

# ELIO PETRI: NOTES ABOUT A FILMMAKER -- ILLUSTRATED SCREENPLAY

directed by Federico Bacci, Nicola Guarnei, and Stefano Leone  
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[This 80-minute documentary from 2005 examines the career of director Elio Petri and features interviews with his collaborators and friends, including filmmakers Robert Altman, Bernardo Bertolucci, and Gillo Pontecorvo; production designer Dante Ferretti; screenwriter Tonino Guerra; composer Ennio Morricone; and actor Vanessa Redgrave. It was directed by Federico Bacci, Nicola Guarnei, and Stefano Leone.]

[Transcribed from the movie by Tara Carreon]

una Produzione  
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[Elio Petri] To make a film today, you must be both crazy and in love with cinema. That's probably the only positive aspect to the thing.

Elio Petri ... Notes About a Filmmaker



[Marina Cicogna, Producer] Elio was a man with grave doubts. He thrived on collaboration. It was extremely easy to collaborate and work with him.



[Giuliano Montaldo, Director] He got everyone involved, even the drivers. I mean, everyone was a part of the film. In the end, he could say, "This film is ours."



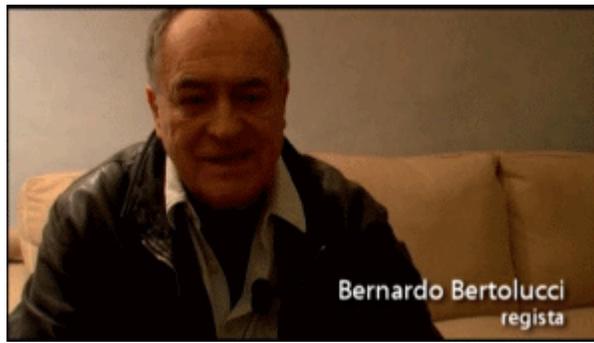
[Florinda Bolkan, Actress] I had fun, because, with Elio Petri, not having fun was just stupid.



[Vanessa Redgrave] I'm not sure I understood what he was looking for, but I appreciated to the fullest that following his vision was worth the effort.



[Marco Giusti, Film Critic] Petri was our "public enemy number one," an enemy of the juvenile Godardian criticism.



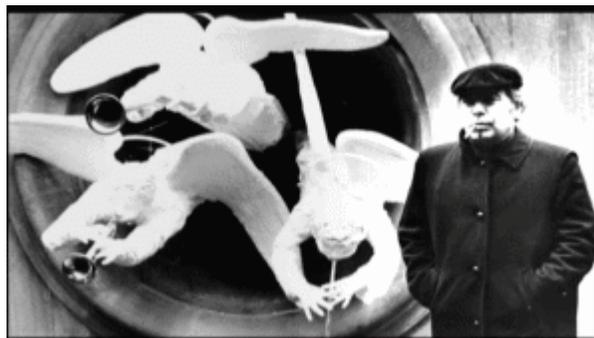
[Bernardo Bertolucci, Director] His way of being political with his films was extremely original, extremely personal. It was different ... from everyone else's way of being political.



[Robert Altman, Director] With Elio's films you really knew what he was talking about. I mean, it was more direct.



[Marco Risi, Director-Producer] That's why we miss Petri. That's why I miss him so much. Because he wasn't afraid. Today, maybe we're more afraid.



[Elio Petri] ... What am I, then? I come from a working-class family, poor, if not abjectly poor. I instinctively chose to side with the workers. Circumstances led me to become a filmmaker. Which circumstances? The hundreds and thousands of films I saw and loved. The fact that the poor become

boxers, popular musicians, or filmmakers. The fact that film was, in those days, a popular art form.



[Giuliano Montaldo, Director] I met Elio when he was still wearing shorts. He came to visit us in Genoa on the set of Attention! Bandits! He was a stocky little Roman kid in shorts. He made an impression on me. I was expecting Elio Petri, a screenwriter. I'm from Genoa, so I didn't know the Roman film world.



I saw this kid come in. He was poised, serious, deeply committed. I took a liking to him right off the bat.



[Gillo Pontecorvo, Director] He was always ready to turn any angle or approach into a joke.



Then he would get serious again.



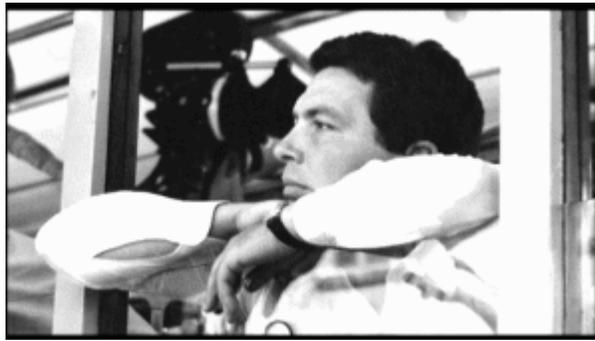
[Giuliano Montaldo, Director] I have to say our friendship lasted, but with the jealousy and exclusiveness which he felt regarding his friends. He was very possessive.



I remember, for instance, right after he married Paola, he said, "Why don't you get married?" "I haven't found the right woman yet." "But you must. You must! You can't go on like this." I said, "What the hell do you care?" "I care because you're a good guy." I was as if he'd suddenly become not just my older brother, but my manager.



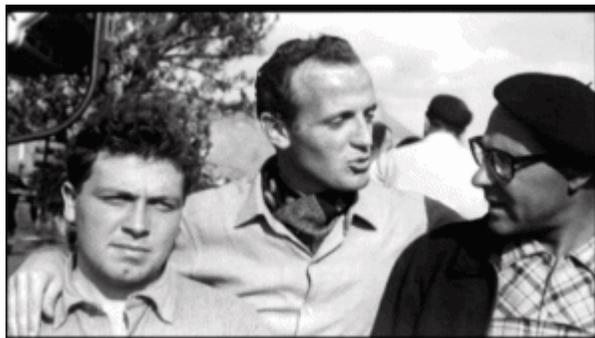
[Gianni Fucci, poet from Santarcangelo] He wanted me to come to Rome to work with him once we came back from Reggio Emilia. On the train back from Reggio Emilia he was already saying, "When we're done working here, you should come to Rome. You can stay with me, so don't worry. Don't worry about a thing." "Yes, yes." Then, when we got to Santarcangelo, the train stopped. Then, when we got to Santarcangelo, the train stopped.



I got off, and he leaned out the window and said, "You asshole. You asshole." Louder and louder, because the train had started moving. It was leaving, getting further away, and the further away it got, the louder he yelled, "Asshole, asshole, asshole!" And these -- I can still hear these -- Let's call them expressions of his affection.



[Gillo Pontecorvo, Director] At one point, we were great rivals, because we were both just starting out.

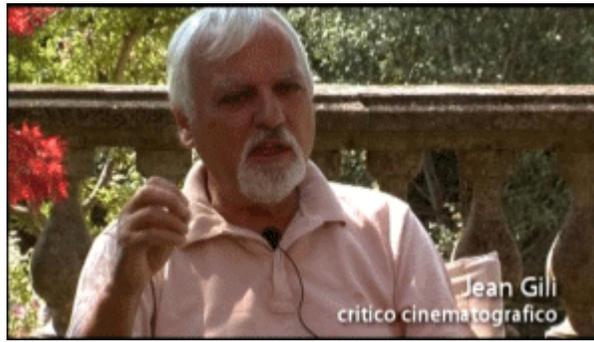


We both wanted to be Giuseppe de Santis's assistant director, so we did everything we could to ingratiate ourselves with him.



[Paola Petri] He spoke of Giuseppe with great affection and passion. He was like a father to him. You

see? I think he also acquired a method of working from Giuseppe.



[Jean Gili, Film Critic] De Santis trained under Visconti, and Petri trained under de Santis. There's a clear lineage.



I believe that Elio, who never went to film school -- From this point of view, Petri was self-taught. He was also a self-taught intellectual.



[Francesco Maselli, Director] As an intellectual, he was unique. He was cultured, intelligent, fervent about the figurative arts. Were any of the rest of us like that? Only him. He was a man of passion, of focus. Within the Communist Party, his speeches and debates were all fundamentally focused on the cultural politics of the party.



[Giuliano Montaldo, Director] For example, even in his work for the Society of Authors, Elio's presence was always both wonderful and frightening. Those were years of great turmoil and crisis, as you know, for the Italian Communist Party, because of what happened in Hungary.

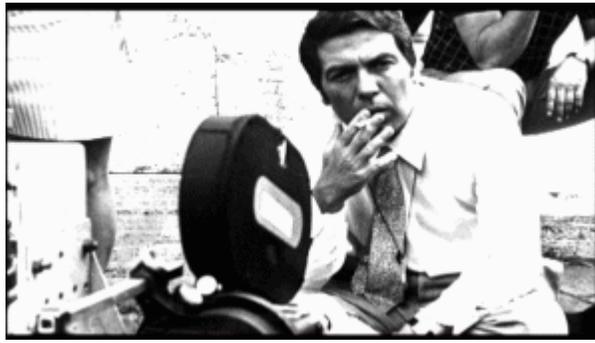


Elio was among the first to distance himself from what was happening in Hungary. He said, "I don't like this new path, the path of armored tanks."



[Gillo Pontecorvo, Director] Certainly our style of filmmaking was heavily influenced by our ties and sometimes also by our differences with the Communist Party.





[Aggeo Savioli, Theater & Film Critic] It was a way of being surrounded by people, albeit in a certain kind of way. Elio wasn't a pure director, a pure filmmaker. That is, the cinema wasn't everything in his films.



[Elio Petri] If I had a school, it was in the street, within the Communist Party, at the movies, variety shows and public libraries, reading newspapers and party magazines, at riots against unemployment, in the lockup, even at Regina Coeli, at clashes with police, shootouts, lynchings, in the studios of the painters of my generation, in film clubs, rallies, among those who were still called professional revolutionaries back then.



[Giovanna Cau, Lawyer] It's always been difficult to make movies, especially for young directors. Goffredo Lombardo had asked us to see who might star in this movie to support this director in his

debut.



[The Assassin - 1961]



[Giovanna Cau, Lawyer] Marcello Mastroianni, who was already very important at the time and also the studio's client, asked to read the screenplay. Since he was very perceptive, he realized there was a director behind this whole story. We left for Tor San Lorenzo in a Fiat 500 to tell Elio that Marcello had agreed. I still remember it as an amazing moment, because for him it meant making the movie.



[Narrator] Rome has no seasons in terms of film production. Neorealism and verism prefer a winter gray. That's hard to find in our capital, but, this time, it's proving useful to Mastroianni, the star of *The Assassin*, in order to create atmosphere. Action.



Mastroianni's working things out with the young actress Cristina Gaioni.



The delightful third wheel is Micheline Presle.



Passersby and children playing hooky are enjoying an exclusive preview. All of Rome often serves as a sound stage.



[Jean Gili, Film Critic] Elio was probably looking for a story that was representative of this new wind that was blowing, of a bourgeois Italian society.

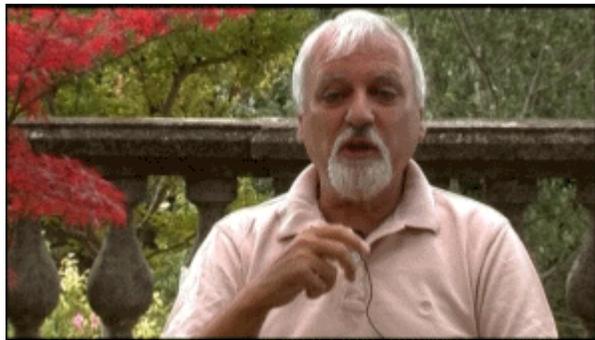


*[The Assassin] [Man] Are you still a member of the party?*

*[Nello Poletti] I'm done with politics. I'm fed up.*

*[Man] But you'll still vote for us?*

*[Nello Poletti] Of course. Let's go.]*



[Jean Gili, Film Critic] The protagonist is an antiques dealer who probably cons his customers a bit during sales to make a little extra money.



