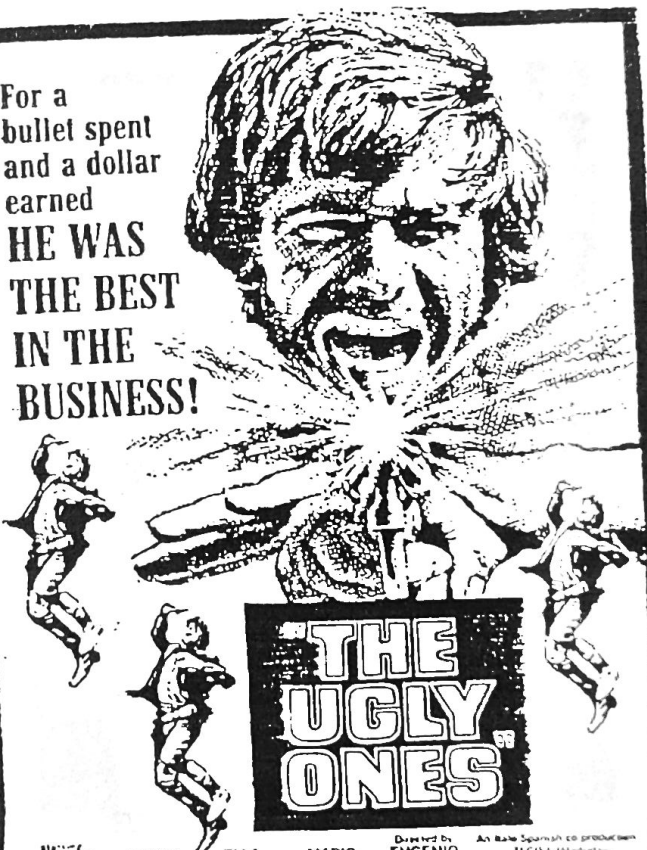


National General Pictures Presents
LEE VAN CLEEF in
"DAY OF ANGER"

Produced by: Giuliano Gemelli - Walter Billa - Christa Lindner - Franco Catalano - Tonino Valeri - Renzo Gentile
Directed by: Tonino Valeri
Music by: Ryo Ohtsuka
Technical: Technicolor® Techniscopes®

These ad mats are gloriously transferred onto the WESTERNS ALL'ITALIANA commissioned T-Shirts. Please read "The Swingin' Doors" for information how you can obtain one or both of these one-time-only wonderments!!!!

For a
bullet spent
and a dollar
earned
**HE WAS
THE BEST
IN THE
BUSINESS!**



Starring: **RICHARD TOMAS ELLA MARIO EUGENIO
WYLER MILIAN KARIN BREGA MARTIN**

Suggested for Mature Audiences

An RKO Pictures production
TECINA (Adapted from)
GASCONE (Italy)
COLOR by DeLuxe
United Artists

THEATRE

Tessari Mixes Spaghetti Western, Yank Adventure In 'Tex' Feature

Rome, July 9.

Nearly 20 years after the success of the spaghetti western, Italy is ready to serve up the genre again with a new Hollywood-recipe sauce.

Two weeks from completion at Cinecittà is "Tex And The Lord Of The Deep," a Cinecittà-RAI-3 feature coproduction blending elements of the Italo western and recent U.S. adventure pics. "Tex" star Giuliano Gemma was a mainstay of the earlier westerns and the new pic was shot mostly in Spain (six weeks) like the originals. But director Duccio Tessari says, "My 'Tex' is closer to Steven Spielberg than the traditional western — and not because it's in vogue, but because the blend of exoticism and adventure that made the fortune of films like the 'Indiana Jones' hits was already there in the comic books written over the past 40 years by 'Tex' creator Giovanni Luigi Bonelli."

Budgeted at 1.5-billion lire (\$750,000), the picture is the pilot for a possible "Tex" tv series. RAI-3 chief Giuseppe Rossini said the project was originated by his web, later proposed to the Cinecittà board (of which he is a member) and realized entirely with RAI personnel. If a series materializes, it will be a RAI-3 partnership with RAI-1, he said, with the two networks deciding later who will air. Titanus has Italo distribution of the feature. Sacis, with world sales, reports preliminary deals already reached with the Far East, Scandinavia, France, Germany, Turkey, and much of Latin America as well as high interest from potential U.S. buyers. The RAI sales arm plans to close contracts at Mifed in October.

"Tex" has been invited to participate in the midnight section of the Venice Film Festival in August.

Helmer Tessari says he directed the film with television primarily in mind, trying to make "the succession of events, emotions and plot twists so riveting that no viewer would want to change the channel."

