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Woody Allen's **TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN** (1969), from a screenplay by Allen and Mickey Rose, with Allen, Janet Margolin, and Jacqueline Hyde, is a gangster spoof that Allen tailor-made to his own wide-ranging media awareness and rich stock of movie lore. In his first real comic feature, a string of vignettes and blackout skits extends through a hit-and-miss anthology of freshly warmed-up chestnuts, including such reliables as tangling up the chain-gang manacles, guns carved from prison soap, and a misspelled stickup note that no one can read. As Virgil Starkwell, a four-time loser going down, Allen already had his safest persona of neb-bish pathos down pat.

Take the Money, with hints of both Marx Brothers and W. C. Fields anarchy as well as the more disciplined Keatonesque and Chaplinesque mastery to come, marked the debut of the major comic talent in cinema in the last third of the century.

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