





WAKE UP & KILL

SVEGLIATI E UCCIDI (LUTRING)

A Film by **CARLO LIZZANI**

ROBERT HOFFMANN as Luciano Lutring

LISA GASTONI as Angela Lutring

GIAN MARIA VOLONTÉ as Inspector Moroni

with **CLAUDIO CAMASO · RENATO NICOLAI · OTTOVIO FANFANI**

GIOVANNI DE LUCA · CORRADO OLMI · ALDO SULIGOI

Story by **UGO PIRRO** and **CARLO LIZZANI**

Screenplay by **UGO PIRRO**

Production Design by **FRANCO BOTTARI**

Director of Photography **ARMANDO NANNUZZI**

Produced by **JOSEPH FRYD** and **CARLO LIZZANI**

Music by **ENNIO MORRICONE**

Edited by **FRANCO FRATICELLI**

Directed by **CARLO LIZZANI**



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THE MACHINE GUN SOLOIST

by Robert Curti

When, in early September 1965, the Italian newspapers came out with headlines about the rocambolesque arrest in Paris of the notorious bandit Luciano Lutring, seriously injured in a shootout with the police after 18 months in hiding between Milan, Marseille and the French capital, readers were torn between relief and disappointment. For about a year, Lutring had been one of the major attractions in the news, because of his spectacular exploits and romantic backstory (with his wife Candida following him on the run like in a modern-day version of the Bonnie and Clyde story). He became an iconic figure in the media, gaining the nickname '*il solista del mitra*' ('the machine gun soloist') as well as the title of 'Public Enemy Number One'.

Lutring's story struck Carlo Lizzani deeply. A former film critic and documentarist, and a politically active member of the Italian Communist Party (which caused his early documentaries to be censored or forbidden by the censor boards, strongly related to the Democrazia Cristiana party as well as the Vatican), Lizzani (1922-2013) had debuted in 1951 with the partisan war film *Achtung! Banditi!*, starring Gina Lollobrigida, and throughout his career had always attempted to analyse Italian history, as well as the country's cultural and sociological issues, with a robust approach that often had him dwell in genres, but within a very definite realistic setting, thus analysing (and criticising) the whole social fabric through individual stories, in a move heavily influenced by neo-realism. Examples of this method were such works as *Ai margini della metropoli* (1953), which brought to the screen an infamous murder case in order to reflect upon class struggle and the injustice of the justice system, or *Il Gobbo* (1960), which took inspiration from the story of a former partisan who became a bandit to think over the painful return to legality in the immediate post-WWII years.

Lutring's story was the perfect opportunity for a similar discourse. "I was interested in that deep and complex moment of transformation that Italy underwent with the 'Boom' and neo-capitalism, which was taking morbid implications in the mid-sixties [...] with the advent of the first big episodes of gangsterism in Italy," Lizzani explained.







“Earlier on there had been episodes of banditism, in a rural environment [...] or else because of WWII, with war veterans becoming bandits and so on. Whereas nowadays it was simply gangsterism, a phenomenon which belonged to affluent societies, such as North America in the '20s or Italy in the '60s.”¹

The project was developed in a haste: Lutring was arrested on September 1st, 1965, and on December of that year Lizzani was already shooting.² *Wake Up and Kill* – Italian title: *Svegliati e uccidi* (Lutring) – was released in Italy in April 1966. Coming after his work on the spy anthology thriller *The Dirty Game* (1965), *Wake Up and Kill* was a much more personal effort: to finance it, Lizzani founded his own independent production company, Castoro Film (named after the Italian translation of his wife's surname), and worked with his regular collaborator, scriptwriter Ugo Pirro. The result is by no means an ordinary biopic. For one thing, even though they roughly follow the basic outline of Lutring's criminal career, Lizzani and Pirro don't stick to the facts and often play their own version of them. This is partly due to the rush with which the film was made,³ whereas several changes and additions (such as the name of Lutring's wife, her job being a nightclub singer, the character of her former lover, petty gangster Franco Magni) were for practical or dramatic reasons. More often, however, such approach is revealing of Lizzani's view towards the matter.

The real Lutring (or at least the image he spread with his 1967 best-selling autobiography, *Il solista del mitra*) was quite different from the one as seen in the film. He had been leading a criminal life since the late 1950s, taking part in many robberies and coming off as some sort of romantic figure, as shown by the many nicknames (such as 'the solitary bandit', 'hero of the night', 'predator of darkness') that accompanied him since his first exploits: a playboy of sorts who loved beautiful women, champagne and expensive restaurants, and who would even return to

1 - Franca Faldini, Goffredo Fofi, *L'avventurosa storia del cinema italiano raccontata dai suoi protagonisti 1960-1969*, Milan: Feltrinelli 1984, p. 207.

