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# IF YOU MEET SARTANA... PRAY FOR YOUR DEATH

## CAST

Gianni Garko Sartana  
William Berger Lasky  
Klaus Kinski Morgan  
Fernando Sancho Tampico  
Sydney Chaplin Jeff Stewall  
Gianni Rizzo Al Hollman  
Andrea Scott Carlos Perdido  
Franco Pesce Dusty

## CREW

Directed by **Gianfranco Parolini**  
Produced by **Aldo Addobbati**  
Story **Luigi De Santis, Fabbio Piccioni** and **Adolfo Cagnacci**  
Screenplay **Renato Izzo, Gianfranco Parolini** and **Werner Hauff**  
Music **Piero Piccioni**  
Director of Photography **Sandro Mancori**  
Edited by **Edmond Lozzi**







# I AM SARTANA, YOUR ANGEL OF DEATH

## CAST

Gianni Garko Sartana  
 Frank Wolff Buddy Ben  
 Klaus Kinski Hot Head  
 Gordon Mitchell Deguejo  
 Ettore Manni Baxter Red  
 Sal Borgese Sheriff Fisher

## CREW

Directed by Giuliano Carnimeo  
 Produced by Aldo Addobbati and Paolo Moffa  
 Story Tito Carpi  
 Screenplay Tito Carpi and Enzo dell'Aquila  
 Music Vasco & Mancuso  
 Director of Photography Giovanni Bergamini  
 Edited by Ornella Micheli



# SARTANA'S HERE... TRADE YOUR PISTOL FOR A COFFIN

## CAST

George Hilton Sartana  
Charles Southwood Sabata  
Erika Blanc Trixie  
Piero Lulli Samuel Spencer  
Linda Sini Maldida  
Nello Pazzafini Mantas

## CREW

Directed by **Giuliano Carnimeo**  
Produced by **Sergio Borelli** and **Franco Palaggi**  
Story and Screenplay **Tito Carpi**  
Music **Francesco De Masi**  
Director of Photography **Stelvio Massi**  
Edited by **Ornella Micheli**







## HAVE A GOOD FUNERAL MY FRIEND... SARTANA WILL PAY

### CAST

Gianni Garko Sartana  
 Antonio Vilar Ronald Hoffman  
 Daniela Giordano Abigail Benson  
 Ivano Staccioli Blackie  
 George Wang Lee Tse Tung  
 Franco Ressel Samuel Piggot  
 Helga Liné Julie

### CREW

Directed by Giuliano Carnimeo  
 Produced by Sergio Borelli  
 Story Giovanni Simonelli  
 Screenplay Roberto Gianviti and Giovanni Simonelli  
 Music Bruno Nicolai  
 Director of Photography Stelvio Massi  
 Edited by Giuliana Attenni



# LIGHT THE FUSE... SARTANA IS COMING

## CAST

**Gianni Garko** Sartana  
**Nieves Navarro** Belle Johnson  
**Massimo Serato** Sheriff Jim Manassas  
**Piero Lulli** Grandville Fuller  
**Bruno Corazzari** Sam Puttnam

## CREW

Directed by **Giuliano Carnimeo**  
Produced by **Eduardo Manzanos Brochero** and **Luciano Martino**  
Story **Eduardo Manzanos Brochero**  
Screenplay **Eduardo Manzanos**, **Tito Carpi** and **Ernesto Gastaldi**  
Music **Bruno Nicolai**  
Director of Photography **Julio Ortas**  
Edited by **Ornella Micheli**







# IF YOU MEET SARTANA...

by Roberto Curti

"When a title such as *Se incontri Sartana digli che è un uomo morto* (If You Meet Sartana Tell Him He's A Dead Man) is spoofed by its very audience and becomes *Se incontri Sartana digli che è uno stronzo* (If You Meet Sartana Tell Him He's an Asshole), it means that the author has been unmasked, and the genre has lost credibility."<sup>1</sup> The movie Sergio Leone mentioned in his last interview as an example of the decadence of a genre doesn't actually exist; but it is significant that the father of the Italian Western took as example, even though liberally changing the title, ...*Se incontri Sartana prega per la tua morte* (If You Meet Sartana Pray for Your Death), the 1968 film by Gianfranco Parolini which introduced one of the EuroWestern's most popular icons.

Sartana is not the first serial hero of the Spaghetti Western, a title which belongs to the eponymous protagonist of Sergio Corbucci's *Django* (1966), with its countless rip-offs and in-name-only sequels, rather than to Duccio Tessari's Ringo (*A Pistol for Ringo/Una pistola per Ringo*, 1965). However, he is one of the most popular and commercially successful ones, and a name which marked its imagery deeply, with five 'official' films and a dozen of apocryphal titles.

Like its predecessors, Sartana is heavily linked to his main incarnation, Gianni Garko. Born in 1935 in the Croatian city of Zadar as Gianni Garcovich, the actor was certainly not an unknown face for the public when he donned the clothes of Sartana: after attending the acting school in Trieste, Garko made himself a name as one of the most promising young actors of Italian cinema, thanks to his participation in such films as Franco Rossi's *Death of a Friend* (*Morte di un amico*), Gillo Pontecorvo's *Kapò* (1960), Luciano Salce's *Crazy Desire* (*La voglia matta*, 1962) and Luigi Comencini's *Don Camillo in Moscow* (*Il compagno Don Camillo*, 1965). But, just like many other newcomers in Cinecittà, he often appeared in genre pictures, from *The Mongols* (*I mongoli*, 1961) to *Mole Men Against the Son of Hercules* (*Maciste, l'uomo più forte del mondo*, 1961) and *Saul and David* (*Saul e David*, 1964). Blond, handsome, with the Nordic features and pale blue eyes which characterised so many protagonists of Italian Western, Garko was not new to the genre: under the pseudonym Gary Hudson, he had even played a Django in *10,000 Dollars for a Massacre* (*10.000 dollari per un massacro*, 1967).

The name Sartana, Mexican-sounding and in tune with those of the typical Spaghetti Western heroes, has actually a funny meaning, being a term for 'frying pan' in the region of Abruzzo. Garko inherited it from *Blood at Sundown* (*1000 dollari sul nero*, 1966 aka *\$1,000 on the Black*), where he played a General Sartana who had nothing in common with Parolini's hero, being a sadistic villain who kissed the medal he donned on his chest before killing someone, and was finally dispatched by Anthony Steffen's hero. Cardone's film was a good commercial success in Italy and especially in Germany, where it was retitled *Sartana*. Producer Aldo Addobbati decided to exploit the name's popularity: as Garko recalled,

1 - Francesco Mininni, *Sergio Leone, Il Castoro Cinema*, Milan 1995, p. 11.







"He had me sign a contract and then showed me a German-language poster, and said: 'We'll call the film *Sartana* [...] Here you won't be the villain, but the hero, like Clint Eastwood.'"<sup>2</sup>

Garko claimed he had an active role in the development of the story and the titular character for what became the first film in the series, *If You Meet Sartana Pray for Your Death*. "I put a clause in the deal, that the story had to be of my own liking, and he [Addobbati] accepted. I was looking for something with more impact on the audience, because I'd realised that the romantic characters of cowboys seeking vengeance for their abused fiancées or wives had less and less appeal on the audience. The story had to be much more captivating, and with ironic, humorous touches."<sup>3</sup> Tessari had introduced these elements in his *Ringo* diptych, which nevertheless was centred on the theme of revenge, but Garko wanted something different. "When the producer suggested a couple of revenge stories I told him, 'I won't do it!' and rejected them. We went on like this for some months, and in the end, he told me, 'Well, then you bring me the idea for the story!' I was in touch with a couple of scriptwriters with whom I had become friends," the actor recalled, referring to Fabio Piccioni and Luigi De Santis, who wrote the first draft of the scenario together with Adolfo Cagnacci. "They brought an idea for me to read and I said it could work, because the main character was not sentimentally involved in the story."<sup>4</sup>

The idea of a bounty hunter who acts like a *deus ex machina* and outsmarts his opponents was not new – think, for instance, about Sergio Corbucci's *Ringo and His Golden Pistol* (*Johnny Oro*) and Tonino Valerii's *Taste of Killing* (*Per il gusto di uccidere*, both 1966). But the great merit of concocting an original and striking hero goes to Frank Kramer aka Gianfranco Parolini. He took over from Guido Zurlì, who was to be the original director and later claimed it was he who had imposed Garko as the lead to Addobbati. Parolini rewrote the script drastically – the financial participation of the West German company Parnass Film justified the inclusion of Werner Hauff with a scriptwriting credit, and the contribution of Renato Izzo was only nominal.<sup>5</sup> Piccioni later sold his original script to a different producer, with minimal variations and a different title.<sup>6</sup>

The director introduced extraneous elements to the Western, as Garko pointed out: "Parolini put much of his own into the story. He characterised Sartana with a black cloak like Lee Falk's Mandrake, and introduced gags featuring mechanical objects like in the James Bond films, with very peculiar effects."<sup>7</sup> The black-dressed Sartana is a dapper figure, in neat contrast with the unkempt, dusty or downright dirty appearance of most Western heroes: he wears a hat over the eyes, its chinstrap in the back, a mantle with red lining, a black jacket, a brocade vest and a crimson tie with a stickpin; he dons a pocket watch and a showy ring on his finger, and rides a white horse. Naturally, he is a skilled gunman, but his choice of weapon is peculiar: a small Derringer-type pistol which has both a cylinder for five cartridges (with the four playing card suit symbols printed on it) and four barrels which take one cartridge each. It is an obviously fake prop, which could not work in real life, but a truly impressive one nonetheless; it appears in Sartana's hands as if by magic, and he uses it incongruously for the long-distance shots with uncanny precision.

