

The Main Feature



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France 1969
Cert 15 121 minutes

Directed by Henri Verneuil
Screenplay by Mr. Verneuil Jose Giovanni
and Pierre Pellegrini, from the novel by
Auguste Le Breton
Director of photography Henri Decaë
Music by Ennio Morricone

Cast

Jean Gabin as Vittorio Manalese
Alain Delon as Roger Sartet
Lino Ventura as Commissaire Le Goff
Irina Demick as Jeanne Manalese
Elisa Cegani as Maria Manalese
Yves Lefebvre as Aldo Manalese
Marc Porel as Sergio Manalese
Philippe Baronnet as Luigi
Karen Blanguernon as Theresa
Cesar Chauveau as Roberto
Amedeo Nazzari as Tony Nicosia
Sydney Chaplin as Jack
Danielle Volle as Monique Sartet
Andre Pousse as Malik
Edward Meeks as the airline captain
Sally Nesbitt as Mrs. Evans
Christian de Tilliere as Jean-Marie
Ballard, the electrician
Yves Brainville as the examining
magistrate
Bernard Musson as the gendarme during
Sartets transfer



THE SICILIAN CLAN is hardly just another gangster picture. The ensemble acting is terrific and the direction tells the story well. This film was one of the biggest box-office successes ever in France and its English-language version also did well, grossing over \$2 million in the US. The film was shot in three languages (French, English and Italian) with the same cast.

The film was largely marketed by the casting together of Gabin, Delon and Ventura, all major film stars of the time. Henri Verneuil had previously directed Gabin and Delon in another thriller *Melodie en sous-sol*. They would also star together in *Deux hommes dans la ville* and Delon would dedicate *Ne reveillez pas un flic qui dort* to Gabin.



Henri Verneuil directed many superb thrillers in the 1960s and 1970s, following the example of his American counterparts by including more graphic physical violence and more ambitious action sequences, breaking with the sedate character-centric thrillers of the past. *Le Clan des Siciliens* is arguably Verneuil's best thriller, combining the nail-biting suspense of Hitchcock's films with the directorial panache of Jean-Pierre Melville (widely acknowledged as the master of the French gangster film).

The meticulously plotted escape sequence at the start of the film and the jewel robbery in the latter part of the film have a distinctly Melville-esque aura about them, but they can also be seen as a tribute to that other great heist movie, *Du rififi chez les hommes* (1955).

Composer Ennio Morricone created one of his most memorable and unsettling film scores, a discordant spaghetti western theme that reminds us that gangster films are really no more than westerns without horses. Electric guitar, Jew's harp, drum kit and orchestra – it could almost be from one of his westerns, but is filled with so much Italian style and swagger, maybe not. It's just a wonderful, wonderful theme – pure Morricone magnificence

Henri Decae's lush cinematography and some skilful editing make this Verneuil's most visually striking and suspenseful film.

With its stunning production values and knock-out performances from the three hard men of French cinema, it is no wonder that *Le Clan des Siciliens* was a box office smash, attracting an audience of almost 5 million in France.



Iain McGlashan

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At the end of Selma I was asked if I knew anything about the person after whom the bridge was named. I replied no, but said I'd look it up. I found the following on the BBC website from 5 March 2015:

US President Barack Obama will visit Selma, Alabama to commemorate the 50th anniversary of "Bloody Sunday".

That's how historians refer to the clash between protestors and police when civil rights activists tried to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge as part of their walk from Selma to Montgomery to protest for voting rights.

The clash was important, leading to the passing of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. But though the bridge has become an iconic symbol of civil rights, its name is now a modern source of contention.

One group has set up an online petition to change the name of the bridge, named after Edmund Pettus. It has gathered more than 150,000 signatures.

Not only was he a Confederate General during the American Civil War and former Alabama senator, but Pettus also served as Grand Dragon of the Alabama Ku Klux Klan in 1877.

"The group got to talking about how offensive the name of the bridge is and how much of a disconnect having a KKK leader on the gateway of the bridge of Selma was," said John Gainey, executive director of the Students UNITE, which is a civil rights and advocacy organisation group for 16 to 25-year-olds.

Dave Eicher, author of "The Longest Night: A Military History of the Civil War," said Pettus was a who was a Civil War general was indeed appointed as the Alabama KKK leader.

He described the post-war activities of Pettus as "deplorable" and said that even as US Senator for Alabama, he was "pushing for the Old South" and "attempting to preserve the southern system of slavery".

Supporters of the petition believe his name should not be on the bridge.

"I'm signing because I believe the bridge's name should represent what it stands for, not what it stands against," wrote one supporter of the petition, Jessica Allen, from Selma.

Charles Clark even had a suggestion for a new name. "I think it should be changed. It's everyone's bridge. Name it the "Bridge to Freedom," he wrote.

The petition - addressed to the US National Park Services, Alabama Governor Robert J Bentley and the Mayor of Selma, George Patrick Evans - gathered 1,000 signatures in the first 24 hours.

The petition's authors point out online that Selma is currently 80% African American, with a black mayor and a majority of African American city officials.

Yet despite the demographics of the city, the petition does not have the support of many of its residents, including the first African American to be elected as Selma mayor in 2000.

The online petition begun by local youth advocacy group Students UNITE got 1,000 s

"It represents the contradiction between America's past and what the Constitution says and so if you change the name of the bridge you change the meaning of the bridge," James Perkins told local Alabama news site Al.com.

"That bridge doesn't just connect Selma to the Selma march, it connects our past to our present; it connects our present to our future. Every now and then when you build a monument, it's good to leave it where it is to remind you from whence you come and where you need to go."

But Gainey, whose group started the petition to get the bridge renamed, said the campaign is not trying to erase the past. "We are not trying to forget history, and even if we were there is no way we could," he said.

Reactions to: **Selma**

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	~	~	~	~	~	~	2	8	20	7	3
Total received – 40	Average Score – 8.03										

Your Comments

A fine tribute to Dr King and a fine lead performance!

Excellent, not newsreel but graphic and basically true.

Moving drama of social history. Excellent casting.

Very powerful – why no Oscars for the actors?

To think this took place in the 60s and really how much has changed! History really seems to repeat itself. David Oyelowo most impressive. Subtitles improved it no end.

Subtitles in first half would have been good.

Food for thought for Mr Cameron? The subtitles were a plus.

A powerful, absorbing and thought provoking film. Fine acting – where was the Oscar?

I wonder how different Alabama is today? A fine film.

Thank you for showing this film. Hard to watch the unjustified violence against innocent people. Very moving.

Very moving – I need to see it again. Great to see the original film clips.

A good serious film that needed to be made. Oyelowo should have been nominated for an award.

Helps us to remember our duty to each other.

Excellent historical reminder of the tragic march of Selma.

Strong performances and sometimes distasteful events. Perhaps people would value their vote if they understood what it cost to win it.

Outstanding

Inspirational, excellent

A riveting film, very moving

Very moving, worthwhile film

Position	Film	Average Score
1 st	Testament of Youth	8.25
2 nd	Selma	8.03
3 rd	Belle	8.00
4 th	The Theory of Everything	7.84
5 th	Rebel Without a Cause	7.16
6 th	Get Santa	6.8
7 th	Dallas Buyers Club	6.5
8 th	The Band's Visit	5.88

Our next film

Thursday 14 February 2016

“Gentle and bittersweet, it's about love in its many permutations.”

“This is a film of great gentleness and subtlety.”

“If it was conceived as a 'message' movie, the message is one of love and hope.”

“One of the most beautifully acted movies in recent times, this affecting love story earns our tears.”

