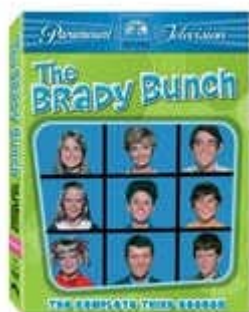




Case Number 7828



THE BRADY BUNCH: THE COMPLETE THIRD SEASON

Paramount // 1971 // 594 Minutes // Not Rated
Reviewed by Judge Dennis Prince // October 19th, 2005

The Charge

The kids are singin', the adults swingin', and Jan's still stinging in the shadow of "Marcia, Marcia, Marcia!"

Opening Statement

The laughs and life's lessons keep on coming as the Bradys enter their third year together and we continue to look on, thanks to Paramount's **The Brady Bunch -- The Complete Third Season**.

Facts of the Case

It's our third year of looking in on the life and times of the Brady family, that well-knit suburban tribe pieced together from the familial remnants of a widow, a widower, their combined complement of six children, and a live-in maid. With the house settled in regards to the mixing of these two families, the specter of teenage angst has also settled in with them. Before things get too hairy, though, the Bradys invite us to join them on a rollicking road trip to the Grand Canyon. During the extended adventure, however, they find themselves stranded in an abandoned ghost town and, once they reach the canyon, Bobby and Cindy get lost and encounter a real Indian tribe. It all works out in the end, of course, when the family is invited to a real Indian tribal gathering. "Well, Chief, I think we'll all have a groovy time," chirps Mike.

Back at home, it's time to navigating the obstacles of growing up as Greg (Barry Williams) leaps headlong into his first car, Marcia (Maureen McCormick) gets down with none other than Davy Jones, Peter

(Christopher Knight) struggles to escape from his own personal Dullsville, Jan (Eve Plumb) gets new glasses and an unending case of inferiority complex, Bobby (Mike Lookinland) gets fed up with getting looked down upon, and Cindy (Susan Olsen) has decided she's ready to graduate from pig-tails when she discovers she has a secret admirer. Meanwhile, Carol (Florence Henderson) and Mike (Robert Reed) get some bad advice from an even worse actress as the family gets their shot in a TV commercial. Close by, Alice (Ann B. Davis) takes a short leave and leaves her militarily-minded Aunt Emma (Ann B. Davis) in charge of the unwary household. Anyone seen Tiger?

The Evidence

By 1971, *The Brady Bunch* was firmly entrenched in America's regular TV diet. Airing in the prime 8:00 -- 8:30 PM timeslot on Friday nights on ABC, the Bradys were a fixture in TV viewers' lives, as groovy as wood-grain paneling and swag lamps. The show, while already traveling down the straight and narrow (and wholesomely wholesome) road, began to veer treacherously close to the ditch of gag-worthy goody-goodness. The moral messages, sometimes implicit but usually explicit, became overtly "preachy" in contrast with the emerging 1970s decade of deceit. While the previous two seasons were laced with plenty of wistful wisdom, the third season overflowed with Brady therapy for viewers who, perhaps, hoped to find hip-ness and happiness in a weekly 30-minute counseling session. Creator/producer Sherwood Schwartz stayed true to his belief that a wholesome show with a moral message was what America wanted most, and in the long run it seems he was right. Today, though, the show and its values are snickered at for their air of nostalgic naïveté, which was thoroughly skewered in 1995's **The Brady Bunch Movie**. However, it is that untainted element that gives the show enduring charm and continues to grow new generations of fans who find an unusual comfort and peace not readily found in the current lot of sex- and strife-laden laments posing as TV entertainment.

Brady fans, of course, will enjoy this third season for its many immediately-identifiable highlights:

- * "Find what you do best, and do your best at it"
- * "F-F-FIL, L-L-LMO, O-O-ORE, Fillmore Junior High!"
- * "Pork chop-shhs and apple shhaushhs. Dat's shhwell."
- * "When I think of your face, and awful cute dimples, from head to toe, I get goose pimples."

And, lest we forget, Season Three provided the coming out party for that groovy new singing group, The Brady Kids (aka The Brady 6), who tickled our ears with their teeny tunes like "We Can Make the World a Whole Lot Brighter" and "Time to Change." Yes, the sights, sounds, and sentimentality all make for Brady gold.