2 - Igor Grimaldi, *Lo chiamavano... Sartana*, "Nocturno Cinema" #10, June-July 1999, p. 56.

3 - Ibid., p. 58.

4 - Ibid.

5 - Marco Giusti, *Dizionario del western all'italiana*, Mondadori, Milano 2007, p. 458.

6 - The new script was entitled *My Name Is Travis Trident*.

7 - Grimaldi, *Lo chiamavano... Sartana*, p. 58.

If the way he manipulates the various parties to his own advantage, forming strategic and fleeting alliances, recalls Dashiell Hammett's Continental Op character (and, consequently, Joe in Leone's *A Fistful of Dollars*/ *Per un pugno di dollari* [1964]), sometimes Sartana looks indeed like a Western version of the James Bond-style superhero, a type which inspired also Fernando di Leo for the script of *God Made Them... I Kill Them* (*Dio li crea... io li ammazzo!*, 1968). But Parolini adds a distinct comic book component, which is evident in the character's ability of employing the most disparate resources to get rid of his enemies, with the athletic skills typical of Parolini's heroes. In fact, the blend of genres and the insistence on a comic book-ish element was not new to the director, who had employed a similar approach to other genres, such as the sword-and-sandal (*The Ten Gladiators*/ *I dieci gladiatori* [1963]; *The Three Avengers*/ *Gli invincibili tre* [1964]), the spy film (the Jo Walker series starring Tony Kendall and Brad Harris) and the sci-fi/caper pastiche (*The Three Fantastic Supermen*/ *I fantastici 3 Supermen* [1967]).

But Sartana – whose origins remain a mystery throughout the series – is not simply a gunman. He is also an illusionist, a magician of sorts, not only because he dresses like Mandrake. Illusionism adds a playful and surreal angle to the character, and will be developed in many Italian Westerns to come. See, for instance, Sartana's sleight of hand at the poker table, which leaves his opponents dumbfounded, almost hypnotised. It is also a sign of how some staples of the Hollywood Western, such as the poker game, are amplified and taken to absurd extremes by the Italians, and become a show-within-the-show: these sequences will often feature conjurers as consultants and stand-ins, playing elaborate card tricks for the camera. Moreover, as Garko wanted, Sartana has in common with Leone's hero the indolent indifference towards the opposite sex. Sometimes he pretends to accept women's erotic blandishments, only to better play his own cards, but usually he is imperturbable, cold and distant, even mocking: a trait which highlights his distance from human passions and renders him an almost diabolical figure.

The first Sartana film takes the mortuary component of the Italian Western to a self-conscious excess. If the eponymous hero in Django dragged a coffin behind him, Sartana introduces himself by saying "I am your pallbearer" (a catchphrase he will repeat in the following movies), becomes friends with the local undertaker (Franco Pesce), and seems to return from death in the climax (thanks to a trick borrowed from *A Fistful of Dollars*...). Starting from the title itself, death – associated with religion – becomes an irreverent, grotesque element, to be further developed in the near future, with heroes more and more characterised as priests/pallbearers/undertakers, sometimes with Latin-sounding names such as Requiescant, Alleluja, Te Deum, or the no less explicit Spirito Santo and Camposanto, up to the more openly laughable variations such as Trinità and Così Sia. The same applies to the ritual paraphernalia that come with it: funerals, hearses, coffins which can contain either dead bodies or sacks of gold, and a funeral parlour filled with marble busts and funeral crowns which, at a certain point, is described as the "antechamber of the afterlife". Two key sequences take place within it: the confrontation between Sartana and Morgan (Klaus Kinski), and the climactic duel, illuminated by the reddish light of an oscillating lamp, a bravura set-piece which alone makes the film worthwhile.

With Sartana, Italian Western severed the last umbilical cord with realism, and embraced the fantastic. "I feel as if a ghost were following me," a character says about him in one of the early scenes, and Sartana's appearances in the series are often sudden and unexpected, as if he materialised out of thin air. In Parolini's film his presence is announced by the eerie tune of his carillon watch (a recurrent







element in the genre since *For a Few Dollars More/Per qualche dollaro in più* [1965], but also used in a perturbing way in Riccardo Freda's *The Ghost/Lo spettro* [1963]) which becomes his sonic alter ego. Piero Piccioni's score, which relies on vertical piano and organ, underlines the movie's playful essence, and Parolini's direction displays a certain stylistic care, with a keen use of depth-of-field, zooms and an ample resort to tracking shots to give dynamism to the scenes. Garko called Parolini "an exuberant volcano. [...] He was always armed with great optimism, nothing would frighten him, there wasn't any issue he wouldn't solve; moreover, he filmed dozens of shots a day, and followed the schedule to perfection... a professionalism I rarely encountered in the movie business."<sup>8</sup>

Parolini pits his hero against an impressive trio of villains. Kinski is an equally dapper antagonist whom the script provides with an incongruous clothing detail such as the small bells attached to his spurs, but he is in the film for barely a handful of minutes and is despatched too soon, without ever coming across Sydney Chaplin, who plays a corrupt banker. Fernando Sancho is the vulgar, ignorant and sweaty "General" Tampico Mendoza, while William Berger is an icy-eyed bandit who kisses a medal on his chest (a nod to the original Sartana?) and always shoots his victims in the forehead. The supporting cast features many typical Italian Western mugs, such as actor/stuntman Sal Borgese, a regular presence in Parolini's films and the most longevous of the Three Supermen, as the Mexican bandit El Moreno. Parolini himself turns up in a cameo: he is the cigar-smoking poker player who then receives a good dose of lead from Sartana's pistol. His pseudonym sports the same irony as many aliases of the period: John Little Words (that is, the literal translation of his name and surname).

The budget was not conspicuous: only 137 million lire according to some sources, or possibly even less, just 121 million.<sup>9</sup> Filming in Spain was out of the question, and Parolini shot the exteriors entirely in the Lazio region: General Tampico's fort, for instance, is the oft-seen 'Villa Mussolini' (not the Duce's summer residence, as some might think, but a country house where Mussolini used to practice horse riding), just outside Rome.

*If You Meet Sartana Pray for Your Death* was released theatrically in Italy on August 14, 1968, and after just nine days it had grossed 30 million, thanks also to some promotional gimmicks such as a Western set, complete with stagecoach and horses, staged in the Roman cinema that hosted the premiere. Addobbati immediately announced a sequel, and there was rumour of a parody in the works starring Franco Franchi and Ciccio Ingrassia, which was never actually filmed. Two months later the first rip-off turned up: Alfonso Balcázar's *Sonora* (1968) was distributed by Edmondo Amati's Fida Cinematografica as *Sartana Does Not Forgive/Sartana non perdona*. Two more came out the following year, *Shadow of Sartana... Shadow of Your Death* (*Passa Sartana... è l'ombra della tua morte*) and *Four Came to Kill Sartana* (*...e vennero in quattro per uccidere Sartana*), both directed by Demofilo Fidani and starring Goffredo Scarciofolo, alias Jeff Cameron.

The second official *Sartana* produced by Addobbati, *I Am Sartana, Your Angel of Death* (*Sono Sartana, il vostro becchino*), came out in November 1969. Besides the title, the director had changed too. Parolini (who would reprise the idea of a character with almost supernatural powers, amplifying the ironic component, in the two *Sabata* films starring Lee Van Cleef) gave way to Giuliano Carnimeo. After

graduating at Rome's CSC, Carnimeo had been an assistant to the likes of Camillo Mastrocinque, Giorgio Simonelli and Sergio Grieco on a number of comedies, and had made his debut as director completing a comic Western with Franco and Ciccio started by Simonelli, *Two Sons of Ringo* (*I due figli di Ringo*, 1966). He went on to direct Westerns which displayed a keen sense of humour as well as an ironic and demystifying approach. Carnimeo highlighted the playful side of Sartana, as shown by the amusing, surreal opening credits: under an abstract red background, a dummy is dressed little by little with Sartana's trademark clothes, and eventually becomes animated. In his left hand, he has the small pistol, in his left a deck of poker cards which he uses for his magic tricks. Curiously, the result predates the opening titles of Mario Bava's *Lisa and the Devil* (*Lisa e il diavolo*, 1973), which featured Telly Savalas as a conjurer devil.