Cinecittà tv production chief Filippo De Luigi said Gemma (who's lately calling himself "the poor man's Indiana Jones") was chosen for the lead role after a public opinion survey polled people on who they thought would be the ideal Tex. Oth-

another tv pilot last year that turned into a six-episode series, "Treasure Hunt," bowing on RAI-1 in November. Cost was about 600,000,000 lire (\$300,000) per segment. Tonino Valerii and Sergio Martino each directed three segs of the program.

TEX

AND THE LORD OF THE DEEP

From an idea by GIOVANNI L. BONELLI



starring
GIULIANO GEMMA

directed by
DUCCIO TESSARI

produced by
RAI Channel 3 / CINECITTÀ

IN PRODUCTION

MORE.... *Missing Scenes!*

In the complete version of *A Minute to Pray, A Second to Die*, after McCord has given up his pistols and received his pardon, he rides away a free but sadder man. Suddenly, the two bounty killers, who had been such pests to the town marshal, shoot McCord down for the price on his head. They loot his body and find the pardon which declares there is no longer a bounty on him. Deciding that bounty killing is not such a lucrative business anymore, the two leave McCord's dead body and determine to return to buffalo-hunting, their previous profession.

When ABC-TV first televised in prime time *A Minute to Pray, A Second to Die*, they cut out some of the scene which McCord faces the twelve-man posse that had just massacred the surrendering blockade runners. To make the scene less violent, ABC showed McCord firing his pistols only five times! However all twelve men in the posse fell dead!! McCord not only seemed a brave man, but a magician as well.

ABC-TV struck again when it first nationally televised *A Fistful of Dollars*.... they inserted a prologue. Using a Clint Eastwood double as well as some close-ups from later action, this prologue shows No Name being released from prison with the proviso that he clean up the liquor and gun-running war south of the Border. A successful mission (several other men with this same assignment had been killed in earlier attempts) would mean a complete pardon for our hero. This prologue changes No Name from a conniving, ruthless killer into a do-gooding American secret agent!

Submitted by KEITH HALL, JR.

TRINITY'S PAL IS BACK ...SLAM BANG ACTION!



Starring
BUD SPENCER • JACK PALANCE

Directed by
MAURIZIO LUCIDI • ERNESTO GASTALDI • LOUIS ENRIQUEZ BACALOV RELEASED BY WORLD WIDE FILMS

PG PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED
Some material may not be suitable for children under 10



COLOR

LEFT: Obscure ad mat from the sparsely released *IT CAN BE DONE, AMIGO!*

Pic was sold quickly to television where local station programmers slot it in time periods when noone watches!!!



by Wm. Connolly

Vamos A Matar, Companeros (shortened to Companeros for U.S. release) translates from Spanish as "Let's Go and Kill, Comrades!" I've read that director Sergio Corbucci has said that this film and its companion piece The Mercenary (a.k.a. A Professional Gun), were meant to be taken as serious political statements, but American audiences might wonder what he's talking about. However, in countries

like Argentina, where recognized political films like The Battle of Algiers are banned, the only way to get a political film shown is to disguise it as an adventure-comedy. In this circumstance, Companeros might be taken seriously as it brings up the subject of revolution, but for audiences in the U.S., the film doesn't really have much to say. Luckily, it's vastly entertaining as an adventure-comedy.

Like The Mercenary, Companeros is mostly told in one extended flashback. Under the opening credits, a young Mexican peasant woman, with her white lace marriage veil falling off, runs out of the adobe church, and down the dust-blown streets of a deserted south-of-the border village. She passes a lone man with glasses (whom we recognize as Fernando Rey) on top of a ladder trying to repair a shop sign, and he sadly watches her go. Finally she reaches the train station at the edge of the village where two men face each other, their hands near their holstered pistols. From the dialog between the two men, we learn that one, a fancy-dressed Swedish gunman named Yod Peterson (but called "Penguin" and played by Franco Nero with gleam in his clear blue eyes) wants to steal a jewel encrusted statue of the village's patron saint and that the other, an unwashed Mexican bandit/revolutionary called Basco (played by Cuban actor Tomas Milian with a Che Guevara beret) wants to stop him. The Penguin thinks back to when he and Basco first met, and thus begins the main portion of the story.

