

## **TV COMPILATION REVIEW**

### THE FUGITIVE: SEASON ONE, DISC TWO

By Robert O'Hannon

**Series Premise:** The story follows the adventures of Dr. Richard Kimble (David Janssen.) Sentenced to death for murdering his wife and on his way to prison, a train accident makes him a free man.

Now his only chance to prove his innocence is to find the one armed man he saw fleeing the scene the night his wife was killed.

Relentlessly pursued by the Lt. Gerard (Barry Morse), he risks his freedom and life to help others. By doing so in each episode he creates one more believer in his innocence. This keeps him going.

**The DVD:** Don't let the color on the cover fool you – these episodes are in B&W. Episodes are generally sharp and clear. The only extras are episode previews.

Watching all the episodes is a huge commitment of time – there are 771 minutes of video to get through. And, as much as I like the series overall, some stories do get downright ponderous at time.

The series ran from 1963 to 1967. I was nine when the series started, so I don't remember anything about it from back then. And I probably wouldn't have appreciated it back then, as it was a show targeted for adult audiences.

This doesn't mean the show had racy storylines – few did back in the early 60s. But the show addresses common issues of greed, family issues, alienation, etc in gritty settings.

And it is kind of cool to see the “Rat Pack” era cars, casinos and casts in action.

Even though the series and I are both dated, the storyline of an innocent man wrongly accused still plays well with me (and with others, as evidenced by the movie).

Janssen's brooding presence throughout is fun to watch. And it's a great chance to watch guest stars like Bruce Dern, Carroll O'Connor, Dianne Ladd, Claude Aikens, Warren Oats and Telly Savalas (with side hair!) in early TV action.

Although there are lighthearted moments built into most episodes to break the tension, in some places the action gets bogged down in expository dialog. This made it difficult to stay focused at times, but for the most part there was a good balance between tension and release.

The noir feel is classic and makes this a timeless piece of entertainment. This is not the Sopranos; the stories are very innocent compared to what we see today. And there are times you will feel you are being hit across the head with the moral of the story. But hey, some people need that.

For that reason I don't think younger (read "not dinosaurs") viewers will be able to appreciate this DVD set very much, unless they are into the history of TV drama.

Not every episode has violent scenes, gunplay is rare, and words are used to resolve most conflicts. This is "G" rated stuff, boys and girls, so if you're looking for bloodshed this isn't the place to find it.

An older audience, more attuned to the subtleties of story telling and understated acting, will enjoy this blast from TV noir's past.

Bottom line – you can pick this DVD up for about 30 bucks, which is a lot of viewing for the money. But unless you're interested in a noir crime drama from a human-interest angle, or in TV history, this is probably not the DVD for you.