*I Am Sartana, Your Angel of Death* incorporates whodunit elements: who's the mysterious fake Sartana who robs the bank in the opening sequence? Who frames our hero as the robber, attracting a trio of bounty hunters eager to collect the \$10,000 reward? The script by Tito Carpi and Enzo Dell'Aquila gives little room to two of them, José Torres (Shadow) and Gordon Mitchell (Deguejo, a baroque country lord who lives in a villa with a black butler, and who turns up just in time for the final duel). The third, and more interesting of the adversaries is Klaus Kinski, as the gambling-addicted and unlucky Hot Head: an amusing role which Kinski seemingly relishes more than his usual hit-and-run special appearances. Unlike Parolini, Carnimeo didn't have any issue with the actor: "They had warned me that he had some weird violent fits, but I didn't happen to witness any of that, because in my film he always kept a professional behaviour. [...] He showed up in his beautiful Mercedes in the Western village main street, got out of the car, went to the costume and make-up area, and then on the set. Meticulous and precise like a Swiss watch."<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, the script gives Sartana a sidekick of sorts, the ragamuffin thief Buddy Ben (Frank Wolff), and the cast includes another important name of Italian cinema with Ettore Manni, formerly a beau in 1950s films – Alberto Lattuada's *She Wolf* (*La lupa*, 1953); Raffaello Matarazzo's *The Ship of Condemned Women* (*La nave delle donne maledette*, 1954); Michelangelo Antonioni's *Le amiche* (1955) – who had become a recurrent presence in genre cinema in supporting roles, save for some sparse auteur movies such as Tony Richardson's *Mademoiselle* (1966).

Sartana loses some of the mortuary features of the first episodes (but not his catchphrase, "I am your pallbearer") and is now portrayed as a conjurer of the Wild West, who not only displays a miraculous ability with cards but is also able to turn any object into a resourceful weapon, be it a spoon or a cart wheel. As Carnimeo recalled, "Garko collaborated on the writing of the story, coming up with many 'tricks' which distinguished his character. For example, having the gun appear out of nowhere in his hands, like a conjurer's trick. [...] Those were things he had in his repertoire, but he always came up with some more... Sartana was unpredictable."<sup>11</sup> Here as well Sartana rejects advances from the weaker sex, namely a Mexican matron and the entraîneuse Rebecca (Lina Franchi), and the film is notable for its lack of prominent female characters. Carnimeo's direction is less measured than Parolini's, and is characterised by the use of hand-held camera and amusing visual tricks: whenever a character is shot to death, the camera tilts, oscillates and bends down, mimicking his demise.

8 - Ibid.

9 - Giusti, *Dizionario del western all'italiana*, p. 459.

10 - Matteo Norcini and Stefano Ippoliti, *Un avvocato nel Far West. Intervista a Giuliano Carnimeo*, "Cine70 e dintorni" #5, Summer 2004, p. 7.

11 - Ibid.







In *I Am Sartana, Your Angel of Death*, the hero notices that whoever wears his hat and cloak could be mistaken for him: "This way, anyone can be Sartana." A line of dialogue which predates what would happen with *Sartana's Here... Trade Your Pistol for a Coffin* (*C'è Sartana... vendi la pistola e comprati la bara!*), coproduced by Colt Cinematografica and the Spanish Hispamer Films, and released in Italy in August 1970. In the meantime, there had been two more in-name-only sequels, which paired Sartana with another Spaghetti Western hero: Pasquale Squitieri's *Django Defies Sartana* (*Django sfida Sartana*, 1970), starring Tony Kendall (as Django) and George Ardisson (Sartana), and another Demofilo Fidani rip-off, *One Damned Day at Dawn... Django Meets Sartana!* (*Quel maledetto giorno d'inverno... Django e Sartana all'ultimo sangue*, 1970) starring Jack Betts (Django) and Fabio Testi (Sartana).

In *Sartana's Here... Trade Your Pistol for a Coffin*, this time it's not Garko who wears the hero's trademark costume, but George Hilton, which caused some to call it an apocryphal entry. As Carnimeo explained, "The character of Sartana had such an attractive sound for the audience that the producers said: 'Well, let's call him Sartana anyway, even though, instead of Garko, it's Hilton!' In the end, the audience reacted equally well."<sup>12</sup>

Hilton's Sartana sports some differences compared with the previous ones. Instead of the crimson tie, he sports a black bow-tie, and often resorts to disguises, exchanging his clothes with other people's. He loves hard-boiled eggs, like the commissioner played by Jeff Blynn in Mario Landi's ultra-gory *Giallo in Venice* (*Giallo a Venezia*, 1979) – in Italian cinema, nothing is created and nothing is destroyed... – and even though he has few opportunities to display his skills at poker, his conjurer tricks underline even more his inherent irony. Carnimeo highlights Sartana's almost magical ability to draw his tiny pistol from where nobody is expecting it to be, making it a recurring gag: Sartana pulls it out from behind a hat, from a boot and, most memorably, from inside a loaf of bread ("Hey, that's the first time I see it, what make is it?" "A sandwich gun") like a magician pulling a rabbit out of a hat. "Appearances are often deceptive, aren't they?" Sartana observes, after despatching a trio of gunmen, and the fun is to see where the weapon will turn up next time, like a three-card trick which always catches the opponents (and the viewer) off-guard.

This is also a more sympathetic Sartana, partly because of Hilton's features, more Mediterranean, warm and good-tempered; he is protective in an almost paternal way of a lame kid whom he released from a Mexican gang along with his mother ("You shouldn't swear in front of the boy," he even tells the woman). Just like the rip-offs, where the public's interest was solicited by pairing up heroes, halfway through *Sartana's Here... Trade Your Pistol for a Coffin* another iconic figure shows up: Sabata ("Sabbath" in the English version). However, as played by ephemeral EuroWestern's star Charles Southwood, this is not the same Sabata as that embodied by Van Cleef in Parolini's diptych, but rather Sartana's complementary twin: dapper, dressed in white, he carries an umbrella (like Tony Anthony in *The Stranger Returns/Un uomo, un cavallo, una pistola* [1967]) and a short-barrelled rifle, reads Shakespeare sonnets and Tennyson poems. The cast also features Erika Blanc as an ambiguous entraîneuse, plus a gallery of familiar faces, starting with the great Nello Pazzafini, whom the script gives one of the most amusing gags: he is the gunman who plays "I'm faster than Sartana... Sartana is faster than me..." with a sunflower, shooting the petals away one by one. And then there are the usual suspects: Carlo Gaddi, Piero Lulli, Marco Zuanelli, Luciano Rossi and Federico Boido (both memorable in the small roles of two

killer brothers, who repeat the famous scene of the dollar thrown into the spittoon from Howard Hawks' *Rio Bravo* [1959]).

*Sartana's Here... Trade Your Pistol for a Coffin* benefits enormously from the work of cinematographer Stelvio Massi, who comes up with many inventive shots and sequences, including a very well-staged poker game and a tightly-edited climactic duel which reprises and takes to bizarre heights another Leone trademark, the bravura competition between gunslingers, as Sartana and Sabata take turns chipping off each other's bow-tie, cigars, spurs, and other accessories with gunshots, and with Sartana pulling one more trick from his hat to triumph over his adversary.

Garko returned in the fourth of the series, *Have a Good Funeral My Friend... Sartana Will Pay* (*Buon funerale amigos!... paga Sartana*), produced by Flora Film and released in October 1970. Meanwhile, another spurious Sartana adventure had come out, the gloomy *Sartana in the Valley of Death* (*Sartana nella valle degli avvoltoi*) by Roberto Mauri, starring William Berger.<sup>13</sup> Another example of the tricks employed by Italian distributors is *Santana Kills Them All* (*Lo irritarono... e Santana fece piazza pulita*), directed by Rafael Romero Marchent and starring Gianni Garko: the main character was called Larry Santana and his appearance had nothing in common with Sartana, but the name was changed in the foreign versions, by merely replacing a consonant. A trick worthy of Sartana, indeed.

The aesthetic differences between Sartana in *Have a Good Funeral My Friend... Sartana Will Pay* and its predecessors are minimal: once looking younger and unshaven, now he seems older and sports a thick moustache. For the rest, Sartana displays a liking for Drambuie and, as usual, he professes an affinity for funeral practices: as the title gives away, he pays for the funeral of those he kills ("It's an old habit of mine"), and again makes friends with an undertaker, again played by Franco Pesce. But for the first time here Sartana gives in to human feelings. He is not insensitive to the charms of the beautiful Abigail (Daniela Giordano), whom he protects from those who want to take possession of the land she inherited; to keep an intimate atmosphere during a love scene, he lights off a candle by throwing one of his poker cards at the flame. The script, by Roberto Gianviti and Giovanni Simonelli, gives Sartana many one-liners as well as the usual assortment of gadgets: his pocket watch turns into a weapon, and he carries a deck of cards with edges sharp as razors (the character of Gambit in the *Daredevil* comics comes to mind); but there are many other bizarre ideas, such as a gun coming out of an open book (which recalls a 1930 crime novel by George Antheil, *Death in the Dark*). On top of that, the presence of George Wang as a gambling house owner allows for an embryonic crossover with the martial arts movie, with a duel scene between Sartana and his Oriental opponent.