With a boxcar of weapons, Yod Peterson arrives in the village of San Fernando, hoping to make a profitable sale to the revolutionary General Mongo (played by Francisco Bodalo, who also played the leader of the Mexican bandits in Django). He is mistaken by Basco, a subordinate revolutionary officer, as an ally of Professor Xantos' (whom we see later is played by Fernando Rey) student revolutionaries (who consider General Mongo a bandit, and are thus being shot on sight by his men as well as the federal troops), is arrested, and will be subjected to "a classic squashing of the head" (as Basco calls being buried in the ground up to the neck and then having horses ride over the part which sticks out). Luckily Mongo arrives and saves 'the Penguin' (as Basco dubs him because of his snappy clothes). Unfortunately, the money with which Mongo plans to pay for the weapons is locked in a special safe which cannot be opened by dynamite. The only living person with the combination is Professor Xantos, who is being held in protective custody at a U.S. Army fort, where he went to ask for help in his fight to bring freedom for his people. Peterson and Basco must go and free Xantos in order that he might open the safe, the contents of which Mongo and Peterson plan to divide amongst themselves and screw the Revolution.

Fearing that Xantos' socialist ideals might hurt their businesses, representatives from a number of U.S. oil companies hire John (played with elan by Jack Palance) to kill the Professor. John is happy to take the fee (which includes a large pile of marijuana cigarettes in addition to the money), and is happy to have a chance to get even with Peterson, who left him with one hand nailed to a tree in Cuba when an arms shipment they sold proved to be defective, and the Swede felt the angry customers might be satisfied with only one of the partners. John was able to escape when his pet falcon, Marsha, flew to the rescue, and ate off the pinned hand.

Corbucci, who is reported to have begun his film career as a gag writer, peppers this film with a lot of very funny jokes, which may detract from the seriousness of the political

message, but makes for a very enjoyable viewing experience. The musical score, by Ennio Morricone, is one of his very best. The very exciting Companeros song seems out of place during the opening credits, but when it is used to hype up the action scenes, it is a real rouser! A second, more serious theme (which reminds me of the Cheyenne theme from Once Upon A Time in the West) is also very effective and memorable.

Other familiar faces which turn up in this film include: Eduardo Fajardo, who played Col. Jackson in Django, plays a Mexican Army Colonel here. Gerard Tichy plays a Lieutenant, and Tito Garcia plays El Tigre, one of Basco's men.



Movie Tie-Ins ^{By} ROBERT BAHN and Tim Ferrante

In today's world just about everything is collectable. No one looks upon the field of comic book collectors as a bunch of nitwits as was prevalent in its earliest phases of development. Whether it's comics or rusty nails, objects of a peculiar and/or nostalgic bent, someone will find reason enough to collect it. What this has to do with Italian western movie tie-in books beats the shit outta me!

One of the biggest publishers of these scarcities was Award Books. Between 1967 and 1973, these folks banged out several Spaghetti western tie-ins as well as a series inspired by The Man With No Name known as the "Dollar" series. Biggest contributor to this era was Joe Millard. Beginning with books based on the screenplays to For A Few Dollars More and The Good, The Bad & the Ugly, the Man With No Name continued his adventures in original novels. They were A Coffin Full of Dollars, The Devils Dollar Sign, Blood for a Dirty Dollar and lastly The Million Dollar Bloodhunt. So ended the Joe Millard 'Dollar' books. A fifth novel was added to the series called A Dollar To Die For and was written by Todhunter Ballard using the pseudonym Brian Fox. (Ballard also wrote under the name Sam Bowie) The writing style was similar to Millard.

Ballard/Fox wrote two more books, this time based on screenplays to two of the three Sabata films. Award issued Sabata and Return of Sabata and both books sported movie tie-in jackets. Same held true for Adios, Sabata depicting a full color shot of Yul Brynner on the cover. Popular Library issued this book and Alice Denham took on the novelization chore.

The last of the Award Book Italian western tie-ins is Duck You Sucker. Novelized by James Lewis, this book suffered the pains of miserable sales probably due to the fact that Duck You Sucker underwent the title change to A Fistful of Dynamite. Perhaps Award had had enough after that fiasco. While Return of Sabata was actually the final book released, Duck You Sucker must have left a foul taste in their mouths.

One of the most difficult books to find is Lancer Books tie-in to The Mercenary. A fantastic color photo of Franco Nero defiantly laughing atop a roof graces the front cover. Released in 1969, the screenplay was novelized by Burt Hirschfeld, a popular American author. Apparently distribution was not too great on this book as very few collectors seem to own it.

Recently unearthed was the fact that Deaf Smith & Johnny Ears had its screenplay put into book form. Using the original title of the film (Los Amigos), Dell Books used a cover that hinted of no association with a film...calling it The Amigos and written by Pico Rivera. Inspection of the inner front pages reveals that it was indeed based on the screenplay by Oscar Saul and Harry Essex. Essex later went on to form his own film distribution company called Boxoffice International specializing in low budget and exploitation.

