

The Star-Ledger

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signal2noise

THE BEST IN HOME ENTERTAINMENT THIS WEEK

DVD

Crime-solving and snappy patter

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Glenn Gordon Caron is the creator and executive producer of "Medium," a drama series starring Patricia Arquette as a crime-solving clairvoyant. After premiering in TV's mid-season this year, "Medium" has become a hit.

Just about 20 years ago, Caron created another mid-season entry about crime solvers — a he-and-she pair of bickering private detectives — though it's arguable if any self-respecting tarot card dealer would have predicted success for the show.

In the mid-'80s, TV already was a Yellow Pages of private detective agencies, amateur sleuths or partnerships of various stripes, with "Magnum, P.I." "Remington Steele," Murder, She

Wrote, "Simon & Simon," "Crazy Like a Fox," "Scarecrow & Mrs. King" and "Cagney & Lacey" among the Top 30 shows.

To complicate matters, Caron cast as his two principals a maligned actress with a southward-bound career and a little-known actor whose TV experience comprised exactly one episode of "Miami Vice."

Despite everything, ABC's "Moonlighting" — whose first two seasons have been released on DVD by Lions Gate — became not just a hit, but a phenomenon.

As much screwball comedy as detective series, "Moonlighting" was set in Los Angeles at the Blue Moon Detective Agency, where former fashion model Maddie Hayes, played by Cybill Shepherd, and a snap-crackle-pop shamus, David Addison, played by Bruce Willis, teamed to exchange both mile-a-minute one-liners and sexual heat.

The DVD includes the two-part pilot and 23 more episodes, including "The Dream Sequence Always Rings Twice," a film-noirish fantasy filmed largely in black and white and dedicated to Orson Welles, who died shortly after filming an introduction for the episode.

"Moonlighting" had style, smarts, wit, irreverence and risk-taking to spare. It was a TV show very aware of being on TV; Willis, at times, would break down the wall between himself and the viewer by winking at or commenting to the camera.

The series also became famous for its on-set feuding and production delays. Caron, Shepherd and Willis, who used "Moonlighting" to launch his film career, have reunited to offer both audio commentary and on-camera interviews discussing the first two seasons and what it was like to find themselves in the midst of an unlikely breakout hit.



"MOONLIGHTING
SEASONS 1 & 2"
(Lions Gate Home
Entertainment)
Six discs.



Bruce Willis and Cybill Shepherd

LION'S GATE