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Case Number 20379: Small Claims Court



Trek Stars Go West

VSC // 1949 // 360 Minutes // Not Rated

Reviewed by Appellate Judge Mac McEntire // December 22nd, 2010

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Scales of Justice

Judgment:

70

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Studio: [VSC](#)

Video Formats:

- Full Frame

Audio Formats:

- Dolby Digital 1.0 Mono (English)

Subtitles:

- None

Running Time: 360 Minutes

Release Year: 1949

MPAA Rating: Not Rated

Genres:

- [Classic](#)
- [Star Trek](#)
- [Television](#)
- [Western](#)

All Rise...

Appellate Judge Mac McEntire can't wait for them to make *Trek Stars Gone Wild*.

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The Charge

Before they conquered space, they had to face the *first* frontier.

The Case

As you've probably already guessed, **Trek Stars Go West** is a two-disc compilation of actors from [Star Trek: The Original Series](#) appearing in Westerns, years before their fame on board the Enterprise.

Star Trek and Westerns have always a spiritual connection of sorts. Creator Gene Roddenberry infamously pitched the series as "Wagon Train to the stars," and the original crew came across cowboy/Western settings more than once. The Old West even showed up in later generations aboard the holodeck, and the sense of exploration that fueled Trek throughout the years is of course a staple of Westerns as well.

On these two discs, we get a bunch of episodes of TV Westerns and one feature, featuring Trek actors and a few other well known names. Set phasers on...lasso?

- **Tate** "Comanche Scalps" (1960)

This series was about a one-armed gunslinger (!) bringing justice to the West. In this episode, Leonard Nimoy plays the villain of the week, a sneaky Comanche. The episode also guest stars a young Robert Redford in one of his first roles.

- **Bonanza** "The Ape" (1960)

Series regular Hoss (Dan Blocker) befriends a mentally challenged young man, who gets swindled by a card shark, played by Nimoy. Everyone at the Ponderosa works together to set things right.

- **Outlaws** "Starfall" (1960)

This was an ambitious series, with the idea being that each episode tells a Western adventure tale from the bad guys' point of view. This 90-minute two-parter stars William Shatner as the "king of thieves" trying to keep his gang together, as they threaten to fall apart, dealing with their clashing codes of honor, and even arguing over racism. The episode, based on a novel by [High Noon](#) writer John Cunningham, also guest stars Cloris Leachman and Jack Warden.

- **The Lone Ranger** "The Legion of Old-Timers" (1949)

DeForest Kelly plays a rancher being menaced by crooks, just in time for the titular Lone Ranger and his pal Tonto to ride in

Distinguishing Marks

- None

Accomplices

- [IMDb: Tate](#)
- [IMDb: Last of the Mohicans](#)
- [IMDb: Bonanza](#)
- [IMDb: Outlaws](#)
- [IMDb: The Lone Ranger](#)
- [IMDb: White Comanche](#)

and save the day. This was the show's first regular episode after the pilot.

• **The Last of the Mohicans** "Scapegoat" (1957)

Loosely based on the famous novel by James Fenmore Cooper, this series starred John Hart as the heroic Hawkeye, and Lon Cheney Jr. as his pal Chingachgook. This DVD doesn't have the complete episode of "Scapegoat," only one segment featuring James Doohan as an angry villager.

• **The Last of the Mohicans** "Way Station" (1957)

This episode, in its entirety on the DVD, aired one week after "Scapegoat," and also guest stars Doohan, now credited as "Jim Doohan." He has a much bigger role this time, playing a psychotic Native American seeking revenge against our heroes.

• **Outlaws** "Shorty" (1960)

Now we're back to this series, as Nimoy once again plays a shifty card shark, who gets involved in a violent land dispute between ranchers.

• **White Comanche** (1968)

This is the only theatrical film on the set. During the original **Star Trek's** production, Shatner traveled to Spain to star in this Western, in the hopes it would be a hit along the lines of the work Leone and Eastwood were creating at the time. The flick is downright insane, with Shatner playing *two* characters. He's the stoic hero Johnny Moon, and his evil twin brother, the drug-addicted killer Notah. The aping of the gritty Spaghetti Western style is unintentionally hilarious, the drug references scream late '60s counterculture, and Shatner's overacting is, well, Shatner's overacting.

Westerns used to dominate so much of the entertainment landscape that Hollywood made a science out of cranking them out fast and cheap. Most of what's on these discs are B-Westerns at heart, made for TV or no. The budgets are tiny, the acting is dodgy, and historical accuracy doesn't bother rearing its head. Even the beloved **Bonanza**, with its color photography and truly kickass theme song, comes across as stodgy and creaky by today's standards. Of course, for fans of these shows, their clunky nature is part of their charm. Interestingly, a lot of these TV episodes attempt some social commentary (not unlike **Trek** so often did) on subjects like tolerance and racism, but it's hard to take this seriously when there's so many white dudes done up like Native Americans.

The screentime allotted to our favorite Enterprise crewmembers varies, as they're guest stars on any given episode. Those interested in this only for the **Trek** connection might get frustrated, wondering "when's Nimoy going to show up already?" The real gem for the **Trek** faithful is **White Comanche**. It was made during the original series production, which makes it a juicy trivia nugget, and it has Shatner chewing the scenery as only Shatner can.

Picture and audio is rough, which is expected, considering the age and obscurity of some of these episodes. There are no bonus features.

The Verdict

More of a novelty item than a watching experience, fans of either **Trek** or B-Westerns will get a few laughs from this release. Not guilty.

You, The Jury...



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