In some cases, Italian westerns were based on American novels. Judas Gun was the basis for A Long Ride from Hell, The Killer From Yuma was filmed as Don't Turn the Other Cheek, Will Cook's Guns of North Texas was the basis for The Trampers and Ron Barkers' Der Tod Ritt Dienstags filmed as Day of Anger. There are others for certain...books that are 'borderline' cases that had film versions not hardcore Italian westerns.

On the following pages are reproductions of the covers to several of the books we spoke of here. While this article does not purport to be the definitive answer to Italian western tie-ins, we're reasonably sure that most are included. There are tie-ins to The Hunting Party, A Town Called Bastard and a British A Fistful of Dollars (Fistful was never published in the U.S., the one pictured is a later day Italian edition as part of a book series on Italian directors). W.A.I. welcomes any additions!

Leone Per un pugno di dollari



nuova universale capelli

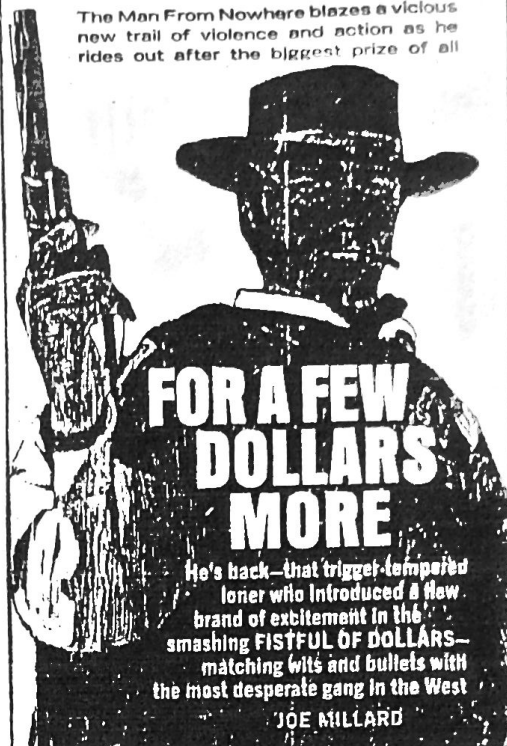
Later day Italian paperback to A FISTFUL OF DOLLARS. Part of a book series on Noted directors.



First edition cover

AN AWARD WESTERN
A454X 60¢ MAC

The Man From Nowhere blazes a vicious new trail of violence and action as he rides out after the biggest prize of all



He's back—that trigger-tempered loner who introduced a new brand of excitement in the smashing FISTFUL OF DOLLARS—matching wits and bullets with the most desperate gang in the West
JOE MILLARD

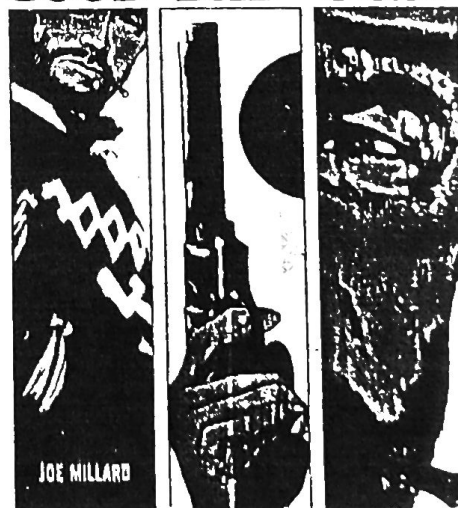
First American Italian western movie tie-in! Read that sentence three times fast...

