CONTENTS

THE BIG RACKET
IL GRANDE RACKET

CAST

Fabio Testi Nicola Palmieri
Vincent Gardenia Pepe
Renzo Palmer Luigi Giulti
Orso Maria Guerrini Giovanni Rossetti
Glauco Onorato Piero
Marcella Michelangeli Marcy
Romano Puppo Doringo
Antonio Marsina Giovanni Giuni
Salvatore Borgese Salvatore Velasci
Gianluigi Loffredo Rudy
Daniele Dublino Commissioner

CREW

Directed by **Enzo G. Castellari**
Story by **Arduino Maiuri** and **Massimo De Rita**
Screenplay by **Arduino Maiuri, Massimo De Rita** and **Enzo G. Castellari**
Produced by **Galliano Juso**
Production Manager **Lanfranco Ceccarelli**
Edited by **Gianfranco Amicucci**
Director of Photography **Marcello Masciocchi**
Music by **Guido and Maurizio De Angelis**
Production Designer **Francesco Vanorio**
Costume Designer **Luciano Sagoni**

THE HEROIN BUSTERS
LA VIA DELLA DROGA

CAST

Fabio Testi Fabio
David Hemmings Mike Hamilton
Sherry Buchanan Vera
Wolfango Soldati Gilo
Massimo Vanni Massimo
Angelo Ragusa Leroy's Henchman
Romano Puppo Leroy's 3rd-in-Command
Sergio Ruggeri Sergio
Johnny Loffredo Gianni
Leon Lenoir Cannabis Dealer
Gianni Orlando Leroy

CREW

Directed by **Enzo G. Castellari**
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Production Director **Maurizio Amati**
Edited by **Gianfranco Amicucci**
Director of Photography **Giovanni Bergamini**
Music by **Goblin**
Production Designer **Corrado Ricercato**
Costume Designer **Luciano Sagoni**

VIVA LA MUERTE!
ENZO G. CASTELLARI'S *THE BIG RACKET*

by Roberto Curti

"It's a fascist film. It's a vile film. It's an idiotic film," the incensed reviewer began.[1] The object of this venomous attack was Enzo G. Castellari's *The Big Racket* (*Il grande racket*, 1976). Diminishingly labeled poliziotteschi (implying they were a poor homemade version of the foreign crime films, polizieschi), the Italian urban crime films were usually treated harshly by critics, and *The Big Racket* was no exception. Not that audiences cared: by 1976 they were by far the most remunerative and solid thread in the Italian industry, alongside the sexy comedy in its various declinations. No wonder *The Big Racket* made business (about 1,500,000,000 lire) despite its V.M.18 rating, aided by a bankable star like Fabio Testi.

Castellari's previous entries in the genre were both quite different from each other: *High Crime* (*La polizia incrimina la legge assolve*, 1973) drew from *The French Connection* (1971) in its tale of a cop against a powerful drug ring, whereas *Street Law* (*Il cittadino si ribella*, 1974) depicted urban violence from the point of view of a middle-class citizen, portraying police forces as distant and powerless. What these movies had in common was the director's dynamic, energetic style and his knack for inventive camerawork, show-stopping stunts and grim violence, often presented in lingering slow-motion. *The Big Racket* was a knight's move of sorts, merging the two perspectives and pairing the figure of the lone avenger with that of the cop whose hands are tied by the rules of law (the rhetorical figure of 'tied hands' being a recurrent occurrence in poliziotteschi, either in the dialogue or title: see Luciano Ercoli's *Killer Cop* [*La polizia ha le mani legate*, 1975]).

Castellari got the offer to direct *The Big Racket* from producer Galliano Juso, right after wrapping the period comedy *The Loves and Times of Scaramouche* (*Le avventure e gli amori di Scaramouche*, 1976), starring Michael Sarrazin and Ursula Andress. Juso had helmed some successful crime films with his company Cinemaster, namely Fernando di Leo's *Shoot First, Die*

1 - Morando Morandini, "Il grande racket," *Il Giorno*, 12 September 1976.

Later (*Il poliziotto è marcio*, 1974) and *Kidnap Syndicate* (*La città è sconvolta: caccia spietata ai rapitori*, 1975) plus Bruno Corbucci's *Cop in Blue Jeans* (*Squadra antiscippo*, 1976), the first in the series starring Tomas Milian as maverick cop Nico Giraldi. Compared with the latter film, however, *The Big Racket* sported a decidedly more downbeat tone.

The term "racket" had been popping up more and more frequently in newspapers, with grisly tales about the misdeeds of criminal organizations that offered "protection" against the crimes they themselves committed (the so-called *pizzo*). It is not surprising, then, that Massimo De Rita's script took inspiration from crime news. Formerly a production manager for Galatea, De Rita has been one of the most consistent scriptwriters within the genre, often co-authoring his screenplays with Arduino "Dino" Maiuri and drawing from real-life figures and events, such as in his works for Carlo Lizzani (*The Violent Four* [*Banditi a Milano*, 1968]; *The Tough and the Mighty* [*Barbagia (La società del malessere)*, 1969]) or Tonino Valerii's *Go Gorilla Go* (*Vai gorilla*, 1975), also starring Testi. And yet, even though it started out as an 'instant' movie, taking *The Big Racket* as if it were yet another utterly reactionary self-revenge flick – as Morandini and other outraged critics did – would be misleading.