The fourth Sartana film features a catchy Bruno Nicolai score but, as with the previous film, the major asset is Stelvio Massi's cinematography, characterised by a virtuoso use of focus/out-of-focus tricks and zooms, which result in several impressive sequences. "I must confess that Massi's interventions had a significant weight in the direction of the ensuing Sartana films," Garko pointed out. "It can almost be said that those films were made by two directors, Carnimeo and Massi. Carnimeo had a great sense of humour [...] and this was fundamental for the picaresque side. [...] But, as regards the technical part, the camera movements were conceived almost entirely by Stelvio Massi."<sup>14</sup>

13 - Several days before the Italian release, Berger was arrested in a drug bust with his wife Carol Lobravico, who died in a cell in the Pozzuoli hospital for the criminally insane.

14 - Grimaldi, *Lo chiamavano... Sartana*, p. 58.







The fifth in the series, Carnimeo's *Light the Fuse... Sartana Is Coming (Una nuvola di polvere... un grido di morte... arriva Sartana)* was released on Christmas Eve 1970, just two months after the previous chapter; but one more rip-off had turned up in the meantime, *Django and Sartana Are Coming... It's the End (Arrivano Django e Sartana... è la fine)*, signed by Dick Spitfire, alias Diego Spataro, but directed by Demofilo Fidani. An Italian-Spanish co-production, it benefitted from a more substantial budget granted by Luciano Martino and Eduardo Manzanos Brochero, and from a cast featuring Italian players (Piero Lulli, Massimo Serato, Bruno Corazzari) and Spanish ones (Susan Scott, José Jaspe, Frank Braña). Ernesto Gastaldi, who co-wrote the script with Tito Carpi (Brochero was credited as co-scriptwriter merely for co-production reasons), brought a touch of giallo to the film: the mystery plot is developed through different versions of a same story as told via flashbacks (as in Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon* [1950]), and includes a coded message left by a dying man which gives the clue to the solution. Sartana keeps his typical sacred-funereal appearance, to the point that he is mistaken for a priest in the opening sequence. But here he is first and foremost a detective, who investigates and solves a mystery. Even more than in the previous episodes, the ironic moments are almost cartoonish, spiced with black humour aplenty: Sartana comes out unharmed from various attempts on his life, while his adversaries end up like Wile E. Coyote. In the Turkish bath scene, a moment which looks as if it was lifted from a spy flick of the previous decade, he gets rid of a trio of clumsy assassins who end up killing each other.

What is more, Sartana displays a parade of playfully inventive gadgets, such as a tiny blowgun hidden inside a heel, a small cigarette lighter robot who turns into a bomb and, most memorably, a pipe organ which Sartana plays in the village main street. By playing its keys and couplers, the organ turns into a multi-faceted concoction with cannons and machine-guns, and blows away an entire army of enemies. It is the kind of over-the-top bravura sequence which brings the Spaghetti Western to a different terrain compared with its early days, closer to a slapstick pastiche of sorts, where violent death, no longer a shocking factor, becomes material for visual gags. Garko defended the character's evolution, though: "In the following Sartana films I achieved greater dexterity and acting skills, by perfecting the character. [...] Somehow, I protected Sartana, how Parolini had invented it, even though the stories changed [...] and moved towards the giallo or the grotesque."<sup>15</sup>

*Light the Fuse... Sartana Is Coming* was the series' last official instalment. Garko played a similar Western hero, Camposanto, in *A Bullet for a Stranger (Gli fumavano le Colt... lo chiamavano Camposanto)*, 1971), also directed by Carnimeo, but he rejected similar scripts, such as Carnimeo's two *Alleluja* films starring George Hilton, and moved on to other genres, such as the horror and the crime film. "I didn't squeeze the lemon as much as I could have. In that period, genres were juicy fruits," he commented.<sup>16</sup> Sartana kept living with other faces, in fraudulent and unfaithful incarnations. Sometimes he was just a name in the title, as in *Let's Go and Kill Sartana (Vamos a matar Sartana)*, 1971,<sup>17</sup> where the character doesn't even appear. The approach was increasingly cruder and cheaper, as with the diptych formed by *Trinity and Sartana Are Coming (Trinità e Sartana figli di...)* and *Alleluja & Sartana Are Sons... Sons of God (Alleluja e Sartana figli di... Dio)*, both released in 1972, where Sartana has the face of Robert Widmark, alias Alberto Dell'Acqua. Relying on broad comedy, in accordance with the tendency following

the success of *They Call Me Trinity (Lo chiamavano Trinità)*, 1970) these were forgettable comic by-products, shamelessly released in the provincial theatres to the audience's mockery, to scrape off a few dollars more.<sup>18</sup> Leone was right after all: the Italian Western died laughing.

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<sup>15</sup> - Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> - Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>17</sup> - The Spanish version is credited to George Martin who, according to Pinzauti, paid from his own pockets to finish the film.

<sup>18</sup> - A character named Sartana appears briefly also in the Franco & Ciccio spoof, *I due figli di Trinità* (1972, Osvlado Civirani), played by Pietro Torrisi.



# WESTERNS, ITALIAN STYLE: ONCE UPON A TIMELINE

by Howard Hughes

In the 1960s, Italian Westerns became hugely popular. First in Italy and throughout Continental Europe, and then internationally. Also known as 'Macaroni Westerns' and 'Westerns all'Italiana' ('Westerns, Italian Style'), they made superstars of several actors and sustained employment for a multitude of performers, craftspeople, technicians and musicians for well over a decade. This timeline traces the genre's highlights in Italy, from the late 1950s to the end of the 1970s.

The first 'Westerns all'Italiana', made at Cinecittà Studios in Rome, were black-and-white spoofs or comedy-dramas. *The Sheriff* (*La sceriffa*), released in Italy in August 1959, starred Tina Pica as a female sheriff of Neapolitan ancestry, and it was followed by *Terror of Oklahoma* (*Il terrore dell'Oklahoma*) in October. Colour cinematography was added to the comedy in the early 1960s, with the parodies *A Dollar of Fear* (*Un dollaro di fifa*, 1960), *The Magnificent Three* (*I magnifici tre*, 1961), *Heroes of the West* (*Gli eroi del West*) and *Twins from Texas* (*I gemelli del Texas*, both 1964). These starred popular Italian comic actors such as Raimondo Vianello, Ugo Tognazzi and Walter Chiari.

Having seen the soaring popularity of the Karl May adaptation *The Treasure of the Silver Lake* (*Der Schatz im Silbersee*, 1962) in Germany, Italian production company Atlantis Film became involved in the second May outing *Apache Gold* (*Winnetou – 1. Teil*, 1963), starring Lex Barker as frontiersman Old Shatterhand and Pierre Brice as Apache warrior Winnetou. The films remain among the most successful ever released in Germany and at the time out-grossed the James Bond movies. American import Richard Harrison starred in the early Italian-Spanish Western *Gunfight at Red Sands* (*Duello nel Texas* aka *Gringo*), released in September 1963. It featured the first Western to be scored by Ennio Morricone, though he was billed as 'Dan Savio'.



## 1964

In May, Sergio Corbucci released his first Western, *Massacre at Canyon Grande* (*Massacro al Grand Canyon* aka *Red Pastures*). It was a range war Western, starring James Mitchum (son of Hollywood legend Robert) and George Ardisson. The first spoof Western of Sicilian comedy duo Franco Franchi and Ciccio Ingrassia, *Two Gangsters in the Far West* (*Due mafiosi nel Far West*), transported the pair from their native Mediterranean island to the Wild West, where they inherited a gold mine. The genre's first milestone, *A Fistful of Dollars* (*Per un pugno di dollari*) was released in Italy in September. Directed by 'Bob Robertson', the film reinvented the Western for a new era. American TV actor Clint Eastwood starred as poncho-clad gunfighter Joe. For international release, ad campaigns rebranded Joe as the Man with No Name, while Robertson was revealed to be Italian Sergio Leone. Ennio Morricone provided a genre-defining score (again billed as 'Dan Savio') and Gian Maria Volontè was the memorable villain, Ramon. It was later released in the US in January 1967 and in the UK the following June.

Made at the same time as Leone's first Western, *Bullets Don't Argue* (*Le pistole non discutono* aka *Pistols Don't Argue*) is now all but forgotten today. Its faulty frontier history had Pat Garrett (Rod Cameron) on the trail of Billy and George Clanton (Horst Frank and Ángel Aranda). Morricone provided a more traditional score for this staid Western. *Winnetou: Last of the Renegades* (*Winnetou – 2. Teil* aka *Winnetou: The Red Gentleman*) featured the first Western appearance of a young Italian actor named Mario Girotti; years later, he became a star having adopted the professional name of 'Terence Hill'. Mario Bava's first Western, *The Road to Fort Alamo* (*La strada per Forte Alamo*), was a meandering cavalry-and-Indians adventure. Regular Bava collaborator Cameron Mitchell starred in Corbucci's second Western, *Minnesota Clay*, as famed gunfighter Clay Mullighan, who returns to his hometown of Mesa Encantada looking for revenge. Traditional Western heroes were popular subject matter and November 1964 saw Gordon Scott starring as Colonel Bill Cody, aka Buffalo Bill, in the cowboys-and-Indians outing *Buffalo Bill, Hero of the West* (*Buffalo Bill, l'eroe del far west*) directed by 'John W. Fordson' (aka Mario Costa). *Gunmen of the Rio Grande* (*Sfida a Rio Bravo*) featured Guy Madison as Wyatt Earp and Carolyn Davys as his darling Clementine.