AWARD BOOKS A918X 60¢ MAC

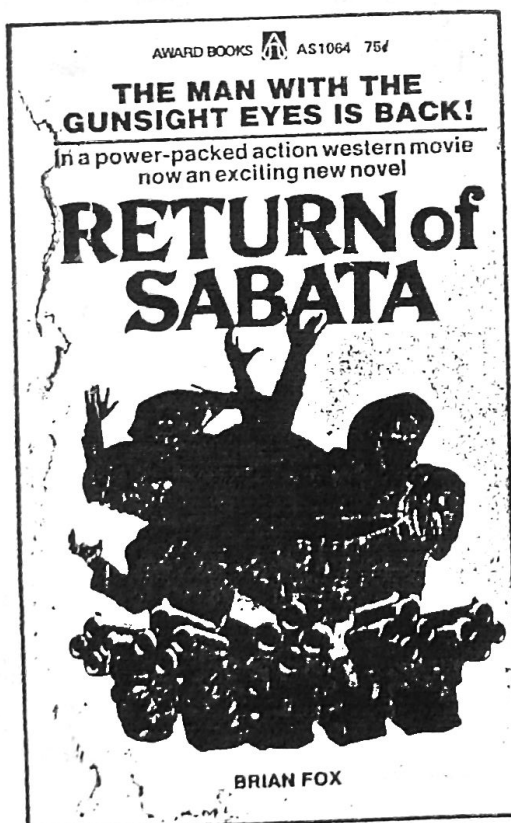
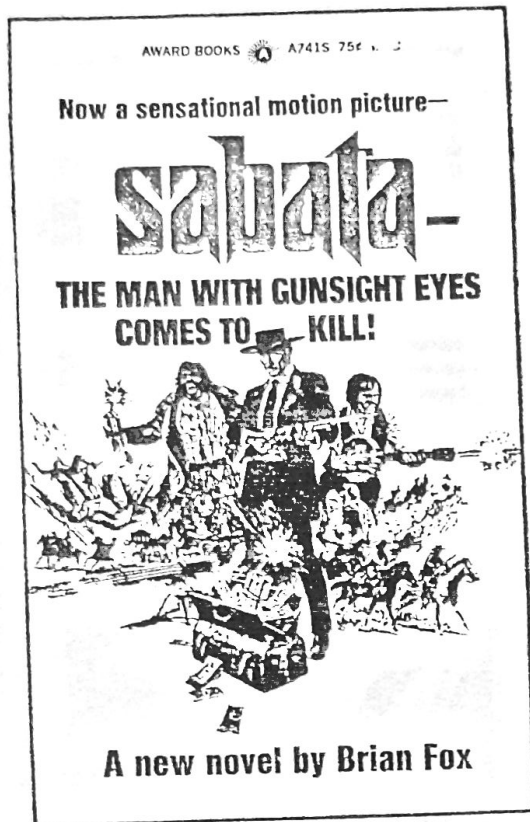
AN EXCITING
"Man With No Name"
WESTERN

The gun-ready hero of "For A Few Dollars More" returns in a hit film—now a blazing novel

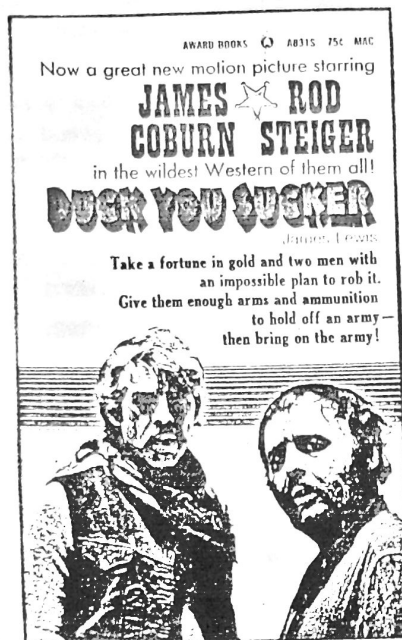
THE GOOD THE BAD THE UGLY



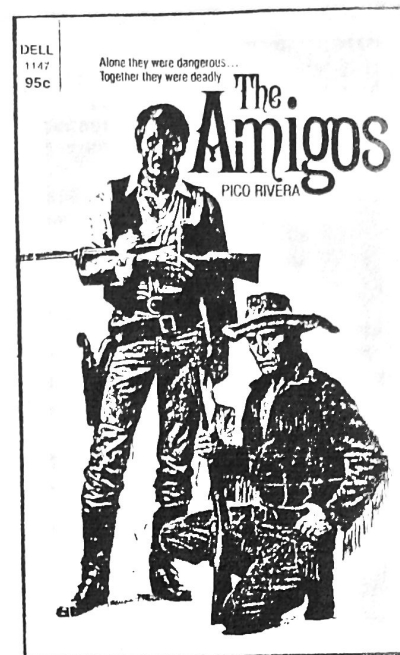
Reprint cover.



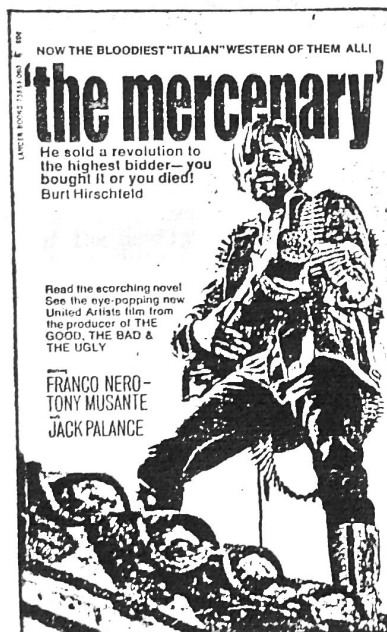
ABOVE and LEFT: The SABATA trilogy novelizations. Curious that Award Books only printed two out of the three. Of the three, RETURN OF SABATA seems to be the most difficult to find.



