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Portlandia: Season 3

2012

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There are times when I simply don't get things which are passed off as being "comedies." As I mentioned with my review for the second season of *Portlandia*, this is a series that I heard nothing but rave reviews about especially from those who live here in Portland. While I see some of the humor, it never came across as being the end all, be all of comedy and perhaps for those living here, it's simply the idea that the series is filmed here that appeals. I'd intended on skipping the third season but after it arrived in the mail, there really wasn't much of a choice.

Portlandia continues to point out some of Portland's many absurdities but as I pointed out this the previous season, some of these things aren't necessarily exclusive to this area although Portland is a city who boldly asks people to "keep Portland weird." The series continues to work in some of its standby skits such as the feminist bookstore or Peter and Nance trying to get their bed and breakfast open. There is also the ongoing saga of Portland's "mayor" (Kyle MacLachlan) has left his post leaving Fred and Carrie to find someone to fill in for him before realizing that he's the only one who can help the city.

There are some things in the series which might seem as though they are purely fictional such as the Steampunk society but, believe it or not, there is in fact a Steampunk Ball that's held here in Portland. There are other skits which aren't necessarily a part of Portland itself but definitely have cultural significance. In particular there is an episode where Fred and Carrie decide to get MTV back to the way it used to be, showing music videos, and they enlist the help of Kurt Loder, Tabitha Soren and Matt Pinfield. This episode actually did have some humorous aspects especially if you're of the age where you remember when MTV showed videos as opposed to the reality trash they air now. There are also some exaggerations in the series but that's part of comedy. There is a short skit in the start of the season featuring Portlanders trying to get into a small spot of moving sunlight during the winter. I don't think that it's nearly as bad as what some people believe. We do have a number of cloudy, rainy days, but there are a few days of sun during winter as well.

The thing about *Portlandia* however is that even though I live here, I just don't feel the show is that funny and in fact, it's really not that funny at all. Given that there are SNL alumni working on it, just like that series *Portlandia* has skits that don't seem to know when enough is enough and simply end. The amount of laughs I find the show providing me with is outweighed by the sense of boredom that *Portlandia* leaves me with. The episodes just don't pack the comedy punch that I would like to find in a series like this.

The transfer for the series is fine for the type of show it is. There aren't any drastic, visual changes between the seasons. *Portlandia* does at least use local landmarks instead of being something which is "set in Portland" but filled on a backstage lot somewhere and most of these locations come across quite beautifully during the course of the series. It's too bad however there aren't more of them used as Portland really does have a lot of places to offer architecturally.

There are a couple of deleted scenes on the blu-ray but the more entertaining segment are the Portland Tours which finds Kumail Najjani visiting some of the more unique places in Portland. I had no idea that there was a vegan strip club here, but now I do.

Portlandia might very well make fun of the more outrageous side of Portland and if you've lived here or know anything about the city, there's more than enough of that. But again this can be found virtually anywhere and while it's great to see Portland take center stage and even take a few shots at Seattle, I just don't see the humor that so many others do. Maybe I'm not pretentious enough to understand the comedy but whatever the truth is, I'm still not sold on what *Portlandia* has been trying to offer.

Episode 3:01 – Winter Special

Winter arrives and a number of inhabitants warm up to some cold-weather projects, including Peter and Nance, who strike pasta from their diet to keep down their weight, and the proprietors of Stu's Stews food cart, who try to stir up business as the weather gets chillier. In other goings-on, Candice's son visits the bookstore; and Bryce and Lisa's newly opened Outlet Hotel offers a getaway package

Episode 3:02 – Take Back MTV

Iris and Spyke rustle up a gang of former MTV personalities in an attempt to wrest the cable music channel from the tween set. Also: Sandra develops a crush on a guy in her meditation class; and Kath and Dave shoot a video about how to construct a tent.

Episode 3:03 – Missionaries

The mayor recruits Fred and Carrie to go door-to-door in Seattle to entice residents to relocate to Portland; a pedicab driver rustles up riders. Also: Peter and Nance make a stop at the Doily Shoppe in preparation for the opening of their bed-and-breakfast; and Toni and Candace try to find out who's behind a bad online review of their restaurant.

Episode 3:04 – Nina's Birthday

Nina throws herself an extravagant birthday party that will include horseback rides, sunrise yoga and a tapas dinner, which thrills Kath and Dave, who've just returned from Spain and are eager to share their knowledge of all things Iberian. A couple who've attended so many birthday parties in the past year that they're broke seek a bank loan in order to afford to make an appearance at Nina's soiree.

Episode 3:05 – Squiggleman

Concerned parents put together a band that plays music for children: and the

Portland Nerd Council produces a public-service announcement. Meanwhile, a couple have an uneasy lunch at a vegan restaurant; and the Feminist Bookstore holds a comedy night.

Episode 3:06 – Off the Grid

The mayor steps down after being involved in an environmental scandal; and a Battle of the Gentle Bands is waged by local musicians. Meanwhile, an inspector stops by Peter and Nance's bed-and-breakfast; and the Gutterpunks try to locate a missing cat.

Episode 3:07 – The Temp

Portland's interim mayor hopes to turn the position into a full-time job with help from Fred and Carrie, while a couple experience wedding interruptus and town baristas devise a coffee-shop manifesto. Later, Kath and Dave have problems finding seats at a restaurant; Joaquin's friends get to the bottom of his mysterious disappearances; and the Rats become authors.

Episode 3:08 – Soft Opening

Peter and Nance prep for the opening of their bed-and-breakfast by hosting their friends; and a local furnituremaker is featured in the "Man Issue" of a magazine. Meanwhile, the Steampunks head to a convention, while an emboldened Fred takes a date out for a third time.

Episode 3:09 – Alexandra

Carrie and Fred's roommate complicates their relationship; Portland is overrun with art projects; coyotes are threatening Kath and Dave's neighborhood; students inspire their teacher; visitors tour the Historical Punk House.

Episode 3:10 – No-Fo-O-Fo-Bridge

The Rats relocate from their recently gentrified neighborhood; first-time parents peruse child-rearing manuals; and Gahvin takes his girlfriend to a movie. Also: Alexandra and Carrie dine at a communal table; and a student inspires a teacher.

Episode 3:11 – Blackout

The entire city is blacked out after the mayor's office fails to pay the electric bill.

-mike-

Directed by:
Jonathan Krisel

Written by:
Fred Armisen
Carrie Brownstein
Karey Dornetto
Jonathan Krisel
Bill Oakley

Cast:
Fred Armisen
Carrie Brownstein

Blu-ray Features:
Aspect Ratio: 1.78:1
Audio: English Dolby Digital 2.0
English SDH Subtitles

Disc 1

Episodes:
3:01 – Winter Special
3:02 – Take Back MTV
3:03 – Missionaries
3:04 – Nina's Birthday
3:05 – Squiggelman
3:06 – Off the Grid
3:07 – The Temp
3:08 – Soft Opening

Disc 2

Episodes:

3:09 – Alexandra

3:10 – No-Fo-O-Fo-Bridge

3:11 – Blackout

Special Features:

Deleted Scenes

Portland Tours

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