*[The Assassin] [Nello Poletti] Here's 5,000. Drink to my health.*

*[Man] All right.*

*[Nello Poletti] If anything comes up, don't find me. I'll find you. Got it? Bye.*

*[Man] Yeah. Bye.*



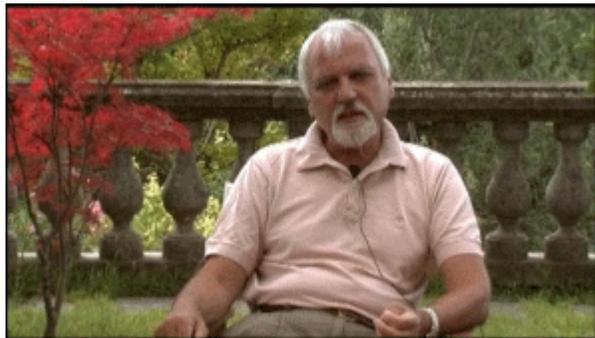
*[Woman] Nice clock. What period is it from?*



*[Nello Poletti] It's 18th century Empire, gilded. The two figurines are beautifully carved. And it has a peculiarity. The music box plays a very original melody.*

*[Woman] How much is it?*

*[Nello Poletti] 150,000 lire.*



[Jean Gili, Film Critic] He also had the idea -- this was his first appearance in Elio's films -- of calling Salvo Randone.



This Sicilian actor was perfect for the part of the policeman, who tries to construct situations where he can catch the criminal and force the truth to emerge, even if he has to use mean that are at the limit of what is acceptable. He's almost a precursor to Investigation's Volonte.



*[The Assassin] [Commissario Palumbo] They think anyone who comes in here must at least be a murderer. Go on. Get out of here. Terrible profession, Martelli. It's a mind-set.]*



[Giovanna Cau, Lawyer] The Assassin ran into trouble with the censorship board for the way it depicted policemen working outside of the law. This was somewhat of a leitmotiv for Elio.



[Goffredo Lombardo, Producer] I remember one extremely serious situation. Just hours before its release, the film went before the censors. There was a scene where, on a rainy, muddy day, some poor policeman starts up the stairs of a building where he's looking for the killer, and he gets mud everywhere.



*[The Assassin] [Landlady] Where are you going? You're making a mess.*

*[Cop ] Are you the landlady?*

*[Landlady] Yes, I am. Why?*



*[Cop] Come here. Do you know this man?*

*[Landlady] That's Marcus Aurelius on horseback.*

*[Cop] No, the other man.*

*[Landlady] That's Mr. Alfredo Martelli. Third floor. The elevator will take you right into the apartment. Who are you? What do you want?*



[Goffredo Lombardo, Producer] "Hold it," said the censors. The representative from the Ministry of Internal Affairs shuts the film down. "You can't release the film unless you cut that scene." "Why?" "Policemen don't leave mud on the stairs." It was a disaster. The film couldn't be released. We had all of Italy's theaters ready to screen it and no film. I called Elio and said, "Elio!" "You can't cut that scene." "I know, but what should we do?" "Wait, I have an idea," I said. I went to the censors and said, "Okay, let's cut the scene." Elio said, "What did you do?" "I cut the scene." "Are you crazy? You

can't! We'll have to pull the film!" "No, because I'm releasing it with the scene still in it. Have you ever seen the censors go watch a movie in the theaters?"



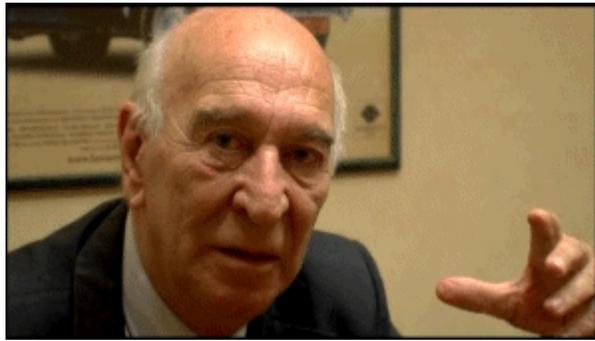
[Elio Petri] I lost my faith around the same time I developed an awareness of death and politics. I became obsessed with death. At times, the sensation of death was so intense that I could no longer eat or sleep. It started around the time my grandmother died and lasted until I was 21. It never left me. I took refuge at the movies to take my mind off it.



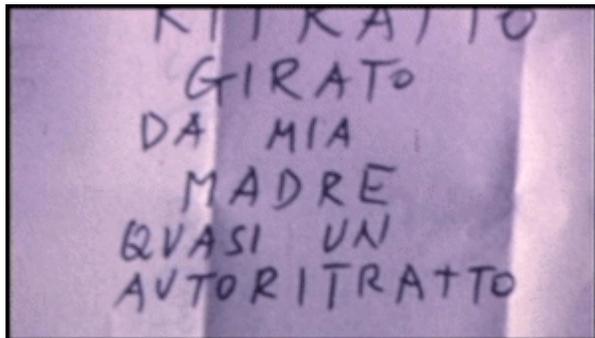
[Giovanna Cau, Lawyer] Elio wasn't religious. He had no faith. But he was clearly influenced by his mother, who was a practicing Catholic, while his father wasn't.



She was a very religious woman. Certain Catholic ethical principles, like brotherhood, solidarity and friendship, were innate to his spirit.



[Giuliano Montaldo, Director] I'd say that to know Elio well you had to know his family: his mother, a wonderful woman, and his father, whom he later mythologized in his films as the working man. He devoted a film to him. Randone played him. It was lovely to see this only child. He was pampered, but within the fabric of a blue-collar reality.



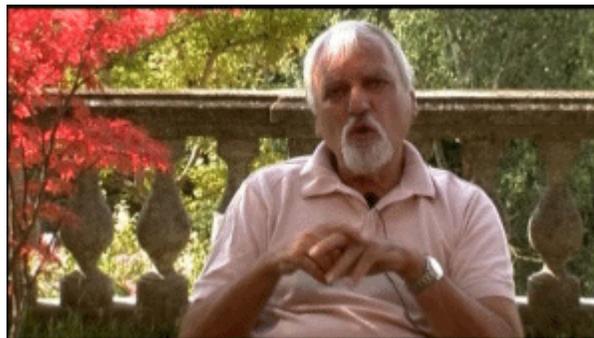
[PORTRAIT FILMED BY MY MOTHER  
ALMOST A SELF-PORTRAIT  
WHAT SHOULD I SAY?]



[Berto Pelosso, Screenwriter] I think that *I giorni contati* was basically inspired by his relationship with his father. At one point, he had stopped working. Elio understood what his father was going through.



He suddenly just didn't feel up to it anymore. This film tells the story of a man who sees another man die on the tram. He sees himself in what happened to the man and starts looking for purpose in his life. He quits his job. He starts to see all the chances he's missed.



[Jean Gili, Film Critic] In this film, Elio revealed the most about himself. So the film doesn't have -- I think it's one of his masterpieces, because it's a very personal film. Elio projects the figure of his father into it, but in a certain way he's projecting himself too.



*[I giorni contati] [Cesare Conversi] Take a look at this. Look here. This guy was born the same day I was born. See? April 11, 1908. The exact same date.*

*[Man] April 1908. What does that mean? What does it mean?*



*[Cesare Conversi] It means something.*



[Aggeo Savioli, Theater & Film Critic] *I giorni contati* is a unique film, because there is an intersection, or a combination, of an existential condition and a social condition. It's a film about the approach of death, and, at the same time, it's a film that says that death isn't the same for everyone.



[Bernardo Bertolucci, Director] One thing really impressed me about *I giorni contati*. Actually, many things.



First, it was set in a strange landscape, a reality as yet unexplored in Italy, halfway between realism and existentialism.



Second, it took the risk of exploring a kind of cinema that was different from anything done in Italy up to that point. I'm sure that *I giorni contati* influenced me in some way. It influenced me just as all the films I loved at that time influenced me. And I wanted them to. I wanted to be influenced by Elio's films.



[Tonino Guerra, Screenwriter] I can tell you something that really astonished us.



[Narrator] Elio Petri is taking off from Fiumicino airport for the Mar de la Plata festival to screen his new film, *I giorni contati*. But it's no ordinary trip for the director. It's his honeymoon. With his is Paola Pecoraro, who will be his lifetime companion. Perhaps Mar de la Plata will surprise Elio and Paola with a wedding present. To be precise, an international award for the director's latest effort.



[Tonino Guerra, Screenwriter] And it won, beating *Jules and Jim*. *Jules and Jim* came in second. We were all, as I said before, stunned and amazed. At the time, we were great admirers of the New Wave and Truffaut, of that entire world.



But we were also proud, because it had been an experiment putting a stage actor in that role. It was already an act of bravery.



[Paola Petri] After I giorni contati, he got a call from De Laurentiis. He said, "Will you write a film for Alberto Sordi with Age and Scarpelli?"



[Marco Risi, Director-Producer] Petri had written part of I mostri because Petri was going to direct it.



[Paola Petri] When Dino De Laurentiis, who was decidedly anticommunist, read it, he said, "You're a communist. Have Togliatti produce this film."



[Marco Risi, Director-Producer] My father was supposed to do The Teacher from Vigevano. Instead, they switched films. My father got the luckier draw. I mostri was a very successful film. The Teacher from Vigevano was very good, but not as successful.



[Paola Petri] So he benefited greatly from the exchange, and he says as much. On the other hand, working with Sordi was very difficult, even though they were both genuine Romans from Rome.



And I want to point out that Elio as a great admirer of Sordi's., but perhaps he hadn't considered the fact that Sordi was a very popular and great actor, but also a co-author of the films he acted in.



[Furio Scarpelli, Screenwriter] So what did Elio Petri set as his goal? To turn him into the teacher from Vigevano. Did he succeed? We must say no. Then we must immediately say maybe that was a blessing. If you mold an actor-author to the point of changing his nature, you end up damaging him.



But The Teacher from Vigevano is a film that displays the complexity and subtlety superimposed on his origins on Elio Petri's human way of narrating through cinema.



Perhaps this too was his way of searching for -- If you remember, then he also made a science fiction film.





[Giovanna Cau, Lawyer] Naturally, after De Laurentiis, who came looking for our capable young director? Carlo Ponti. So it's Goffredo Lombardo, De Laurentiis, Carlo Ponti who were the great producers of that time.



*[The 10th Victim - 1965] [Policeman] Stop.*

*[Man] Hunter.*

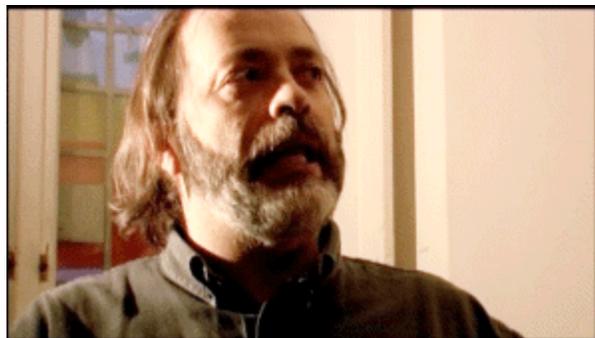
*[Policeman] Let's see. Go on, go ahead.*



*[Man] Ladies and gentlemen, I shall repeat the rules of the Big Hunt, a global institution that has brought morality to this century and has chained and legalized violence.*



*First rule: each member must agree to complete 10 hunts, five as hunter and five as victim.*



[Marco Giusti, Film Critic] Petri had some of the qualities of an American-style director.