Movie title later changed to
A FISTFUL OF DYNAMITE!



Based on the screenplay to
DEAF SMITH AND JOHNNY EARS



LEFT: Ultra-scarce movie tie-in to
Sergio Corbucci's THE MERCENARY.

We'd be interested to know how many
readers own a copy of this paperback.
If you do, please write!!

Lee Van Cleef
dirty,
"ugly" and
downright
mean...

now
watch him
get
violent!



National General Pictures Presents
LEE VAN CLEEF
"DAY OF ANGER"

Technicolor® Techniscope®



A National General Pictures Release



LEE VAN CLEEF & **DAY of ANGER**

by **EARL HUDSON**

When one thinks of Italo-made westerns, one invariably thinks of Clint Eastwood or Lee Van Cleef. Eastwood, because in a way, he started it all, and Van Cleef because he probably made more westerns there than anyone else, and his continued popularity.

Thanks to his many previous westerns, Van Cleef was more than ready for the vigors of the Italian western. The horses were wild, the locations all very primitive, and the props and sets real ones! But it was all worthwhile because by the time *Day of Anger* was filmed in 1968, Van Cleef was commanding \$400,000.00 per picture! The script was tailor-made for Van Cleef as it called for him to portray a callous gunfighter, a man embittered by the years of war and death. Having done this type of character before, he felt right at home in the role of Frank Talby as he rode into what was supposed to be an Arizona town.

The time is after the Civil War and the place is a small, dusty town in the Arizona Territory, Frank Talby rides into this town as a professional gunfighter. His gunsight eyes and the lines on his face all point to a hard man and a hard life. Although the picture makes no mention of Talby's background, the audience is left to assume that like many others, he has lost everything in the war and has taken up gunfighting as a profession, even though he is against killing for the sake of (just) killing. In fact, when he rides into town and sees the townspeople abusing a young man, his immediate reaction is to put a stop to the mistreatment. He later befriends the young man, who is an orphan and whose name is Scott Mary. The role of Scott Mary is portrayed by Giuliano Gemma, who was once billed as Montgomery Wood in his western debut, *A Pistol for Ringo* (1966). He was later billed as John Wade (without him knowing it!) in the film *Sundance and the Kid* (1969). (See last issue for further info on this title!).

After finishing his business in the town, the gunfighter rides off and is then followed by the youngster. Seeing the respect commanded by Talby, Scott Mary begs to join him and learn the tricks of the trade. The gunfighters trail is a lonely one so Talby gives in and lets the boy trail along. Talby sees himself in Scott Mary and starts by showing the boy how to shoot and teaches him the code of the gunfighter. At this point, the two become friends of sorts and together they shoot their way out of several gun fights and battles with outlaw gangs. After all of this however, Scott Mary realizes that despite their friendship, Talby is a very callous and dangerous person and this leads to a conflict between them. It eventually leads to a gunfight and while putting his recent training to good use, Scott Mary ends up killing his tutor. Despite the fact that he has emerged victorious in the gunfight, Scott Mary realizes he has killed the only man who ever befriended him and that he too could become the vicious gunfighter Talby was. Disgusted by all of this, Scott Mary throws his guns into the dust and walks away from them.

Day of Anger was based on the novel 'Der Tod Ritt Dienstags' by Ron Barker. Produced by Alfonso Sansone and Enrico Chroschicky, pic was directed by Tonino Valerii. Riz Ortolani scored with exteriors shot in Spain and interiors at Rome. A running time of 112 minutes.

Much has already been written about Van Cleef in the pages of W.A.I. in an excellent article by Gary Dorst in issue # 1. To briefly update, Van Cleef has appeared in the short-lived tv series *The Master*, feature films *Captain Yankee* and *Codename: Wildgeese*. He currently splits his residence between Rome and Southern California.



MARK DAMON

Real Name: Allen Herskovitz
Born: 1935

by Tim
Ferrante

One of the stalwart regulars in the Italian western was none other than a son of poor Romanian immigrants, Mark Damon. His film and television spans some twenty years involving just about every genre. Recently described as a 'Horatio Alger of Hollywood', Damons years in Tinseltown and abroad would prove that description.

A business school graduate, which he put himself through, led to an acting course and a job at 20th Century-Fox. By 1961 Golden Globe awarded Damon "Newcomer of the Year" and was later selected as one of "Hollywood's Hottest Bachelors" by TV & Screen Magazine. After several television appearances, which included The Alfred Hitchcock Hour and 20th Century Hour, and a co-starring role in the Roger Corman film House of Usher, Damon

aspired to act in foreign arty films. He was briefly known as Marco Damone in some productions but we know what happened when he arrived in Italy!