1965

As *A Fistful of Dollars* broke all records in Italy, outperforming films headlining established stars such as Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni, Franco Franchi and Ciccio Ingrassia released their spoof *For a Fist in the Eye* (*Per un pugno nell'occhio*) in April, which used the same sets and locations as Sergio Leone's hit. In May, Giuliano Gemma's Western debut hit Italian cinemas. Directed by Duccio Tessari, *A Pistol for Ringo* (*Una pistola per Ringo*) made him a superstar in Italy and Spain, even though he was billed under the pseudonym 'Montgomery Wood'. He was Clint Eastwood's biggest rival at the Italian box office at the time and the film inspired many copycat Ringos. Gemma followed it up with *One Silver Dollar* (*Un dollaro bucato* aka *Blood for a Silver Dollar*) in August, and *The Return of Ringo* (*Il ritorno di Ringo*) and *Adiós Gringo* in December. Balcázar Studios in Barcelona and Edmondo Amati's Fida Cinematografica were behind the first of the Ringo imitations with *One Hundred Thousand Dollars for Ringo* (*100.00 dollari per Ringo*), released in Italy in November 1965 and in Spain in July 1966. It starred Richard Harrison as a gunman who cleans up Rainbow Valley.



All eyes were on Leone's sequel to *A Fistful of Dollars*, which arrived in Italy in time for Christmas and went on to become the biggest grossing film of the year. *For a Few Dollars More* (*Per qualche dollaro in più*) saw Eastwood and Lee Van Cleef playing bounty hunters who join forces to track down wanted bandit El Indio (Gian Maria Volontè). The ballistic hardware used by Van Cleef's Colonel Mortimer was massively influential, as was Morricone's twangy score. It remains the most successful of all Leone's films in his home country, but it had to wait until May 1967 to be released in the US and October of that year in the UK.







## 1966

April saw the arrival of another iconic hero in *Django*, directed by Sergio Corbucci. Franco Nero's avenger dragged a coffin and his machine gun levelled the opposition, while Luis Enriquez Bacalov's title song went on to appear in Quentin Tarantino's *Django Unchained* (2012). In Europe, *Django* was as influential as Sergio Leone's first two films and launched dozens of imitators, rip-offs and pretend-sequels, but Nero only officially returned to the role in 1987 for *Django Strikes Again* (*Django 2 – Il grande ritorno*). Many of the actor's Westerns, such as *Texas, Adios* (*Texas, addio*) and *Massacre Time* (*Le colt cantarono a morte e fu... tempo di massacre* aka *The Brute and the Beast*), both made the same year as *Django*, were released as Django movies in Germany, France, Holland and elsewhere in Europe. The same year, Anthony Steffen played Django for the first time in *A Few Dollars for Django* (*Pochi dollari per Django*), while Dutch actor Roel Bos became 'Glen Saxson' to star in *Django Shoots First* (*Django spara per primo*), also released in 1966.

Mark Damon played Jonathan Gonzales alias Johnny Ringo, in Corbucci's *Johnny Oro*, retitled *Ringo and His Golden Pistol* by MGM for international release. August saw the release of *For a Few Dollars Less* (*Per qualche dollaro in meno*), a daft parody of Leone's sequel, based on a story by Corbucci and his brother Bruno. Giuliano Gemma continued his winning run at the box-office, with *Man from Nowhere* (*Arizona Colt*) and *Fort Yuma Gold* (*Per pochi dollari ancora* aka *For a Few Extra Dollars*) – the latter marketed as a follow-up to Leone's films. In November, *The Bounty Killer* (*El precio de un hombre* aka *The Ugly Ones*) was notable for the debut of Cuban actor Tomas Milian, as renegade José Gómez. Corbucci's fifth Western, *Navajo Joe*, pitted Burt Reynolds and Aldo Sambrell against each other (as a vengeful Native American and vicious scalphunter respectively), and featured a classic score by Ennio Morricone. Damiano Damiani's political Western *A Bullet for the General* (*Quién Sabe?*) was released in December, starring Lou Castel, Gian Maria Volontè and Klaus Kinski. Franco Franchi and Ciccio Ingrassia took aim at *For a Few Dollars More* in their spoof *Two Sons of Ringo* (*I due figli di Ringo*), with George Hilton as bounty hunter Joe.

Leone, Clint Eastwood and Lee Van Cleef returned with *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (*Il buono, il brutto, il cattivo*) in December. An epic American Civil War picture and the biggest film of the year in Italy, it starred Eastwood as a bounty hunter, Van Cleef as a hired gun and Eli Wallach as a Mexican bandit who are searching for a missing Confederate payroll, and was originally going to be released under the title *The Man with No Name*. A US-Italian co-production, between United Artists and Alberto Grimaldi's PEA, it even managed to top the top music charts in the UK in 1968 when Hugo Montenegro covered Morricone's iconic theme tune.



## 1967

January saw the first appearance of Tony Anthony's 'Stranger', a character conceived as a 'streetwise punk' version of the Man with No Name. *For a Dollar in the Teeth* (*Un dollaro tra i denti*) was successfully released as *A Stranger in Town* in the US in April 1968. Giulio Questi's notoriously violent *Se sei vivo spara*, which gave Tomas Milian his first lead role, ran into trouble in Italy in January and the film ended up in court. A severely truncated edition was rebranded as Django movie internationally, as *Django Kill... If You Live, Shoot!*. Sergio Corbucci's sixth Western, *The Hellbenders* (*I crudeli* aka *The Cruel Ones*), features a coffin that's even more widely travelled than Django's, as a Confederate Colonel (Hollywood star Joseph Cotten) tries to reboot the Civil War with a fortune in stolen cash. Gianni Garko appeared under the pseudonym 'Gary Hudson' to play Django in *10,000 Dollars Blood Money* (*10.000 dollari per un massacro*). After *The Son of Kong* (1933), *Son of Frankenstein* (1939) and *Son of Godzilla* (*Kaijūtō no kessen: Gojira no musuko*, 1967) then *Son of Django* (*Il figlio di Django*) was hardly a surprise, with Gabriele Tinti cast as Jeff Tracy, the famed gunfighter's offspring.

Politics continued to be on the agenda and Lee Van Cleef consolidated his European fame with *The Big Gundown* (*La resa dei conti*) in March. Sergio Sollima's film depicted a manhunt for a Mexican rapist and murderer played by Milian. Ennio Morricone's score is another masterclass in composition. The leftfield, low-key *Requiescant* (aka *Kill and Pray*) was of note for an onscreen appearance by Italian director Pier Paolo Pasolini as a Mexican revolutionary priest, and demonstrated the diverse names the genre attracted.

*Payment in Blood* (*7 winchester per un massacro* aka *Renegade Riders*), the official Western directorial debut of Enzo Girolami (better known as Enzo G. Castellari), riffed on *For a Few Dollars More* and *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* in its search for hidden Confederate gold. Anthony was back as the Stranger in *A Man, A Horse, A Gun* (*Un uomo, un cavallo, una pistola*), which appeared Stateside as *The Stranger Returns*. Ferdinando Baldi's concoction *Little Rita* (*Little Rita nel West*) was a musical, with 22-year-old pop singer Rita Pavone punching, shooting, singing and dancing her way through the bad guys, including Django and Ringo. Meanwhile the inevitable parodies of Sergio Leone's third successful Western arrived from Franco Franchi and Ciccio Ingrassia with *The Handsome, the Ugly, the Stupid* (*Il bello, il brutto, il cretino*) and *Two Ringos from Texas* (*Due rringos nel Texas*), the latter featuring a talking horse and a fortune buried in the grave of Archie Stanton. *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* also cast a long shadow over Castellari's *Vado... l'ammazzo e torno*, though it was called *Any Gun Can Play* and *For a Few Bullets More* internationally. In its opening sequence, George Hilton's Stranger gunned down Django, Colonel Mortimer and the Man with No Name. It was the director's biggest Western hit in Italy.

Van Cleef was cast alongside the younger John Phillip Law in Giulio Petroni's revenge Western *Death Rides a Horse* (*Da uomo a uomo*), released in Italy in August. The first teaming of Terence Hill and Bud Spencer (real name Carlo Pedersoli), *God Forgives... I Don't!* (*Dio perdona... io no!* aka *Blood River*) was released in Italy in October and became the biggest grossing film in Italy for the year. The other massive hit Western in Italy was *Day of Anger* (*I giorni dell'ira*), directed by Tonino Valerii and pairing two of the genre's biggest stars – Van Cleef and Giuliano Gemma. Sollima returned with another highly-charged political parable, *Face to Face* (*Faccia a faccia*), in November. Gian Maria Volontè played an eastern professor who joins Milian's outlaw gang and becomes a brutal renegade. William Berger appears as real-life Pinkerton agent Charley Siringo.