[The 10th Victim, based on the short story "Seventh Victim" by Robert Sheckley. ]



[Marco Giusti, Film Critic] The 10th Victim is an extraordinary film and, seen through our modern lens, it's the epitome of Italian lounge cinema.





[Ursula Andress, Actress] The bikini from Dr. No is nothing compared to this.



This bikini was made of metal.



I couldn't move because every time I had things here and here. I would get cuts all over because of this metal brassiere. All metal. I had to stand like this, because if I lowered my arms I got cut all over.



These things shot for real.







[Marco Risi, Director-Producer] He was able to make it all believable in spite of the absurdity of the story he was telling.





[The 10th Victim] [Mother] What a lovely girl. Come in, miss. Don't stand on ceremony. Want some coffee?



[Father] Sure, give her coffee! She could be a spy!

[Mother] A spy?



[Marcello Poletti] Don't worry, Mother. I should have known you were a spy for the Old People Collection Center.



[Mother] Marcello, be careful! Marcello!



[Ursula Andress, Actress] You can see it was fabulous, inventive, artistic. It became a cult film in America.



*[The 10th Victim] [Man] May we come in?*



*[Marcello Poletti] Who are you?*

*[Man] Relax. It's just us. Repossession. How are you, Mr. Poletti?*

*[Marcello Poletti] Fine, come in.*



*[Giovanna Cau, Lawyer] Production on the film was agony, because after seeing a few dailies, Ponti called me and said he wanted to replace the director. Which was very bad.*



[Ursula Andress, Actress] Elio wanted to film the ending in Africa, which he didn't do. We were supposed to end like Adam and Eve in Africa together.



But Ponti didn't want to spend any more money.



[Giovanna Cau, Lawyer] Elio never knew how serious Ponti's initial decision had been.



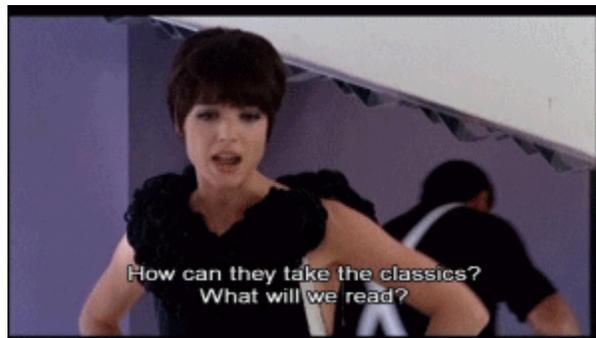


[The 10th Victim] [Olga] Not the classics, Marcello!



[TV] The United Nations has decided ...

[Olga] Marcello, this is unacceptable. You must object!



How can they take the classics? What will we read?



[Man] Miss, this is a highly valuable collection, perfectly confiscatable.



[Olga] Marcello, you talk to them. Wait, let me help you.



[Ursula Andress, Actress] For a director like Elio Pet, who has his own ideas, his art ... His name is on the film and he wanted to execute it his way. But then the producer said, "No, it's too expensive." And he was very angry, I remember I remember.

[Elio Petri] One becomes a director like this, making mistakes, learning to face powerful personalities, like De Laurentiis and Ponti. At a certain point you can't back down from the producers, and this too is part of the job.



[Narrator] This year the festival opened with an Italian film, *We Still Kill the Old Way*, by Elio Petri, and a Hungarian film *Ten Thousand Days* by the entrant Ferenc Kosa.



On the Croisette we ran into Irene Papas, Gabriele Ferzetti and Gian Maria Volonte, stars of the former.



[Reporter] We Still Kill the Old Way was produced by an independent producer, Giuseppe Zaccariello, an industrialist who had never worked in film before.



We are asking Elio Petri, the director of *We Still Kill the Old Way*, how this kind of production has helped his movie.



[Elio Petri] I think I was able to make what I consider the best film of my career, to use an ugly word, thanks to Zaccariello. That is, thanks to the atmosphere of freedom in which I was able to work.



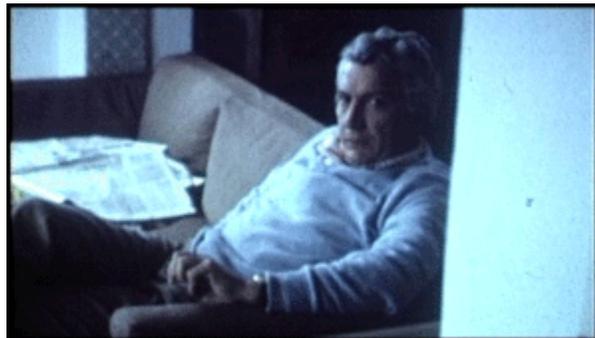
[Ugo Pirro, Screenwriter] Then this guy ... who made tiles in Sassuolo popped up. His name was Zaccariello, and I guess he decided to make a film.

[SCREENWRITERS AT DUSK]



[Ugo Pirro, Screenwriter] Elio had a house in Torvaianica, a cottage, and I moved into his house this cottage ... and we wrote the screenplay together.





During the time in which we made *We Still Kill the Old Way*, Italian cinema, the audience and even the critics, were looking for a kind of cinema that was disengaged. Therefore, *We Still Kill the Old*

Way was a bit of a risk. But precisely because it went against that tendency, the film was hugely successful.



[Marina Cicogna, Producer] One night I went to the Fiamma theater, I remember, to see *We Still Kill the Old Way*, which I found to be magnificent.



And I was especially impressed by the amazing ability in camera movement of the director, who was Petri.



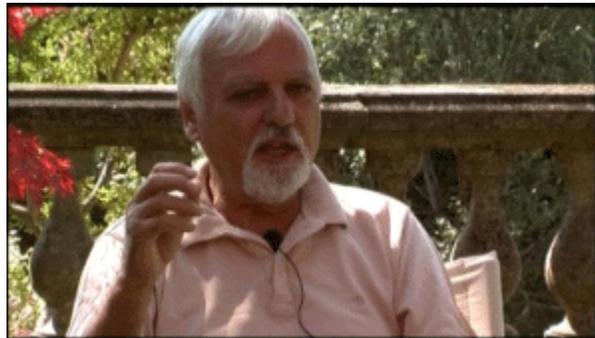
[Elio Petri] I'm against an aristocratic cinema, so I tried to keep in mind a dialogue with the audience. For me, making movies without making them effective, spectacular, is useless, something to be kept in the family, meaning amateur.



So when I make a film, I always take into consideration the fact that I am communicating my ideas to the audience. This is something I've imposed on myself. No one made me do it.



[Narrator] The story takes place in a town in Sicily. Paolo Laurana, a high school teacher, attempts to discover the truth about the death of two friends. But his naivete and lack of pragmatism cause him to come up against a wall of silence and omerta.

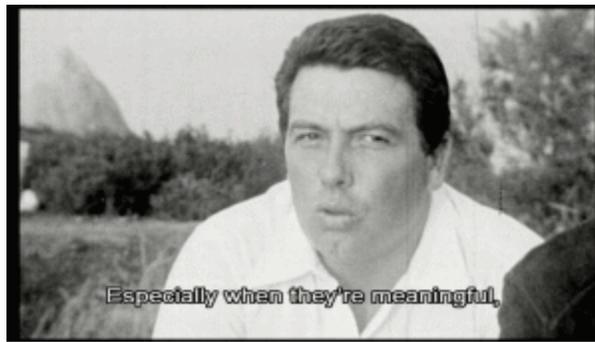


[Jean Gili, Film Critic] This was another of Petri's themes ... the occasional intellectual inability to understand reality. In particular this Sicilian reality.



[Narrator] The film was written and directed by Elio Petri, to whom we asked his reasons or setting this film in Sicily.

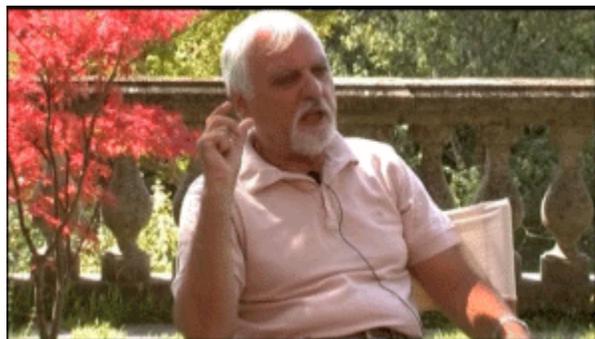
[Elio Petri] There are many reasons. First of all, by my very nature and background, I have a preference for tales of mystery.



Especially when they're meaningful, in other words, when they enable directors to indulge in an analysis of today's world.



[Paola Petri] I don't know. He always worked on things that he found stimulating. He didn't plan out his film career. I would say that all things considered, he made films that were all different from one another. And this is good, because it means that you have a fertile imagination. But sometimes it's a bit disorienting. You never rest on your laurels, right?



[Jean Gili, Film Critic] Some directors say that the best music is the music you can't hear.



It's just there, very mild in the background, but the less we are ware of it the better.



[Ennio Morricone, Composer] Our first meeting was strange because of what he said.



He said to me, "My dear Morricone, for every film I've made, I have hired a new composer."



This will be the first and last film we will make together."

[PREPARATION FOR THE FILM A QUIET PLACE IN THE COUNTRY, 1968]



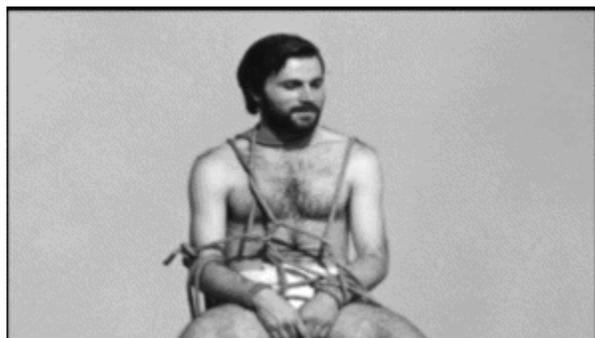
[Franco Nero, Actor] At first he wanted to hire Jack Nicholson. But I think he had trouble signing him. So then at some point he asked me. He asked me and I accepted, and Ms. Vanessa Redgrave, accepted as well, because at the time we were living together and it was a way for her to be near me and also make the film.



[Vanessa Redgrave, Actress] I had seen his film *We Still Kill the Old Way*, which had really impressed me. And when I met Elio, he impressed me, as a man. He was very deep, very direct. So when he asked me to make his next film, I accepted immediately.



[Franco Nero, Actor] And I must say, it was a very difficult experience, but a wonderful one. I will go so far as to say that Elio Petri is the greatest Italian director of the past. He is the only Italian director who made ten films, but ten films that were each completely different from one another.





The film was produced by Alberto Grimaldi and United Artists. I was meant to play this very strange painter. And United Artists sent this young American painter to Italy who was supposed to teach me to paint. His name was Jim Dine. Nobody knew him.



[JIM DINE DURING PREPARATION FOR THE FILM]



[Franco Nero, Actor] Elio knew that he was very important because Elio loved art. So I started working with him and imitated all his movements, as my character does in the film.