2 - A.g., *Soprabito rosso e pizzo nero per impersonare la moglie del bandito*, “Stampa Sera”, 12.23.1965.

3 - For instance, a biographical licence is Luciano's encounter with his wife-to-be, which did not take place in Sanremo but in Rimini. The actual encounter was worthy of Lutring's legend, and would have made for a great scene: Luciano and his gang stole a suitcase which belonged to Candida, but the bandit was so awestruck by the woman's sight as seen in a picture that he later approached her, in one of his usual daredevil bouts, pretending to have recovered her missing luggage.

the banks or jewelleries he had robbed to bring flowers or chocolate boxes to the employees. During his time hiding in Paris, Lutring would often disguise himself (even as a high priest) and even lead a *ménage-à-trois* with his wife and a young Parisian named Josette, who gave him a child.

On the other hand, Pirro's script deprives Lutring of any romantic and (anti-)heroic halo since the opening scenes set in the foggy, grey outskirts of Milan, amidst newly-built skyscrapers that hint at the new-found wealth brought in the early Sixties by the Italian economical miracle. An attendant in his parents' dairy who during weekends takes off his apron while yelling "To hell with work!", jumps on his friends' convertible and heads off to the Ligurian Riviera's nightclubs, Lutring looks at first like a cross between one of the bored slackers in Federico Fellini's *I vitelloni* (1953) and a younger version of Bruno Cortona, the character so memorably played by Vittorio Gassmann in Dino Risi's masterpiece, *Il sorpasso* (1962). His desire is not so much to get rich as to savour the privileges that money allows: dressing sharp, driving fast cars, meeting gorgeous women. To Lizzani, Lutring is a son of the consumerism brought in by the 'Boom', just as the characters of the contemporaneous *commedia all'italiana* are: he is the other side of the coin, so to speak.⁴ He first steals a car so as to impress a woman, robs jewellers to make her expensive gifts – just like Jacques Sernas's character did in Pietro Germi's early crime film *Gioventù perduta* (1947) – and keeps living well beyond his means. He is an amateur, an impromptu gangster who looks like a fish out of water when he moves to the Parisian underworld and has to deal with real gangsters who exploit him and extort money from him. As renowned film critic Tullio Kezich noted, "*Wake Up and Kill* offers a glimpse of class struggle even in the world of crime."⁵

Lizzani and Pirro focus not only on the impact that Lutring's figure has on the media, but also on the way it has been shaped up for the public's consumption. Far from being a 'public enemy', Lutring is basically an immature small-time crook with few brains, a nervous temper and a good dose of luck who is fascinated by crime, as underlined

4 - Interestingly, in his youth Lutring was known as 'L'Americano' for his penchant on everything American: one cannot help thinking about Alberto Sordi's ground-breaking portrayal of the America-obsessed Nando Moriconi in Steno's comedy *An American in Rome* (*Un americano a Roma*, 1954).

5 - Tullio Kezich, *Il FilmSessanta*, Milan: Il Formichiere, 1979, p. 235.





in the prologue, where he gleefully witnesses a violent showdown between two rival gangs, while standing behind his shop's window – the sight of the white spilled milk soiling the glassy surface before his eyes implicitly evoking a blood-spattered future. He then quickly becomes a sensation mainly because of the press's astuteness in portraying him as the kind of romantic gangster figure that the public opinion was so eager to meet in real life, and not only in the *fotoromanzi*, paperbacks and violent comic books of the era. The bombastic appellation, 'the machine gun soloist', is a case in point, as Lizzani humorously points out: when a stolen machine gun is found inside a violin case in his hideout, one newspaperman comes out with the sensationalistic title – whereas until then Lutring merely threw bricks against shop windows and grabbed whatever he could⁶ – which hits the headlines simply because of lack of other interesting news. Later on, Lutring decides to carry a machine gun during a heist, even though he still doesn't know how to shoot, so as to keep up with his own image in the press...

Lizzani's take on law enforcement is equally ambiguous. He implies that the police are purportedly allowing Lutring to remain a fugitive, allowing the media to inflate his figure and using him as a red herring to catch the big shots of organized crime, regardless of what will happen to him. Here, *Wake Up and Kill* conveys a dissatisfaction towards law enforcement that will turn into open distrust after 1968: the sight of an unmarked police car crossing Parisian streets in search of Lutring, with cops acting like a small film crew and filming unaware passers-by from behind the window, is an unsettling image that evokes Orwellian dystopias. The film never portrays the police in a sympathetic manner: the cops – like the ambiguous Inspector Moroni, who manipulates Lutring and his wife, and his cunning French counterparts – are untrustworthy, closer to the menacing and violent authorities as seen in Elio Petri's *Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion* (*Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto*, 1970, also written by Pirro, incidentally) than to the sympathetic, martyr-like figures of 1970s *poliziotteschi*.