## 1968

In January, Terence Hill played Django in one of the few films to capture the look and atmosphere of Corbucci's original, *Django, Prepare a Coffin* (*Preparati la bara*). The gravedigger outfit, coffin and machine gun were back with a vengeance. *The Belle Starr Story* (*Il mio corpo per un poker*), starring Elsa Martinelli, was the only Spaghetti Western to be directed by a woman – Lina Wertmüller under the pseudonym 'Nathan Wich'. Castellari's *Johnny Hamlet* (*Quella sporca storia nel West* aka *The Wild and the Dirty*) was the Bard, Spaghetti-style. March saw a 'Magnificent Five' (including Brett Halsey, Bud Spencer and William Berger) on the trail of wanted bandit Elfago (Japanese samurai star Tatsuya Nakadai) in Tonino Cervi's *Today It's Me... Tomorrow It's You!* (*Oggi a me... domain a te!*). Spencer also appeared in *Beyond the Law* (*Al di là della legge* aka *The Good Die First* and *For a Fistful of Silver*). It starred Lee Van Cleef and Antonio Sabato, but saw a dip in the former's fortunes at the box-office after the heights of *Day of Anger*.

Former Hercules actor Steve Reeves released his only Western, *A Long Ride from Hell* (*Vivo per la tua morte*), in April. It was his last film before retiring, aged 42, to a horse ranch in California. Antonio Margheriti's success in Italian horror served him well when he worked in other genres. His Gothic Western *Vengeance* (*Joko invoco Dio... e muori*) starred Richard Harrison as Rocco Barrett, who shoots it out with villain Mendoza (played by Claudio Camaso, real-life brother of Gian Maria Volontè) in a sulphur mine. Sergio Sollima's third and final political Western, *Run, Man, Run* (*Corri uomo corri*), was a sequel to *The Big Gundown* and followed the adventures of Tomas Milian's Mexican rogue Cuchillo.

'Frank Kramer' (aka Gianfranco Parolini) launched a new hero in *If You Meet Sartana Pray for Your Death* (*Se incontri Sartana prega per la tua morte*), which starred Gianni Garko (credited to 'John Garko') as the spectral, gambling gunfighter of the title. The eclectic cast included Klaus Kinski, William Berger, Fernando Sancho and Sydney Chaplin, son of filmmaking legend Charles. Bruno Corbucci made *Shoot, Gringo... Shoot!* (*Spara, Gringo, spara*), a Western to rival his sibling's oddest work, with Brian Kelly as gunman Chad Stark and Keenan Wynn as an army renegade with a pet duck. *A Taste of Death* (*Quanto costa morire* aka *Cost of Dying*) released in September, was the first snowbound Spaghetti Western, as a gang of outlaws led by Bruno Corazzari take over a secluded mountain settlement. Taking their lead from Terence Hill and Bud Spencer's successful pairing, Franco Franchi and Ciccio Ingrassia starred in *Ciccio Forgives... I Don't!* (*Ciccio perdona... io no!*). Hill and Spencer themselves were back in a sequel to *God Forgives... I Don't!*, *Ace High* (*I quattro dell'Ave Maria*), which was also released as *Revenge at El Paso*. Eli Wallach joined the team as Cacopoulos, a bandit of Greek descent.

November saw the arrival of Sergio Corbucci's snowy Western *The Big Silence* (*Il grande silenzio*), which wasn't a success at the time, but is now acknowledged as a masterpiece. Jean-Louis Trintignant was mute avenger Silence, Klaus Kinski was ice-cold bounty hunter Loco, and Ennio Morricone composed the ethereal score. Corbucci's most profitable Western internationally, *A Professional Gun* (*Il mercenario* aka *The Mercenary*), was released by United Artists and produced by Alberto Grimaldi. Franco Nero starred as a Polish mercenary caught up in the Mexican Revolution, with Jack Palance as his nemesis, a hired gun called Curly.

Another prestigious Western from Leone, this time co-financed by Paramount Pictures, *Once Upon a Time in the West* (*C'era una volta il west*) ended the year on a high in Italy. A remake of sorts of Nicholas Ray's *Johnny Guitar* (1954), it starred Henry Fonda, Claudia Cardinale, Jason Robards and Charles Bronson. Released in the US in May 1969, it was less successful than the *Dollars* trilogy – Eastwood's first post-*Dollars* Western without Leone, *Hang 'Em High*, took \$6.8 million at the US box-office, whereas Leone's first without Eastwood, took only \$1 million, though it was hugely successful in Europe.







## 1969

*Tepepa*, a political Western that further developed Tomas Milian's rebel with a cause, was released in Italy in January. Milian played the title role, but the production's major coup was the casting of the legendary Orson Welles as a vicious counter-revolutionary. William Berger and Anthony Steffen teamed up as bounty hunters for a wintry take on *For a Few Dollars More* in *No Room to Die* (*Una lunga fila di croci*), which was also released as *A Moose for Django*. Ruggero Deodato's spoof *In the Name of the Father* (*I quattro del pater noster*) may have made Franco Franchi and Ciccio Ingrassia look like Keaton and Chaplin, but there's no denying that it was prescient in its comedy. The comedy fights, slapstick antics and trio of all-in-black, masked bad guys would reappear in Enzo Barboni's comedy Westerns of the seventies.

One of the great European Westerns, *Cemetery Without Crosses* (*Un Corde, un colt...*) was dedicated by its director-star Robert Hossein to his friend Sergio Leone. A taciturn French-Italian 'Baguetti Western', it boasted a title song performed by Scott Walker. Tony Anthony was back as the Stranger in *The Silent Stranger* (*Lo straniero di Silenzio*), which was also known as *The Stranger in Japan* and *Samurai on a Horse*. It was belatedly released internationally in 1974, following a disagreement with the producers and cuts imposed by MGM. Gianfranco Parolini's biggest international hit was the lively, acrobatic *Sabata* (*Ehi amico... c'e Sabata. Hai chiuso!*), released in Italy in September. The film starred Lee Van Cleef as a self-styled 'James Bond of the West', with support from Berger and Pedro Sanchez. Producer Alberto Grimaldi ensured the film made a splash internationally via United Artists. Duccio Tessari and Giuliano Gemma moved into comedy with *Alive or Preferably Dead* (*Vivo o preferibilmente morti*) which was later released in the US as *Sundance Cassidy and Butch the Kid*, after the hugely successful Paul Newman and Robert Redford picture.

Men-on-a-mission movies, inspired by the success of World War II adventures such as *The Dirty Dozen* (1967), were epitomised by *The 5-Man Army* (*Un esercito di 5 uomini*). *Mission: Impossible* star Peter Graves enlists Bud Spencer, Tetsurō Tanba, James Daly and Nino Castelnuovo to attack an armoured train. *The Forgotten Pistolero* (*Il pistolero dell'Ave Maria*), based on the Greek tragedy *Orestes*, featured an incredible piece of title music from Roberto Pregadio, which remains go-to 'stock music' for programme makers and advertisers. One of the best Django sequels, *Django the Bastard* (*Django il bastardo* aka *The Strangers Gundown*) starred Steffen as the ghostly avenger, who announces each villain's death with a wooden cross inscribed with the day's date. The first official Sartana sequel, *I Am Sartana, Your Angel of Death* (*Sono Sartana, il vostro becchino* aka *Sartana the Gravedigger*) was directed by 'Anthony Ascott' (aka Giuliano Carnimeo). Gianni Garko returned as the hero.

*Drop Them or I'll Shoot* (*Gli specialisti* aka *Specialists*), the third of Sergio Corbucci's 'Mud and Blood' trilogy further explores the warring-gangs format of *A Fistful of Dollars* that provided Corbucci with the basics for *Django* and *The Big Silence*. It's probably his most underrated Western and starred French rock singer Johnny Hallyday as avenger Hud. Gemma's Christmas release, *The Price of Power* (*Il prezzo del potere*), directed by Tonino Valerii, was unusual fare for the actor. This allegorical Western explored events and fallout from the assassination of a US president – in the film James Garfield, but it could just as easily be John F. Kennedy. Terence Hill and Bud Spencer too continued their winning run at the box-office, with the second sequel to *God Forgives... I Don't!*, *Boot Hill* (*La collina degli stivali*).



Popular heroes faced each other for the first time in *Django Against Sartana* (*Django sfida Sartana*), with Tony Kendall and George Ardisson as the iconic gunmen. It was swiftly followed by *One Damned Day at Dawn... Django Meets Sartana* (*Quel maledetto giorno d'inverno... Django e Sartana all'ultimo sangue*), starring Hunt Powers and Fabio Testi. Meanwhile, George Hilton took over as Sartana in the official series for *Sartana's Here, Trade Your Guns for a Coffin* (*C'è Sartana... vendi la pistola e comprati la bara!*), which teamed the gunfighter with Sabbath (Charles Southwood). *Django and Sartana Are Coming... It's the End* (*Arrivano Django e Sartana... è la fine!*), starring Powers, was also known by the titles *Django and Sartana... Showdown in the West* and the catchy *Sartana If Your Left Arm Offends, Cut It Off*. Other Sartana outings included *Sartana in the Valley of Death* (*Sartana nella valle degli avvoltoi*) and *Sartana Kills Them All* (*Un par de asesinos*), the latter starring Gianni Garko. Garko was back as the official Sartana for *Have a Good Funeral, My Friend... Sartana Will Pay* (*Buon funerale, amigos!... paga Sartana*). The last and best of the official Sartana movies with Garko, *Light the Fuse... Sartana's Coming* (*Una nuvola di polvere... un grido di morte... arriva Sartana*) appeared in Italy in December.