Previous examples of cops taking justice into their own hands included Enrico Maria Salerno in *The Police Serve the Citizens?* (*La polizia è al servizio del cittadino?*, 1973, directed by Castellari's uncle, Romolo Guerrieri) and Henry Silva in Umberto Lenzi's *Almost Human* (*Milano odia: la*


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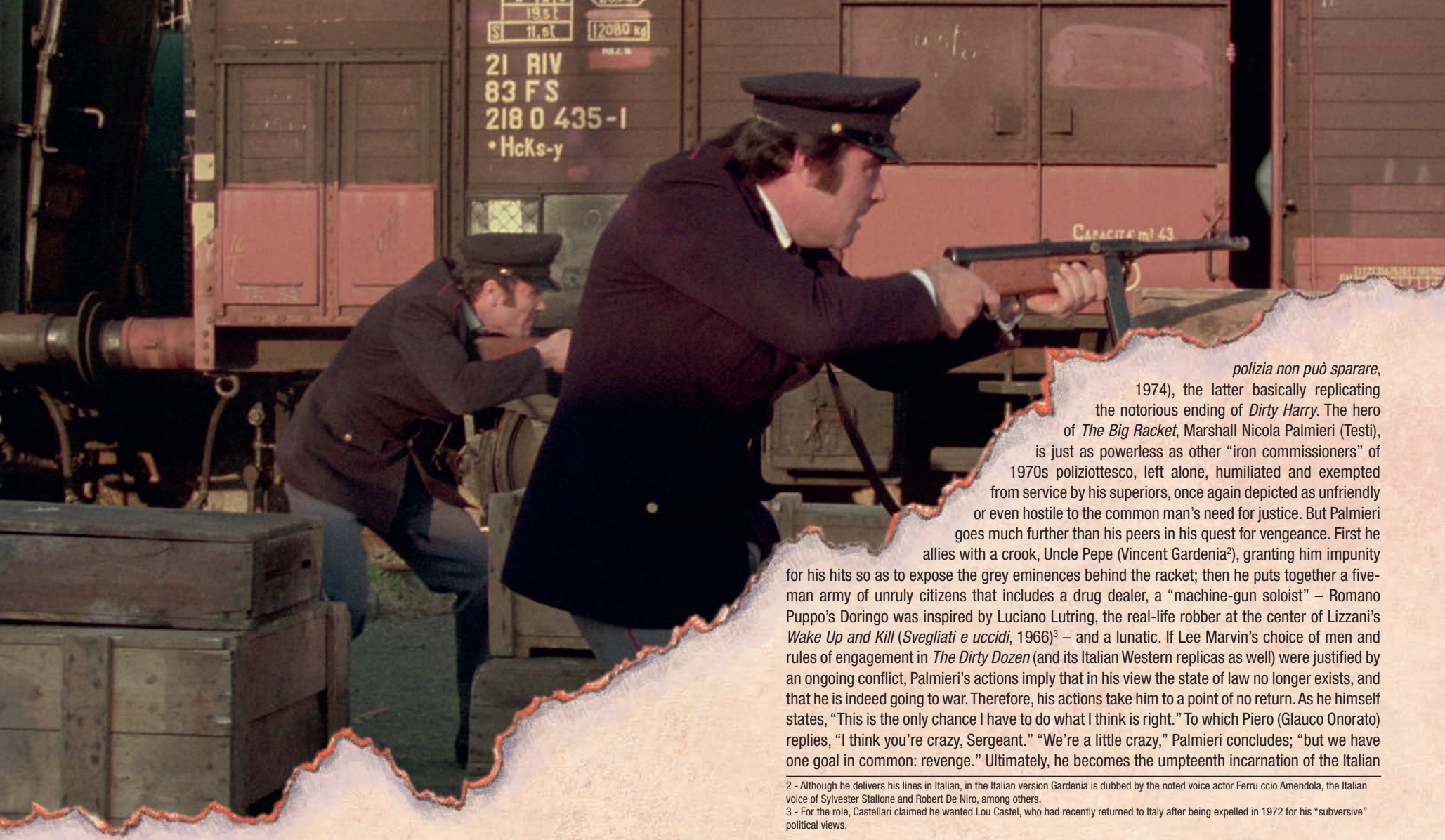
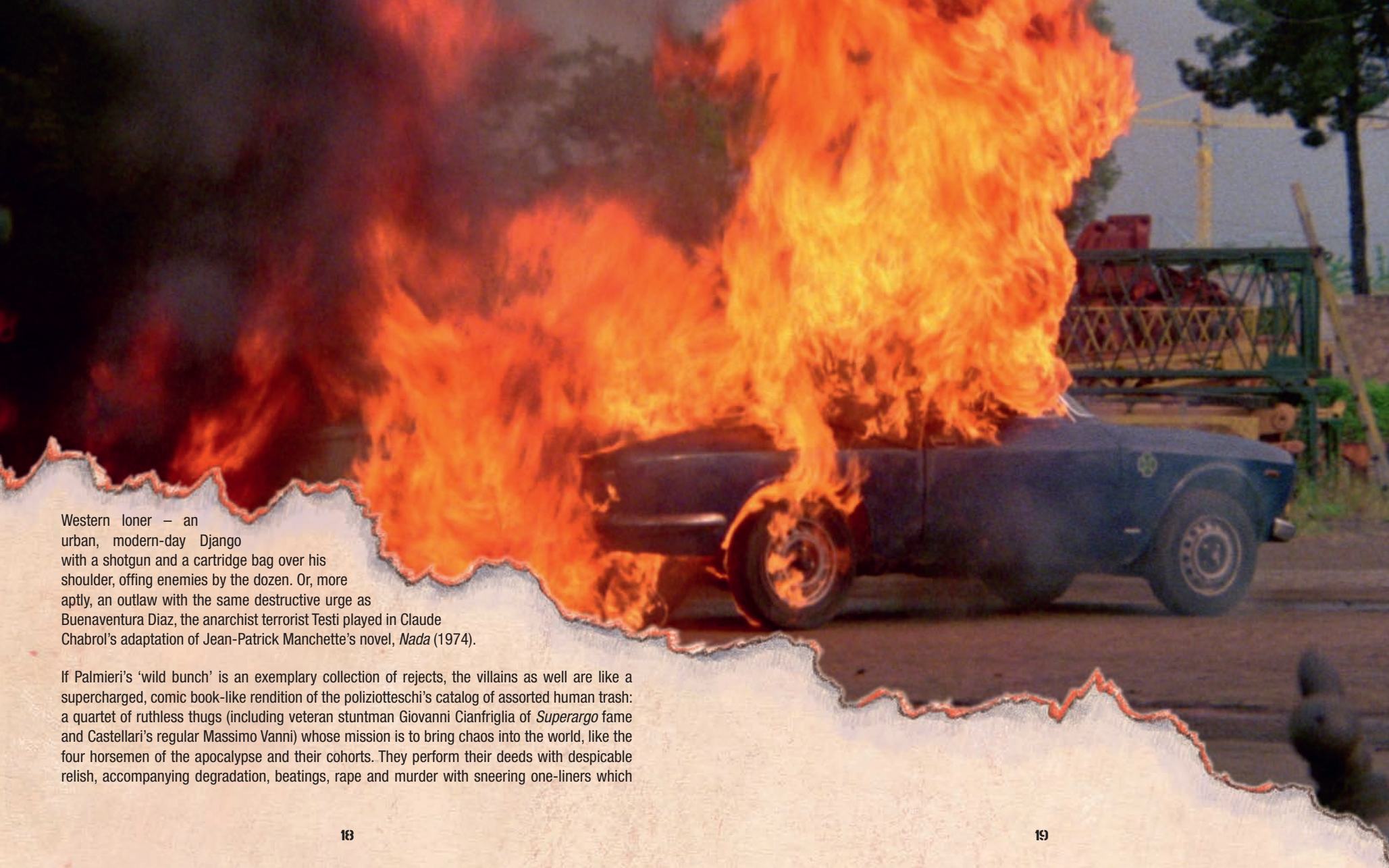