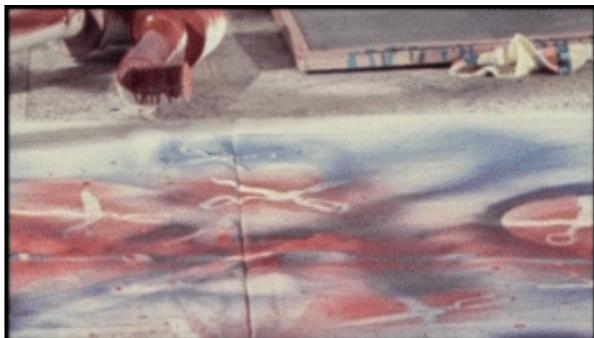
[Bernardo Bertolucci, director] It was transgressive for someone with his background -- Rome in the '50s, with its artists, its writers, its directors -- hiring Jim Dine was transgressive.



And he went all the way with this kind of transgression, which evidently was a way for him to constantly challenge himself.



[Vanessa Redgrave, Actress] I protested against the English text because it didn't have the flavor of the Italian original. One day Elio exploded and said, "I don't give a damn about the text."



The entire film is contained in the images."



[Ennio Morricone, Composer] The music fulfilled a role that was not merely musical or tied to the realism of the parts. In the character's dreams, for instance, we see colors falling. And over all of this was the music. They weren't only the sounds of reality.





[FRANCO NERO, DURING REHEARSAL]





[Ennio Morricone, Composer] From that moment on I continued to work with Elio, and I did Investigation, The Working Class Goes to Heaven, Property is No Longer a Theft, Todo Modo, Buone notizie, which was the last film I made with him. And perhaps there were some before. I did all of them. After that initial introduction, I never would have imagined he would always call me.



[Elio Petri] The theme of Investigation has to do with authoritarianism. I compare it to a poison that snakes its way into the hearts, into the spirit of man, into our psychology.



[Marco Risi, Director-Producer] The revelation was absolute, violent, overpowering with Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion.



It was a film unlike anything we might expect, at the time. Back then I was 18, 19, and it arrived like a typhoon, like a cyclone that overwhelms absolutely everything.



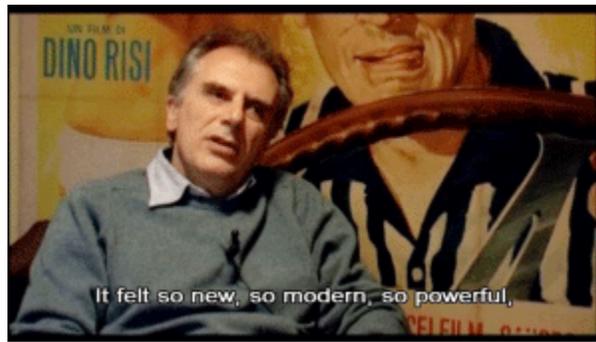
[Reporter] It was Italy's turn to open the festival in Cannes. The film is the one you mentioned, the director is Elio Petri, and as many now know the film is about an insane crime perpetrated by a police inspector. The film was hugely successful, it must be said, with audiences.



Representing the film were the female lead, Florinda Bolkan, with the director Elio Petri, the screenwriter Ugo Pirro, and the producers Marina Cicogna and Daniele Senatore.



[Ugo Pirro, Screenwriter] But since there had been a rumor that the film was going to be banned, there were endless lines in front of the theater, endless. At the Ariston in Rome, for the first time ever, there was a screening that started at 12:30 at night, because people were standing outside and refusing to leave.



It felt so new, so modern, so powerful,

[Marco Risi, Director-Producer] It felt so new, so modern, so powerful, with an overpowering concept. And that's when I thought, "Damn, this means that it's possible to make movies like this."



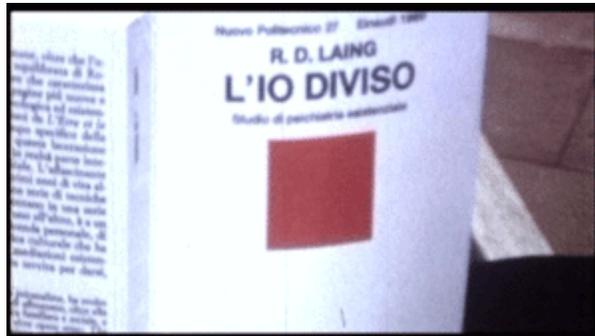
[Giovanna Cau, Lawyer] It was a miracle that we were able to make the movie thanks to the signature of Daniele Senatore, whom I want to honor.

[DAY OF THE GREAT PRODUCER: RISE AT 12:30 ... PALE FACED]

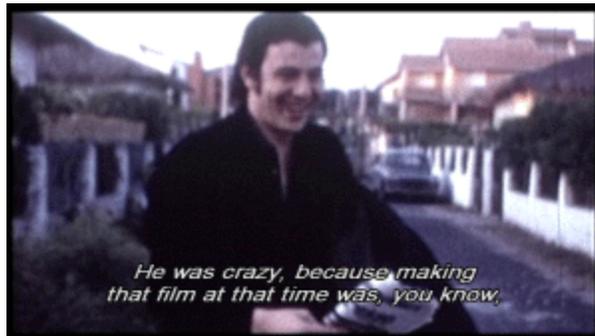




[Giovanna Cau, Lawyer] He committed his father's money, who was a general, so the screenplay and the film could go forward.



[THE DIVIDED SELF, BY R.D. LAING]



[Florinda Bolkan, Actress] He was crazy, because making that film at that time was, you know, very courageous, very nonconformist.



The beauty of that film was that it was made with absolute freedom. So it came out as it was meant to.



[Reporter] Mr. Petri, forgive me, but you are not too uncomfortable in the system. You always find a patron who finances your ideas. You have a Jaguar parked outside, a villa by the shore.



[Elio Petri] But I have to find them. Every time I have to find them. For example, I didn't make Investigation with a regular producer. It was a young producer who took on Investigation, and his name is Daniele Senatore. He appreciated the film precisely because of its anti-conformist content. I would never propose a film like Investigation to an established producer, to a member of the establishment. I would never dream of it.



[INVESTIGATION OF A CITIZEN ABOVE SUSPICION - 1970]



[Marina Cicogna, Producer] Suddenly Gian Maria decided he would no longer make bourgeois films, and that he could only work with me for his next three films.



So finding Petri with a project like the one Senatore had brought me in Investigation, with Gian Maria already attached for the part was really ideal.



*[Augusta Terzi] How are you going to kill me this time?*



*[Homicide Division Chief] I'm going to slash your throat.*



[Florinda Bolkan, Actress] Perhaps what enabled me to play this part was the fact that I was completely unprepared.



When I read the part, it seemed very straightforward. I could have worn a perfectly ordinary dress and he was -- But when I got to the set and saw the Liberty style decor, the sheets were black, and she was practically naked, it all seemed surreal.



So I put myself in Elio's hands.



He was not at all rigid. He seemed very easygoing. In fact, he actually had very specific ideas, but he would also give you the freedom to do your thing. Then he would come in and adjust things, and at times put you in almost ridiculous situations, like when I was hit. I didn't know.



I had no idea that I would be hit, because he took me by surprise.



*[INVESTIGATION OF A CITIZEN ABOVE SUSPICION] [Augusta Terzi] You treat them like children.*

*[Homicide Division Chief] Everyone becomes a child again, especially in the presence of the established authorities.*



*In my presence, because I represent power.*



*Straighten up! The law.*



*Sit up! The law.*



[Florinda Bolkan, Actress] And again when we were on the beach, and I put sand in Volonte's mouth, that too was a surprise. He was like that. He came up to me and said, "Put sand in his mouth."



I said, "God no, he'll be furious. He'll hit me." Because Volonte had a temper, even in real life.





[INVESTIGATION OF A CITIZEN ABOVE SUSPICION] [Homicide Division Chief] What the --  
Bitch! What the --



[Florinda Bolkan, Actress] He was really the ideal director. Because we all need a hand, we all need surprises.



[Ugo Pirro, Screenwriter] At one point Elio called and said, "Listen, I finished mixing Come and see the film." Zavattini was there, and Monicelli. I think Scola was there, and others, I can't remember now. When the lights came back up, after a few comments, they all sad, "You're going to jail."



And they advised us to leave Rome.



*[INVESTIGATION OF A CITIZEN ABOVE SUSPICION] [Homicide Division Chief] Panunzio!  
Panunzio! Let's have Panunzio break open a bottle for us. Here he is.*



*[Panunzio] My deepest congratulations, Chief.*

*[Homicide Division Chief] Toruzzo! You're coming with me.*



*[Panunzio] Mangani!*

*[Homicide Division Chief] You're coming with me, got it?*



*[Mangani] Congratulations. It won't be easy for me to fill your shoes.*



*[Homicide Division Chief] Don't be ridiculous. What are you talking about? And Panunzio? Where is he?*

*[Panunzio] Here.*

[Reporter] About Investigation it's been said that as well as being highly popular it also displays political apathy, since there is nothing that amuses Italians as much as bad-mouthing the police.



[Elio Petri] Yes, but it set a precedent. For the first time, a film that criticized the institution of the police was not accused of contempt. And this set a precedent. I don't believe political apathy does anything of that sort. Political apathy never brings about any kind of change. In its own tiny way, Investigation created change.



[Enrico Lucherini, Press Agent] It was an inconvenient film.





In order to promote it, I had to jump through a thousand hoops, because it was not appreciated by part of the Italian government, the Christian Democrats, at the time. So it was not easy for me.

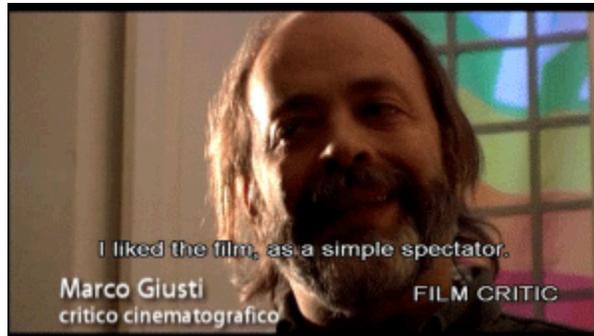


I was fairly well known for making up small scandals and tabloid-worthy gossip on set.

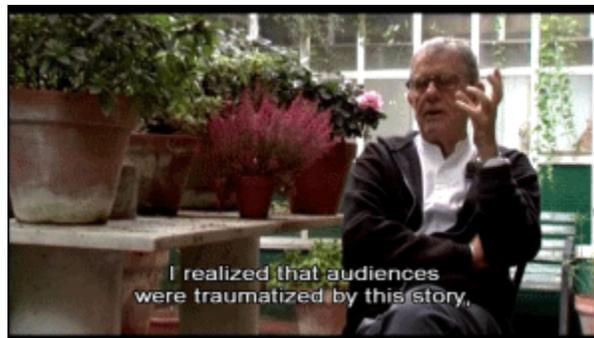




With Petri, as with Pasolini, and Visconti and Fellini, I couldn't help the films with that type of nonsense. Because I understood that these were important films.



[Marco Giusti, Film Critic] I liked the film, as a simple spectator. As a critical spectator, I had other ideas. I mean, I didn't like the kind of cinema that Petri made, at all. But between Morricone, who could make us love anything, and Volonte with his mannerisms, if you see it today it's very modern.



[Enrico Lucherini, Press Agent] Already the day it came out, I realized that audiences were traumatized by this story, so complex yet so wonderful.

[Cop Frenchy] Chief, they have the same names they did 30 years ago.



[Homicide Division Chief] Revolution is like syphilis. It's in their blood.

