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# BACKGROUND NOISE

(R.D.F.: RUMORE DI FONDO)

(ITALIAN)

A Lucky Red Distribuzione release (in Italy) of a Lucky Red/Filmmakers Group production. Produced by Andrea Occhipinti, Kermit Smith, Rossella Mercurio, Riccardo Trigona. Executive producer, Mercurio.

Directed, written by Claudio Camarca. Camera (color, widescreen), Raffaele Mertes; editor, Enzo Meniconi; music, VLV, Alberto Brizzi, Marco Caccioni; art direction, Bruno Amalfitano; costume design, Ornella Campanale; sound (Dolby SR), Luciano Muratori; assistant directors, Roberto Orazi, Gian Paolo Vallati. Reviewed at Intl. Recording screening room, Rome, April 18, 1996. Running time: 74 MIN.

Zago ..... Francesco Dominedo  
Francesco ..... Francesco Meoni  
Chiara ..... Giuditta Del Vecchio  
Inspector Tiresia .... Andrea Occhipinti  
Loan Shark ..... Antonello Fassari  
Woman ..... Licia Maglietta  
Police

Commissioner ..... Vittorio Di Prima  
Monatto ..... Marco Rigon

**A**n urban punk Western set on the desolate outskirts of the Italian capital, "Background Noise" provides a refreshing alternative to the often pompously solemn portraits of life on Rome's uncompromising fringes. Writer-director Claudio Camarca seasons the bruising drama and hard, unsympathetic characters with vaguely deadpan detachment, and the result is a small but sharp indie production that should go over well with hip festival crowds.

Starting with a series of edgy monologues, the script brings five diverse but similarly dark characters into focus. These are led by Zago (Francesco Dominedo), a walking time bomb fresh out of prison, his brother Francesco (Francesco Meoni), who scrapes out a miserable living tending sheep in a shantytown quarter on the edge of

the city, and Chiara (Giuditta Del Vecchio), Zago's faithful but frightened g.f., who looks set to branch into prostitution.

Emerging alongside them are a contemptuous neighborhood loan shark (Antonello Fassari) and Tiresia (Andrea Occhipinti), a police inspector whose weakness for gambling has landed him in debt and compromised his status on the force.

In an attempt to get the cash to start over, Zago impulsively decides to rob the loan shark in his isolated office in an auto wreckers yard. Both Francesco and Chiara tag along and try to stop him, getting dragged in when he coldly guns down the money man. Unseen by the outlaw trio, a woman (Licia Maglietta) who is hiding in the murder victim's office phones the police, and a state of siege is established.

With a nod to John Carpenter's "Assault on Precinct 13," Camarca keeps the tension humming as the four strung-out captives slowly form new allegiances while Tiresia closes in, determined to exploit the situation to reaffirm his professional reputation.

A subtext about body-piercing and marking, and its quasi-tribal significance to characters on the margins of society, is introduced via the heavily tattooed and studded Zago. But the idea ultimately feels like an underdeveloped appendage to an otherwise slim but functional Western riff.

Lenser Raffaele Mertes' often convulsive, mainly hand-held camera helps shape the understated comic-strip tone, stalking and circling its subjects and lurching in for brutal, distorting close-ups. An aggressive musical score from a variety of sources also is a plus. Cast is pro, including Occhipinti — one of the producers and a partner in the Lucky Red distribution outfit that backed the pic — having fun here as the bad sheriff. —David Rooney