polizia non può sparare, 1974), the latter basically replicating the notorious ending of *Dirty Harry*. The hero of *The Big Racket*, Marshall Nicola Palmieri (Testi), is just as powerless as other "iron commissioners" of 1970s poliziottesco, left alone, humiliated and exempted from service by his superiors, once again depicted as unfriendly or even hostile to the common man's need for justice. But Palmieri goes much further than his peers in his quest for vengeance. First he allies with a crook, Uncle Pepe (Vincent Gardenia[2]), granting him impunity for his hits so as to expose the grey eminences behind the racket; then he puts together a five-man army of unruly citizens that includes a drug dealer, a "machine-gun soloist" – Romano Puppo's Doringo was inspired by Luciano Lutring, the real-life robber at the center of Lizzani's *Wake Up and Kill* (*Svegliati e uccidi*, 1966)[3] – and a lunatic. If Lee Marvin's choice of men and rules of engagement in *The Dirty Dozen* (and its Italian Western replicas as well) were justified by an ongoing conflict, Palmieri's actions imply that in his view the state of law no longer exists, and that he is indeed going to war. Therefore, his actions take him to a point of no return. As he himself states, "This is the only chance I have to do what I think is right." To which Piero (Glauco Onorato) replies, "I think you're crazy, Sergeant." "We're a little crazy," Palmieri concludes; "but we have one goal in common: revenge." Ultimately, he becomes the umpteenth incarnation of the Italian

2 - Although he delivers his lines in Italian, in the Italian version Gardenia is dubbed by the noted voice actor Ferru ccio Amendola, the Italian voice of Sylvester Stallone and Robert De Niro, among others.
3 - For the role, Castellari claimed he wanted Lou Castel, who had recently returned to Italy after being expelled in 1972 for his "subversive" political views.



