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The Convoy Collection DVD Review: Highway to Haul

A good exploitation filmmaker is quick to cash in on a craze. Unfortunately, most of the bad ones are, too. In the '70s, the industry of trucking had transformed into a phenomenon of epic proportions. Truck drivers were seen by the public as modern-day cowboys and outlaws (a far cry from the image we have stuck in our heads today every time we see another moronic Walmart driver overturn his rig) – and there were numerous filmmakers across the nation (especially the lower states) anxious to make a buck off of America's enthusiasm over the subject.

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Recently, the folks at the budget label CFS Releasing decided to reignite the fire of a long-extinguished (but always fun) fad. *The Convoy Collection* is a single-disc title that contains three different movies: *Trucker's Woman*, *Concrete Cowboys*, and *Moonfire*.

The first film, 1975's *Trucker's Woman* (which was originally released as *Truckin' Man*, and is erroneously credited as *Trucker's Women* on the DVD artwork), is directed by none other than Will Zens -- the low-budget filmmaker behind the *MST3K*-favorite, *The Starfighters*, as well as several other cheapo charms. Michael Hawkins (father of Christian Slater and the original Frank Ryan on *Ryan's Hope*) stars here as Mike Kelly, the son of a truck driver who is killed in an "accident" in the pre-credit sequence.

Convinced there's something more to his father's death, Mike takes up his late patriarch's profession -- wooing women and performing some of the clumsiest fisticuff moments ever captured on film (it is a Will Zens film, after all). Also starring in this enjoyably cheesy ditty are Larry Drake (his second credited role) and the great Doodles

Weaver. Future horror/exploitation filmmaker Phil Smoot (*The Boneyard*, *Alien Outlaw*) also appears as a henchman. Most of the other actors never went on to do anything else in the film industry – and it's pretty easy to see why, too. Lots of good ol' '70s country music to be found here, with some nudity courtesy one-time actress Mary Cannon.

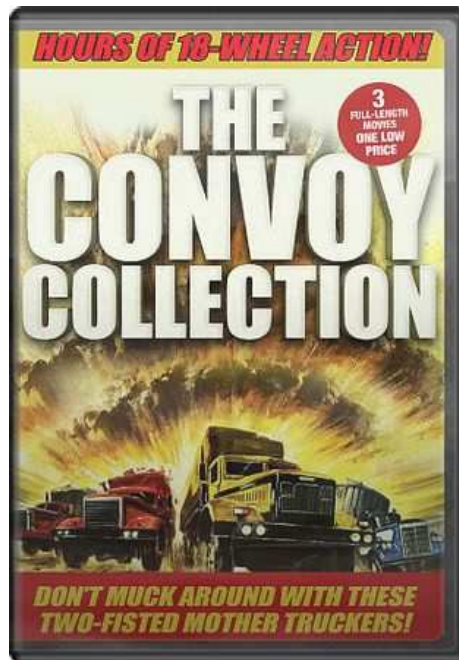
Movie No. 2 in *The Convoy Collection* is the 1979 made-for-TV feature, *Concrete Cowboys* – which isn't even a trucker movie, and is listed on the box art and DVD menu as *The Concrete Cowboy*. Starring the great duo of Tom Selleck and Jerry Reed, this fun comedy finds Will Eubanks and J.D. Reed (Tom and Jerry, respectively) – two smarter-than-average country bumpkins from Montana who are bound for Hollywood, but who wind up in Nashville instead after they escape a crooked redneck sheriff. Taking up residence at the pad of a private investigator they met at a party, they take up a case on his behalf whilst his is out of town.

Their client is a woman looking for her missing sister (both of which are played by Morgan Fairchild) – a country music protégé with stars in her eyes. And so, J.D. and Will set about to solve the case – causing every kind of uproar imaginable in the process. Claude Akins receives the proverbial "Special Guest Star" billing in the credits for his small role, Gene Evans is a grumpy police detective the two keep running into, and country music star Roy Acuff, Ray Stevens, and Barbara Mandrell also appear as themselves in cameos. Burt Kennedy (*Return of the [Magnificent] Seven*) directs this tale written by Hammer Films regular Jimmy Sangster (!). A short-lived TV series followed in '81 (without Selleck).