Damon appeared in at least a dozen westerns, many of which will probably never reach the American shores...and much to his happiness we could assume! Johnny Yuma, Go For Broke (starring with John Ireland), and Let Them Rest... (reviewed in this issue) are some that come to mind. His foreign feature film appearances are nearly uncountable. Examples of his output include, Black Sabbath; The Young, The Evil and the Savage; Secret Agent 777: Operation Mystery; The Devils Wedding Night and Hannah, Queen of the Vampires (released here as Crypt of the Living Dead). Damon became fluent in German and Italian and garnered several influential friendships that would prove fruitful later on. Having filmed so many movies, he has great difficulty remembering them. When once asked to identify some publicity stills, he was unable to match it to it's title.

Realizing his acting career had become stagnant, Damon returned to the United States in the early seventies and began to produce and direct his own projects. Today, Mark Damon heads up one of Hollywoods most prestigious film companies, Producers Sales Organization (PSO). Originally PSO specialized in creating boxoffice champs out of poorly performing films. Using his knowledge from years past, PSO had the knack to take a boxoffice turkey like Endless Love and rework it's ad campaign and release it in foreign markets. With his expertise in what the European theatregoers and exhibitors needed for a boxoffice winner, Damon steered PSO into the corporate giant it is today. Most recently, a coventure deal with Delphi Organization for \$350 million placed PSO into the position of an important film production company.

Currently, PSO/Delphi has seven feature film projects in various stages of development and production. Look for Clan of the Cave Bear, The Navigator, 9½ Weeks and Lost Boys to come out of this newly formed company.

I think it safe to assume that Mark Damon has put a lid on his acting career for the present...! For the Italian western fan, we can only look to his past achievements in this genre and hope that one day all of his output will be available for viewing.

RIGHT: Scarce ad
mat for Johnny Yuma.



LET THEM REST

(1967)

by Eric Maché

(REQUISICANT) Italian Title,
(LET THEM REST) English Title,
(MÖGEN SIE IN FRIEDEN RUHEN;
GALGEN-KID) German Title.

Running Time: 78 minutes

Teli Films - Munich

Castere Films - Rome

Mancor Films - Rome

Chretien Films - Rome

Director: Carlo Lizzani

Producer: Carlo Lizzani

Music: Riz Ortolani

Cast: Lou Castel, Mark Damon,
Pier Paolo Pasolini,
Barbara Frey, Rossana
Kisman.



SYNOPSIS AND REVIEW:

"Let Them Rest" has a very bizarre, somewhat rambling, and frequently illogical plot that hinges on a great bloody massacre in the opening sequence.

A group of Mexicans confront a cavalry troupe in front of a fortress. The Mexican leader, with a young boy by his side, offers a valuable map to the cavalymen. A truce is made and a celebration follows. An officer named Ferguson (Mark Damon) rides up into the fortress. At his command a machine-gun starts to fire, and all the Mexican men, women, and children are brutally massacred. Only the leader's boy, wounded in the scalp, survives. He escapes, and is brought back to health by a travelling mormon preacher and his family. They raise the boy as their own.

Years later, the grown-up boy (Lou Castel) is in town with his adoptive parents and sister. His sister stares wistfully into the saloon window at the dancing girls and is admonished by her father. She runs away. Meanwhile, Castel is inadvertantly caught in the middle of a holdup, kills one of the bandits, and reads a

eulogy over the dead body from his prayer-book.

Weeks later, Castel stops in the bar to eat and runs into former members of Ferguson's cavalry outfit. Recognizing his sister as one of the saloon whores, Castel pays to see her. She tells him that she has been set up by Ferguson and that he is Castel's real brother. (???)

Castel rides out to Ferguson's villa where he runs into the ex-cavalrymen again. Ferguson and some very distinguished guests take Castel down to his wine cellar where they get drunk and play a sadistic game of shooting out lit candles held by a servant girl. The more drunk they get, the worse their aim becomes. When the girl finally cracks, Ferguson has her dragged away. Castel, still drunk, rides backwards on his horse into the desert. He is ambushed and shot by bandits, but kills them after their bullets lodge in his prayer-book.

Castel's sister is visited at the brothel by Ferguson's men, and when she tries to escape from them, they force her to take drugs. Castel arrives and sends her off to safety with an old Mexican mute. Ferguson and his men, thinking that Castel has the long-lost Mexican map, search his sister's room and interrogate the other whores.