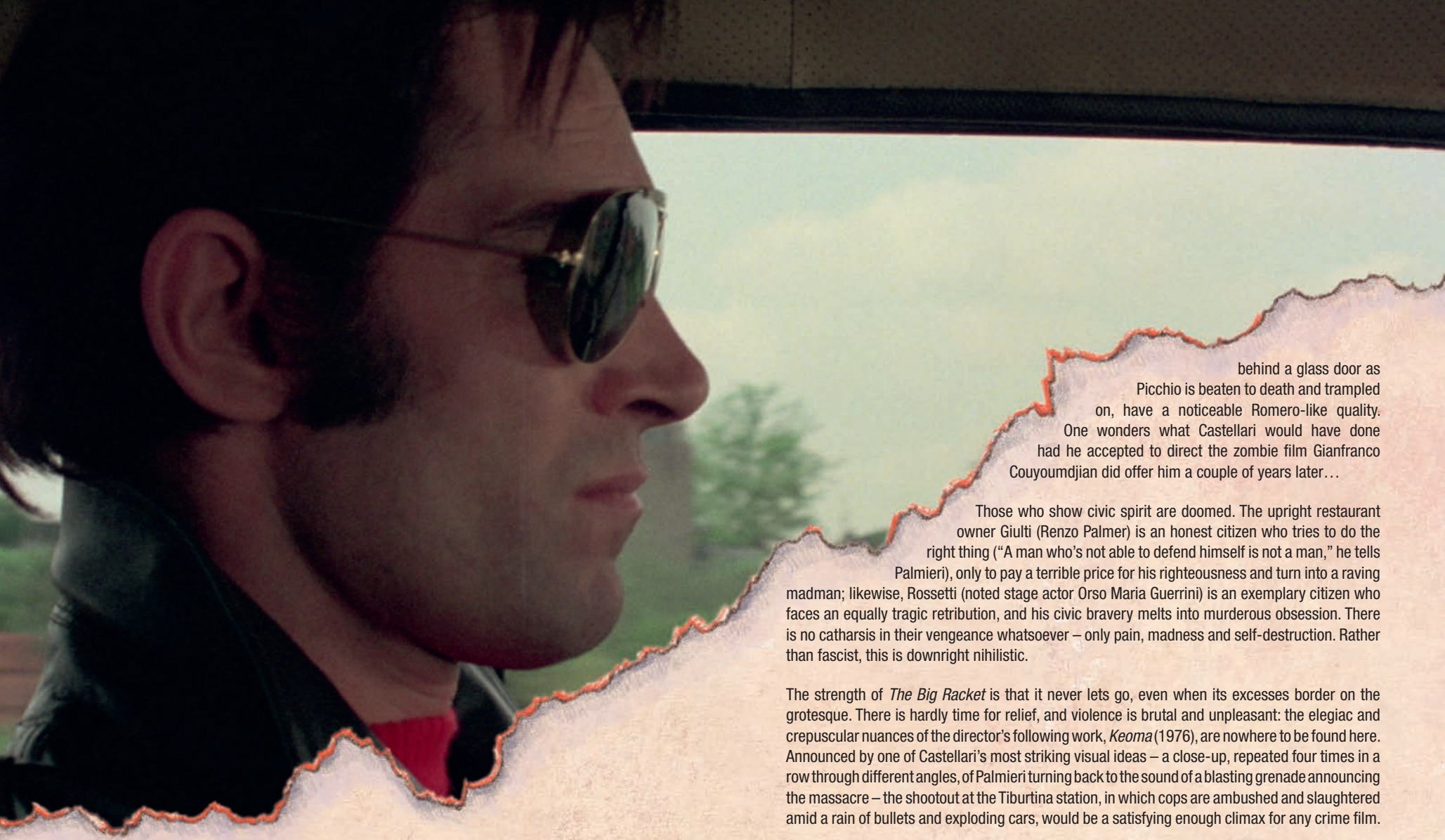
Western loner – an urban, modern-day Django with a shotgun and a cartridge bag over his shoulder, offing enemies by the dozen. Or, more aptly, an outlaw with the same destructive urge as Buenaventura Diaz, the anarchist terrorist Testi played in Claude Chabrol's adaptation of Jean-Patrick Manchette's novel, *Nada* (1974).

If Palmieri's 'wild bunch' is an exemplary collection of rejects, the villains as well are like a supercharged, comic book-like rendition of the poliziotteschi's catalog of assorted human trash: a quartet of ruthless thugs (including veteran stuntman Giovanni Cianfriglia of *Superargo* fame and Castellari's regular Massimo Vanni) whose mission is to bring chaos into the world, like the four horsemen of the apocalypse and their cohorts. They perform their deeds with despicable relish, accompanying degradation, beatings, rape and murder with sneering one-liners which

make Tomas Milian's histrionic villains look restrained in comparison; among them Marcella Michelangeli's character comes out as particularly hateful, a concentrate of over-the-top misogynist fury that leaves one breathless. Not only does she punch and kick like a man, usually aiming at the groin while spouting obscenities and profanities ("She's a lady," Vanni's character quips at one point), but she joyfully helps her male companions rape their victims, a trait that makes her one of the genre's vilest figures ever.

Even though its threadbare plot about a coalition among criminal gangs to sack and rule the city predates what would soon happen in Rome with the rise of the so-called Banda della Magliana – itself the subject of acclaimed novels, movies and TV series such as *Romanzo criminale* (2008–2010) – *The Big Racket* shows no pretense at a realistic canvas of the underworld's changing ways, unlike Lizzani and Di Leo's works. Whereas in crime films of the period social disorders are provoked and exacerbated for political purposes, either to overturn the government, undermine democracy or silence the opposition, here the final aim is reduced to money. "Pay, pay! […] It'll be like tax. And evasion is not acceptable." proclaims the grey eminence behind the racket, exposing to his allies his project of a state within the state. In a reversal of clichés, then, political stances become merely instrumental for the main goal – profit. The racketeers even maneuver a horde of left-wing protesters into occupying a supermarket and destroying the goods while shouting anti-capitalist slogans, merely to provoke even more confusion and distrust.

