

DVD REVIEW

LIL' BUSH – RESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, SEASON 2

By Reuben Sturman

Specs:

Discs: Two, swinging single holder inside 14mm slipcase, Region 1

Audio: Dolby Digital Stereo

Aspect: Full frame

Running Time: 220 min, plus unrated bonus features.

Bonus Features: Six Audio Commentaries (cast and crew), Digital Shorts, Comedy Central teasers, Lil Bush music video, animatics

Though some would argue contemporary animation is bound by the original laws of both storytelling and characterization pioneered by legends like Chuck Jones, Tex Avery or the Hanna/ Barbara team, and hasn't changed since, a new surge in animated satire has picked up the posture of the most ruthless editorial images to create a new cartoon rule: The worse the President, the better the animated caricature.

Set in a bizarre meta-political universe where George Herbert Walker Bush is the current president, navigating the contemporary horrors of his son's presidency, Lil' Bush Season Two follows the further exploits of an 8 year old prepubescent commander-in-training and his gang of Lil' Cronies. With the help of a miniature Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice and Donald Rumsfeld, Lil' Bush finds himself stuffed inside Saddam Hussein's corpse, re-ravaging a post-Katrina New Orleans, and fist-fighting a foul-mouthed Lil' Vladimir Putin in front of a crowd of cowardly Lil' Dems. The series is a funny mix of harsh satirical gags and silly toilet humor in a web cartoon universe reminiscent of Clocksuckers and SuperNews.

Departing from a hybrid of cell and flash animation into a strictly digital format for season two, Lil' Bush is crisp, colorful and sounds fantastic. Though the animation can sometimes appear choppy in motion, the character designs are appealing and capture their real life counterparts well while allowing for plenty of comedic leeway. For example Bush Jr is a likeably adorable tot with an oversized head and short pants, adding charm to his childlike stubbornness, while Barbara Bush, portrayed by a producer's mother as a substance-abusing nymphomaniac, has an odd resemblance to a small-eyed George Liquor. It may sound bizarre, but it works well.

Assumedly thanks to Iggy Pop's reoccurring role as Lil' Rumsfeld, guest appearances ranging from members of the Grateful Dead to Bootsy Collins pepper the season, though are unfortunately overshadowed in favor of more popular, and markedly less political acts, like Good Charlotte (I can't imagine Fat Mike was too busy to help find a real punk group to take their place).

While the commentary tracks are so casual, shapeless and timid that they often become intentionally uninformative and directionless, the numerous internet shorts and Comedy Central spots add a lot of value to the special features as genuinely worthwhile extras. Aspiring animators and cartoon connoisseurs will find the lengthy animatics a treat.

Lil' Bush is a hilarious series. Though it sometimes loses traction, dropping hard satire in favor of easy attacks (Lil' Cheney's apparently based on a repetitive toss-away Daily Show gag), Lil' Bush shines well above C-average and will make an adamant decider out of anyone who stays the course. Mission Accomplished.