

= Better Off Ted =

Better Off Ted is an American satirical situation comedy series , created by Victor Fresco (known for his other television series Andy Richter Controls the Universe and the short @-@ lived show Life on a Stick) , who also served as the show 's executive producer . The series ran on the ABC network from March 18 , 2009 to January 26 , 2010 .

Better Off Ted focuses on the protagonist , Ted Crisp (Jay Harrington) , a single father and the well @-@ respected and beloved head of a research and development department at the fictional , soulless conglomerate of Veridian Dynamics . Ted narrates the series ' events by regularly breaking the fourth wall and directly addressing the audience as the show 's on @-@ camera narrator . Supporting characters include Ted 's supervisor Veronica Palmer (Portia de Rossi) , co @-@ worker and love interest Linda Zwordling (Andrea Anders) , his daughter Rose (Isabella Acres) , and laboratory scientists Phillip Myman (Jonathan Slavin) and Lem Hewitt (Malcolm Barrett) .

The series received critical acclaim , with particular praise going towards its witty and satirical humor . Its second season holds a score of 84 out of 100 on Metacritic . However , despite such positive feedback , the show 's debut only drew in 5 @.@ 64 million viewers and continued to have extremely low ratings . Although many expressed skepticism that it would return , it was renewed for a second season . On May 13 , 2010 , ABC officially canceled the series due to low viewing figures . Two episodes were unaired in the United States , but are available to view on Netflix , Amazon Video on Demand , Xbox Live Marketplace , and iTunes .

= = Conception = =

= = = Origin = = =

Victor Fresco , the show 's creator , has cited his being a new parent as inspiration for the show . In an interview with NPR , he discussed how having a kid piqued his interest to develop a show about the disconnection between a person 's public and personal lives , such as how parents teach their kids to be moral , yet work for giant corporations . According to Fresco , Ted Crisp is the single father and his daughter serves as his moral compass . Fresco stated that since he 's worked for a few giant companies , he didn 't base Veridian Dynamics on any specific corporation . The show 's name was based on the idea that a person is better off if they are Ted , that essentially the average person wants to be Ted . Fresco has stated that he wasn 't a fan of the show 's title , but hadn 't spoken of changing it .

= = = Casting = = =

In casting his crew , Fresco and his team worked fairly quickly . " You don 't have a lot of time to cast , unfortunately , and it 's the most important thing in the show , I think . " says Fresco , " Good casting can transcend mediocre material but the best material in the world cannot transcend the mediocre casting . It 's all about casting and I think we got really lucky in all five of these regulars . "

Fresco approached Jonathan Slavin , with whom he had previously worked on the sitcom Andy Richter Controls the Universe , about playing the role of Phil . Being a fan of Slavin 's work , he thought he 'd be great for the role . Andrea Anders , whom Fresco previously enjoyed on The Class , and Malcolm Barrett were cast for the roles of Linda and Lem respectively . Portia de Rossi met with Fresco about the role of Veronica . Fresco assessed during their meeting that de Rossi was completely convinced that the role was perfect for her and that she was born to play it . He thought de Rossi nailed the role and cast her . When asked what drew her to the role , de Rossi replied , " I 'm really attracted to strong women . " De Rossi further went on to say , " I kind of had to throw myself at [Fresco] . I told him I 'd played this character who had similar qualities , very work driven , strong , insensitive , slightly chilly . I had to convince him I could play this character well and could play a character of this nature . " Jay Harrington was the first person Fresco met with when trying to

cast someone as Ted Crisp . Although Fresco really liked Harrington , he decided to see more people before casting the role . After five weeks , Harrington was cast .

= = = Plot = = =

Better Off Ted revolves around the employees of a stereotypically evil company . The company , Veridian Dynamics , experiments on its employees , twists the truth , and will stop at nothing to achieve its goals . It has been mentioned that Veridian has swayed presidential elections , created killer pandas and robots , weaponized pumpkins , and that there are only three governments left in the world which are more powerful than Veridian . Although not promoted as such , and rarely the focus of storylines , the show 's frequent references to futuristic technologies , killer robots , sentient computers , etc . , places Better Off Ted at least partially in the science fiction genre .