Gianfranco Parolini's *Adiós, Sabata* (*Indio Black, sai che to dico: sei un gran figlio di...*) saw Yul Brynner take over the lead role from Lee Van Cleef, with singer Dean 'Red Elvis' Reed as his untrustworthy ally, Ballantine. Cesare Canevari's way-out *Kill Him! (¡Matalo!)* was a sadistic, psychedelic trip featuring strange 'electroacoustic music effects', a rock score by Mario Migliardi, and a hero armed with a boomerang. In a highly competitive festive season, Sergio Corbucci's *Compañeros* (*Vamos a matar, compañeros*), starring Franco Nero, Tomas Milian and Jack Palance, was easily out-grossed by the biggest hit of the year, *They Call Me Trinity* (*Lo chiamavano Trinità...*), a comedy Western directed by 'E.B. Clucher' aka Sergio Corbucci's former cinematographer, Enzo Barboni. Terence Hill starred as Trinity and Bud Spencer was his half-brother, Bambino. Christened a 'fagioli' Western in Italy after the heroes' penchant for eating pans of beans, the film out-performed every previous Italian Western except Leone's *Dollars* trilogy.

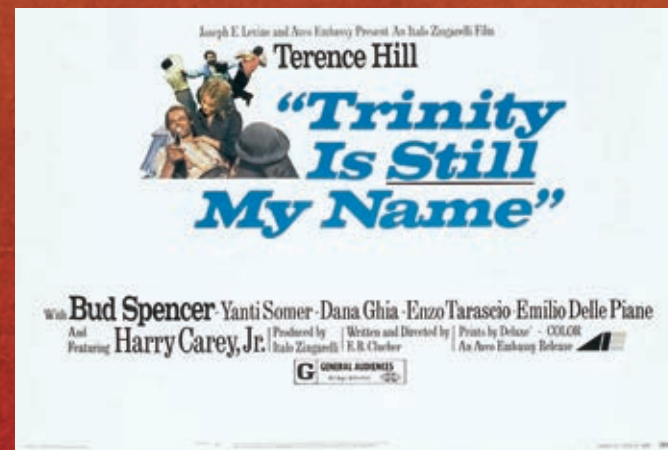






## 1971

George Hilton starred as Hallelujah and Charles Southwood played a Cossack named Alexi the Bear in Giuliano Carnimeo's *Heads I Kill You... Tails You're Dead! They Call Me Hallelujah* (*Testa t'ammazzo, croce... sei moret - Mi chiamano Alleluja* aka *Guns for Dollars*), which was *They Call Me Trinity* meets *Adiós, Sabata*. By 1971, the tide was turning. Westerns were falling out of favour and after the success of *They Call Me Trinity*, many, but not all, Westerns took the comedy route. *Dead Men Ride* (*Anda muchacho, spara!*), starring Fabio Testi, bucked the trend. A serious film with an exceptional score by Bruno Nicolai, it's a hybrid of *A Fistful of Dollars* and *The Return of Ringo*. *Return of Sabata* (*È tornato Sabata... hai chiuso un'altra volta!*) was Sabata's third official outing, with Lee Van Cleef returning to the title role; the plot reworked writer-director Gianfranco Parolini's own *If You Meet Sartana... Pray for Your Death*.



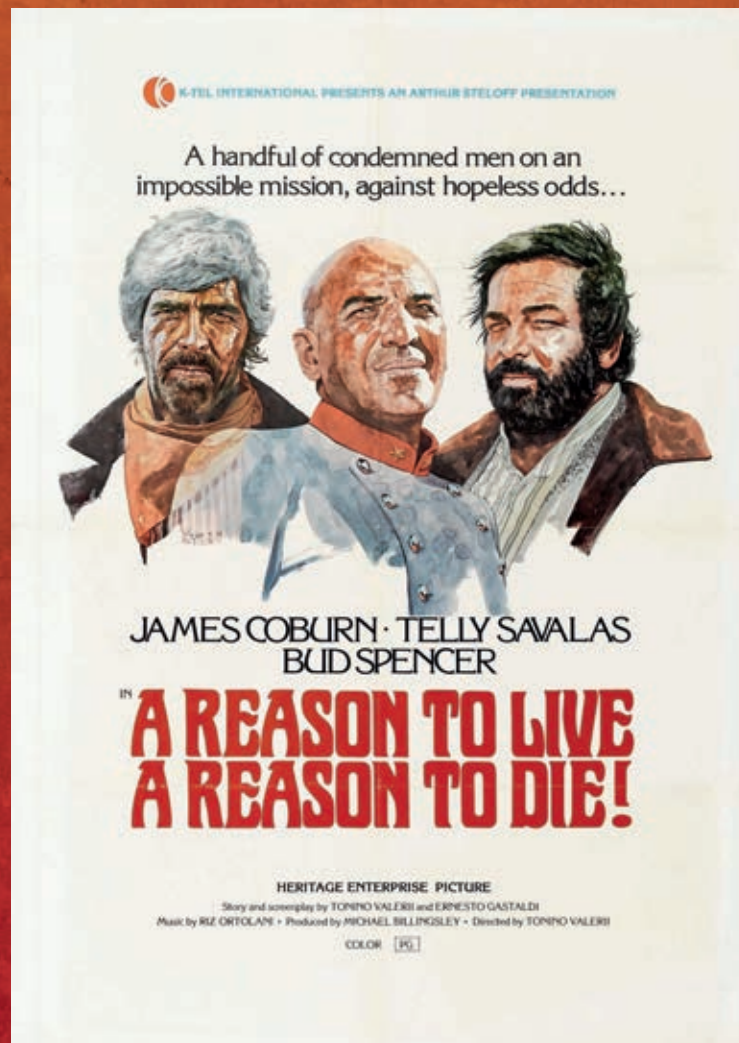
The massively successful international Western *Red Sun* (*Soleil rouge*) was a hit everywhere except the US. In Italy it remains the ninth most successful, and it played a record-breaking 35-week first run in Tokyo, beating *Gone with the Wind*. It starred Charles Bronson, Ursula Andress, Toshiko Mifune, Alain Delon and Capucine. Tony Anthony's offbeat *Blindman* cast him as a sightless gunfighter, and featured former-Beatle Ringo Starr as a Mexican bandit. It was remade a decade later by Anthony as the highly successful 3D Western *Comin' at Ya!*. In October, Sergio Leone's final Western, the Mexican Revolution-set *A Fistful of Dynamite* (*Giù la testa* aka *Duck, You Sucker*), starring Rod Steiger and James Coburn, was nowhere near as popular as Enzo Barboni's second Trinity instalment, *Trinity Is STILL My Name* (*Continuavano a chiamarlo Trinità*), again starring Terence Hill and Spencer. It was released internationally by Joseph Levine, through AVCO Embassy, to great success, while in Italy it remains the highest-grossing Italian Western of all time.



As Terence Hill and Bud Spencer reigned supreme at the Italian box-office, Spencer went solo for *It Can Be Done Amigo* (*Si può fare... amico* aka *The Big and the Bad*), while Hill starred alone in *Man of the East* (*E poi chiamarono il magnifico*). Both were sizeable hits. Giuliano Gemma's *Ben and Charlie* (*Amico, stammi lontano almeno un palmo* aka *Amigo, Stay Away*) is up with the official Trinity films as one of the finest 1970s Italian Western comedies. Other actors got in on the Trinity act, with Richard Harrison and Donal O'Brien starring in *Two Brothers in Trinity* (*Jesse & Lester – Due fratelli in un posto chiamato Trinità*), 'Robert Widmark' (aka Alberto Dell'Aqua) and Harry Baird starring in *Trinity and Sartana Are Coming* (*Trinità e Sartana figli di...*) and Franco Franchi and Ciccio Ingrassia's spoof-of-a-spoof *Two Sons of Trinity* (*I due figli di Trinità*).



The perennially popular Tomas Milian starred in Sergio Corbucci's comedy-drama *Sonny and Jed* (*La banda J. & S. – Cronaca criminale del Far West*), opposite Susan George and Telly Savalas, and as the Chaplinesque bounty hunter in *Life Is Tough, Eh Providence?* (*La vita, a volte, è molto dura, vero Provvidenza?*) and its sequel *Here We Go Again, Eh Providence?* (*Ci risiamo, vero Provvidenza?*), released the following year. During Christmas, Corbucci rounded out his political Western trilogy with *What Am I Doing in the Middle of the Revolution?* (*Che c'entriamo noi con la rivoluzione?*). It starred two great Italian comedians, Vittorio Gassman and Paolo Villaggio, in a story that could be termed 'slapstick tragedy'. *A Reason to Live, a Reason to Die* (*Un ragione per vivere e una per morire*) starring James Coburn, Telly Savalas and Bud Spencer, was second only to *Man of the East* as Italy's most successful Western of the year.