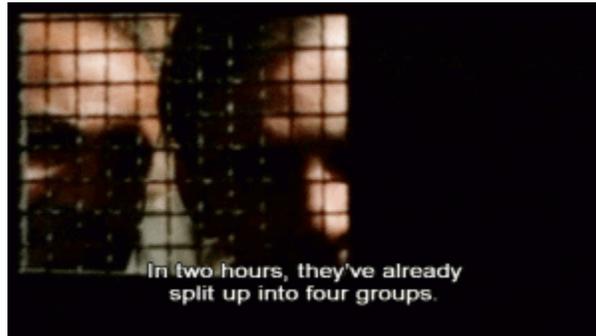
[Cop] Good evening.

[Homicide Division Chief] Evening.

[Cop] Evening, Chief. We can't take this much longer. What a pain!



[Anarchists] Murderers! Fascists! Fascists! Fascists! Spontaneists! Spontaneists!



[Cop Frenchy] Even in jail, they fight. In two hours, they've already split up into four groups. It's like a chain reaction. It's a good thing they're not united, or we'd have trouble.

[Reporter] Mr. Petri, your films have been given many different labels: Films of denunciation, of protest and even demonstration films.

[Elio Petri] That's right.

[Reporter] Lately, they've been called political. Which label is most accurate, or how would you characterize your work?



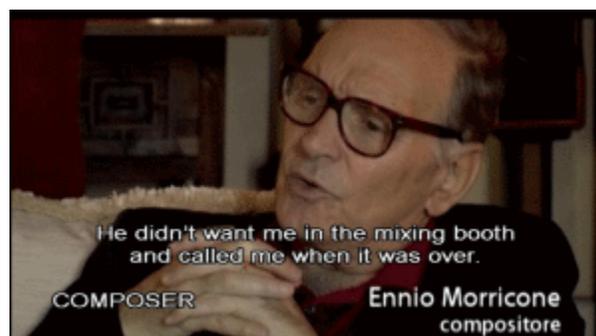
[Elio Petri] Well I think Investigation was a popular film. Therefore it was also political. I think the political content of Investigation was enhanced by the great audience response it got.



[Giovanna Cau, Lawyer] And the film received the Special Jury Prize at Cannes. It was nominated for Best Original Screenplay, and it won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film.



[Florinda Bolkan, Actress] I remember that it was -- what was her name -- Leslie Caron accepted the award, and I was furious. I said, that would have been me if I had known that those two weren't going to go, because they didn't move. They were protesters and they made a film about a moment in history, and they really focused on -- It was important, but they didn't even want to go receive -- they didn't want to even be there.



[Ennio Morricone, Composer] This is like a little fable, but it's true. He didn't want me in the mixing booth and called me when it was over. When he was done mixing he showed me the film. And he had put in completely different music from another thriller that I had composed, with a chorus, it was completely absurd. And since he was next to me, he said, "You see, Ennio, how perfect this music is?" Knowing full well that it wasn't the original music. So he knew that I would be very upset. And I said, "Look, it's awful. It has nothing to do with the film." "No, it's extraordinary. Truly extraordinary." And for ten minutes he bombarded . It was fabulous. "Look, it's extraordinary, extraordinary." By then I've given up -- In the end, the director does whatever he wants. What could I do? I gave up, and said to him, "Look, it just doesn't fit." By then the lights were up. He said to me, "Ennio ... you should" -- His exact words. "You should slap me in the face for this prank. You wrote the most beautiful music" [chokes up and holds back tears] "I could ever imagine."



I'm done.





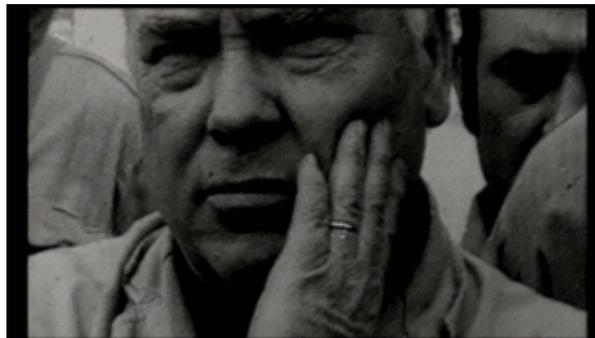
[Ugo Pirro, Screenwriter] It was Elio's idea at first to make a movie about the working class.





So we started to write the script and we traveled around visiting factories, and mostly we followed a workers' protest in Rome, here at FATME, a factory where there was a protest led mostly by this one group called Potere Operaio, Workers' Power.





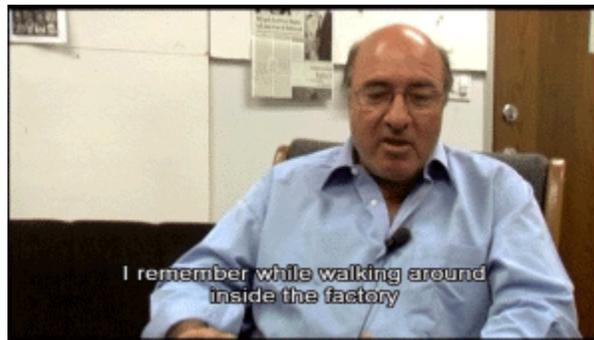
Potere Operaio urged the workers to hold demonstrations inside the factory. All this because a worker had been fired. His name was Tiberio. So we took this protest as our model.



Other people had also offered to produce the film. But when they heard that it was The Working Class, they all pulled out.



[THE WORKING CLASS GOES TO HEAVEN]



[Dante Ferretti, Set Designer] I remember while walking around inside the factory there were some cardboard boxes thrown to the side and on one of them there was a closed fist -- no, not closed -- it was pointing, instead of drawing an arrow. And I remember I said, "Look at this great image." And the others said, "That's a fabulous idea. Why don't we paint it on the wall, like the boss telling the workers that they have to work." It then went on to become the symbol of repression in the factory.



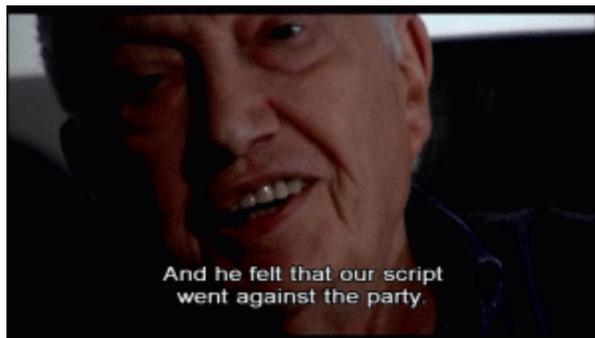
Then there was the whole aspect of his private life, of where Gian Maria Volonte as supposed to live. His name in the film was Lulu. And I made it completely real with real materials, inside Cinecittà, with real floors.



So what did I do? I'll never forget one day, I told the prop master, before he came, to cook something in the kitchen and to use garlic, to saute some garlic. So that when you entered it would smell like a real home. In fact, it stank to high heaven. So he came in, he smelled the garlic and said, "Oh, it's wonderful, it looks great. Wonderful, so real." So that was the miniscule idea I had. Not so much to make it look so perfect, but to have him come into a place that smelled real.



[Ugo Pirro, Screenwriter] There were lots of clashes. Because Volonte, who had been a strong protester, in the meantime had become very orthodox. He was very much aligned with the Communist Party.

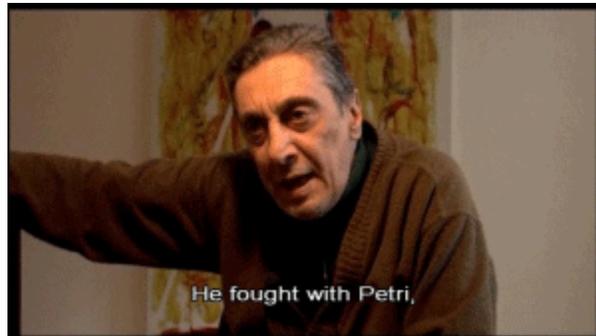


And he felt that our script went against the party. Volonte even got into fistfights with students in front of the factory. At one point he provoked me and I assaulted him. There were several episodes.

[Marina Cicogna, Producer] Pirro and Gian Maia one day chased each other with knives.



They wanted to kill each other. Then at night, at the restaurant, "Tomorrow I'm going to kill you." It was a time of great tension.



[Flavio Bucci, Actor] He fought with Petri, but he also fought with Pirro. But his behavior was also kind of schizophrenic. Gian Maria was a man who always had to be worked up, pissed off. He was not at all laid back.







[Mariangela Melato, Actress] One day he called me to do what I thought was an audition for The Working Class.



They put me in a slip that was rather see-through. and told me to get into bed and pretend to have intimate relations with Gian Maria Volonte.



I was completely bewildered, and I asked myself, "What kind of weird audition is this? My face has to be under the covers. It's going to be a bit embarrassing, but we all know perfectly well what's going on.

And they'll never see my face." Then I was terrified because my feet were cold, and I remember I apologized ad nauseam, "I'm sorry, Mr. Gian Maria. My feet are cold. I am so sorry, I have to touch you with my cold feet." And finally at one point he said, "All right already, with your feet. Your feet are cold, big deal. I don't give a damn about your feet. Be quiet." So that evening, I said, "So, how did

the audition go? You'll let me know?" And Petri said, "What audition? This was a shoot. Come back tomorrow because we're going to go on with the scene."



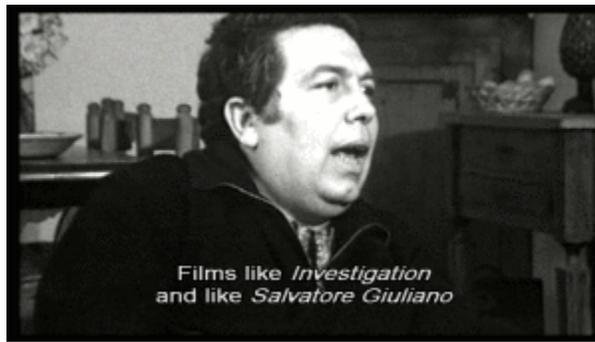
I was absolutely dumbstruck. I nearly fainted, because I thought ... I was so excited that as I was running to catch the train back to Rome, I broke my foot.



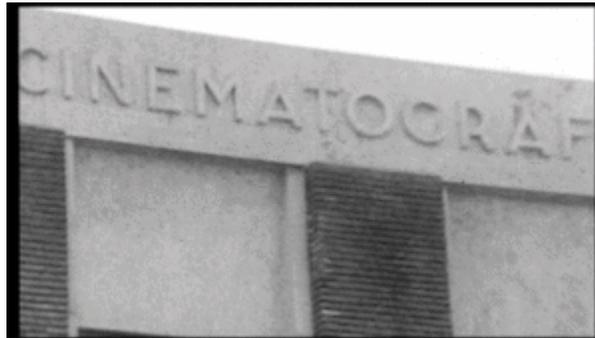
For me it was a unique experience. Usually I don't dwell on the past. But that period, that time, I miss that film. I would love to start all over tomorrow. Even going back and forth between Rome and Novara, Novara and Roma, even with my broken foot.



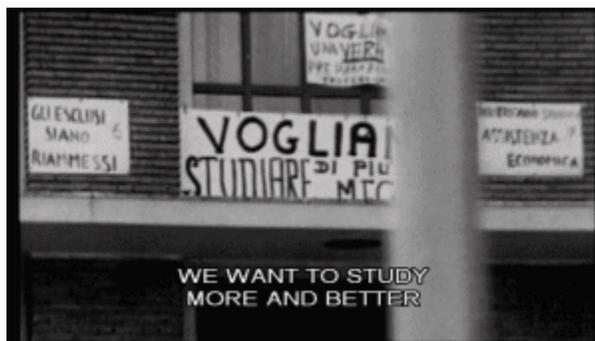
[Robert Altman, Director] I think I learned then to insist on that sort of thing from my relationships with people like Elio and Fellini and Bergman, John Huston, and the directors that were my mentors, because they politically -- no matter what the film was -- they politically took the position that they were the artists, these were people who were artists, and they could say what, and they could make them about what they wanted to. And politics was always in the background of all of us, because we'd have to deal with that every day of our lives.



