



**TOP FIGHTER**  
 Genre - Documentary/Kung Fu  
 Region 2 DVD (Pal)  
 M.I.A.

What starts as a dissection into the history of Chinese martial arts thankfully settles on a general overview of all the great kung fu stars instead. All angles are covered in this generic documentary looking at the various genres of martial arts film with all the big names getting a mention! Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan dominate, but there's also nice footage from fan favourites like Bolo Yeung, Hwang Jang Lee, Dorian Tan and Gordon Liu, not to mention the lesser known actors, like Casanova Wong, Ron Van Clief and Larry Lee.

Too many film clips tag the piece together, some good and others not; but in amongst all the flailing limbs hide a few gems, such as the trailer for Bolo's film **Chinese Hercules**, which is hilarious, and a neat look at Dorian Tan's Tae Kwon Do school in California.

Those of us who bought this documentary when it first arrived on video ten years ago would probably be right to expect a bit more from the long awaited DVD release. They've chucked in the full Brandon Lee interview with Mariella Frostrup promoting 1992's **Rapid Fire**, and rare Bruce Lee footage, but aside from some filmographies it's pretty much a transfer of the original video. Eastern Heroes productions have lost a lot of their thunder since DVD giants like Hong Kong Legends and Celestial Pictures stormed the market, but for those of us who want to rekindle the good old days of pre-audio-commentary nostalgia then there are worse ways to spend two hours of your time.

However, **Top Fighter** has started to look a little dated. After all, things were a lot different in 1995, Jackie Chan hadn't even made **Rumble in the Bronx** and was still a relatively unknown entity in the west; the thought of Sammo Hung in **Martial Law** was a crazy man's dream; and the rise of Jet Li mirrored by the fall of Van Damme was

something not even Nostradamus could have predicted. If Eastern Heroes had the budget and resource to remake **Top Fighter** today, I'm sure it would be much different. As it is, this is possibly still the best 'documentary' they made; endearing despite the amateur interviews and tiresome film clips... Come on, do we really need to see **Rumble in Hong Kong** again?

Reviewed by Ben Johnson

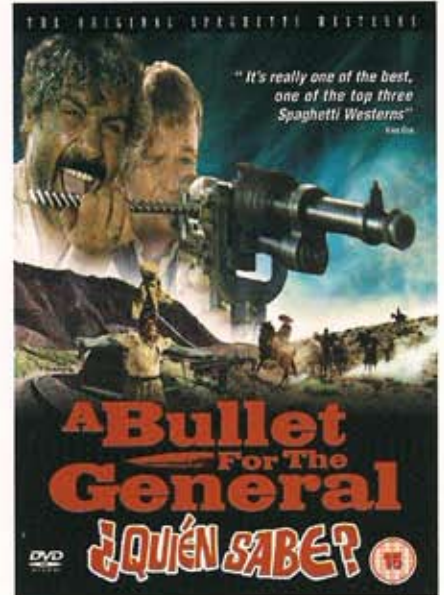
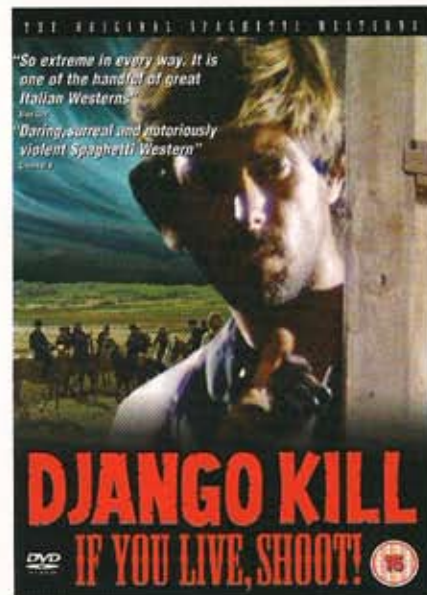
**DJANGO KILL**  
 Genre - Spaghetti Western  
 Region 2 DVD (Pal)  
 Argent Films

If you are a lover of the Spaghetti Western then you've come to the right place! You have been warned though; because this is the home of the strange and the stranger still! Our cowboy-fest begins with **Django Kill : If You Live Shoot!** Not to be confused with Sergio Corbucci's, **Django**, (see Vengeance Vol. 2 No. 2)

**Django Kill**, saw Giulio Questi's promotion from assistant director in Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* to being the main man in the directorial chair. Writing credits come courtesy of Franco Arcalli, whom the more fervent of you will remember as being the literary mastermind behind Bernardo Bertolucci's, **Last Tango in Paris**. Indeed all of this promises to give you a taste of something quite remarkable, but whether or not it hits the spot is yet to be seen...

Tomas Milian plays 'The Stranger' who crawls his way to our attention after being left to die in a grave of his own making. Double crossed by his gang, our hero, 'the half breed' as he is so affectionately called by his arch enemy Oates; finds himself seeking revenge. Armed with bullets freshly smelted from the remains of his looted gold dust; 'The Stranger' is taken off by his two new Indian companions. These witnesses of his resurrection take him to 'The Unhappy Place' and his road to vengeance!

Upon his arrival the gang have been



gruesomely dispatched by the townsfolk, who instantly smell a rat when they discover that their visitors' currency is gold. The saloon owner and local business brain play 'tug of war' with the gold; until an even bigger fish swims into town. 'Mr Zorro' played by Robert Camardiel, sends his mincing reconnaissance scout into town to swoop upon the loot. With the saloon owner's son; pretty boy and official 'dress slasher', Evan (Ray Lovelock) as bait it is a matter of time before our reluctant hero stirs from his reverie.

What exactly Questi had in mind when he shot **Django Kill** is not clear. The eccentricity alone, demands attention never mind the seductive cinematography. The impotence of the characters, particularly of 'The Stranger' is compensated for with astute observations of life in a town which reeks of despair. This film will no doubt have the die hards gushing, but for the less laterally minded out there, give up now...

Finally it should be noted that this is not a sequel to the original **Django** and the title was merely changed to cash in on Sergio Corbucci's success!

Reviewed by Kasha Van Sant

**A BULLET FOR THE GENERAL**  
 Genre - Spaghetti Western  
 Region 2 DVD (Pal)  
 Argent Films

Like anything in life there is a right way and a wrong way to do things. When it comes to the grit chewing Spaghetti Western there can be no escaping the criticism. With commercial and creative climates often as spartan and unforgiving as the landscapes they depicted; this genre was up against it from the start. However certain contenders have made it through by the skin of their teeth.

One such resilient strain is **A Bullet For The General**. Directed by Damiano Damiani better known in mainstream circles for breathing life into **Amityville 2**. With a