Both individuals and the masses are presented as weak and gullible: shop-owners (among them Castellari himself in a cameo) meekly bow their heads to the demands of the racket; the crowd blindly follows those who incite to violence and revenge. Take the sequence where a roaring multitude amasses outside the bank that Uncle Pepe and his young nephew Picchio (Ruggero Diella) have unsuccessfully tried to rob. The quartet of villains inflame the onlookers, spreading fake news and fueling anger, until the mob assaults the cops and lynches Picchio. Castellari repeatedly expressed his disinterest in the horror genre, but here the frantic shots of the raging horde, the close-ups of legs, hands and furious faces amassing outside the bank while Pepe watches in desperation from



behind a glass door as Picchio is beaten to death and trampled on, have a noticeable Romero-like quality. One wonders what Castellari would have done had he accepted to direct the zombie film Gianfranco Couyoumdjian did offer him a couple of years later…

Those who show civic spirit are doomed. The upright restaurant owner Giulti (Renzo Palmer) is an honest citizen who tries to do the right thing ("A man who's not able to defend himself is not a man," he tells Palmieri), only to pay a terrible price for his righteousness and turn into a raving madman; likewise, Rossetti (noted stage actor Orso Maria Guerrini) is an exemplary citizen who faces an equally tragic retribution, and his civic bravery melts into murderous obsession. There is no catharsis in their vengeance whatsoever – only pain, madness and self-destruction. Rather than fascist, this is downright nihilistic.

The strength of *The Big Racket* is that it never lets go, even when its excesses border on the grotesque. There is hardly time for relief, and violence is brutal and unpleasant: the elegiac and crepuscular nuances of the director's following work, *Keoma* (1976), are nowhere to be found here. Announced by one of Castellari's most striking visual ideas – a close-up, repeated four times in a row through different angles, of Palmieri turning back to the sound of a blasting grenade announcing the massacre – the shootout at the Tiburtina station, in which cops are ambushed and slaughtered amid a rain of bullets and exploding cars, would be a satisfying enough climax for any crime film.

In *The Big Racket*, it comes midway through, a sign that Castellari has many more tricks up his sleeve.

From then on, the movie becomes a nightmarish descent to hell, in which the genre's tools are taken to paradoxical extremes. The scene where Rossetti's wife (Anna Zinnemann) is savagely gang-raped and humiliated is painful to watch, even at a time when Italian cinema reveled in depictions of sexual violence. But Castellari is no hack, and he depicts the most harrowing moment – the gang rape of Giulti's underage daughter, played by the director's own daughter, Stefania – with powerful touches, alternating long shots of the act and close-ups of the victim, thus isolating the act in the distance in all its horror and at the same time dolefully registering her ordeal.

Castellari employs the camera eye as if it were the barrel of a gun (one of his favorite visuals is indeed the sight of someone appearing at the other end of a round-shaped hole, like through a viewfinder) and with the same precision Orso Maria Guerrini's character displays in skeet shooting. His use of slow-motion (including a reference to *Il cittadino si ribella* in the scene where Glauco Onorato's character is pursued by a car), clearly inspired by Peckinpah, is exhilarating, and his flair for locations – a drab-looking, industrial Rome of steel, bricks and mud, a backdrop of warehouses, silos and decaying factories invaded by wild greenery – conveys the story's dismal tones. The director virtually improvised the final massacre, a savage orgy of blood and bullets that easily stands the test of time, shot over the course of six days inside an abandoned plant ("Six nights of shootings, deaths, falls, oncoming bullets, a sea of blood, thousands of feet of film for the many slow-motion shots […] a riot!"[4]), coming up with diverse visual tricks and stunts for each character's demise.

But Castellari's most felicitous invention can be found in the early scene where Palmieri's car is pushed down a ditch, with the camera capturing Testi trapped inside the vehicle as it rolls over. For the scene, he had his special effects man Giovanni Corridori weld the car to a couple of enormous iron wheels. "'We'll chop off the engine; chop off the trunk and just leave the car interior. Then we'll turn the wheels by hand, so the interior turns over…' […] So, once we'd got the car interior in place, I put one camera in front of Fabio and the other at the side to shoot him in profile. In rotation, you could see the ground turning behind Fabio's head, and the stuff inside the car fell all over the place."[5] The effect is outstanding.

4 - Enzo G. Castellari, *Il bianco spara (autobiografia)*, Milan: Bloodbuster Edizioni, 2016, p. 305.
5 - Davide Pulici, "Il muscolo intelligente, Intervista a Enzo G. Castellari," in *Nocturno Dossier* n. 66, January 2008, p. 22.

Some scenes have a rarefied, almost abstract quality that goes beyond mere budget-saving shortcomings. Take the one where Doringo, Giulti and Pepe escape from prison, suggested via a sweeping hand-held camera shot circling around them interspersed with a subjective shot approaching a ladder leaning on the prison wall and another POV shot descending on the other side and fleeing. It looks like a dream, a feverish hallucination of freedom which leaves aside any attempt at plausibility and allows the viewer's imagination to fill the dots. Anything is possible, not the least that a 'dirty half-dozen' can destroy a whole army of thugs armed to the teeth. "I am immortal!" yells one of Castellari's "inglorious bastards" after several bullets have bounced against his metal exoskeleton, looking like a futuristic warrior made of flesh and steel.

