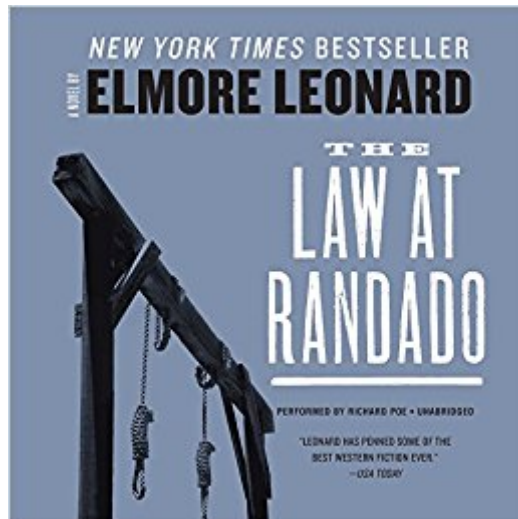




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The Law At Randado



Synopsis

[Read by Richard Poe] Phil Sundeen thinks Deputy Sheriff Kirby Frye is just a green local kid with a tin badge. And when the wealthy cattle baron's men drag two prisoners from Frye's jail and hang them from a high tree, there's nothing the young lawman can do about it. But Kirby's got more grit than Sundeen and his hired muscle bargained for. They can beat the boy and humiliate him, but they can't make him forget the oath he has sworn to uphold. The cattleman has money, power, and guns on his side, but Kirby Frye is the law in this corner of the Arizona Territories, and he'll drive a rich man to his knees to prove it.

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Customer Reviews

"Although known for his mysteries, Elmore Leonard has penned some of the best western fiction ever." --USA Today

Elmore Leonard (1925-2013) wrote more than fifty books during his highly successful career, including the bestsellers *Djibouti*, *Road Dogs*, *Mr. Paradise*, *Tishomingo Blues*, and the critically acclaimed collection of short stories, *When the Women Come Out to Dance*. Many of his books have been made into movies, including *Get Shorty*, *Out of Sight*, and Quentin Tarantino's *Jackie Brown*. He was the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from PEN USA and the Grand Master Award of the Mystery Writers of America.

Though I grew up watching westerns on television and at the movies, I was never a fan of the western in written form (I'm a science fiction reader and writer). However, for years and years, everyone told me that I absolutely HAD to read Elmore Leonard. I'd seen some of the movies made from his books. (I even saw *Stick* which starred Burt Reynolds in the late Seventies, I think, a movie no one ever talks about.) Then I started reading him. The crime novels first. Then the short stories. Then the westerns. And boy was that ever a revelation. I was genuinely surprised to realize that Leonard's westerns had long been part of my movie-going childhood. I remember seeing *Valdez is Coming* and loving it. I started reading the mass market paperbacks of his westerns, first the four or five short story collections, then I started in on the novels. *The Law at Randado* is my favorite. (Sadly, *Hombre* is not. Don't know why. Too grim, I guess.) Anyway, the one feature of Leonard's westerns that really impressed me, besides the crisp writing and the keen evocation of the landscape (and its indigenous peoples) of southeastern Arizona--of which I am very familiar--is the uncanny way Leonard has of making his westerns seem not like westerns at all. I never once, especially in *The Law at Randado*, thought I was reading "a western". Horses, guns, bad guys, renegade Apaches, rustlers, etc. Leonard has a way of pulling you into the human side of his stories and all you can do is marvel as he puts his characters through their paces and, more often or not, wind up with a totally unpredictable ending. Such is the case with *The Law at Randado*. Not only do you get a real sense of how lawless some of the settlements in the desert Southwest actually were in the late 19th century, you get to see how Leonard makes it all come alive without resorting to a single western cliché. (These were written mostly in the Fifties, in Leonard's youth and if there were any clichés to speak of in his novels or short stories that got translated into movies, they were HIS clichés. They were original to him. (One of his most original westerns is *Forty Lashes Less One*. Not only is it totally unpredictable, it's quite funny.) I'm a fan. Totally. I've read everything. And while he doesn't bat a hundred (who does?) a great deal of his work is top-notch and the very best of its kind. (And you'll never see the climax of *The Law at Randado* coming. Thoroughly original, to say the least!)

Another outstanding but quirky Elmore Leonard western. Leonard again proves himself a master of terse, realistic dialog and fine descriptive writing in this story of a young deputy with nerve and sand, but not much experience. He is confronted and tested by a rich, arrogant cattleman, the gunman on the cattleman's payroll and a hostile town.

This is VERY early Elmore Leonard, without the characters, dialogue and plot twists that make his

later work so outstanding. I'm not sorry I read it, but I'll be much more careful to check the date of my future Leonard purchases. A two word review? Unmet promise.

Leonard is up there with the best western writers. This book has a good plot and great characters. It is not a shoot 'em up, but will keep you entertained.

I love to read western novels and until recently had never heard of Elmore Leonard. It was either Goodreads or the 'Justified' website where I saw his name as a western writer. I downloaded his first western novel, *The Bounty Hunters* to my Kindle and was hooked. In *The Law at Randado*, the main character, deputy Sheriff Kirby Frye, is learning his job OJT. He is taken advantage of, loses his fights, and initially the respect of the Randado citizens. Very slowly and I might add, painfully he is mentored almost by non-involvement by his boss, Sheriff John Danaher, Sheriff of Pima County, Tucson. As the story progresses the deputy grows in both his humanity and professionalism. The story moves quickly and the word descriptions of the people, towns, landscape are so vivid that your imagination captures you instantly. If you love raw old west adventure, read *The Law at Randado*.

I've only started with Leonard's many tales of the west (of which there are many) but I think I'll keep reading them. He clearly has some knowledge of the Apache which is interesting. Draws characters in a believable way. Nice detail of the violence and brutality that no doubt governed life in that time, but not in an overly-graphic way. Was surprised that this story resolved in a non-violent way, which I thought was creative.

I was new to Leonard's westerns...now I'm hooked.

I have just recently "discovered" Elmore Leonard as a writer of westerns. *Hombre* and *Mr. Majestik* were big favorites of mine, although I had forgotten he wrote them. I am going back now and catching up on the western series.

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