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SENZA PIETA

a film by Michele Alhaique

**Press Reviews**

## Without Pity

31 August, 2014 | By Mark Adams, chief film critic



**Dir: Michele Alhaique. Italy. 2014. 97mins**

An impressively moody and magnetic lead performance from Pierfrancesco Favino as a muscular debt collector who ends up falling for a pretty young prostitute (Greta Scarano) helps give actor-turned-director Michele Alhaique's modest drama an edge. While nicely shot, it is all rather familiar, but both Favino and Scarano have real quality and help the story just about rise above the clichés.

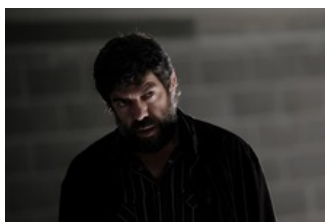
**Scarano is vibrant and sparky while Favino has a glowering but oddly gentle persona that suits the character perfectly.**

*Without Pity* (*Senza Pieta*), which had its premiere at Venice, trawls familiar territory, but does so with a certain gritty charm, making great use of suburban Rome's outskirts and letting a series of strong performances shine through.

Towering, burly and bearded Mimmo (Favino) works as a Mafia debt collector. He is loyal to his uncle, who heads the mob, but doesn't like taking orders from his boss's sleazy son Manuel (Adriano Giannini), who takes advantage of his position by indulging in booze, partying and women.

Mimmo is told to meet prostitute Tanya (Scarano) who's been hired to 'entertain' Manuel, but he is given the wrong date and has to reluctantly spend time with her. He relishes his quiet life away from his work and hates

J'aime 0



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having her in his small flat. In familiar film fashion this enables him to get to know the feisty and flirtatious Tanya, who seems equally drawn to the brutal but oddly gentle Mimmo.

The next day he dutifully delivers Tanya to Manuel, but when he fancies some sadistic sex play Mimmo returns to stop him in a deadly fashion. Soon Mimmo and Tanya are on the run from the former mob friends and seek help at the seaside home of Mimmo's Caribbean housekeeper Pilar (Iris Peynado), a sadly rather clichéd character, there to act as a caring mother figure and offer a home next to the beach.

It all follows a pretty predictable route as the pair try and deal with their somewhat difficult future. It all looks very good, with plenty of nicely shot close-ups and good use of the widescreen format, but there is a niggling and uncomfortable simplistic sexism to the film – plenty of lingering shots of Scarano's breasts and legs – which detracts from the fine performances and strong sense of atmosphere.

But both Scarano and Favino come out of the film with credit though, and there is a nice understated chemistry between them. Scarano is vibrant and sparky while Favino has a glowering but oddly gentle persona that suits the character perfectly.

**Production companies:** Lungta Films, PKO, Rai Cinema

**International sales:** Indie Sales,  
ndenamur@indiesales.eu

**Producers:** Alexandra Rossi, Maurizio Piazza,  
Pierfrancesco Favino

**Screenplay:** Andrea Garello, Emanuele Scaringi,  
Michele Alhaique

**Cinematography:** Ivan Casalgrandi

**Editor:** Tommaso Gallone

**Production designer:** Sonia Peng

**Music:** Luca Novelli, Pierre-Alexandre "Yuksek"  
Busson

**Main cast:** Pierfrancesco Favino, Greta Scarano,  
Claudio Gioe, Adriano Giannini, Renato Marchetti,  
Iris Peynado, Ninetto Davoli

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# 'Without Pity' ('Senza Nessuna Pietà'): Venice Review

2:45 PM PDT 8/29/2014 by Leslie Felperin

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Courtesy of Biennale di Venezia  
Claudio Gioe and Pierfrancesco Favino  
In 'Without Pity'

## The Bottom Line

*This ho-hum but watchable genre exercise isn't as smart as it thinks it is*

## Venue

Venice Film Festival

## Cast

Pierfrancesco Favino,  
Greta Scarano, Claudio  
Gioe

## Director

Michele Alhaique

## Watchable Italian star Pierfrancesco Favino plays a stone mason who tries to help newcomer Greta Scarano's tart with a heart in this debut feature

A stone mason (**Pierfrancesco Favino**) who moonlights as a debt collector for the **Mafia** gets into trouble when he helps out a pretty prostitute (**Greta Scarano**) in "Without Pity," an adequately made but cliché-riddled feature debut for actor-turned-director **Michele Alhaique**. Debuting in the **Venice's Horizons** strand, the film features solid performances and nicely evokes the unlovely suburban shabbiness of **Rome's** outskirts. However, there's not enough here to draw offshore distributors, although it would make a perfectly serviceable schedule-filler for cable stations.

Mimmo (Favino, who's taken supporting roles in *Rush* and *World War Z*) is a big glowering bear of a man, who mostly works on building sites and is well-liked as a stern but fair boss by his underlings. But when his mobster uncle Santili (**Ninetto Davoli**) needs some muscle to collect from debtors, Mimmo is partnered with motormouth hoodlum Il Roscio (**Claudio Gioe**) to break bones and bring home cash. Mimmo doesn't like this network, but it's the family business. He likes taking orders from his cousin, Santili's sleazy son Manuel (**Adriano Giannini**), even less, but he feels he has no choice when he's assigned to meet-and-greet reputed prostitute Tanya (Scarano) who's been hired to entertain at one of Manuel's upcoming bunga bunga parties.