Overall, Castellari's bleak vision depicts mid-1970s Italy as hopeless and savage as a barbaric era, an apocalyptic vision of sorts. There is no need of a nuclear war, for pandemonium is just around the corner. *The Big Racket* begins with the sound of the De Angelis brothers' ominous, bass-driven theme (modeled on Iron Butterfly's 'In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida'), with the thugs wearing protective helmets as if they belonged in a dystopian tale (Castellari's model being possibly the fearsome team players in *Rollerball* [1975]) and wreaking havoc under unreal pulsating red lights; it ends in a deserted industrial complex, amid clouds of smoke arising from burning wrecks, dead bodies scattered all around, steel and debris. It is a post-atomic landscape of sorts, like the ones Castellari will devise a few years later in such works as *1990: Bronx Warriors* (*1990 – I guerrieri del Bronx*, 1982). Amid the detritus, a lone survivor beats his gun on the ground in a hysterical frenzy. Not the savage excitement of the primate in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) after discovering the act of killing, but an incontrollable, primordial, blind urge for annihilation.

Roberto Curti is the author of* Italian Gothic Horror Films, 1970-1979 *as well as other books and essays on Italian cinema. He lives in Cortona, Italy

COPS OF TWO NATIONS: *THE HEROIN BUSTERS*

by Barry Forshaw

ON THE STREET OF DRUGS

While the tough poliziotteschi genre – the violent Italian police thrillers that are now being rediscovered through the medium of Blu-ray – may have borrowed from such US models as Don Siegel's *Dirty Harry* and William Friedkin's *The French Connection* (both 1971), it's often remarked that elements of social criticism were shoehorned in by Italian filmmakers among the flying bullets. And that's certainly true – the political turmoil of that country in the 1970s (not least the bombings instigated by a variety of very different groups) found its way into the popular film of the day and gave it a grit and substance that enhanced what were essentially entertainment products rather than arthouse movies. Nevertheless, there were films in which the emphasis was strictly on fast-moving hyperkinetic action, where the elements of characterization were provided less by the screenwriter or director than by the effective broad-brush work of Italian and Anglo-American actors.

A good example of this is Enzo G. Castellari's 1977 crime epic *The Heroin Busters* (*La via della droga*; the original title translates as 'the street of drugs'). But to say that the filmmakers spent less time on developing the relationship between the film's driven protagonists than on simply raising the pulse of the audience is not a criticism: Castellari was well aware that by hiring such charismatic actors as the Italian Fabio Testi and the British David Hemmings, character would be amply taken care of. In fact, it's interesting to note how the two actors approach their parts. Testi is one of those actors who is well aware that he is rather too good-looking to be a persuasive undercover cop, so he takes the approach so often adopted by his colleague Tomas Milian: basically, look scruffy. Here, Testi sports an unkempt beard, long hair and all the accoutrements of the anti-establishment hippie – a look that is dictated by the plot, given that

he is playing a cop masquerading as a law-breaking drug dealer. The deception is maintained for a time in the film, but one wonders if any members of the 1970s audience who first saw it in the cinema were taken in for a second by the imposture. Similarly, David Hemmings plays somewhat against type: rather than the hapless figure caught up in circumstances beyond his control (as in his two most celebrated films, Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up* [1966] and Dario Argento's *Deep Red* [*Profondo rosso*, 1975]), here he is a short-tempered, constantly frustrated policeman – very British compared with his Italian colleague. Hemmings' volatile cop is working for Interpol (explaining the presence of an Englishman in Italy); it's refreshing – in the English dub – to hear Hemmings using his own voice, and particularly to hear the frequent references to his 'arse' rather than the Americanized 'ass'. The relationship between the two cops is not delivered in static dialogue scenes – they are always on the run – but their edgy interactions more than compensate for a lack of nuance. And speaking of a lack of nuance, all of the criminal types (with the possible exception of one pathetic junkie) are played as irredeemable scumbags; this is perhaps the legacy of one key template for the Italian crime movie, Don Siegel's *Dirty Harry*, in which the villain played by Andy Robinson serves the sole, straightforward function of making the audience loathe him. Various much-employed Italian character actors supply these heavies in poliziotteschi, and all have to display a certain limber, active quality: nobody sits quietly behind a desk in this film, quietly threatening as they deliver orders – they're always on the move.

CUTTING TO THE CHASE

There is one aspect that Castellari chooses not to put center stage here: the implacable influence of the Mafia. While Italian directors such as Stelvio Massi and Antonio Margheriti were presenting a clear-eyed view of Mafia tactics, including the corruption that allowed the organization to flourish, Castellari managed to present the whole apparatus of international drug dealing – from the key upper-level suppliers to the street-level pushers – with no reference to organized crime. Nor is there any suggestion that the criminal structure reflects Italian society more widely – an approach adopted by many other poliziotteschi. Castellari is less interested in social commentary than in delivering the kind of visceral impact characteristic of the American crime genre, from the films of James Cagney and Edward G. Robinson onwards.

Interestingly, the structure of *The Heroin Busters* echoes not so much American examples of the crime film as the 1963 Terence Young Bond film *From Russia with Love*. A convoluted plot takes up the film's first two acts before the last third becomes essentially one lengthy chase, utilizing a variety of vehicles. The stunts and chases are delivered with much enthusiasm here, and it's easy to underestimate how well these are put across, given the casual skill with which they are performed – the now famous lack of attention to safety gives car and motorbike chases a real edge, with the viewer wondering just how many injuries were captured in footage that was not used.

RESOURCEFULNESS WITH NO RESOURCES: ENZO G. CASTELLARI

The career of the director Enzo G. Castellari largely represents a triumph of ambition and resourcefulness over limited material and limited budgets. As with so many of his Latin colleagues, time constraints were an eternal sword of Damocles over Castellari, and he frequently noted that he had insufficient time to develop the concepts of his films and refine the performances of the actors – which makes the things that he *did* manage to achieve all the more commendable (even though at times the demands of Italian production methods defeated him). One characteristic shared by many of his protagonists is a deeply cynical view of life – very much a characteristic of *The Heroin Busters*, in which both leading protagonists do their job without any real sense of purpose other than getting it done. Violence is, of course, a given in Castellari's universe, and it flourished in whatever genre he tackled.

