PIER PAOLO PASOLINI

Pier Paolo Pasolini achieved fame and notoriety long before he entered the film industry. A published poet at 19, he had already written numerous novels and essays before his first screenplay in 1954. His first film *Accattone* (1961) was based on his own novel *Ragazzi di vita* and its violent depiction of the life of a pimp in the slums of Rome caused a sensation. He was arrested in 1962 when his contribution to the portmanteau film *Ro.Go.Pa.G.* (1963) was considered blasphemous and given a suspended sentence. It might have been expected that his next film, *Il vangelo secondo Matteo* (1964) (The Gospel According to St. Matthew), which presented the Biblical story in a totally realistic, stripped-down style, would cause a similar fuss but, in fact, it was acclaimed as one of the few honest portrayals of Christ on screen. Pasolini's film career would then alternate distinctly personal and often scandalously erotic adaptations of classic literary texts: *Edipo Re* (1967) (Oedipus Rex); *Il Decameron* (1971); *I racconti di Canterbury* (1972) (The Canterbury Tales); *Il fiore delle mille e una notte* (1974) (Arabian Nights), with his own more personal projects, expressing his controversial views on Marxism, atheism, fascism and homosexuality, notably *Teorema* (1968) (Theorem), Pigsty and the notorious *Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma* (1975), a relentlessly grim fusion of Benito Mussolini's Fascist Italy with the 'Marquis de Sade' which was banned in Italy and many other countries for several years. Pasolini was murdered in still-mysterious circumstances shortly after completing the film.

**LA RICOTTA - 1962**

La ricotta (a curd cheese) is a short film written and directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini in 1962 and is part of the [omnibus film](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthology_film) *Ro.Go.Pa.G[[1]](#footnote-1).* It is often considered the most memorable portion of *Ro.Go.Pa.G* and the height of Pasolini's creative powers and social criticism.

La ricotta tells the story of filming a movie about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ at a slightly hilly waste ground near a residential area. The main character is a simple man playing a bit part – one of the two men who were crucified with Christ.

Pasolini, in a disclaimer tacked in the beginning, affirms that the event narrated, the Passion, is the greatest event ever occurred, and stressed that he held in great respect the Christian heritage. Despite this assertion, Pasolini was accused of holding contempt for the state religion and was sentenced four months of conviction, which he avoided by paying a fine. The sentence was later declared void by an appeals court.

1. These include the French director Jean-Luc Godard (segment "*Il Nuovo mondo*") and the Italian directors Ugo Gregoretti (segment "*Il Pollo ruspante*"), Pier Paolo Pasolini (segment "*La Ricotta*") and Roberto Rossellini (segment "*Illibatezza*"). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)