



## THE MUSEUM OF WESTERN FILM HISTORY

### Django Unchained (2012)



Quentin Tarantino filmed much of *Django Unchained* in and around the Alabama Hills & Independence. He is a great fan of spaghetti westerns and Director, Bill Witney. So much so, he asked if he could use the original clapper board from the Lone Ranger, which Witney directed, to shoot many of his scenes here.

He used the Film Museum's theater to screen and share his love of old westerns with the rest of the crew. He has kindly donated the dentist wagon, with its easily recognizable giant tooth atop, that Christophe Waltz drove in the film.

Set in the South two years before the Civil War, *Django Unchained* stars Academy Award®-winner Jamie Foxx as Django, a slave whose brutal history with his former owners lands him face-to-face with German-born bounty hunter Dr. King Schultz (Academy Award®-winner Christoph Waltz). Schultz is on the trail of the murderous Brittle brothers, and only Django can lead him to his bounty. The unorthodox Schultz acquires Django with a promise to free him upon the capture of the Brittles dead or alive.

Success leads Schultz to free Django, though the two men choose not to go their separate ways. Instead, Schultz seeks out the South's most wanted criminals with Django by his side. Honing vital hunting skills, Django remains focused on one goal: finding and rescuing Broomhilda (Kerry Washington), the wife he lost to the slave trade long ago.

Django and Schultz's search ultimately leads them to Calvin Candie (Academy Award®-nominee Leonardo DiCaprio), the proprietor of Candyland, an infamous plantation. Exploring the compound under false pretenses, Django and Schultz arouse the suspicion of Stephen (Academy Award®-nominee Samuel L. Jackson), Candie's trusted house slave. Their moves are marked, and a treacherous organization closes in on them. If Django and Schultz are to escape with Broomhilda, they must choose between independence and solidarity, between sacrifice and survival.

In 2007, Tarantino discussed an idea for a type of spaghetti western set in the United States' pre-Civil War Deep South. He called this type of film "a southern", stating that he wanted "to do movies that deal with America's horrible past with slavery and stuff but do them like spaghetti westerns, not like big issue movies. I want to do them like they're genre films, but they deal with everything that America has never dealt with because it's ashamed of it, and other countries don't really deal with because they don't feel they have the right to. Tarantino later explained the genesis of the idea: "I was writing a book about Sergio Corbucci when I came up with a way to tell the story. ... I was writing about how his movies have this evil Wild West, a horrible Wild West. It was surreal, it dealt a lot with fascism.

So I'm writing this whole piece on this, and I'm thinking: 'I don't really know if Sergio was thinking [this] while he was doing this. But I know I'm thinking it now. And I can do it!'"

Tarantino finished the script on April 26, 2011, and handed in the final draft to The Weinstein Company. In October 2012, frequent Tarantino collaborator RZA said that he and Tarantino had intended to cross over *Django Unchained* with RZA's Tarantino-presented martial-arts film *The Man with the Iron Fists*.



The crossover would have seen a younger version of the blacksmith character from RZA's film appear as a slave in an auction. However, scheduling conflicts prevented RZA's participation.

One inspiration for the film is Corbucci's 1966 spaghetti western ***Django***, whose star Franco Nero has a cameo appearance in ***Django Unchained***. Another inspiration is the 1975 film ***Mandingo***, about a slave trained to fight other slaves. Tarantino included scenes in the snow as a homage to ***The Great Silence***. "Silenzio takes place in the snow. I liked the action in the snow so much, ***Django Unchained*** has a big snow section in the middle," Tarantino said in an interview.



The title ***Django Unchained*** alludes to the titles of the 1966 Corbucci film ***Django***; ***Hercules Unchained***, the American title for the 1959 Italian epic fantasy film ***Ercole e la regina di Lidia***, about the mythical hero's escape from enslavement to a wicked master; and to ***Angel Unchained***, the 1970 American biker film about a biker exacting revenge on a large group of rednecks.



***Django Unchained***, released in 2013, was written and directed by Academy Award®-winner Quentin Tarantino, produced by Stacey Sher, Reginald Hudlin and Pilar Savone.

The film was a major critical and commercial success and was nominated for several film industry awards, including five Academy Awards. Waltz won several awards for his performance, among them Best Supporting Actor at the Golden Globes, BAFTAs, and Academy Awards. Tarantino won an Academy Award, a Golden Globe, and a BAFTA award for writing the film's original screenplay. The film grossed over \$425 million worldwide in theaters against its \$100 million budget, making it Tarantino's highest-grossing theatrical release.

Awards included:



An Oscar for: Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role - Christoph Waltz and Best Writing, Original Screenplay - Quentin Tarantino.

The movie was nominated for: Best Motion Picture of the Year, Best Achievement in Cinematography and for Best Achievement in Sound Editing. The American Film Institute

included ***Django Unchained*** in their list of the Top Ten Movies of the Year, while the African-American Film Critics Association nominated it for Best Picture.



The ***Django Unchained*** exhibit includes the dentist wagon, scripts, Quentin's director's chair, and a full size theatrical display.