

## Document Citation

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Author(s)	Robert F. Hawkins
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**La Donna Scimmia**  
(The Ape Woman)  
(ITALIAN)

Interfilm release of a C. C. Champion (Carlo Ponti) production. Stars Ugo Tognazzi, Annie Girardot; features Achille Majeroni, Filippo Pompa Marcelli, Linda de Felice, Elvira Paolini. Directed by Marco Ferreri. Story and screenplay, Ferreri and Rafael Azcona; camera, Aldo Tonli; editor, Mario Serandrei; music, Teo Usuelli. At Cannes Film Fest (In Competition). Running time, 900 MINS.  
Antonio Focaccia                      Ugo Tognazzi  
Maria                                      Annie Girardot

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Marco Ferreri, who recently did well with his offbeater, "Ape Regina" (Conjugal Bed), has another attention-getter in this unusual tale. It again is concocted with the

assistance of his favorite author, Rafael Azcona. While it lacks the audience identification aspects which made "Bed" an international conversational piece, it has other exploitable story aspects to attract attention with savvy bally. Ugo Tognazzi, of course, is a repeater from "Bed" and should help draw those who appreciated the previous Ferreri pic.

Bitter and ironic as they come, this story sounds wilder than it really is in the telling, though certainly downbeat. Antonio (Ugo Tognazzi) has for years lived by expedients, disliking the routine of steady occupation. One day he meets Maria, a fully normal woman, except for fact that her skin is covered with a thick coat of hair. He decides to exploit her and assure himself a steady living, setting her up as a sideshow in a garage. Later, both out of pity and interest, he marries the freak, and can thus also accept a French nitery's offer to have his wife star in a novel strip number. Back from Paris, wife learns she is to have a baby, and eventually dies in childbirth, together with the infant. To meet expenses, Antonio first accepts, then regrets an offer from a museum to have bodies enbalméd and shown in public. Broke once more but wanting the bodies back in order to give them a decent burial, he has to sign a set of IOU's. And to pay these, he is forced once more to set up a freak show and exhibit the wife and child's mummies to the public.

Admittedly, the windup is especially bitter in its comment on Roman society and could cause some adverse average audience comment. An alternate ending has been lensed, in which ironic aspects are maintained but the impact softened. Director shot this himself, but is known not to be too happy with it. In Italy, the first few days saw the pic circulating with truncated windup (ending at wife's death), but original footage was restored at Ferreri's immediate complaint.

It is to Ferreri's credit, and to his actors' prowess, that such an offbeat theme comes off at all, though each viewer will have and make his own mental reservations and comments. Tognazzi is good as the exploiter. Annie Girardot is appealing and often strangely moving as the object of attention. Technically, the pic could have used some smoother continuity, but otherwise is outfitted in okay fashion.

Hawk.

YBRVLSY