



God's Gun

Israel / US : 1976 : dir. Gianfranco Parolini (Frank Kramer) : Golan-Globus : 97 min
 prod: Menahem Golan : scr: Frank Kramer : dir.ph.: Sandro Mancori

[Leif Garrett](#)
 Lee Van Cleef; Jack Palance; Richard Boone; Sybil Danning; Paul Smith; Cody Palance;
 Robert Lipton

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω 8 € M ⚡	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
5923	1.5	2	1	1,186	3 7 7 3 7	No	Dec 2002

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

“A brave padre takes up the cudgels against the Clayton gang, but must pay for this with his life. His twin brother, a renowned sharpshooter, steps into his shoes, and this undetected character switch costs the Claytons very dear. Van Cleef (in the double role) and Palance (as head of the gang) turn in a routine reprise of their well-known characters in this spaghetti Western full of violence, which probably shows more killings than any other film in this genre. Parolini directed as "Frank Kramer". **1/2 ”

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Garrett:

“Leif Garrett is his stage name; his mother is the actress Carolyn Stellar. He was a glamorous child with the eyes of a knowing doe, and began acting professionally as a five-year old.

Although he was in continuous demand and acquired a considerable teeny-bopper following, his star roles, as in "SKATEBOARD" and the lurid "KID VENGEANCE" didn't come till he was 15. (He was unlucky to be only eight or nine when Visconti was casting "DEATH IN VENICE", though this would actually have been nearer the age of the real-life Tadzio – Wladyslaw Moes – at the moment Thomas Mann saw and was entranced by him in Venice in the summer of 1911.)

Leif Garrett now began making rock LP's, but his acting career continued strongly, with roles in "SERGEANT PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND" (78), "THE OUTSIDERS" (83), "THUNDER ALLEY" (84), and a near-lead – as a motor mechanic – in Bruce Morrison's "SHAKER RUN" (NZ 85).”

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "Bloomsbury Foreign Film Guide", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

Radio Times review:

“This little-seen novelty western is only made tolerable by its grizzled cast – Lee Van Cleef, Jack Palance and Richard Boone – all old enough to know that sometimes you just take the money. Contains violence, swearing and nudity. ** ”

“Western starring Lee Van Cleef and Jack Palance. A gang of outlaws are shocked when

a murdered priest returns to wreak revenge on | them. ** ”

Ignored by every film reference work thus far consulted bar the *Speelfilm Encyclopedie*, it's a kibbitzer Western from the Golan Globus turkey factory, producers of such archive howlers as "**GOING BANANAS**" (aka "My African Adventure") and "**OVER THE TOP**". Appallingly post-synced ~ although shot in the English language ~ it has all the immediate drawbacks of a dubbed Hispanic Western, and despite roping in genre legends Jack Palance and Richard Boone, it contrives to secure really bad performances from both. Palance just grins and wheezes along in a sad parody of the reptilian menace he radiated in "**SHANE**".

Fourth billed on the titles is the sumptuous [Leif Garrett](#) (14), and he's the active pivot of the plot even though his dialogue is minimal (for half of the film he's struck dumb with grief) and he's given precious little to do. Garrett's luxuriant flowing locks are about as appropriate to the period setting as a Studebaker or colour TV, but since he's the only thing worth watching in the film, who are we to quibble?

Fatherless Johnny is sheltered under the wing of Juno City priest Lee Van Cleef, formerly a dab hand with a six gun. He keeps a pistol behind the altar of his church, but this actually belongs to his renegade brother, last seen down Mexico way. When Palance's outlaw gang shoot up the town and sheriff Richard Boone considers his retirement options, Van Cleef single-handedly arrests Palance's nephew and marches him back to jail. The next day he too is shot dead for his sins, and dumbstruck Johnny steals a horse and the keepsake gun to go in search of the priest's brother. In due course Johnny chances on a fellow in a wide hat leading a burro, so – yep! this must be Mexico. Van Cleef's brother, as luck would have it, is living just a stone's throw away (Mexico is a *really* small place). Brace yourselves for a shock.

Van Cleef's brother is the spitting image of Van Cleef!!! Gee whiz! If Johnny were not already speechless, *this would have done it for sure*. "You could use a meal, a bath and a bed" Van Cleef declares, looking the boy over, "Bath first. Come on."

Van Cleef 2 gets the whole story out of Johnny via sketches and sign language, and the two of them head back to Juno City for a Reckoning. But in memory of his later brother's pacifism, the gunslinger polishes off Palance's gang simply by donning the priest's garb and letting them shoot each other *in their mortal terror*. Now brace yourselves for another shock.

During a rape scene at the town saloon – the film is well stocked with rape scenes – Johnny's mother saves herself by announcing to Palance that he's the father of her son. Palance scoffs at this news, and gives his croney leave to rape away, until she recalls a time when Palance himself raped her in a barn many moons ago. Overjoyed to learn he's a daddy, the desperado begins making plans for long fishing trips and a life of bliss together, man and son.

Alas, this is not to be. Van Cleef 2 has a score to settle for Van Cleef 1, and rides off into the sunset leaving Johnny the gun, and Johnny's mother a saddlebag full of Palance's ill-gotten gains.

If only the film were an hour longer! It's unquestionably the most inept Western I've seen in years. The day-for-night shooting is blindingly obvious, the foley work atrocious, the fight scenes amateurish, and every *shock* shot is accompanied by a disembodied shriek from the soundtrack, as though a woman in the audience kept having her corns trodden on. Leif surfs through it all with earnest expressions, but his character is a cutout stand-in for Brandon de Wilde's Joey in "**SHANE**", which part he's slightly too old for, and without dialogue or action he merely loiters decorously in the background – like so many screen heroines before him.

Sadly for Leif, most of his films seem to have been on a par with this one, and acting talent did not number among his visible charms. He had much greater success as the silent star of many a fan-mag centrefold, and as a pop icon in the David Cassidy mould.

See subject index under [TWINS / LOOKALIKES](#), VENGEANCE / VIGILANTEISM and [WESTERNS](#).