Castel brings his sister back to health at the old mute's place, which is the ruined fortress from the Mexican massacre. The mute recognizes him as the legendary lone survivor of the massacre from the scar on his scalp. The old man offers him the map that Ferguson has been searching for. Running outside the fort, Castel sees skeletons of the massacre victims and begins to relive the bloody incident. He goes back inside to find the mute dead and his sister gone.

Castel goes looking for his sister in the saloon where Ferguson's men capture him and drag him bound behind a horse through the desert. They come to where Ferguson is waiting with Castel's sister tied to a tree. Ferguson stops his men from hanging Castel, demanding to know where the map is. Castel is brought back to the wine-cellar where he is tied upside-down and lowered into a barrel of wine. That night Ferguson's servant girl and the brothel's madam help him escape. Later, as the madam prays, she is strangled by Ferguson for betraying him.

As Castel burns the map at the fortress he is confronted by a group of Mexicans who recognize him as their massacred leader's boy. They enlist his help in avenging their people against Ferguson.

As Ferguson's men gamble in the saloon, Castel sneaks in and forms two nooses tied to the bar. The Mexicans provide a diversion posing as musicians. Castel holds Ferguson's men at gunpoint and forces one of them to take drugs. Then he makes him participate in a very bizarre showdown. Castel and the drugged man stand on stools and put their heads into the two nooses. When the clock strikes the hour they both draw their guns and Castel shoots the other's stool apart, hanging him. Ferguson's other men draw their guns and Castel kills them all.

After discovering the bodies in the saloon, Ferguson and the rest of his men surround Castel and a Mexican friend in the fortress. A bloody shootout follows and Ferguson destroys the fortress with dynamite. The Mexican is killed and Castel finds shelter inside the fortress' huge fallen bell. As each dynamite blast sounds, the bell rings, deafening him. Ferguson is sure he is buried underneath the rubble.

Later, Ferguson's men surround the remaining Mexicans as they gather the bones of the massacre victims for burial in front of the ruined fortress. The huge bell has been hung back in place. As Ferguson is about to have the Mexicans shot, he hears Castel's voice from inside the fortress. A machine-gun, manned by the Mexicans, appears and a blast is fired at Ferguson's men. They immediately desert him.

Ferguson enters the fortress to face Castel. He tries to commit suicide by shooting himself in the head, but Castel shoots him in both arms. Helpless, Ferguson falls into a hole under the bell. Castel shoots the rope holding up the bell, burying Ferguson beneath it.

The film ends very abruptly with the bell coming down- there are no end titles. This is a very strange film. It does not seem all that strange as you are viewing it - it's the culmination of many wierd little touches that hits you afterwards. For instance, after Castel kills his enemies he prays for their souls and reads from his prayer-book. There is the bizarre ritual of the hanging showdown. One of Ferguson's more perverse men constantly fondles a blonde-haired barbie doll. Another one uses drugs to disorient his victims. There is the surreal touch of the skeletons from the original massacre left strewn in front of the fortress years afterwards.

Strangest of all is Mark Damon's portrayal of Ferguson. It has to be seen to be believed. Damon plays the fey, sadistic Ferg-

uson with eyes that are heavily made up with enough eyeliner to give a drag queen competition. His hair is streaked and waved ever so carefully, and his clothes make him appear quite prissy. This eccentric character rarely executes the violence he revels in, opting to watch as others do it at his command. In the end, instead of shooting it out with Castel, he opts for suicide- the coward's way out.

Damon initiates a lot of S&M throughout the film, with his victims being beaten, tied up, and tortured. While Castel is tied by his feet and lowered repeatedly upside-down into a barrel of wine, Damon sits in a luxurious chair and sketches the scenario! There are enough bizarre elements like this to lead me to speculate that Pier Pasolini had more to do with this film than just making a cameo appearance as a character named Don Juan. Better known for making sick art films like "120 Days of Sodom", his personal life was pretty kinky, and he was snuffed out before his time.


Lizzani's direction is effective, lightening the sadistic overall mood with minor comedy touches throughout. In a recurring bit of vaudeville comedy, Castel's mormon hat falls off every time he bends over. When he gets drunk he rides his horse backwards. Lizanni adds a nice sensitive touch when Castel hides under the huge bell - Castel pulls out his flute to counteract the deafening reverberations caused by the dynamite.

The music by Riz Ortolani is pretty nondescript. It is reminiscent of the lushly orchestrated soundtracks of American Westerns from the 1950s. In fact, the only indication that this is an Italian Western score is a lone twangy electric guitar that introduces the various showdowns.


This is a terrific film, especially if you're in the mood for some offbeat entertainment. It certainly stands alone as an oddity in the Italian Western genre.

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