[Elio Petri] Films like *Investigation* and like *Salvatore Giuliano*, and like *The Conformist*, and like *Hands Over the City*, like *La Terra Trema*, or *Rome Open City*, the great films. I'm talking about the great films on whose shoulders my work stands. They originated in a great wave of democratic renewal.



[Ugo Pirro, Screenwriter] We occupied the Istituto Luce. We members of the Society, we occupied the Mostra del Cinema.



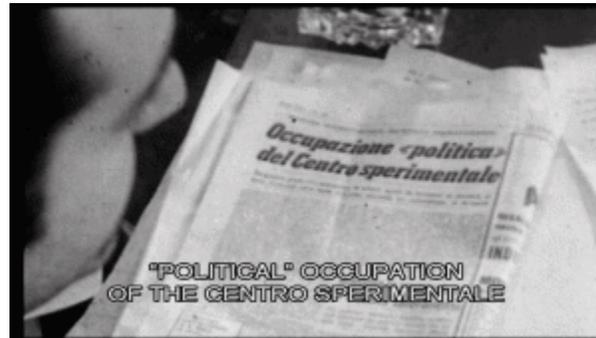
[WE WANT TO STUDY MORE AND BETTER]



[FILMMAKERS PROTEST PERSECUTION OF DEMOCRATS IN TURIN]



[HUGE ATTENDANCE AT GATHERING OF ITALIAN FILMMAKERS]



["POLITICAL" OCCUPATION OF THE CENTRO SPERIMENTALE]





[Ugo Pirro, Screenwriter] The debates were incredibly impassioned. You can't imagine what it was like. Today it's unimaginable.





The things we did.



[Robert Altman, Director] So you can't be an artist in the 20th century and not be involved in politics.  
It's just impossible.



[Woman] They dragged me away from home like a tin of stewed tomatoes. And now I'm here. But if I weren't, I'd be somewhere else. In another store, another house, another neighborhood.



Or maybe ...



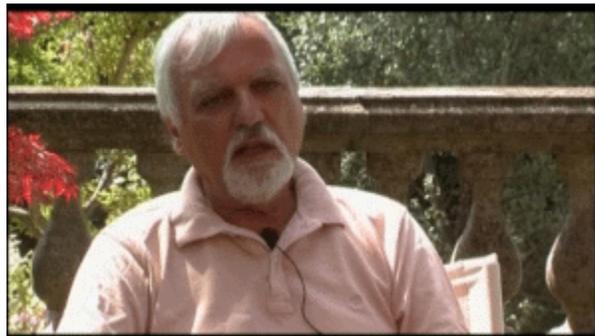
seated in a theater, like you.



[Ugo Pirro, Screenwriter] Elio's belief, rather than an idea, was: The actor is like a thief. What does the actor do, after all? He steals the character from here, takes possession of a personality there. And the thief? He disguises himself. He transforms himself to become a thief.



From this paradox we started to think about the film.



[Jean Gili, Film Critic] He said many times that Property is about "being" and "having."

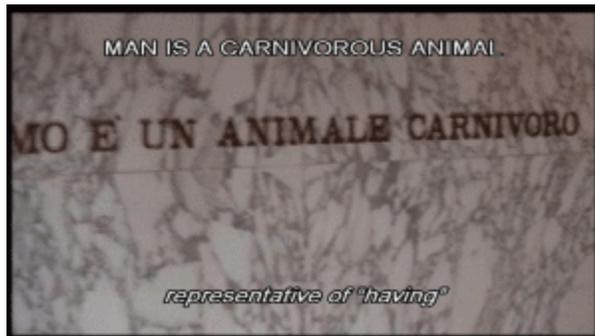


And mostly about the fact that "having" destroys "being."



*As a prime example of a character*

As a prime example of a character ...

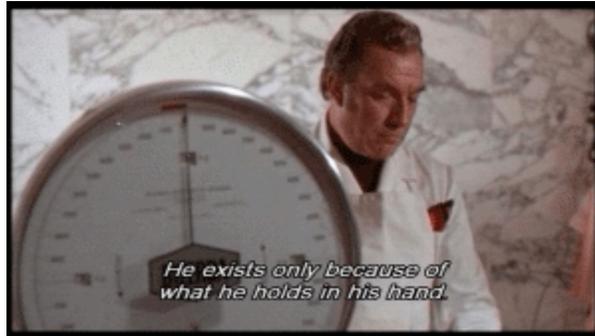


*representative of "having"*

representative of "having", he chooses the butcher.



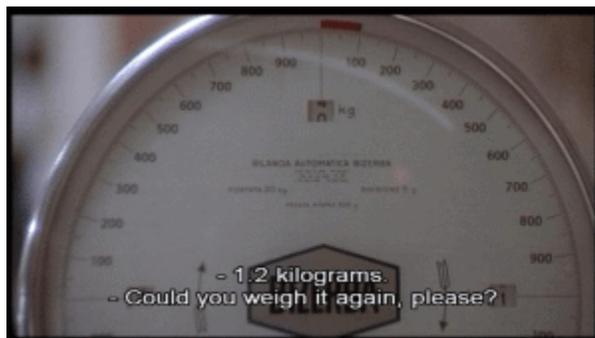
He needs to show off his power.



He exists only because of what he holds in his hand.

[PROPERTY IS NO LONGER A THEFT]

[MAN IS A CARNIVOROUS ANIMAL]



[Butcher] 1.2 kilograms.



[Woman] Could you weigh it again, please?



[Butcher] Why should I?

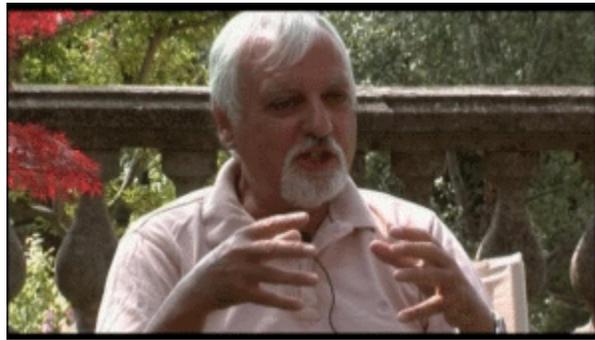
[Woman] I read 1.08 kilograms ...



and not 1.2 kilograms.



[Jean Gili, Film Critic] Then he runs into this young man ...



who works at a bank and hates money so much that he has to handle it with gloves, because Elio wanted to show us that money burns.



[Bank Director] Mr. Total, come here.





[Mr. Total] Director, may I please work with gloves on?

[Bank Director] As long as you don't remove your tie.



And go see a doctor.



[Flavio Bucci, Actor] The very first scene of Property was one in which I was outside the door of my house, and the camera was inside. I had to open the door and go in, pass the camera in the hallway and exit the scene. Then there was the next scene. I was very excited, super tense, we did various rehearsal shots, the camera on the ground, 55 people behind the camera. And then, after many practice shots, I said, "Is it all right, Elio?" "Yes, it's perfect. Go ahead!" The very first slate for the film. So I hear, from behind the door, "Ready, speed, slate it. Action, go!" I open the door, go in, and I hear a huge raspberry from 55 people in the crew. A colossal raspberry.



[Property is No Longer a Theft] [Girl] Who's that?



[Mr. Total] A ghost. The ghost of a banker.



[Girl] Did you steal all of this stuff?

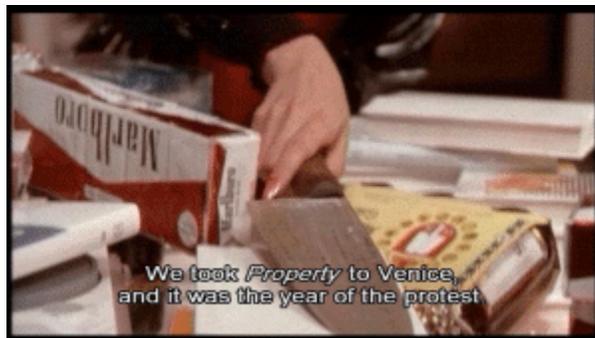
[Mr. Total] I'm a Marxist and a magician.



I only steal what I need. The hardest thing to steal is tobacco.



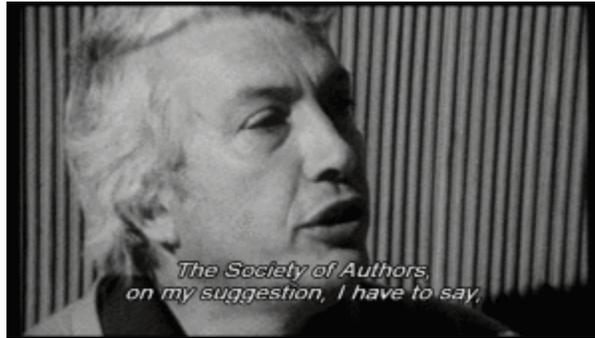
Harder than medications.



[Flavio Bucci, Actor] We took *Property* to Venice, and it was the year of the protest.



The traditional festival was canceled, but we held the *Giornate del Cinema*.



[Ugo Pirro, Screenwriter] The Society of Authors, on my suggestion, I have to say ...



we created the Giornate del Cinema.

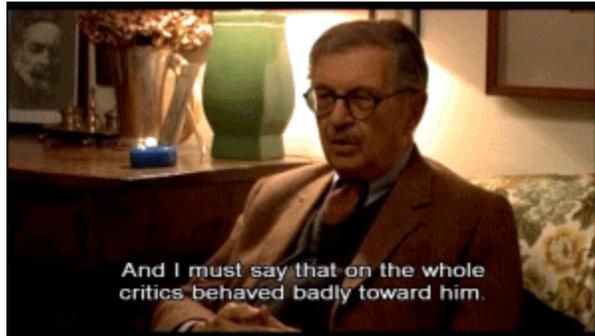




In a public square we projected films that were supposed to go to the Venice Film Festival. *Property Is No Longer a Theft* was presented in an open square ... and was received badly. It was misunderstood, and the next day, the reviews were all negative.



At that point, Elio met with Lietta Tornabuoni, a critic for *La Stampa*, and gave an interview against film critics which was very scathing.



[Furio Scarpelli, Screenwriter] And I must say that on the whole critics behaved badly toward him.



They didn't understand the heart that he put into each of his works.



[Flavio Bucci, Actor] This so-called cinema of engagement, political, social, etc., had a huge following among the leftists, of course. By boycotting it, the traditional left, we can say, condemned it to fail, if I may say so.



[Francesco Maselli, Director] Two things hurt Elio deeply at the time, I remember it well.



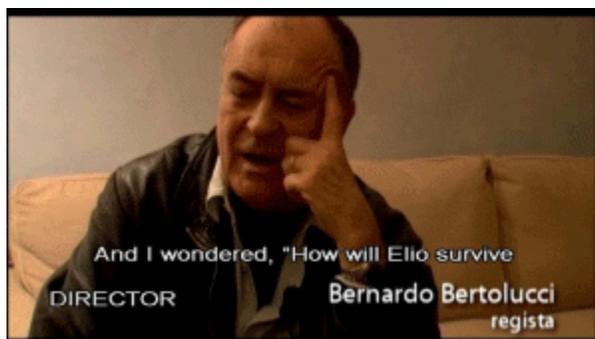
One was the type of debate started in Venice, also with the workers of Porto Marghera, who were there, in the film.



