

DVD Review: 'Andy Barker, P.I.' Deserved More Time to Grow

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on December 1, 2009 - 1:01pm

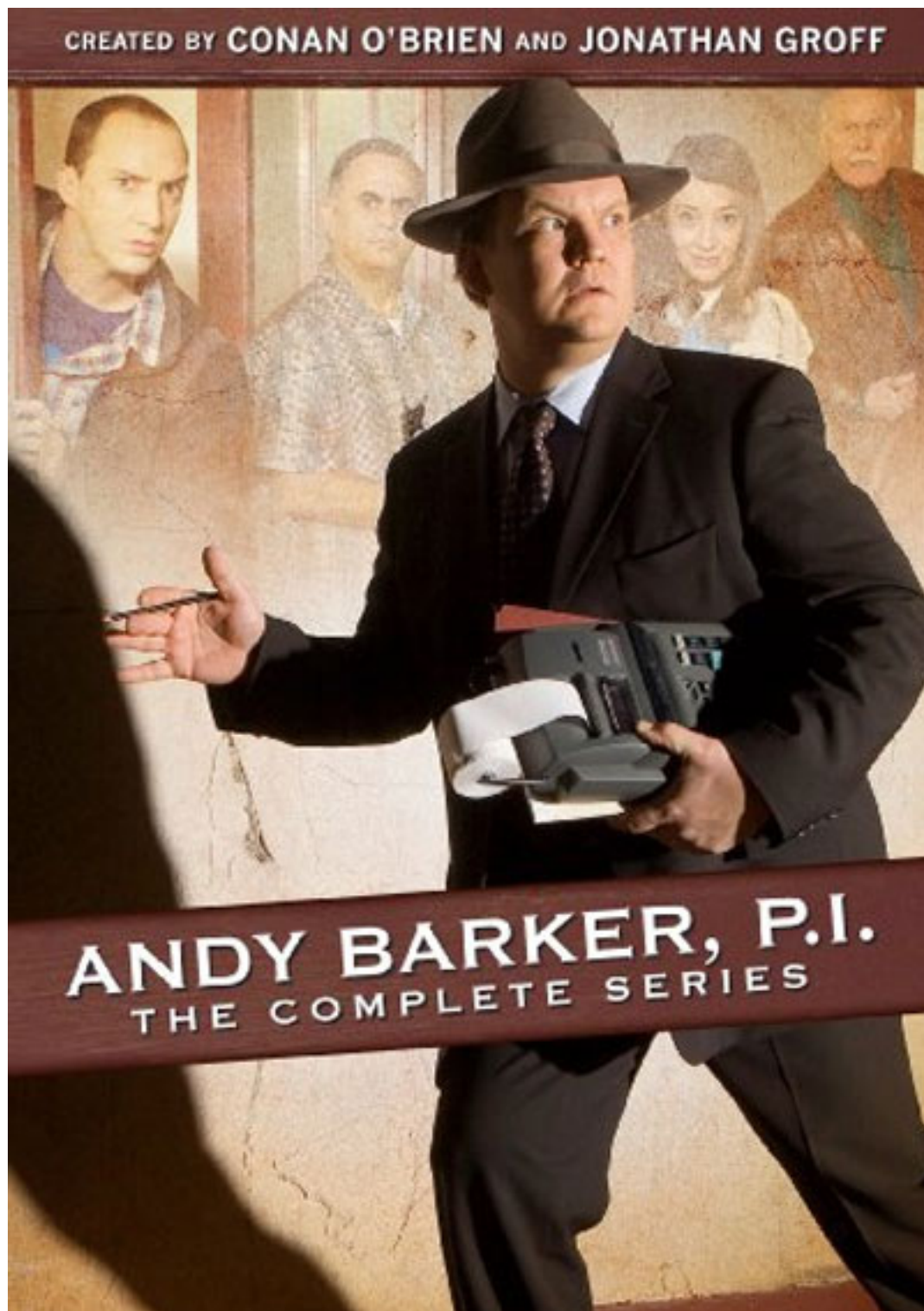
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CHICAGO – Created by Conan O'Brien and Jonathan Groff, NBC's "Andy Barker, P.I." was barely given even the slightest chance to develop a following when it debuted a few years ago. Andy Richter had the worst luck as a sitcom lead, failing to find an audience for the brilliant-but-canceled "Andy Richter Controls the Universe" and then getting the axe again after only six episodes of the promising "Andy Barker, P.I.". No wonder he returned to the loving embrace of Conan O'Brien when he went to "The Tonight Show".



DVD Rating: **3.5/5.0**

Richter's last stab at sitcom glory was a clever comedy about a fish-out-of-water stuck in noir-esque action. The lovable sidekick played CPA Andy Barker, a successful accountant who stumbles into the life of a private detective after he rents a storefront office that used to be occupied by someone more skilled at the seedy side of humanity. Instead of leaving innocent victims with no recourse, the sweet Barker does his best to help those who hire him, assisted by a video store clerk (the great Tony Hale of "Arrested Development"), a restaurant owner nearby (Marshall Manesh of "How I Met Your Mother"), and a world-weary tough guy (the legendary Harve Presnell of "Fargo"). Clea Lewis co-starred as Andy's wife.



Andy Barker, P.I.: The Complete Series was released on DVD on November 17th, 2009.

Photo credit: Shout Factory

With talented producers, writers that included Jane Espenson ("Buffy the Vampire Slayer," "Caprica"), Jon Pollack ("30 Rock"), and Josh Bycel ("Psych), and a great cast, "Andy Barker, P.I." had undeniable potential. But NBC saw the early low ratings and pulled the trigger before the show had a chance to develop. Do you know how many shows wouldn't be on the air if they were judged by the first six episodes? "Cheers" and "Seinfeld" started notoriously low in the ratings and the first month or so of "30 Rock," before the cast and writers really clicked, is easily the worst in the history of the series. I'm not sure that "Barker" could have ever developed into true greatness, but there should be a rule that every series, especially a quirky one that's going to take time to find an audience, be given at least ten episodes before judgment falls.

The only six episodes of "Andy Barker, P.I." have been collected on two discs by the best studio in the business for unheralded TV gems, Shout Factory. Every single episode includes a commentary and the special features are great with participation by the whole team on the retrospective "Going Where the Numbers Take You" and "Writers Class 101". A gag reel is also included.

'Andy Barker, P.I.: The Complete Series' is released by Shout Factory and stars Andy Richter, Tony Hale, Marshall Manesh, Clea Lewis, and Harve Presnell. The show was created by Conan O'Brien and Jonathan Groff. The show was released on DVD on November 17th, 2009. It is not rated. It runs 132 minutes.



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