

## *In guerra per amore*

*In guerra per amore* is a 2016 film directed by and starring Pif (Pierfrancesco Diliberto)

Country of production - Italy

Year - 2016

Duration - 99 min

Genre - comedy, dramatic, sentimental, war

Director - Pif

Screenplay - Pif, Michele Astori, Marco Martani

Producers - Mario Gianani, Lorenzo Mieli, Fausto Brizzi

Executive producer - Olivia Sleiter

Music - Santi Pulvirenti

Scenary - Marcello Di Carlo

Costume - Cristiana Ricceri

### **Actors and characters**

Pif: Arturo Giammarresi

Miriam Leone: Flora Guarneri

Andrea Di Stefano: Philip Catelli

Stella Egitto: Teresa

Vincent Riotta: James Maone

Maurizio Marchetti: Don Calò

Sergio Vespertino: Saro Cupane

Maurizio Bologna: Mimmo Passalacqua

Antonello Puglisi: Agostino

Samuele Segreto: Sebastiano

Mario Pupella: Don Tano

Orazio Stracuzzi: Zio Alfredo

Lorenzo Patanè: Carmelo

Aurora Quattrocchi: Annina

David Mitchum Brown: Franklin Roosevelt

Forest Baker: Generale Patton

Rosario Minardi: Lucky Luciano

Salvatore Ragusa: Tommaso Lo Presti

Domenico Centamore: Tonino

Larry Kapust: Colonnello Monrovia

Antonio Alveario: l'uomo che mostra interesse per Teresa

### **Awards**

#### **2017 - David di Donatello**

- the award David Giovani to Pierfrancesco Diliberto

Nomination for Best Original Screenplay to Michele Astori, Pierfrancesco Diliberto and Marco Martani

Nomination for the Best Production Designer to Marcello Di Carlo  
Nomination for the best costume designer to Cristiana Ricceri  
Nomination for the best make-up artist to Maurizio Fazzini  
Nomination for the best hairdresser to Massimiliano Gelo  
Apply for the Best Visual Special Effects to Chromatica

### **2017 - Golden globe**

Best photography nomination to Daniele Cipri  
Candidacy for Best Comedy to Pierfrancesco Diliberto

### **Storyline**

New York, 1943. Arturo Giammarresi is a Palermitan who immigrated to America. He is in love, with Flora Guarneri, Alfredo's granddaughter, the owner of the restaurant where Arturo works as a waiter.

But Arturo learns that Flora has already been promised by her uncle to Carmelo, the son of the mafia boss Don Tano, Lucky Luciano's right-hand man. Flora suggests to Arturo to ask her hand directly from her father, the only one able to oppose her uncle's will: but her father is living in Sicily. Arturo accepts the proposal, and to seal it he takes a selfie with Flora in the background of the Brooklyn Bridge, to take the photograph with him to Sicily and to show it to Flora's father.

Arturo in a bar asks for a glass of "water", but he pronounces it "war", in the presence of an army officer who, intrigued, asks him if he is a Sicilian, advising him to enlist because they are really looking for Sicilians in view of the landing on the island. Arturo enlisted, but given his lack of skill he is relegated to manage pack donkeys.

Meanwhile, in Sicily, the two scammers Saro Cupane and Mimmo Passalacqua, one blind and the other lame, on the lookout on the cliffs of the coast, observe the landing of the Americans and try to warn the inhabitants of the nearby town of Crisafullo of the danger. Americans bomb civilian homes, causing death and destruction. After disembarking, the first contact with the town's mafia takes place. Don Calò, the boss who has the power over Crisafullo, assures Commander Vincent Maone that in a short time all the military will surrender, and that the country will joyfully welcome the liberating Americans.

So it happens, and the commander Maone is therefore waiting for the list of mafia to be released given the precious collaboration provided, collaboration which must be recorded by a specially parachuted OSS agent: Lieutenant Philip Catelli. During the launch, however, he fell on the bed of a girl and her father, enraged, imprisoned the lieutenant in his cottage. General Patton then orders that the soldier with the most useless role to be sent to save Catelli. So Arturo is called into service, tied to a cable together with a donkey, and transported to Crisafullo. The people of the village then, with great wonder, see a donkey flying: Arturo is launched, together with the donkey, at the cottage where Lieutenant Catelli was captured. Bad luck for him too, he falls into the bed of the same girl, and he is also captured by her father even more enraged. He shares his captivity with Lieutenant Catelli until they are released by Maone.