6 - Here as well Lizzani is actually reshaping the facts: by the time the infamous appellation was coined (by *Corriere della Sera* journalist Franco Di Bella, in September 1964, after a heist in the town of Salsomaggiore Terme) Lutring was already an experienced armed robber, even though he would never shoot at people.

As with many other Lizzani films, *Wake Up and Kill* features a compelling female character: Angela, Luciano's wife, a mediocre nightclub singer who tries to pass off as French (with the alias Yvonne Candy) and who, like Luciano, has grandiose delusions of becoming rich and famous. Ironically, her fifteen minutes of fame come not as a singer, but when she is asked to take part in a TV show and ask her husband to give himself up. Even though they live outside the law, both are bourgeois at their core: an apparent contradiction in terms that will be the main focus of the director's second crime film of the decade, *Bandits in Milan* (*Banditi a Milano*, 1968, aka *The Violent Four*), where Pietro Cavallero (Gian Maria Volonté) and his men hide their criminal activity behind the respectable cover of a ghostly agency and trace a balance sheet of their exploits as if they were ordinary businessmen. Unlike Cavallero, though, Lutring is not a criminal entrepreneur; he moves by the logic of need, spends (or rather, wastes) all the money he grabs, and ends up penniless and homeless, running on the streets of a foreign town, hunted like a wild animal towards a future unknown.

On the other hand, it must be noted that his real-life model proved to be far more resourceful than the director thought. Once he recovered in prison, Lutring started out a new life. Sentenced to 20 years, he began to paint, wrote his own memoirs, and then two more autobiographical novels, *Difesa illegittima* (*Unlawful Defence*, 1969) and *L'assassino non sciopera* (*The Murderer Does Not Go on Strike*, 1970). He was graced in 1977 and started a fruitful career as a painter and writer. He died on May 13, 2013.

Stylistically, *Wake Up and Kill* amply shows Lizzani's skills as a filmmaker. Several sequences – such as the tightly shot and edited heist in Milan's central via Montenapoleone and the subsequent car chase – display an energetic approach and confidence with genre filmmaking. Others show a patent debt to the French Nouvelle vague: Lutring's final desperate attempt at escape in Paris, wounded and hunted by the police—with the director frontally isolating Hoffmann's face in close-up via a telephoto lens—owes much to Godard's *Breathless* (*À bout de souffle*, 1960). Lisa Gastoni's musical number 'Una stanza vuota' (written by Ennio Morricone, who also provided the dynamic score) stands out, with the camera tracking forward to a veil behind which the actress and the musicians appear in silhouette. The use of colour is also remarkable: Armando Nannuzzi's cinematography juxtaposes the greyish Milan with the unreal reds of the nightclubs in which Luciano and friends



hang out and the multi-coloured streets of Paris where he and Angela sample a fleeting taste of the easy life. Lizzani often has Angela wear bright red overcoats that makes her stand out in the film's overall greyness, heightening the character's centrality in the film.

The role of Angela awarded the 31-year-old Gastoni a Silver Ribbon for Best Actress. A former model of Irish descent, she had appeared in minor roles in British productions, and in the early 1960s had played in a number of Italian genre films, from Umberto Lenzi's *Hell Below Deck* (*Le avventure di Mary Read*, 1961, aka *Queen of the Seas*) to Antonio Margheriti's *Wild, Wild Planet* (*I criminali della galassia*, 1965) and *The War of the Planets* (*I diafanoidi vengono da Marte*, 1966). The success of Lizzani's film made her a household name, a status heightened two years later by Salvatore Samperi's scandalous drama *Come Play with Me* (*Grazie, zia*, 1968).