## 1973-78

As Italian Westerns searched for new territory to explore, Anthony Quinn teamed up with Franco Nero in the unusual buddy Western *Deaf Smith & Johnny Ears* (*Los amigos*, 1973), with Quinn playing deaf-mute spy Erastus 'Deaf' Smith, who was a real historical figure. Caped superheroes the Three Supermen (George Martin, Sal Borgese and Frank Braña) travelled by time machine back into the old West for *Three Supermen of the West* (...e così divennero i 3 supermen del West) in August 1973. The big hit of December 1973 was Tonino Valerii's *My Name Is Nobody* (*Il mio nome è Nessuno*) starring Henry Fonda as aging gunfighter Jack Beauregard and Terence Hill as his avid fan, Nobody. A sequel, *A Genius, Two Partners and a Dupe* (*Un genio, due compari, un pollo* aka *Nobody's the Greatest*) followed in Christmas 1975.

Following the success of *Red Sun*, there was many East-meets-West adventures, featuring martial arts action, fistfights and gunplay. These included *Kung Fu Brothers in the Wild West* (...Altrimenti vi ammucchiamo), *Robin Hood, Arrows, Beans and Karate* (*Storia di karatè, pugni e fagioli*), *The Fighting Fists of Shanghai Joe* (*Il mio nome è Shanghai Joe*), all released in 1973; 1974's *The Stranger and the Gunfighter* (*El kárate, el Colt y el impostor*); and Sergio Corbucci's Western swansong from 1975, *Samurai* (*Il bianco, il giallo, il nero*). Lucio Fulci had a huge hit in Italy in December 1973 with *White Fang* (*Zanna Bianca*), his family-friendly Jack London adaptation starring Franco Nero and Verna Lisi. But his *Four of the Apocalypse* (*I quattro dell'apocalisse*, 1975), starring Tomas Milian and Fabio Testi, was more in keeping with his visceral horror films, as it featured gory SFX body injuries, sexual assault, nihilistic characters and cannibalism.

Enzo G. Castellari and Franco Nero became a key director-star partnership in the 1970s, performing particularly well on crime films. They also made the indefinable comedy Western *Cry, Onion!* (*Cipolla Colt*, 1975) with Nero starring an onion-eating drifter with deadly halitosis. The actor also starred in Castellari's mystical twilight Western, *Keoma* (1976 aka *The Violent Breed*) which was marketed in some territories as *Django's Great Return*. Other downbeat twilight Spaghetthis included *Mannaja* (1977), starring Maurizio Merli as hatchet-wielding Blade, and *California* (1977), which was Giuliano Gemma's answer to Clint Eastwood's *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976). These twilight Westerns are steeped in hopelessness, decrepitude and tragedy. Meanwhile, Lee Van Cleef's final Westerns were filmed not in Italy and Spain, but the Canary Islands for *Take a Hard Ride* (1975) and Israel for *God's Gun* (*Diamante Lobo*, 1976) and *Kid Vengeance* (1977).

The last Spaghetti Westerns of the golden era were Fulci's *Silver Saddle* (*Sella d'argento*), released in Italy in April 1978 and starring Giuliano Gemma and Geoffrey Lewis, and Monte Hellman's *China 9, Liberty 37* (*Amore, piombo e furore*), released in August 1978 and starring Fabio Testi, Jenny Agutter and Warren Oates. It featured film director Sam Peckinpah as a dime novelist who wants to sell the hero's romanticised Wild West exploits to a receptive audience back East, cynically reasoning that Western stories are: "The lies they need, we all need."

*Howard Hughes writes about film, history and music. He is the author of Once Upon a Time in the West: The Filmgoers' Guide to Spaghetti Westerns (I.B. Tauris) and many other books, and contributes various film-related publications and websites.*



# ABOUT THE RESTORATION

The films in this collection have been exclusively restored by Arrow Films. Restoration work was carried out at L'Imagine Ritrovata, Bologna and R3Store Studios, London. In all cases the best elements that could be found were used for these restorations.

*If You Meet Santana... Pray for Your Death* is presented in its original aspect ratio of 1.85:1 with Italian and English mono audio. A 35mm print was scanned in 2K resolution on a pin-registered Arriscan at OCN Digital. The film was graded on Digital Vision's Nucoda Film Master and restored at R3Store Studios. The English-language soundtrack was sourced from the 35mm print and remastered at Deluxe Media. There are times in which audio synchronisation will appear loose against the picture, due to the audio being recorded in post-production. This presentation still exhibits some wear and damage to the picture and soundtrack, in keeping with the condition of the print elements. The Italian-language soundtrack was remastered from an SD tape master source. There were instances of severe damage on this master where the English-language track had to be substituted.

*I Am Santana, Your Angel of Death* is presented in its original aspect ratio of 2.35:1 with Italian and English mono audio. All restoration work was carried out at L'Imagine Ritrovata, Bologna. The original 35mm camera negative was scanned in 2K resolution on a pin-registered Arriscan and was graded on Digital Vision's Nucoda Film Master. Thousands of instances of dirt, debris, scratches, picture instability and other instances of film wear were repaired or removed through a combination of digital restoration tools and techniques. The mono Italian and English soundtracks were remastered from the optical sound track negatives.

*Santana Is Here... Trade Your Pistol for a Coffin* is presented in its original aspect ratio of 2.35:1 with Italian and English mono audio. All restoration work was carried out at L'Imagine Ritrovata, Bologna. The original 35mm camera negative was scanned in 2K resolution on a pin-registered Arriscan and was graded on Digital Vision's Nucoda Film Master. Thousands of instances of dirt, debris, scratches, picture instability and other instances of film wear were repaired or removed through a combination of digital restoration tools and techniques. The mono Italian and English soundtracks were remastered from the optical negatives.

*Have a Good Funeral My Friend... Santana Will Pay* is presented in its original aspect ratio of 2.35:1 with Italian and English mono audio. The original 35mm camera negative was scanned in 2K resolution at EuroLab. The film was graded on Digital Vision's Nucoda Film Master and restored at R3Store Studios. Thousands of instances of dirt, debris, scratches, picture instability and other instances of film wear were repaired or removed through a combination of digital restoration tools and techniques. The mono Italian and English soundtracks were remastered from the optical negatives.

*Light the Fuse... Santana Is Coming* is presented in its original aspect ratio of 2.35:1 with Italian and English mono audio. All restoration work was carried out at L'Imagine Ritrovata, Bologna. The original 35mm camera negative was scanned in 2K resolution on a pin-registered Arriscan and was graded on Digital Vision's Nucoda Film Master. Thousands of instances of dirt, debris, scratches, picture instability and other instances of film wear were repaired or removed through a combination of digital restoration

tools and techniques. The mono Italian-language soundtrack was remastered from the optical negative. The English-language soundtrack was remastered from an SD tape master source.

Audio synchronisation for all films will appear loose against the picture, due to the audio being recorded in post-production.

**Restorations Supervised by** James White, Arrow Films

**Restoration Services** L'Imagine Ritrovata, R3Store Studios

**Additional Scanning Services** OCN Digital, Eurolab

**Additional Audio Services** Deluxe Media, David Mackenzie

**L'Imagine Ritrovata**

Simone Arminio, Gilles Barberis, Valeria Bigongiali, Diego Mercuriali, Julia Mettenleiter, Alessia Navantieri, Caterina Palpaceli, Davide Pozzi, Elena Tammaccaro, Giandomenico Zeppa

**R3Store Studios**

Gerry Gedge, Jo Griffin, Andrew O'Hagan, Rich Watson

**OCN Digital**

Joe Rubin

**Eurolab**

Alessio Sinistro

**Deluxe Media**

Jordan Perry

Materials for *If You Meet Santana... Pray for Your Death* were made available by Harry Guerro and Moviemann Productions.

Materials for *I Am Santana, Your Angel of Death, Light the Fuse... Santana Is Coming* and *Santana Is Here, Trade Your Pistol for a Coffin* were supplied by Intramovies.

Materials for *Have a Good Funeral My Friend... Santana Will Pay* were supplied by Variety.

**Intramovies**

Paola Montavani, Paola Corvino

**Variety**

Laura Indiveri

**Moviemann Productions**

Hans-Jürgen Panitz



## PRODUCTION CREDITS

**Discs and Booklet Produced by** Anthony Nield  
**Executive Producers** Kevin Lambert, Francesco Simeoni  
**Technical Producer** James White  
**Production Co-Ordinator** Liane Cunje  
**QC Manager** Nora Mehenni  
**Blu-ray Mastering** David Mackenzie, Fidelity in Motion  
**Subtitling** The Engine House Media Services  
**Design** Obviously Creative  
**Artwork** Matthew Griffin

## SPECIAL THANKS

Alex Agran, Tony Askin, Erika Blanc, Sal Borgese, Jonathan Bygraves, Federico Caddeo, Roberto Curti, Roberto Dell'Aquila, Ernesto Gastaldi, Manlio Gomasasca, George Hilton, Howard Hughes, C. Courtney Joyner, Mike Siegel, Henry C. Parke, Gianfranco Parolini, Fabbio Puccioni