Most of the characters are fully aware of Veridian 's nature , and often try to manipulate the system in order to stop bad things from happening to them (and sometimes to mitigate the evil effects of some of Veridian 's projects) . They are also all susceptible to the potential rewards the company can offer despite the consequences of their actions , such as the company 's attempt to hire Lem 's mother , or the company 's introduction of scented light bulbs with known flaws . Much of the comedy of the show comes from the characters ' navigation of these morally ambiguous areas .

Jay Harrington , who plays Ted Crisp on the show , serves both as a main character and as an on @-@ camera narrator . Throughout the show , he breaks the fourth wall and speaks directly to viewers , offering inside information and observations while the action continues around him . Another plot element involves the use of mock commercials for Veridian Dynamics , thematically related to individual episodes and placed at the end or beginning of actual commercial breaks in all but a couple of episodes .

= = Cast = =

Jay Harrington as Theodore Margaret " Ted " Crisp : Ted is the titular character , and also the show 's narrator . He is the senior vice @-@ president of the Research and Development department at Veridian Dynamics , and is well respected and loved by most of the employees ? and even members of the otherwise difficult upper management . He balances his desire to maintain his position at the company with his feeling that he must demonstrate a moral center to his daughter . He has had sexual relations with his immediate supervisor , although she remains emotionally distant . He also has interest in Linda , who was a new hire to Veridian Dynamics at the launch of the series .

Portia de Rossi as Veronica Palmer : Veronica is Ted 's boss and immediate supervisor at Veridian Dynamics . She maintains a fierce and unapproachable workplace demeanor , and many employees have a deep fear of her . She seems cold and calculating , but it is also clear that she has more than grudging respect for Ted , and often recognizes what moral action is necessary to maintain balance in the workplace . An ongoing subplot touched on sporadically in the first season but more frequently in the second sees Veronica becoming a mentor to Linda and , to a lesser degree , Rose .

Andrea Anders as Linda Katherine Zwordling : Linda is a tester in one of Veridian 's departments . She finds herself very attracted to Ted , but maintains other relationships and reminds Ted repeatedly that he has rejected the idea of a workplace romance with her . She seems to be a bit of an outsider to the corporate culture . Often she demands that Ted consider the horrible ramifications of the company policies or activities . Her relationship with the scientists is strained by her rejection of the weird things they do in the name of science . Despite this , she finds herself increasingly looking at Veronica as a mentor as the series progresses .

Jonathan Slavin as Dr. Philip " Phil " Myman : Phil is one of the laboratory scientists in Veridian 's Research Department . He is usually working or hanging out with Lem , who works with him on almost every project . He generally does whatever he can to be accepted and avoid conflicts . He is married , and makes frequent references to his wife , who seems to hate him . In season 2 's

episode 6 , " Beating a Dead Workforce " , we learn she was a member of Mossad .

Malcolm Barrett as Dr. Lem Hewitt : Lem is one of the laboratory scientists in Veridian 's Research Department . He is best friends with his lab partner Phil , who works with him on almost every project . Lem is just as conflict @-@ averse as Phil , and seems just as willing to roll over and take whatever abuse the company has to offer . He grew up in the shadow of his mother (Khandi Alexander) a renowned scientist .