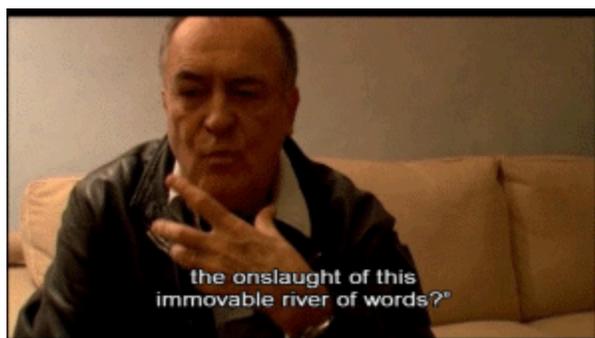
But he was even more disappointed, if I'm not mistaken, the year before at the festival of Porretta Terme, where *The Working Class Goes to Heaven* was attacked by members of FIOM, the Italian Federation of Machinists, who rejected the film and went so far as to say that it was dangerous and should not be screened. And there was a debate where Elio blamed me -- and not only me, there were several other directors there -- for not standing up for him. **And he was absolutely right.**



[Flavio Bucci, Actor] Elio had a powerful desire, as we all did, to criticize. But the goal was to spark debate, not to be destructive.



[Bernardo Bertolucci, Director] And I wondered, "How will Elio survive ...



the onslaught of this immovable river of words?"



[Elio Petri] Toward the end of my life, I made unpleasant films. Yes, unpleasant films in a society that now requires pleasantness of everything, even of social engagement. My films, on the contrary, go even beyond the mark of unpleasantness. To what is this due? Why do I make such films? Evidently because I have the distinct feeling of having reached a point in which I feel that all the premises that existed when I was a boy have been completely neutralized. Society has taken a completely different path, and this could not fail to leave a deep scar in my being.

[Todo Modo - 1976] [Don Gaetano] I am an evil priest. Very evil.



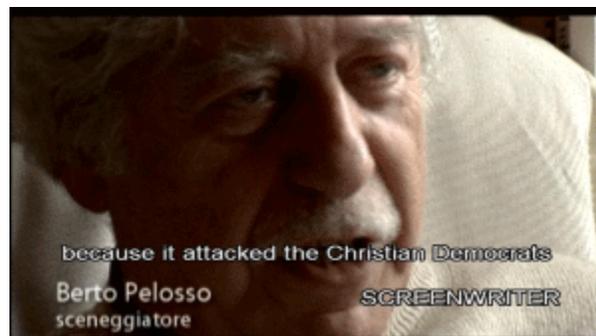
And I'll tell you something else. The Church has triumphed over the ages thanks to evil priests.



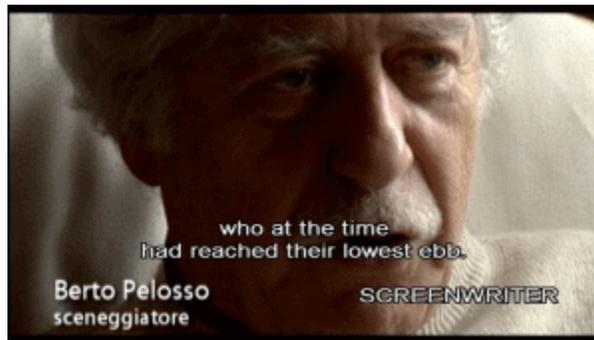
Their evil serves to confirm and exalt sanctity.



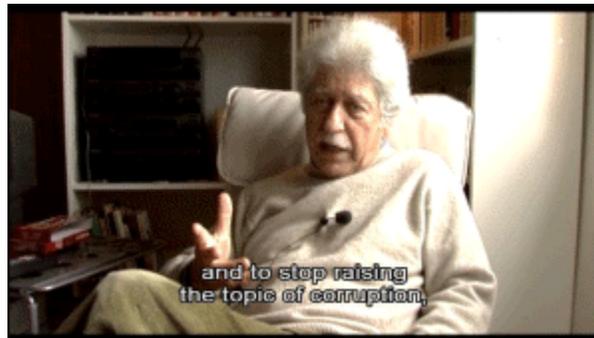
[Berto Pelosso, Screenwriter] Sciascia's novel had impressed him very much ...



because it attacked the Christian Democrats ...



who at the time had reached their lowest ebb. And he tried to personalize it very much in the screenplay, honing in on his goals, steering away from the more literary angle of Sciascia, and making a film that was more concrete, harsh, and which at the same time addressed other issues like the relationship between morals and politics, something which then we talked about a lot. When the film came out, some very important things had happened, in politics. There had been the proposal of the Historic Compromise. The Historic Compromise forced the political players to soften their polemical tone ...



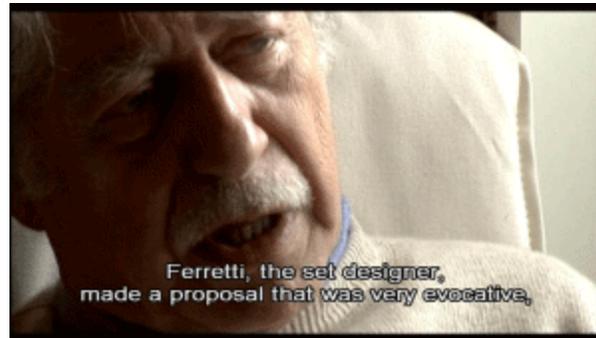
and to stop raising the topic of corruption in favor of trying to find common ground all in the name of defending democracy.



[Woman] Let them talk first. There's always someone willing to start.



Don't say "painfully" "sorely" or "sadly" and most of all "magmatically," as you always do. Remember, they don't believe you just as you don't believe them.



[Berto Pelosso, Screenwriter] Ferretti, the set designer, made a proposal that was very evocative, to rebuild in the studio a giant ... a gigantic body shop.



[Mariangela Melato, Actress] You felt like you were in a never ending tunnel. There was an atmosphere of penance, which was the point, the whole point for these characters to go back and forth.



[Dante Ferretti, Set Designer] He loved the set, this modern cement catacomb.





In order to show it all, all the time, he shot the whole thing with the 25. Whether it was close-up, objects in the foreground, or ... the camera was always very close to the actor, very close, close to people who were whispering, because just like in politics, people speak up close, in each other's ears. So he only used that one lens, and even more importantly, he use the dolly for everything.



If you watch the film again, you'll never see a static shot, very few. Most of the time, he uses dolly shots that track the actors' movements.

[Giovanna Cau, Lawyer] The censors went to town on this film.



When it came out, disastrously, it was in theaters for a few days and then it disappeared, basically never to be seen again.



[Mariangela Melato, Actress] *Todo Modo* is a film that I never saw again. Never again. And I'd like to see it again, because it was a special film, I think, not even comparable to Elio's other films. It was really special. Prophetic.



[*Todo Modo*] [M.] I believe the time has come to think back upon the thirty years that saw us at the head of this country ....



[Berto Pelosso, Screenwriter] While we were writing in a house that Petri had in Torvaianica by the sea, Volonte often came to see us. He was very curious, and he would read pages of the script. So Petri, who always catered to his passion and encouraged his enthusiasm, said to him, "Listen, in the meantime, why don't you study some of these people, these Christian Democrats."



[Todo Modo] [M.] ... during which we effected a difficult, tormented, perhaps painful ...



agitation.



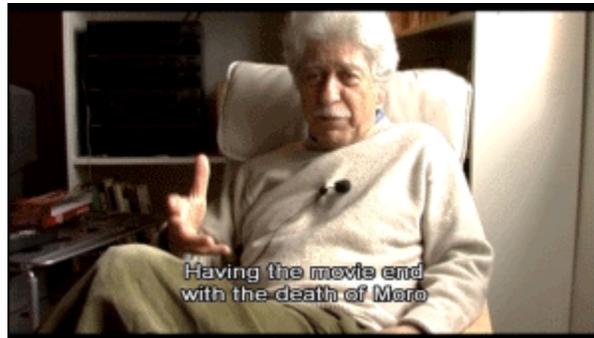
[Paola Petri] In fact we had problems, because we received the first dailies and discovered that this was Moro himself. But they didn't want Moro. He was meant to be the symbol of a ruling class that precisely because religion was involved, everyone identified with Moro.



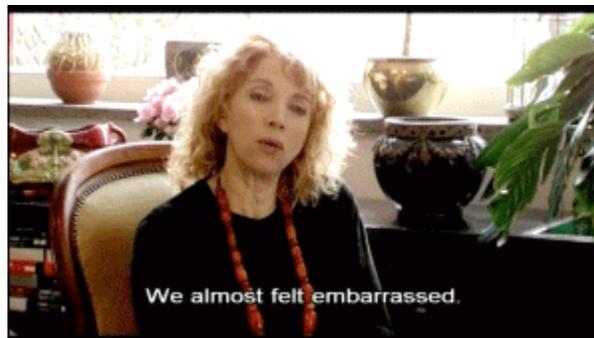
[Berto Pelosso, Screenwriter] I remember the screening, when the film came out. There were many members of the Communist Party, who were interested, and at the end, the room went completely cold.



[Marco Giusti, Film Critic] Moro was already an inconvenient character even before his death. So it's ... This movie needs to be completely reevaluated.



[Berto Pelosso, Screenwriter] Having the movie end with the death of Moro was a very inopportune choice, politically. And the Communist Party distanced itself immediately from the film, because at the time it was very disturbing.



[Mariangela Melato, Actress] We almost felt embarrassed. "Oh, God," we said. "Oh, God, we didn't know." There was no guilt, of course. But we did feel that we had foreseen the event. So we were even more shocked, I believe, than the rest of Italy. I mean, it was an event that was ...



incredible and unspeakable, and it still is today.



[Berto Pelosso, Screenwriter] Films were much more ... I mean, they had an effect ... they were much more impactful with audiences. Nowadays, everything is met with much more indifference, we could say. Back then a protest film, a harsh film, especially if made by someone with Petri's prestige -- They were films that could have a certain impact on audiences. The reactions of the politicians were justified

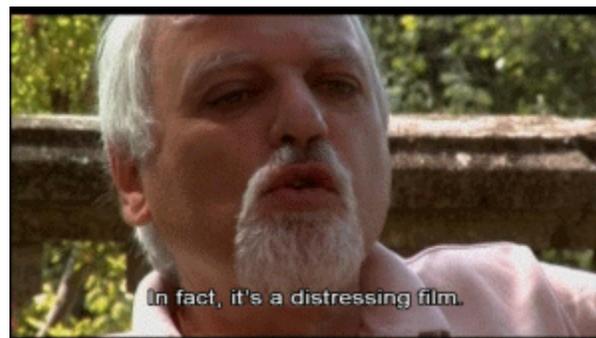
...



because films left a mark when they hit their target.



[Giovanna Cau, Lawyer] From this moment on, after *Todo Modo*, it was a hard time for Elio. There were many difficulties. Because *Property is No Longer a Theft* was criticized. *Todo Modo* in the end, even though it was amazing, had that sad fate. So he wrote *Buone notizie*, a film starring Giannini. I was hesitant about *Buone notizie* because it was very melancholic, very pessimistic.



[Jean Gili, Film Critic] In fact, it's a distressing film. It creates an image ... He put his angst, perhaps even his nightmares -- Yes, this film can be seen as a nightmare. In a society in which one can no longer live. And in this sense, it acquires the weight of a last work.