The last feature here is the wacky 1973 (though it was made in 1970) highway adventure *Moonfire*. As with the previous two movies in this ten-dollar-and-under set, the folks at CFS Releasing somehow managed to get the name of the flick wrong once again – listing it as *Moonfire Trucker*. Though the credits list Richard Egan (*Gog*) as the star here, the movie actually centers on second-billed Charles Napier as a young trucker who lands a job of delivering a secret cargo of lettuce along with a statuesque fellow named The Farmer (Sonny Liston, who died in '70) to Mexico.

The hush-hush haul in question contains a payoff – to be delivered to a powerful ranch owner (Dayton Lummis) South of the Border who is not only an ex-Nazi, but is holding a reclusive billionaire hostage. There's even a downed satellite and Sonny has a run-in with a group of vicious bikers in one scene. Marty Robbins performs two tracks just for the story. Michael Parkhurst wrote, directed, and produced this low-budget trucker gem, which was filmed across the Southwestern United States and Mexico, with Ed Begley, Jr. as an assistant cameraman. Joaquín Martínez, Rodolfo Hoyos Jr., and Jose Gonzales-Gonzales co-star as the film's humorously stereotypical Mexicans.

Now, I'm not sure if the fact that each and every one of these movies is labeled incorrectly on the DVD sleeve and/or menu is because CFS just bootlegged these films from VHS cassettes and/or other reproduced DVDs or not, but I can very much guarantee you that all three titles were culled from other video sources. One look at the quality will tell you that -- and it might have been better had they not crammed three movies onto a 4.5GB DVD. All of the films are presented in a 1.33:1 ratio with mono stereo sound. Fortunately, though, the audio sync problem I encountered with another of their releases, *Great White Death*, is not a problem here, so I guess the people at this decidedly-grey market label are learning how to do things.



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Contraband came out in January, a dumping ground for studios unless the film is competing for an Oscar, so no surprise you didn't...

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Film Festival: Day 3 and 4

I want to watch Call Her Savage now!!! hehe. Good job working the system! :D Practice from years of Comic-Con? hehe. :D

Reporting on The 2012 TCM Classic

Film Festival: Day 1 and 2

Great review! That would be a really fun film fest to attend. :D Although, I probably never will... That's just too many movies!!!!...

The Best of Barnabas DVD Review: A Perfect Primer for "Dark Shadows"

Vampire Virgins

I'll have to pick this up so I can show the kids the REAL Barnabas.

The Best of Barnabas DVD Review: A Perfect Primer for "Dark Shadows"

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If there was a revival in LA, I am disappointed I missed it. I hope a cable channel picks it up and runs them because I am...

Bob's Burgers The Complete 1st

Season DVD Review: An Acquired Taste

welcome back, SG. I had a similar reaction. I'm a huge HJM fan, and thought the 1st episode was all right, but there...

Astonishing X-Men: Dangerous DVD

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I didn't draw the parallel between this and Gaiman's Doctor Who, but now that you mention it, Gaiman is a biter! Beast had been...

Astonishing X-Men: Dangerous DVD

Review: Joss Whedon Earns His Marvel Stripes

A very intriguing idea. Wonder if Gaiman read it before his turn at Doctor Who. I don't care for the panther look on...

Contest: Shame (2011) Blu-ray Combo

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I tweeted the Cinema Sentries -

Subtitles? Extras? No, silly, of course not: this is a bargain bin priced title that can't even get the names of the films right. But, considering you can find *The Convoy Collection* for next to nothing, and that all three films are entertaining for one reason or another, this isn't a bad buy. Providing you like this sort of stuff to begin with, that is.

Surviving Progress Movie Review: A Wake-Up Call About the Progress Trap sounds intriguing and your concerns about technology overtaking our lives is a valid concern



BY LUIGI BASTARDO

Posted on Sunday, April 22, 2012, by [Luigi Bastardo](#)

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About the author

[Luigi Bastardo](#) is the disgruntled alter-ego of Adam Becvar, a thirtysomething lad from Northern California who has watched so many weird movies since the tender age of 3 that a conventional life is out of the question. You can stalk and annoy Luigi via [Insomniac Entertainment](#) and those trendy social sites, [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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