There's a mix up over which day the party is on, so Mimmo ends

up having to put Tanya at his house overnight and generally keep an eye on her until she's needed at Manuel's. This gives them just enough time to form a tentative respect, maybe even an attraction, for one another after the obligatory argumentative introduction.

When Manuel starts up some sadistic sex play with Tanya before the party starts, Mimmo steps in to stop him with violent results, and Mimmo and Tanya go on the run. They take shelter at the seaside home of Mimmo's Caribbean housekeeper Pilar (**Iris Peynado**), a noble-immigrant character that's almost as much of a stereotype as Tanya's tough-but-secretly-fragile tart with a heart. Inevitably, Mimmo's family and former associates come to hunt them down, but not before he and Tanya have a chance to fall in love, have sex and dream doomed dreams of building a life together somewhere else. Fat chance of that working out.

It's all pretty much standard-issue noir stuff, which would be fine in a genre film without pretensions but there's a sense here that filmmakers think they're making something daringly original which this film just isn't. There's also a nasty prurience in its attitudes towards prostitution and the exploitation of women. On the one hand, we're meant to be horrified by Manuel's raping her, but surely the camera doesn't need to linger over her humiliation in a way that seems designed to excite as much as repel. Elsewhere, no opportunity is wasted to expose Scarano's legs and breasts with **Mariano Tufano's**

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skimpy costumes, even in the later stages when she's supposedly decided to put hooking behind her.

Nevertheless, Scarano, whose main previous credits have been in TV shows like the spinoff series of *Romanzo Criminale*, exudes a gutsy charisma and there's a nice, simmering chemistry between her and Favino who radiates inherent goodness and solidity throughout like a cast-iron stove.

Ivan Casalgrandi's widescreen lensing is fetching, and plays some game tricks with perspective in the home stretch. The other craft contributions are all solidly professional.

*Production companies: A Lungta Films, PKO and Rai Cinema production*

*Cast: Pierfrancesco Favino, Greta Scarano, Claudio Gioe, Adriano Giannini, Renato Marchetti, Iris Peynado, Ninetto Davoli*

*Director: Michele Alhaique*

*Screenwriters: Andrea Garello, Emanuele Scaringi, Michele Alhaique*

*Producers: Alexandra Rossi, Maurizio Piazza, Pierfrancesco Favino*

*Director of photography: Ivan Casalgrandi*

*Production designer: Sonia Peng*

*Costume designer: Mariano Tufano*

*Editor: Tommaso Gallone*

*Composer: Luca Novelli, Pierre-Alexandre "Yuksek" Busson*

*Sales: Indie Sales Company*

*No rating, 97 minutes*

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VENICE 2014 Orizzonti

## Senza nessuna pietà, a criminal tale

by CAMILLO DE MARCO

30/08/2014 - VENICE 2014: Newcomer Michele Alhaique directs Pierfrancesco Favino in a metropolitan noir that seems like a spinoff of *Romanzo criminale* (Criminal novel)



Mimmo is a large quiet man who works in construction and from time to time is sent by his uncle, Mr Santili (**Ninetto Davoli**), to the industrial outskirts of Rome in order to beat up those who haven't paid their debts. One night his mission changes, he must pick up a prostitute named Tanya (**Greta Scarano**) and accompany her to his cousin's home, the arrogant and cruel Manuel Santili (**Adriano Giannini**). But Tanya is too young, too beautiful and too vulnerable to be left in the hands of his hated cousin. Mimmo turns into the good giant: he beats up Manuel and flees with the girl, helped and covered by the family's servant, Roscio (**Claudio Gioé**). He's a fugitive now, he's broken the rules of this criminal world and he must protect himself and this girl who has had nothing in life.

(The article continues below - Commercial information)


Pierfrancesco Favino stars in Michele Alhaique's *Senza nessuna pietà* [+ ] in competition in Orizzonti at the Venice Film Festival and in cinemas from 11 September with BIM. The Lebanese from *Romanzo criminale* [+ ] also co-produced the movie with Lungta and RAI Cinema and plays Mimmo's character with great conviction. Helped by his good direction technique, this young first time director, who entered the cinema world as an actor, follows his actors using a hand-held camera thus leaving them free to move around. The freshness offered by the young Greta Scarano acts as a counterbalance to the austerity of Favino's acting, who boasts a filmography which includes names like Spike Lee, Giuseppe Tornatore, Gianni Amelio and Ron Howard. Michele Alhaique doesn't have the same flashes of genius as some newcomers who managed to shake up Italian cinema last season, and the movie certainly adds little to the career of one of the most appreciated Italian actors abroad, nonetheless this brand of Italian *Taxi Driver* could reach a young audience thanks to its pace and to the presence of the two main characters. Worth noting is the soundtrack by **Luca Novelli** and **Pierre-Alexandre Yuksek Busson**, a mix of orchestra and electronic music.

(Translated from Italian)

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