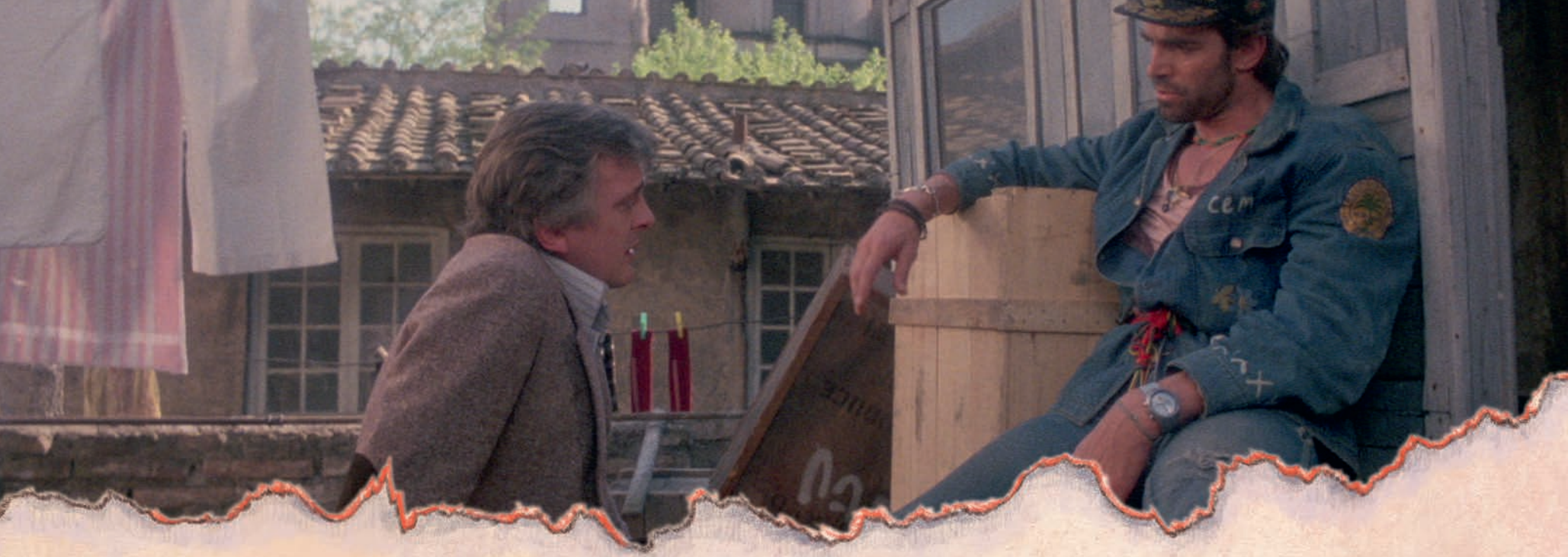
Like most of his contemporaries, the director took on whatever genre the market demanded at any given moment. Take, for instance, the glossy, ice-cold Italian thrillers, the gialli. Castellari delivered such efficient entries in the field as *The Cold Eyes of Fear* (*Gli occhi freddi della paura*, 1971), which features a very strangely photographed London as its setting and furnishes its

macabre excitement with some panache. There is a pre-echo here of *The Heroin Busters*, with the inclusion of a policeman who is not what he seems to be and who appears to relate to murderous thugs. Other characteristics of the director are evident in his Italian war film *Eagles over London* (*La battaglia d'Inghilterra*, 1969), which has American star Van Johnson shoehorned in for marquee value. What is most striking in the latter is the director's skill at making the most of his meagre monetary resources; here, the recreations of such spectacles as the Battle of Britain on a budget considerably more limited than the one the film of that name enjoyed are triumphs of invention over finances.

Although Castellari is known in British and American circles for his work in a variety of genres, from gialli to war films, the director is perhaps most at home in the field of the poliziotteschi. *Street Law* (*Il cittadino si ribella*, 1974), for instance, is another deeply cynical entry in the crime canon, with an inscrutable Franco Nero on a single-minded mission of vengeance after a brutal attack by thieves. The fact that the thieves have escaped justice (in an echo of Michael Winner's *Death Wish*, also 1974) gives Castellari an opportunity to indulge in an orgy of retributive violence, even conveying the breakdown of the central character in a more analytical fashion than in the bloodbath of Winner's film. Similarly, Castellari's *The Big Racket* (*Il grande racket*, 1976) is an accomplished piece, once again starring *The Heroin Busters*' Fabio Testi as another single-minded police inspector in a narrative quite as amoral and fatalistic as anything in the director's oeuvre.

