

TV Review: 'Better Off Ted' Deserves to Develop an Audience

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on December 8, 2009 - 12:38pm

- [ABC](#) [2]
- [Andrea Anders](#) [3]
- [Better Off Ted](#) [4]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [5]
- [DVD Review](#) [6]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [7]
- [Isabella Acres](#) [8]
- [Jay Harrington](#) [9]
- [Jonathan Slavin](#) [10]
- [Malcolm Barrett](#) [11]
- [Portia de Rossi](#) [12]
- [Television](#) [13]
- [Victor Fresco](#) [14]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [15]

CHICAGO – With their renewal of “Better Off Ted” and “Scrubs,” it’s clear that ABC is unwilling to throw in the towel and give up on a comedy that’s not finding its audience. Before the wonderful arrival of “Modern Family,” easily one of the best shows on TV, ABC was not recently known as the place for laughs and there has clearly been a conscious effort to change that including giving the relatively audience deficient “Better Off Ted” another shot at finding a following (as well as scheduling an entire night of new comedy to start the season on Wednesdays).



Television Rating: **4.0/5.0**

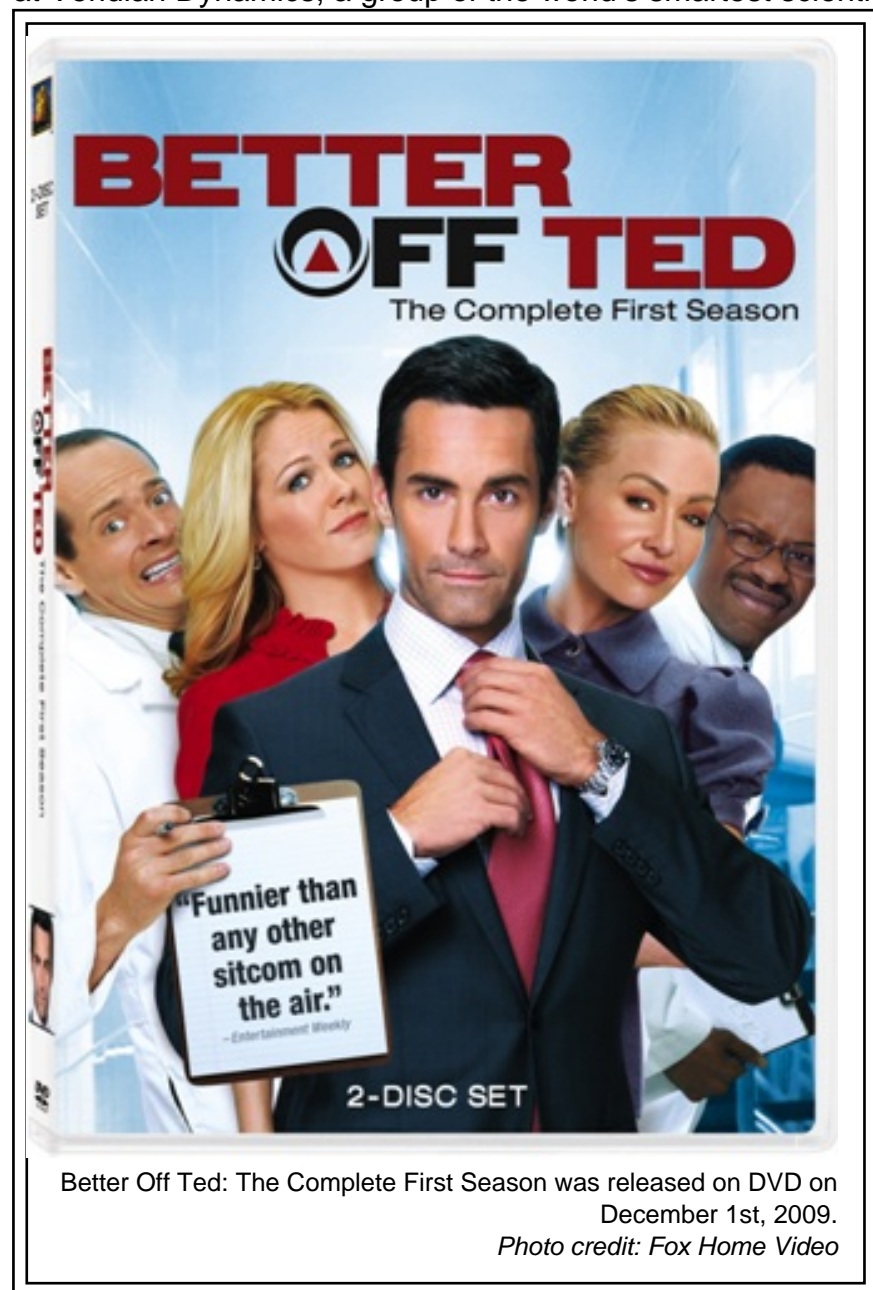
With a second-season premiere tonight and the recent arrival of the first season on DVD, if “Better Off Ted” has a shot at even cult status, it better happen soon. The ratings near the end of last season were abysmal and I’ll admit that I had written off the show, somewhat surprised to see that it was returning (partnered again with “Scrubs” on Tuesday nights). With crisp writing and a stellar ensemble that improves episode by episode over the course of the first season and a strong season-two premiere, “Better Off Ted” deserves the second chance ABC has given it. “Castle” struggled in season one but has developed a following after being given a second chance. You never know what could happen to “Ted”.