Meanwhile, in New York, Don Tano plans the killing of Arturo with his son Carmelo, and sends to Don Calò a letter with the appropriate personal details. Flora, who is only waiting for Arturo's return from Sicily, finds ways to delay marriage with Carmelo.

In the meantime Arturo searches fruitlessly for Flora's father, of whom he only knows that he lives in Crisafullo; Saro and Mimmo offer themselves to help him, to thank to Arturo for avoiding to be shot, for having been caught stealing a pair of shoes from a dead American soldier. Shooting sentence appears incomprehensible even to Lieutenant Catelli, given that his boss, Maone, being now in possession of the list of mafiosi prepared by Lucky Luciano, releases assassins, extortionists and thieves.

Arturo became friend with Catelli, to whom he admires the loyalty and courage in reporting to Maone that they are freeing offenders. Arturo receives the officer jacket from the lieutenant in order to make a good impression on Flora's parents. This favors Arturo, who by showing the photograph with Flora under the Brooklyn Bridge, obtains the consent to the wedding; but it damages Catelli who, having taken the place of Arturo, is mistaken for him and killed by order of Don Calò, while false witnesses declare that it was the Germans. But now the mafiosi are close to power and Don Calò is appointed mayor under the aegis of a newly founded political party: Christian Democracy.

Across Sicily, the alliance between American soldiers and mafiosi brings lucrative business. The boss Calogero Vizzini is elected mayor of Villalba, while the future mafia and politician of the Christian Democrats Vito Ciancimino begins to work in the municipality of Palermo. To supervise the financial interests between American and Sicilian soldiers, also taking into account the interests of the mafia, the banker Michele Sindona is the future "banker of Cosa Nostra".

Arturo returns to the United States bringing with him the letter of denunciation of the collusions with the mafia that Catelli had addressed to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He personally hands it over to the White House guard post, and he sits on a bench waiting confidently for the president's reaction, who, however, does not send to call him. Meanwhile, Flora receives a letter from Arturo, letting her know that they can get married but he is in Washington. Flora, who is about to marry Carmelo, runs away from home and joins Arturo in Washington.

### **In guerra per amore / At war for love - a comedy about love and war**

Pif, Pierfrancesco Diliberto, returns behind the camera after "La mafia uccide solo d'estate" / "The Mafia kills only in summer", to direct "In guerra per amore" / "In war for love", a pleasant and well-made story that, through a love story, describes one insight into Italy.

Pif takes us to Italy during the Second World War, exactly at the days of the landing of the Americans in Sicily, where Arturo arrives to enlist, to be able to reach the Sicilian country where his Flora originates (Miriam Leone), and to ask for her hand.

It will be a journey to the Italy of contradictions, where the price paid for the liberation from fascism is higher than it may seem: the American army sometimes goes to wicked compromises.

### **In guerra per amore: a clear eye on the Italian recent history**

Pif is a good storyteller, a director who delights the viewer with shots that capture the soul of the protagonist and define the characters more than a thousand words.

The Palermitan director, who wrote the script with Michele Astori and Marco Martani (with whom he has already collaborated for his debut film), has been able to build a narrative that amuses and never bores, with a fast rhythm, with hilarious moments. And with the same naturalness he clearly focused those salient elements through which to maintain the historical coherence.

Love will take Arturo away from America, and through his eyes the spectator will observe the contradictions of the island, impoverished by war, a land of conquest for the underworld, which still afflicts the country. The film can rightly be considered a spiritual pioneer to the work before Pif.

Diliberto has kept the part of Arturo to himself and, in all honesty, he convinces more as a director than as an actor, one might say, but he has a nice face and a delightful voice, which lends himself to off-screen narration. The scenes with Saro and Mimmo, the strange couple in history, are funny.

