

The Broken Spokes

present

WANTED MAN

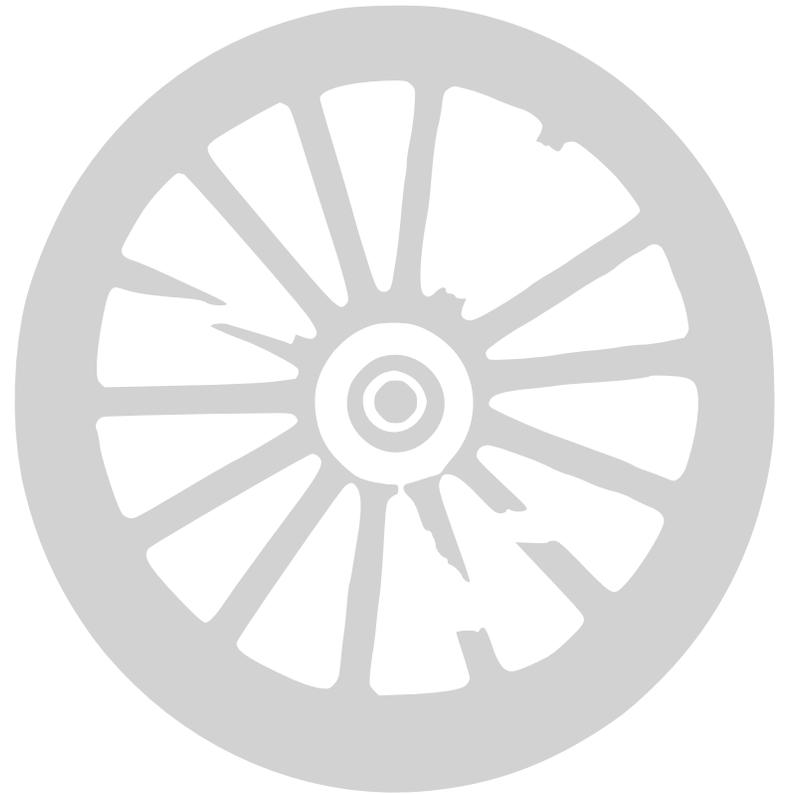
A Spaghetti Western Surf Opera

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tracks from "Wanted Man."



Synopsis

Overture: Wanted Man

Mexico, 1870's. Ignacio Aguilar, a small-time rancher, prepares to marry Esmeralda Flores, the most beautiful woman in their rural village. However, the bandit leader El Mezquino also desires the hand of the beautiful Esmeralda. As the whole village attends the wedding ceremony, El Mezquino steals several horses from Ignacio's ranch and uses them to rob a Rio Grande Railway train carrying gold. One of the horses is shot during the robbery and left by the railroad tracks. El Mezquino returns the remaining horses to Ignacio's ranch and buries a small portion of the stolen gold on the property. Federales investigating the robbery recognize the Triple Bar brand of Ignacio's ranch on the dead horse; they immediately ride to the ranch and discover the buried gold. They proceed to the church, where Ignacio's protests of innocence are ignored as they take him into custody. He escapes after a gunfight in the church, riding away a Wanted Man.

Scene One: Tiki Rustler

Pursued by both the Federales and El Mezquino's men, Ignacio is forced to flee the area. He books passage aboard a ship headed to Isla Socorro, a volcanic island in the Pacific Ocean where a master gunfighter is rumored to live. Ignacio arrives at the island, which is populated by the gunfighter, a small village, and an enormous number of giant carved stone heads. Ignacio begs the master gunfighter, who only gives his name as "Saguaro," to train him, and Saguaro agrees. The training consists of carving more of the stone heads: at first using a chisel, which Saguaro explains develops his reflexes, his eye, and his strength. After many months, Ignacio graduates to the next level of training: he begins carving while blindfolded, to develop his focus and sense of place. More time passes as Ignacio masters this. The final step is to stand perfectly still, holding the stone tools at chest level for hours at a time. One night, Saguaro silently takes the tools from Ignacio and places Ignacio's own pistols in his hand. Unbeknownst to either of them, that same night El Mezquino's men arrive on the island under cover of darkness.

Scene Two: Luchando Banditos

The bandits ambush Ignacio and Saguaro, setting the village afire to draw their attention. Saguaro is killed rescuing the villagers, but not before dispatching a dozen of the bandits himself. The bandits pursue Ignacio up the side of the volcano. He makes a stand at the rim, but a stray shot crumbles the rock on which he is standing and he falls into the mouth of the volcano, landing on a hidden ledge just below the rim. The bandits, assuming he is dead, prepare to leave. As he lies on the ledge half-conscious, Ignacio hears them discuss another train robbery.

Scene Three: Empty Canteen

Ignacio awakes on the ledge, his body sore and his lips parched from the intense heat of the active volcano. Realizing the mouth of the volcano is impossible to reach without rope, he explores the ledge, finding a small tunnel heading down into the volcanic rock. With no other choice, he crawls over the hot rocks through the tunnel, scalding his hands and knees. After an hour of crawling, he comes upon the skeletal remains of a long-dead explorer in the tunnel. Ignacio spies the explorer's canteen, which he grabs and desperately raises to his lips, only to find it empty. He tosses it aside and crawls for hours, driven mad by the pain, thirst, and exhaustion. He has a vision of the master Saguaro, urging him to continue, to avenge his death and return to his wife, and reveals to him that this was to have been the final test: to face death and feel no fear. Ignacio eventually emerges from the tunnel at the base of the volcano and collapses.

Scene Four: The Duel

Ignacio, nursed to health by the stalwart villagers, returns to Mexico just a day before the planned train robbery. He goes directly to the Federales and informs them of El Mezquino's plan. They place him in jail and leave to investigate his claim. One of El Mezquino's men is in the adjacent cell, and he informs Ignacio that Esmeralda is being held captive by El Mezquino and will be present at the robbery. Knowing that she is in grave danger, Ignacio tricks the deputy into opening the cell door, knocks him unconscious, and steals a horse. Riding hard, Ignacio soon intercepts the train, only to find a gunfight raging between the bandits and the Federales, both on the train and on horseback. Ignacio leaps onto the moving train and begins searching for Esmeralda. Chasing the bandit the whole way up the train, Ignacio corners El Mezquino on top of an empty cattle car and shoots him dead.

Finale: Trainwreck

During the gunfight, a stray bullet hits the train's engineer, who slumps forward, pushing the throttle lever to full. The train careens wildly, and Ignacio realizes it is only a matter of time before it derails. He runs desperately through the train searching for Esmeralda, dispatching bandits as he goes. Finally, he finds her tied to a barrel. He frees her, and they both leap from the train, seconds before it flies from the track and plummets into a canyon.