Andrea Anders, Jay Harrington, Portia De Rossi, Malcolm Barrett, Isabella Acres, Jonathan Slavin
Photo credit: Bob D'Amico/ABC

Created by Victor Fresco (who also made the underrated, great, and similarly quirky “Andy Richter Controls the Universe”), “Better Off Ted”

is a sometimes brilliant dissection of modern science and the workplace. Ted Crisp (Jay Harrington) is the head of research and development at Veridian Dynamics, a group of the world's smartest scientists trying to make the next amazing product like cowless meat.



Most episodes of "Better Off Ted" incorporate an office plotline and a romantic one between Ted and co-worker Linda (Andrea Anders). The chemistry of the flirtation between Ted and Linda significantly improves over the course of the first season and the quirky office politics of the new millennium has always been a strong element of the program. Let's just say that Veridian displays some morally questionable behavior, often led by the borderline sociopathic Veronica (Portia de Rossi). Most of their breakthrough scientific developments are tested on their own employees.

Take for example the excellent second season premiere airing tonight, "Love Blurts". Veridian has determined that they can save money on health care by hooking up the most genetically compatible employees at the company. Genetic compatability leads to stronger offspring. Of course, our romantic leads aren't deemed a good match and are forced to go on dates with other employees (including a guest spot by Taye Diggs) with hilarious and unpredictable results. Meanwhile, Phil is instructed that it would be best if he gets a vasectomy and Veronica demands Lem's sperm after discovering that he's a good match for her.

Like the best of "Ted," the humor in the season premiere comes completely out of left field. "Better Off Ted" may not be on your comic wavelength but it is incredibly original with an eccentric sense of humor unlike anything else on TV. For its originality alone, it deserves a look.

In a plot description, any given episode of "Better Off Ted" may sound absolutely ridiculous, but it's the execution of the show that makes it click. The writing has gotten smarter and more confident every week as has the chemistry between the important pairs (Ted & Linda, scientists Phil & Lem, Ted & Veronica). In particular, Anders and Harrington have made a marked improvement from season one to two. It's not as if they were bad in the first season, but they seem more comfortable in the shoes of these characters at the start of season two.

"Better Off Ted" opened well in March of 2009 with a 3.6 rating and 5.64 million viewers. By the time the 13th episode aired in August (after a summer of oddly scheduled installments), less than half that many people were watching with a pathetic 1.7 rating and under 2.5 million viewers. Shows have been cancelled with four times that many weekly viewers (go ask a producer of "Without a Trace"). It's heartwarming to think that executives at ABC are actually looking at the quality of a show like "Better Off Ted" before making scheduling decisions. This show is getting better every week. Now it's your turn to catch up with it.

The season-two premiere of 'Better Off Ted' airs on ABC on Tuesday, December 8th, 2009 at 8:30pm CST. It stars Jay Harrington, Andrea Anders, Portia de Rossi, Jonathan Slavin, Malcolm Barrett, and Isabella Acres. It was created by Victor Fresco.

The first season of 'Better Off Ted' is released by Fox Home Video. It was released on DVD on December 1st, 2009. It is not rated. It runs 299 minutes and includes no special features.



[16]

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [17]
Content Director
HollywoodChicago.com
brian@hollywoodchicago.com [16]

Source URL (retrieved on *Apr 18 2024 - 7:55pm*):
<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/9464/tv-review-better-off-ted-deserves-to-develop-an-audience>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/briantt>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/abc>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/andrea-anders>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/better-off-ted>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brian-tallerico>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dvd-review>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/isabella-acres>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/jay-harrington>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/jonathan-slavin>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/malcolm-barrett>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/portia-de-rossi>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/television>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/victor-fresco>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dvd-theater-tv-news>
- [16] <mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#BRIAN>