

DVD Review: Betty White in Black and White

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- Jake Guerra

It goes without saying that TV legend Betty White has had quite a year. From a memorable Super Bowl ad, to roles in such hit movies as *The Proposal*, to even hosting one of the funniest *Saturday Night Live* episodes in recent history, Betty White is still making them laugh at 88 years old. For true Betty fans, a nice little treat has been released on DVD: *Betty White in Black and White*, a DVD compilation that comes with episodes from the start of White's career in the '50s.

The DVD begins with two episodes from one of White's first sitcoms, *Life with Elizabeth*, which started as a local program that received national syndication. White stars as Elizabeth, who is newly married to Alvin (Del Moore), and the series shows the ups and downs they face. The format of the show is different in the sense that each episode is broken into three "incidents," introduced by an announcer each time. At the end, the cast would tell the audience goodnight, followed by a special message from White.

Some people might be thrown by the obvious static set and the low budget look, however White makes each segment shine. *Elizabeth* may not be considered a classic to some, but it was definitely a great start to a wonderful career.

During the time of *Life with Elizabeth*, White also started her own daytime variety program, *The Betty White Show*. The episode featured served as a good showcase for White, who sang, read viewer mail and jokes, and even shows her humanitarian side.

Date with the Angels is another sitcom starring White, and the DVD provides viewers with two episodes. The setting is a bit familiar, White is once again newly married, however her timing still pulls through the material. The second episode might also be of interest to classic TV Fans, since it features cameos by *The Beverly Hillbillies'* Nancy Kulp and *Dick Van Dyke's* Richard Deacon.

After *Angels* was canceled, White went on to star in another variety program, this time during prime time. The two episodes of *The Betty White Show* featured are my favorite of the entire DVD, especially the second one, "Jealousy," simply because we get to see White tackle a variety of characters, including a loony cleaning lady, and a snooty actress. The episodes really showed her range and prove why White is in fact a national treasure.

For any Betty White fan, this DVD is a must have, if only to see the origins of their favorite Golden Girl.