Wake Up and Kill marked a breakthrough role for his male protagonist as well. Austrian-born Robert Hoffmann enjoyed a short-lived popularity, appearing in Giuliano Montaldo's *Grand Slam* (*Ad ogni costo*, 1967), Robert Siodmak's *The Lost Roman* (*Kampf um Rom*, 1968), plus a number of thrillers and *gialli*, including *A Black Veil for Lisa* (*La morte non ha sesso*, 1968, Massimo Dallamano) and *Spasmo* (1974, Umberto Lenzi). As Moroni, Gian Maria Volonté – fresh from Sergio Leone's first two Westerns – gives a subdued performance in the first of his three films with the director, and gets to act alongside his younger brother Claudio (credited as Claudio Camaso, and playing Franco Magni), a talented actor who mostly worked within the boundaries of genre, in such films as Antonio Margheriti's *Vengeance* (*Joko invoca Dio... e muori*, 1968) and Mario Bava's *Bay of Blood* (*Reazione a catena*, 1971). Camaso's career ended tragically in 1977, when he committed suicide in jail while awaiting trial for murder.

Coming out in the same year as Giorgio Scerbanenco's novel *Venere private* – the cornerstone of the Italian hard-boiled novel – *Wake Up and Kill* is one of the landmarks of the modern Italian crime film, with Lizzani as one of the driving forces. After moving on to other uncharted territory such as the Western – *The Hills Run Red* (*Un fiume di dollari*, 1966) and the remarkable *Requiescant* (1967) – he returned to the genre with the extraordinary *Bandits in Milan*, again made in the wake of a news item, just several months after the events. Lizzani would follow

the same method with many of his subsequent pics, such as *Crazy Joe* (1973), *The Teenage Prostitution Racket* (*Storie di vita e malavita*, 1975), *San Babila 8 P.M.* (*San Babila ore 20: un delitto inutile*, 1976), up to 1985's *Mamma Ebe*. Rather than mere instant movies, which exploit the sensation caused in the public by events or people, Lizzani's works have something different at their core: by displaying both the impassioned eye of a historian and a strong civil commitment, they attempt to capture events in their making in order to analyse the society that nurtured them.⁷ They raise questions, suggest (but never impose) answers, demand debate. Were it only for this, Carlo Lizzani deserves to be counted among the most relevant filmmakers in post-WWII Italy.

Roberto Curti is the author of Italian Crime Filmography 1968-1980 and Italian Gothic Horror Films 1959-1969 as well as other books and essays on Italian cinema. He lives in Cortona, Italy.

7 - In many ways, they can be compared to what the renowned French historian Jean Lacouture labelled "immediate history", based on "the temporal proximity in relation to the theme and the author's proximity to the studied crisis." See Jean Lacouture, "L'histoire immédiate", in Jacques Le Goff (ed.), *La nouvelle histoire*, Paris: Editions Complexe, 2006 (1978), p. 229.







ABOUT THE RESTORATION

Wake Up and Kill (Svegliati e uccidi) has been exclusively restored in 2K resolution for this release by Arrow Films and is presented in its original aspect ratio of 1.85:1 with mono sound.

The 35mm original camera negative and 35mm Internegative elements were scanned in 2K resolution on a pin-registered Arriscan at Immagine Ritrovata, Bologna. The film was graded on the Baselight grading system at Deluxe Restoration, London.

Thousands of instances of dirt, debris and light scratches were removed through a combination of digital restoration tools. Overall image stability was also improved. Some instances of minor damage and wear remain, in keeping with the condition of the original materials. There are also several instances of noticeable softness in the image, which are as per the film's original production.

The film's mono soundtracks were transferred and restored from the original optical sound negatives at Immagine Ritrovata, Bologna, and were conformed by Deluxe Restoration and David Mackenzie. Some minor instances of noise still remain, in keeping with the condition of the optical source elements.

There are frequent moments throughout the film in which the audio synch will appear loose against the picture, due to the fact that the soundtrack was recorded entirely in post-production. This is correct and as per the original theatrical release.

Restoration supervised by James White, Arrow Films

Scanning and audio transfer services by Immagine Ritrovata, Bologna

Restoration services by Deluxe Restoration, London:

Baselight colour grading Stephen Bearman

Restoration Department Management Mark Bonnici and Graham Jones

Restoration Department Supervisors Tom Barrett and Clayton Baker

Restoration Technicians Debi Bataller, Dave Burt, Lisa Copson and Tom Wiltshire

Audio Restoration and Conform Tom Barrett and David Mackenzie

Special thanks to Barbara Varani/Movietime and Studio Cine, Italy.





PRODUCTION CREDITS

Disc and Booklet Produced by Anthony Nield
Executive Producer Francesco Simeoni
Production Assistants Liane Cunje
Subtitling Deluxe
QC and Proofing Liane Cunje and Anthony Nield
Authoring IBF
Artist Reinhard Kleist
Design Jack Pemberton

SPECIAL THANKS

Roberto Curti, Robert Hoffmann, Uwe Huber,
Marc Morris, Barbara Varani







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