“In guerra per amore” amuses, and not a little, using the schemes of classic comedy to tell a piece of history neglected by war cinematography, which has marked the fate of Italy.

The film is actually a long **flashback** told in first person by the protagonist, who is in front of the White House holding a letter to be delivered directly to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. We will discover only at the end why Arturo took that burden, and with his over voice begins the story of the personal story and, through the narration of his tragicomic adventures, the rebirth of the Mafia in Sicily is staged.

### **The comparison with his first movie**

The presence of *La mafia* in *In guerra per amore* once again underlines the director’s passion for “the time that was”, for a past that allows us to investigate it more easily and objectively than we can investigate the present. Pif is good, very good indeed, when he begins his stories with a “once upon a time” hidden in poetic realism.

The director Pierfrancesco Diliberto in art Pif, after his previous work “La mafia uccide solo d'estate” / “The mafia kills only in summer” continues the historical discourse on the criminal organization, this time going to the roots of the rebirth of the modern mafia, thanks to the policy of the military government that used the help of the Mafia for the invasion of Sicily. Moreover, in the closing credits, an original document is presented (inspired by the subject): a report by an American captain who denounced how the policy of the allied forces abdicated the government of the island in the hands of the Mafia, naming and placing in the key points the local mafia bosses.

Pif with his Arturo Giammaresi, plays the protagonist with slight naivety, driven by the love for his Flora, unaware and clumsy, entering a bigger scenario than he is. The confrontation with the lieutenant Philip Chiamparino (Andrea Di Stefano) will make him grow in the awareness of what hides his homeland and will put before him the reality with which he must however deal directly to marry his Flora (a Miriam Leone convincing in the role).

Between these two main narrative lines - the individual story and the history of the war and the Mafia - **a whole series of characters and secondary events** are grafted:

- the devotee to Mussolini who prays to the statue of the Duce for his son to come back alive from the front and his tragicomic “battle” with the town’s comare / la godmother and the statue of the Madonna in a race towards the refuge before the bombing;

- the events of Teresa and her son awaiting her husband and father of who they will have no news;
- the life of the small town in the hands of Don Calò (Maurizio Marchetti) local boss who helps the allied forces and who will eventually be appointed mayor like many others on the island.
- But above all the most successful characters are Mimmo (Maurizio Bologna) and Saro (Sergio Vespertino), the blind and lame man of the country, who pass from the role of bombing fighters (thanks to Mimmo's fine hearing skills developed for his blindness) looking for food, poor hungry and isolated Christians; until the death sentence for the attempted theft of a pair of shoes from a dead soldier. Arturo will save them, thanks to the role of translator from the "Sicilian" with the Americans, becoming his helpers in the search for Flora's father to ask for his daughter's hand. All-round, poetic and bewildered characters enrich the screenplay (written by Pif with the associates Marco Martani and Michele Astori) giving a wide-ranging narration.

**The director** surrounds himself with the same technical team of the previous film (and the protagonists even have the same names), in a sort of diegetic continuity that make the two films the chapters of a wider story about the Mafia. There is also a technical evolution, with greater accuracy in the scenography and costumes, in a better use of the camera that works on putting details of the hands and objects into the picture and on some movements of the dolly, which give breath shooting, making the lightness with which to pass the heaviness of the subject. The same Arturo Giammaresi of Pif is a mask of the man on the margins both who lives in the 40s and who grows in the 90s of "La mafia uccide solo d'estate" / "The mafia kills only in summer". If only one note can be done in Diliberto it is his acting which is sometimes too fixed and devoid of expressive mobility and the need for greater courage of stylistic unity. In the end, however, "In guerra per amore" / "In war for love" is a successful and funny, tragic and painful film, on the story of a phenomenon such as that of the Mafia which is still topical due to its presence in national history of Italy.

"In guerra per amore" confirms how good Pif, the director (and actor) had already shown with "La mafia uccide solo d'estate" / "La mafia kills only in summer": talking about hot topics (the mafia) through the filter of the story, of a magical realism that tries to make "contemporary" well-circumscribed facts and historical events, placing everything on the tracks of the comedy, with some flashes of slapstick strengthened also by the strong territoriality of some characters and performers.

