

HAPPY TREE FRIENDS: VOLUME TWO, SEASON ONE

(Navarre Canada)

BRIEFLY: Cute animals meet bloody ends in the TV version of the hit online show.

THE GIST: Kids' cartoons have always been cruel — think Wile E. Coyote and the Roadrunner — but Happy Tree Friends is just next level s**t. The Flash-animated series — featuring cutesy animal characters like Cuddles,

Lumpy and Petunia dying in the bloodiest ways imaginable — started online before jumping to TV (it's on Spike here in Canada). But fear not: the leap to the small screen has not diminished the show's sickness. Indeed, the producers have met the challenge of expanding the episodes to seven minutes from just one or two by amping up the carnage. It's grotesque but funny as hell. As the cover warning says, not recommended for small children or big babies.

EXTRAS: Storyboards, creator commentaries, behind-the-scenes featurettes including the bizarre 'All Up In My Grill' featuring a plush Lumpy doll getting barbecued. (SP)



THE O.C.: THE COMPLETE FOURTH SEASON

(Warner Home Entertainment)

BRIEFLY: The No. 1-rated teen drama ran out of steam in Season 4.

THE GIST: Killing off Melissa (Mischa Barton) in a car accident at the end of Season 3 didn't help the ratings of a series which debuted with so much promise. Structured around two wealthy Newport Beach, California families (the Cohens and the Roberts) and the angst of their hormone-riddled teen offspring, *The O.C.* was a hit when it debuted in 2003, with Barton, Rachel Bilson, Adam Brody and Benjamin McKenzie achieving cult status with teens. But the show was struggling well before Barton met her demise, and attempts by creator Josh Schwartz to focus on fresher characters like Willa Holland and Chris Pratt in Season 4 failed to revive interest. The show concluded dramatically with an earthquake striking Newport Beach and destroying the Cohen's house.

EXTRAS: Outtakes, Schwartz's commentary on the final episode, a look at the magic of 'Christmulkah', and a featurette on Summer Roberts (Bilson). (KS)



WKRP's four seasons, it spawned several classic episodes. This 22-episode Season One collection features several, including 'Turkeys Away' in which a Thanksgiving turkey-toss promotion goes sadly wrong, resulting in Carlson's classic quote: "As God is my witness, I thought turkeys could fly."

EXTRAS: Cast interviews, commentaries by creator Hugh Wilson and cast members Anderson and Bonner on the pilot and 'Turkeys Away', two featurettes. (KS)

NOT JUST THE BEST OF THE LARRY SANDERS SHOW

(Sony)

BRIEFLY: Twenty-three of the best episodes from this hilarious late night talk show spoof's six seasons.

THE GIST: *The Larry Sanders Show* not only spoofed late night talk shows, it ripped on their holier-than-thou pomposity with an armada of guests who played along and were not afraid to poke fun at themselves. Best jokes: David Duchovny's "gay" advances towards Shandling, Shandling bedding Ellen DeGeneres, losing his job to Jon Stewart. Inserted into the episodes are classic interviews with the likes of Carol Burnett, Sarah Silverman and Janeane Garofalo plus musical guests including Elvis Costello, They Might Be Giants and Paul Westerberg.

