

Justified (2010)

There are few actors who can effectively pull off a cowboy hat anymore. Perhaps this has contributed to the relative death of the western, which is sad because I enjoy a good western. Every once in a while we'll get a True Grit or The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford, but more often than not what we get is in the vein of the forgettable American Outlaws.

For a while I thought Deadwood would fulfill my western needs, but it was canceled before it's time. While it was around, I learned a very important thing about Timothy Olyphant, who played Seth Bullock on the show. Timothy Olyphant was born to wear a cowboy hat. When he puts one on and throws on a drawl he becomes an insanely talented thing. Very Gary Cooper out of High Noon.

For this reason, I was very excited when I first heard about the show Justified, which was to feature Timothy Olyphant in a cowboy hat. As it turned out, Timothy Olyphant's cowboy hat would become so ubiquitous that some characters address his character as "you and your hat." Season 1 even features an episode in which Raylan Givens (Timothy Olyphant) loses his hat and is mildly distressed until he is reunited with it at the end of the episode.

At this point you may be thinking that *Justified* is just a show about a guy and his cowboy hat, but it is much more than that. *Justified* is based on a character from some Elmore Leonard stories and follows the adventures of a U.S. Marshal who, after some drama in Miami, is reassigned to his hometown in Eastern Kentucky. Here he has several run-ins with Boyd Crowder, played by the genius Walton Goggins, who was once his best friend, but is now a born-again Christian/all-purpose outlaw. Their clashes become the highlight of the show. Where Raylan is cool, but deadly, Boyd is hot-headed, and also deadly.

While not set in the West during the 1800s, *Justified* still plays like something of a hard-boiled western. The stories and dialogue are pure hard-boiled detective pulp and the setting of backwoods Kentucky is almost as foreign as the West once was. The result is one of the best written, tightest acted shows on the air.

Find the first season of *Justified* in our catalog here!

Posted by intern on February 20, 2011

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