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Convoy (1976) + Shark (1969/Cheezy Flicks DVD)

Picture: C- Sound: C-/C
Extras: C- Films: C/D

Two of the top male stars of the 1970s associated with Southern Good Old Boy fun did what they could and worked with who they could to have their success work out. At opposite ends of their success, singer/songwriter Kris Kristofferson and Burt Reynolds worked with top directors in two of their most commercial offerings. For Kristofferson, working with Sam Peckinpah in **Convoy** (1976) kept him a top box office star and helped the director stay commercially viable a little bit longer. For Reynolds, working with the great Sam Fuller on **Shark** (1969) was an early attempt to make the TV star a movie star while Fuller looked for a hit that was not.

In 1975, C.W. McCall jumped in the Country Pop bandwagon and produced a rare novelty record in *Convoy*, a hilarious, well-done, comic hit about how CB (Citizen's Band, analog) Radio was so hot, that it brought a group of participants together in the title activity; lining up their vehicles in a long parade of trucks and other motorized vehicles riding the roads of the U.S.A.! In one of the then-rare early examples of this, it was decided to build an entire film around the song and the result was a hit movie, itself jumping on another craze of the time: the bandit/chase film cycle.

Convoy had Ernest Borgnine as the angry "smokie" cop chasing Kristofferson, et al and a still hot and on top Ali McGraw as his love interest. Broadly humorous and definitely commercial, it was actually co-produced by Barry Spikings and Michael Deeley (**Blade Runner**, **The Man Who Fell To Earth**) and Burt Young (hot that year in **Rocky** as well) made it a hit. Kristofferson was also in the Barbra Streisand **A Star Is Born** which was an even bigger hit. Unfortunately, Peckinpah was repeating himself and though this is competent entertainment, it is fluff with a little edge.

Reynolds would have been a fool to pass up working with Fuller and being **Thunderball** (1965) was still on everyone's mind as a huge action hit, the heist script for **Shark** is set on the water often and takes place in Sudan. Though this is professional and even a bit ambitious, Fuller wants a hit, but the script lacks suspense and any mystery is slight. Action is also limited and the film never adds up, while Reynolds gives a fair, pre-smart ass star performance, the film falls flat and did not help anyone involved in the end.

The letterboxed 2.35 X 1 image on Convoy and 1.33 X 1 image on Shark are soft and color poor, while the PCM 16/48 2.0 Mono is low, rough and compressed on **Convoy**, so be very careful of playback levels and volume



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switching, while **Shark** fares a little better than expected in clarity.
Trailers and Intermission shorts are the only extras.

- Nicholas Sheffo



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