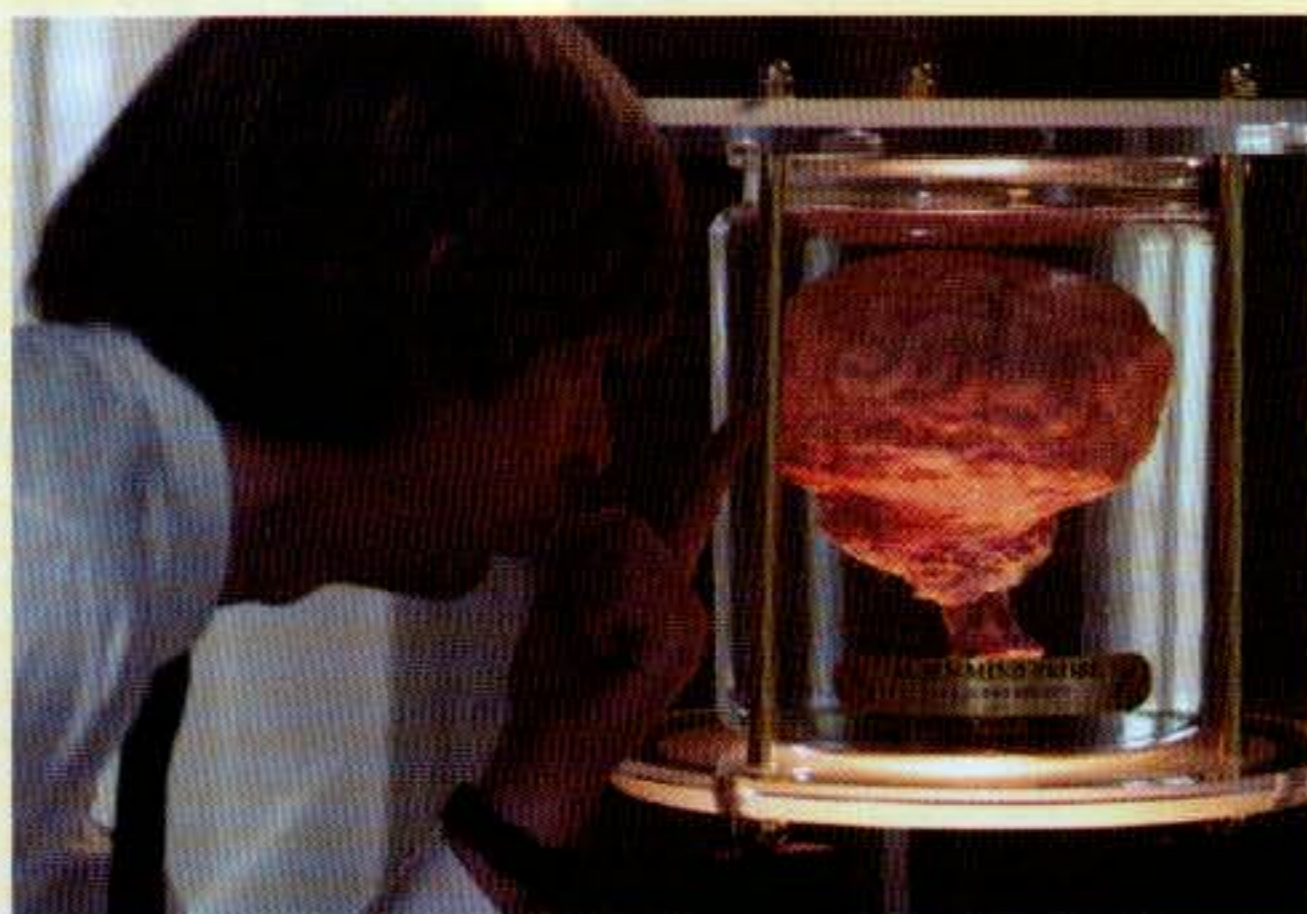
EXTRAS: A feature-length making-of doc, deleted scenes, audio commentaries, and personal visits with Burnett, Jerry Seinfeld and Tom Petty. (KS)

WKRP IN CINCINNATI: THE COMPLETE FIRST SEASON

(Fox Home Entertainment)

BRIEFLY: The most authentic radio station sitcom debuted in 1978.

THE GIST: Andy Travis (Gary Sandy) is recruited by weak-willed Arthur Carlson (the late Gordon Jump) to boost ratings at a mediocre 500-watt Cincinnati radio station by transforming its 'beautiful music' format to rock & roll. Too bad the station's oddball employees — plaid-suited salesman Herb Tarlek (Frank Bonner), newsman Les Nessman (Richard Sanders), burnout deejay "Dr." Johnny Fever (Howard Hesseman), smooth late-night jock Venus Flytrap (Tim Reid), gorgeous receptionist Jennifer Marlowe (Loni Anderson) and perky ingenue Bailey Quarters (Jan Smithers) — are mostly inept and ratings never improve. Yet over



ROBSON ARMS: THE COMPLETE FIRST SEASON

(VSC)

BRIEFLY: The comic (and wistful) goings-on in a Vancouver apartment.

THE GIST: *Robson Arms* playfully tweaks Vancouver stereotypes (pot, hippies, Toronto disdain) while the main thrust of its humour explores the eccentricities of the tenants of the titular apartment. Each episode focuses on a different tenant, with various crossovers occurring as they pass each other in the halls, visit the sundry shop, or hook up for awkward and unfulfilling sex. Regulars include *Corner Gas*'s Gabrielle Miller and Fred Ewanuick, while various Canadian vets like Margot Kidder, Brent Butt and Mark McKinney appear in supporting roles. An exaggerated but often accurate look at apartment living, with the jokes tempered by unexpected drama and emotion. But it never rains! How unrealistic.

EXTRAS: Creator and director commentaries, Season Two preview, opening sequence featurette. (SP)

MURDER IN SUBURBIA: SERIES 2

(BBC America/Paradox)

BRIEFLY: The British Cagney & Lacey's final season.

THE GIST: The suburbs have long inspired black comedy — all that 'what's going on behind the white picket fences and drawn curtains?' And the British have suburbs, too. *Murder In Suburbia* is a typically well-done BBC series starring Caroline Catz and Lisa Faulkner as police detectives Kate "Ash" Ashurst and Emma "Scribbs" Scribbins respectively. That Ash is brunette and Scribbs blonde is mined for laughs, as is the buttoned-down nature of Middleford, a 'burb where infidelity, theft and, of course, murder are rampant. Given that it's a BBC production, language is bluer and content racier than what we're used to in North America, but the repartee between our leads is never less than entertaining and the mysteries never less than intriguing. Pity there are only six episodes on this two-disc set.

EXTRAS: Cast filmographies. (SP)