It is not surprising, then, that the protagonists have the same name as the previous film (Arturo Giammarresi and Flora, with Miriam Leone this time, rather than Cristiana Capotondi), because - we seem to be able to say - Diliberto's intent is precisely to build a macro-account, a "saga", which by bringing back the roots (and development) of the Italian business today manages to explain better, and with more depth than many other so-called "high" products, the reasons for many (alleged) mysteries that distinguish Italy. Ambition that was proper to the best Italian comedy, that of Comencini (and Tutti a casa is more than just inspiration) and Monicelli, Risi and - of course - Scola. To whom, of course, Pif dedicates the film.

The recipe is always the same: to make people laugh without forgetting the serious things, to mix lightness and gravity in the wake of the great tradition of Italian comedy, between some consolations, a touch of surrealism and a lot of bitterness.

In Sicily, the film features a series of sketches that are at times pleasant but often disjointed, or even entire plots that remain hanging (...). The models are a little Benigni and above all a lot of Tornatore, in the description of the environment and in certain editing effects: the passage from the noise of the bombs to the potatoes spilled on a table, from the word "freedom" to the shot of a cell. The film has laudable ambitions, it avoids the minimal and obvious settings of a lot of Italian cinema, and it starts from an original situation: the allied landing, and above all the revival of the mafia after the war were very little told in the cinema.

Pierfrancesco Diliberto, Pif, likes parody. After *The Mafia kills only in the summer*, the director continues to rework the Sicilian history in an ironic and fantastic way, returning to the Second World War and the allied landing: this is a possible surreality, a false hypothesis but close to the truth. With clear intent: to arrive through the comedian to stage a serious picture, and therefore to send a message, the liberation of Sicily has favored the rebirth of the mafia and allowed the criminal domination of the country. To this end, Pif rekindles his alter ego Arturo Giammaresi, the same name but not a character from the previous film (chronologically it is impossible), and with his legitimate egotism he takes center stage. Humor relies on irony: the level of writing is summarized in the gag of Arturo who cannot pronounce "water". In the "incredible" adventures of the protagonist, misunderstanding about misunderstanding, stereotype about stereotype, with the intention of making them comedy through their ridicule, joke and paradox. So the Sicilian dialect is incomprehensible for liberators, and so the statue of the Virgin collides with Mussolini, but always in the shadow of gravity: the parable of the icon ends up under the rubble. If on one side Pif is swamped in the comic, by the after all, the other does not intend to propose pure comedy: he is serious, he wants to tell us something, as the punctual and abrupt turns on reality attest, for example the tragic recovery after the bombings. Laughter always grafted on the commonplaces, on the customs and habits of the islanders (from food to mourning), studded with inessential grafts such as the mother with the child, soon a war widow, clumsy imaginative episodes that want to materialize myths and proverbs like the donkey that flies. The author thinks of an anthropological comedy about Sicily (by extension Italy).

To convey an undoubted overexposure of **metaphors** and uncovered signs, some of which are difficult to defend (the statue of Mussolini stuck upside down between the wires to hang clothes in the square remains an unforgivable image), Pif and his authors resort to the filter of the subjective view of a child and his hope to see donkeys fly one day, once again a device in the direction of Cerami / Benigni.

He has no small ambitions, Pif, and denounces them immediately, with that "A Ettore Scola" which contains within it not only the memory of a great name of the Italian cinema deceased, but the desire to reconnect creation at a time of the Italian local production in which they staged the Country.

### **Soundtrack**

The original music of the film is by Santi Pulvirenti buyers (*Baciami ancora, La gente che sta bene, La scuola più bella del mondo / Kiss me again, People who are well, The most beautiful school in the world*). Santi Pulvirenti returns to collaborate with Pif after having set the film *La mafia uccide solo d'estate / The Mafia kills only in summer*.

The singer-songwriter Thony feat. Santi Pulvirenti plays **the main song** of the soundtrack "Donkey flyin' in the sky".

**Bibliography:**

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