This third-season boxed-set arrives in the usual slipcase with two slimline keep cases inside, each holding two single-sided discs. The season's 23 original episodes are contained as follows:

Disc One:

- * "Ghost Town, USA"
- * "Grand Canyon or Bust"
- * "The Brady Braves"
- * "The Wheeler-Dealer"
- * "My Sister, Benedict Arnold"
- * "The Personality Kid"

Disc Two:

- * "Juliet is the Sun"
- * "And Now, a Word from Our Sponsor"
- * "The Private Ear"
- * "Her Sister's Shadow"
- * "What Goes Up..."
- * "Click"
- * "Getting Davy Jones"

Disc Three:

- * "The Not-So-Rose-Colored Glasses"
- * "The Teeter-Totter Caper"
- * "Big Little Man"
- * "Dough Re Mi"
- * "Jan's Aunt Jenny"
- * "The Big Bet"

Disc Four:

- * "The Power of the Press"
- * "Sergeant Emma"
- * "Cindy Brady, Lady"
- * "My Fair Opponent"
- * "The Fender Benders"

As with the previous boxed-set editions, each third-season episode here is presented in its original 1.33:1 full frame format as originally televised. Although these aren't bona-fide "restored" transfers (none have been up to this point), the image quality is clean, consistent, and colorful, up to par with the Season Two set and still besting the lesser quality of the Season One release. As with the Season Two set, there is a frequent softness in the presentation here which is likely a problem with source material quality and not necessarily the fault of the authoring process. The audio is offered in a clean and clear Dolby Digital 2.0 Mono track. Again, this is another decent presentation following in the footsteps of the Season Two set and a hopeful harbinger of things to come (and possibly improve) with subsequent season releases.

The Rebuttal Witnesses

So now the often-caustic Robert Reed has the court's permission to wag his finger, wave his arms and stick out his tongue at the Paramount team in reaction to this third season collection. The late actor, who often found fault with the show's scripts, would likely find fault that here, again, is another release completely devoid of any extras. While we clung to the notion that the pre-show still panels and the nifty lenticular slipcases could conceivably be considered "extras," this release only brings us the lenticular cover, allowing us to tilt it and watch the eight Bradys plus Alice look about at one another in the famous tic-tac-toe title design. The show reached its pop-culture peak with this third season, yet there is nothing extra here to celebrate its iconic stature. It would seem appropriate to provide at least the updated pre-show still panel or maybe some network bumper spots. Even better, of course, would be audio commentaries. We've yet to hear from Florence Henderson or Ann B. Davis, not to mention Maureen McCormick or Mike Lookinland -- up to this point we've only heard from Susan Olsen, Christopher Knight, and Barry Williams on a couple of episodes on the Season One set. (It's doubtful that the elusive Eve Plumb would ever step into the commentary booth which is a shame, really, since she was responsible for the show's single greatest line: "Marcia, Marcia, *Marcia!*") Also, it's certainly appropriate -- no, requisite -- that a respectful retrospective of

Robert Reed's career be included at some point in these releases. Regardless of whether he and show creator Sherwood Schwartz ever saw eye to eye, Reed managed to deftly maintain the character of Mike Brady, concealing any hint of his true disgruntlement over the show.

Closing Statement

Despite its saccharine-smothered sweetness, *The Brady Bunch* hit its stride in this third season, and fans will usually single out this year as that which contains their favorite and most often-quoted episodes. The show is definitely harmless (provided you brush thoroughly after each viewing) and perpetually endearing in its lack of self-consciousness despite its heavily moral clichés. It's a groovy time just waiting to be had.

The Verdict

It's nice to be nice to the nice, so this court finds no crime committed by these very nice Bradys. Case dismissed.

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Scales of Justice

Video: 93

Audio: 95

Extras: 25

Acting: 91

Story: 93

Judgment: 79

Perp Profile

Studio: Paramount

Video Formats:

* Full Frame

Audio Formats:

* Dolby Digital 2.0 Mono (English)

Subtitles:

* None

Running Time: 594 Minutes

Release Year: 1971

MPAA Rating: Not Rated

Distinguishing Marks

* Lenticular Slipcase Cover

Accomplices

* IMDb

<http://us.imdb.com/title/tt0063878/combined>

* Season One Review

<http://www.dvdverdict.com/reviews/bradybunchseason1.php>

* Season Two Review

<http://www.dvdverdict.com/reviews/bradybunchseason2.php>

Original Article: <http://www.dvdverdict.com/primer/bradybunchseason3.php>