Isabella Acres as Rose Crisp : Rose is Ted 's preteen daughter . She attends the Veridian Dynamics daycare program when her nanny is not available , but prefers to stay at home . According to Ted , " her mom ran off to Africa to go save the world . " She is often the voice of reason on the show . When Ted talks with her about work she points out the terrible choices the company makes , and often helps Ted focus on what needs to be done to set things straight . She attends Eugene Debs Elementary School .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical response = = =

Critics have praised Better Off Ted 's witty and satirical humour , as well as its cast . According to Metacritic , which assigns a normalized rating out of 100 to reviews from mainstream critics , the show 's first season holds a score of 68 out of 100 , indicating " generally favorable reviews " , based on 21 reviews . Misha Davenport of the Chicago Sun @-@ Times wrote favorably of the show , comparing its characters to those of the highly acclaimed show Arrested Development . Linda Stasi of the New York Post gave the show three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half out of four stars , lauding the cast and simply referring to it as " a very funny comedy " . Ken Tucker of Entertainment Weekly gave the show a B + , stating " ' Better Off Ted ' is certainly the most original sitcom to come along in a while . " Robert Bianco from USA Today referred to the show as " well @-@ cast and reasonably entertaining . "

After returning for a second season , the show became even more acclaimed and is considered by some critics to be a vast improvement on its first . On Metacritic , it holds a score of 84 out of 100 , indicating " universal acclaim " , based on 11 reviews . Linda Stasi of the New York Post gave the show 's second season a perfect score , calling it " hilarious and even funnier this year than last . " Tim Goodman of the San Francisco Chronicle also gave the show 's second season a perfect score , praising the show 's return , saying it " means there 's finally something good (and funny) on Tuesday nights . " Ken Tucker of Entertainment Weekly gave the show 's return an A- , stating " Thank goodness Better Off Ted has returned intact . I love everything about this show , from star Jay Harrington 's delivery of Ted 's straight @-@ man lines with WASP ramrod posture to the show 's up @-@ front critiques of corporate capitalism . "

= = = Ratings = = =

The show 's pilot episode averaged a total of 5 @.@ 64 million viewers , which made it ABC 's lowest @-@ rated comedy debut since 2005 . The show 's first season continued to experience both a drop and mild fluctuation in ratings , taking in only 2 @.@ 41 million for its finale . After being renewed , the show 's second season premiered to a low 3 @.@ 82 million viewers .

= = = Awards and accolades = = =

On TV.com , editorial assistant Anna Hiatt included the show in the website 's list of The Best TV Shows of 2009 . Josh Bell , a writer from About.com , ranked the series second on his list of The Best TV Comedies of 2010 . In 2009 , the show was nominated for an EWwy Award for Best Comedy Series .

= = Cancellation = =

The series was officially canceled by ABC on May 13 , 2010 . In an interview with New York Magazine , Victor Fresco , the show 's creator , was asked why he thought the show didn 't catch on . He responded , " I think not enough people knew about it . It wasn 't like we had a lot of people watch it and they didn 't come back to it . If anything , I think we were building slowly , but to me the way TV works is you spend a lot of money advertising and promoting , or you have to let a show stay some place for a long period of time and an audience slowly comes to it . And I don 't think we got either of that " . Fresco also added , " I still feel there 's an audience out there for it , because I know that the people who liked it , liked it a lot . "

At the time of its cancellation , two episodes of Better Off Ted had yet to be broadcast by ABC . The network announced on May 27 , 2010 that it would air the two episodes back @-@ to @-@ back on June 17 , 2010 , contingent on the 2010 NBA Finals not requiring a seventh game . Ultimately , however , a seventh game was needed , and thus ABC did not air the final two episodes of the series .

= = Episodes = =

= = DVD release = =

It was initially announced that a Blu @-@ ray edition would be released of Season 1 , but this has yet to occur .

= = Music video reunion = =

In mid @-@ 2011 series co @-@ star Malcolm Barrett released his first single , " Revenge of the Nerds " under his alternate performance name , Verbal . The official music video for the song , released in June 2011 , reunited all the major cast members of Better Off Ted , although only Barrett , Slavin and de Rossi reprised their original series characters (Harrington and Anders appear as a high school jock and a cheerleader , respectively , while series creator Victor Fresco also appears in the video) . Barrett 's recording is also included on the soundtrack of the final episode of Better Off Ted , " Swag the Dog . "