NOT JUST A PRETTY FACE: FABIO TESTI

Fabio Testi, a mainstay of Italian exploitation films, resembles Luc Merenda, a French actor who worked in the same territory and also looked like a male model. Testi's performances, however, are customarily gritty, albeit usually delivered in the same middle register; directors such as Castellari were canny enough to try to move him out of his comfort zone. Massimo Dallamano, for instance, showcased his skills in the accomplished *What Have You Done to Solange?* (*Cosa avete fatto a Solange?*, 1972), with its narrative of a sexually sadistic killer preying on a girls' school. One of the actor's best roles is in Sergio Sollima's excellent *Revolver* (1973), where his charisma is used



to good advantage. Testi began his career as a stuntman, and his confident physicality stood him in good stead in a variety of genre parts, although he also appeared in such arthouse fare as De Sica's *The Garden of the Finzi Continis* (*Il giardino dei Finzi Contini*, 1970) and Giuseppe Patroni Griffi's '*Tis Pity She's a Whore* (*Addio fratello crudele*, 1971). In the late 2000s, the actor entered politics and ran for mayor of the city of Verona.

FROM ANTONIONI TO ARGENTO: DAVID HEMMINGS

Those who saw the bloated, rouged figure of David Hemmings in one of his last films, Ridley Scott's *Gladiator* (2000), might have had some difficulty aligning this image with the beautiful young man who had started his career as a child actor. After a variety of unexceptional roles, he achieved stardom as a trendy photographer in Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966) – so perfect in the role that it's hard to imagine the director's original choice, Sean Connery. Hemmings emerged with credit from Joshua Logan's misfiring musical *Camelot* (1967), drawing on the cynical edge of his personality for the villainous Mordred, and although he missed out on the leading role of Alex in Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), he exercised his comic chops in Roger Vadim's gaudy and inventive comic strip adaptation *Barbarella* (1968). However, it was his appearance in Argento's *Deep Red* that established the Italian career that would lead to *The Heroin Busters*. As his good looks deserted him, Hemmings proved to be a solid character actor – in fact, this is what stands him in good stead in Castellari's film.

ITALIAN PENNY-A-LINER: ERNESTO GASTALDI

Writers for hire in Britain who could turn out commercial work quickly were once called penny-a-liners, and some Italian screenwriters undoubtedly qualify for the description in terms of sheer productivity. There is one important Italian screenwriter who has managed to move from relative obscurity into a kind of mini-fame (at least among those who know their Italian movies): the amiable Ernesto Gastaldi (born 1934). He is also known to admirers of Italian film under the pseudonym 'Julian Berry'. Gastaldi had written science fiction and crime novels in the 1950s, but his debut film (in the horror vein) was *The Vampire and the Ballerina* (*L'amante del vampiro*),

directed by Renato Polselli in 1960. After this shaky start, the writer was to work on some of the most well-regarded films in the genre.

Gastaldi also worked for the director Sergio Martino, who has remarked on the importance of screenplays to his films – most of which, admittedly, he worked on himself after Gastaldi's efforts, notably *Your Vice Is a Locked Room and Only I Have the Key* (*Il tuo vizio è una stanza chiusa e solo io ne ho la chiave*, 1972**).** In 1973, Martino and Gastaldi came up with the memorable *I corpi presentano tracce di violenza carnale* ('The bodies present traces of carnal violence'), the title of which was shortened to *Torso*.

In the poliziotteschi genre, Gastaldi worked for Martino on the tongue-in-cheek thriller *The Suspicious Death of a Minor* (*Morte sospetta di una minorenne*, 1975), as well as writing the screenplay for Umberto Lenzi's savage crime thriller *Almost Human* (*Milano odia: la polizia non può sparare*, 1974), with Tomas Milian in typically scenery-chewing form. *The Violent Professionals* (*Milano trema: la polizia vuole giustizia*, 1973) is a key Gastaldi/Martino crime move starring Luc Merenda.

Despite the writer's principal relationship being with the director Sergio Martino – facilitating the tales of crime and murder at which both were so adept – Gastaldi's collaboration with Enzo G. Castellari produced the lively and colorful *The Heroin Busters*, which – with its two charismatic male leads – is a prime example of the poliziotteschi form, from its lethal gunplay to its screeching tires.

Barry Forshaw is the author of **Italian Cinema: Arthouse to Exploitation** ***and*** **British Crime Film.**

ABOUT THE RESTORATIONS

The Big Racket / Il grande racket and *The Heroin Busters / La via della droga* are presented in their original aspect ratio of 1.85:1 with Italian and English mono audio. Scanning and restoration work was completed at L'Immagine Ritrovata, Bologna and color grading was completed at R3Store Studios, London. The original 35mm camera negatives were scanned in 2K resolution.

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

All original materials used in this restoration were made available from Intramovies.

Restoration supervised by James White, Arrow Films

L'Immagine Ritrovata:
Gilles Barberis, Alessia Navantieri, Charlotte Oddo, Caterina Palpacelli, Davide Pozzi, Elena Tammaccaro

R3Store Studios:
Dan Crussell, Jo Griffin, Nathan Leaman-Hill, Rich Watson

Intramovies:
Paola Corvino, Paola Mantovani, Manuela Mazzone

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Disc and Booklet Produced by **Michael Mackenzie**
Executive Producers **Kevin Lambert, Francesco Simeoni**
Technical Producer **James White**
QC **Alan Simmons, Aidan Doyle**
Production Assistant **Samuel Thiery**
Blu-ray Mastering **The Engine House Media Services / Leroy Moore**
Subtitling **The Engine House Media Services**
Artwork **Colin Murdoch**
Design **Obviously Creative**

SPECIAL THANKS

Alex Agran, Gianfranco Amicucci, Jon Casbard, Enzo G. Castellari, Roberto Curti, Michele De Angelis, David Flint, Barry Forshaw, Nicola Longo, Jon Robertson, Adrian J. Smith, Fabio Testi, Massimo Vanni, Jonathan Zaurin