[Giancarlo Giannini, Actor] Elio called me at 10:00 at night. He said, "I have to read you the treatment I just jotted down. I want you to read it, or I can read it to you." He came to my house and read me this 40-page treatment, and it was Buone notizie. He was so enthusiastic about his idea. And I said, "It's going to be hard. Who will give us money to make it?" So I said, "Tomorrow morning, I want to ask my friends, the producers at Medusa," which were Poccioni and Colaiacomo.



So I went to see them. And they said, "Is this film full of laughs?" And I said, "Yeah, sure." Which was completely untrue. So in one morning I found, I think, 500 or 600 million lire. Back then it was more than enough, anyway, it was what we needed, and this film was born, Buone notizie, a difficult, strange, intriguing film. And we were the producers.



[Le buone notizie - 1979] [Man] I don't wanna die. I don't wanna die. Nurses, doctors, scientists, save me.



I don't wanna die. I don't wanna die! I don't wanna die! I don't wanna die! I don't wanna die!

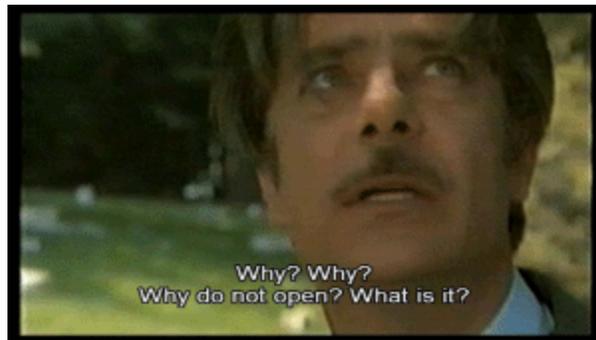
[Giancarlo Giannini, Actor] The best time, with Elio, was following the film. It was my first time following with a director, in several cities -- We did this for an entire month. Almost every day. We'd go to Turin and then maybe Palermo. We would talk to people. And Elio wanted to explain the theme of the film. Even watching it now, I think its still very complex in its unfolding, and especially its ending.



The film ends with a question. It ends with this character, whom I played ... in the middle of this riddle that he can't solve, which is the distressing theme of life itself. He finds himself opening these envelopes within envelopes, and there's yet another envelope on which is written:



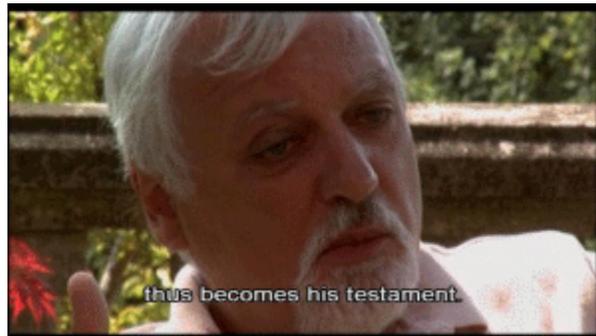
"Do not open," "Do not open," "Do not open."



Why? Why? Why do not open? What is it?



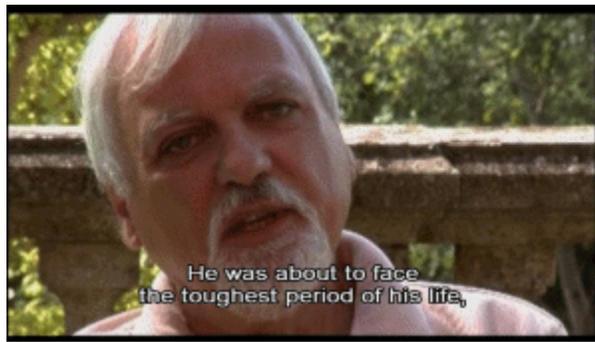
And this was the enigmatic, distressing ending of the film, which is still difficult to understand today, so I'm very proud of having produced that film together with Elio, such a complex film.



[Jean Gili, Film Critic] The angst that the film communicates, that makes it inconvenient, thus becomes his testament.



[Giovanna Cau, Lawyer] Since he died a few short years later, it may have presaged his death. He had become extremely depressed.



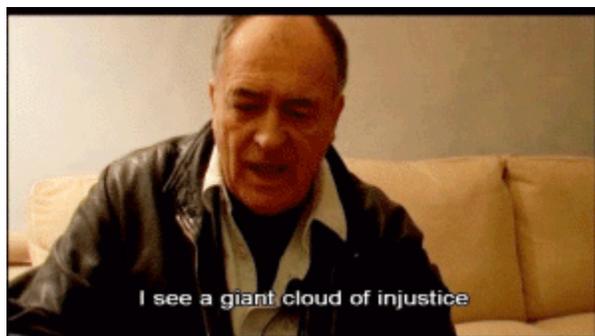
[Jean Gili, Film Critic] He was about to face the toughest period of his life, that sadly culminated as we all know. And then, the final project: Chi illumina la grande notte, which unfortunately he never made.



[Dante Ferretti, Set Designer] What saddens me is that unfortunately in Italy, who knows why, a person who had such success abroad, who won everything from the Oscar to the Silver Bear, to Cannes, internationally, to the Lion in Venice.



He won everything. This man who was a great artist, a great director, a truly great man of the cinema, has been completely forgotten, one never hears about him.



[Bernardo Bertolucci, Director] I see a giant cloud of injustice covering the figure of Petri, this director of a dozen films.



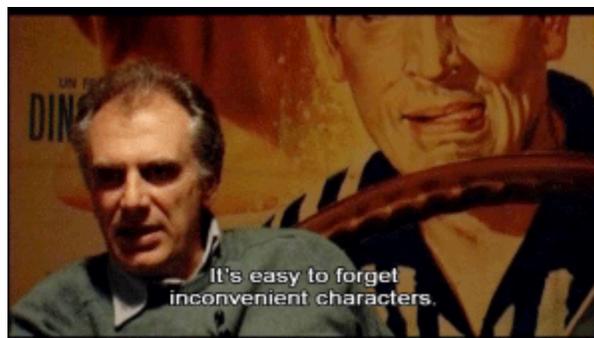
[Mariangela Melato, Actress] It's baffling.



Maybe there really is a will to erase him from memory.



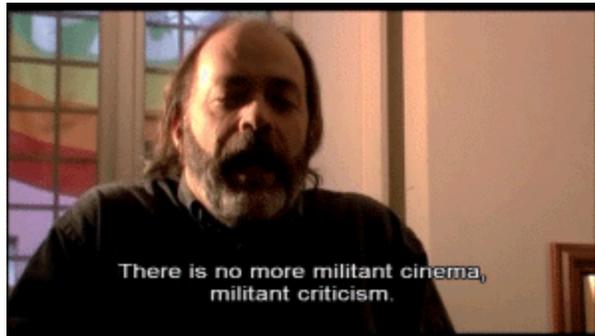
I can't see any other explanation.



[Marco Risi, Director-Producer] It's easy to forget inconvenient characters. Petri was not an easy man, not an easygoing man. He examined the flaws of society and talked about them.



[Marco Giusti, Film Critic] I must be honest. Time has killed Petri, as well as our criticism and all critical debate. In Italy there no longer exists a critical debate on the cinema. The cinema is this stuff we have now.



There is no more militant cinema, militant criticism. This is one more reason why we miss Petri.



[Robert Altman, Director] And the people who didn't know the Elio Petris, the people who didn't know those films, they don't know what's missing. They have no inkling, because it just never existed in their minds. So those people have been really pushed aside and buried by the system, that they artistically really gave up their lives for.



[Tonino Guerra, Screenwriter] It's the first time that I've heard someone speaking, that a group of people thinks they can talk about this boy, so alive, so ... so entrenched in the cinema, in the images, so entrenched in a powerful vision, who must not be forgotten.

[Elio Petri] I like Stroheim and I don't like Flaherty. I don't like documentaries. They make me laugh. They're the epitome of manipulation, because they pretend to document that which cannot be documented.



[Gianfranco Piccioli, Producer] He told me part of this story for about ten minutes. Then he stopped talking. I said, "What then?" "Well," he said, "If you want to know how it ends, you'll have to give me a contract. I'll go home, work on it, and we'll finish this thing." And I said, "What do you mean? Are you going to leave me hanging?" And he said, "Well, first of all, I don't even know how it ends. So I don't want to get frustrate by going home to write a screenplay if I don't know who it's for. I need a producer." So began this extraordinary adventure, a fascinating project, lovely, and ahead of its time called *Chi illumina la grande notte*. With an amazing ending, because we got there, of course. And it was strange. I was very surprised by the fact that Elio, perhaps for the first time, had written a story with a happy ending. So there is this screenplay lying among my papers, and every now and then, I pull it out again. But that was a film that only he could make.



SPECIAL THANKS: Goffredo e Guido Lombardo, Cesarina Marchetti

Alberto Grimaldi

Giovanna e Andrea Cau

Ennio Morricone

Carlo Bixio

Ugo Pirro

Massimo Vigliar

Davide Secchiaroli

Francesca Perri

Ellen Schafer

Alberto Morselli

Regia: Federico Bacci, Nicola Guarneri e Stefano Leone

Collaborazione Artistica e Produttore: Paola Petri

Montaggio: Paola Freddi

Assistente al Montaggio: Elsa de Falco Bonomi

Musiche Originali: Simone Soldani

Postproduzione e Colorist: Pierpaolo Murru

Montaggio del Suono: Paolo Lucaferri

Fonico di Mix: Marco Saitta

Postproduzione Sonora: MARBEA - Rome

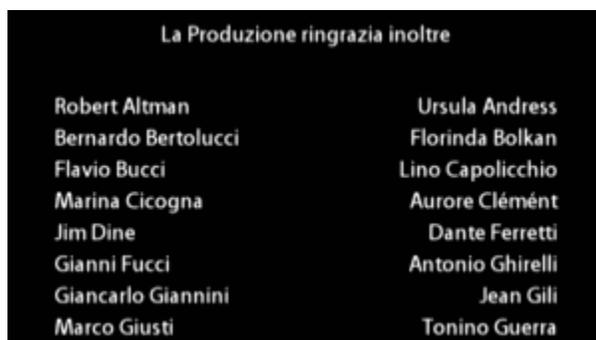
Missaggio Musiche Originali: STUDIO IRIS - Livorno

Assistente di Paola Petri: Lorenzo Del Re

Amministrazione: Studio De Santis

Materiale di Repertorio: Teche RAI, Istituto Luce, Archivio Audiovisivo Movimento Operaio  
Democratico

SuperOtto e Fotografie: collezione Paola Petri



La Produzione ringrazia inoltre:

Robert Altman

Ursula Andress

Bernardo Bertolucci

Florinda Bolkan

Flavio Bucci

Lino Capolicchio

Marina Cicogna

Aurore Clément

Jim Dine

Dante Ferretti

Gianni Fucci

Antonio Ghirelli

Giancarlo Giannini

Jean Gili

Marco Giusti

Tonino Guerra

Luigi Kuveiller	Carlo Lizzani
Enrico Lucherini	Francesco Maselli
Mariangela Melato	Giuliano Montaldo
Franco Nero	Andrea Occhipinti
Paola Pascolini	Berto Pelosso
Gillo Pontecorvo	Vanessa Redgrave
Marco Risi	Aggeo Savioli
Furio Scarpelli	Brandon Hussey
Natalia Loppi	Frederic Fasano
Edoardo Gabbriellini	Sonya Rhee

Luigi Kuveiller  
Carl Lizzani  
Enrico Lucherini  
Francesco Maselli  
Mariangela Melato  
Giuliano Montaldo  
Franco Nero  
Andrea Occhipinti  
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