

= Love , Inc . ( TV series ) =

Love , Inc. is an American television sitcom , created by Andrew Secunda , which originally aired on United Paramount Network ( UPN ) from September 22 , 2005 to May 11 , 2006 , lasting one season . With an ensemble cast led by Busy Philipps , Vince Vieluf , Reagan Gomez @-@ Preston , Ion Overman , and Holly Robinson Peete , the show revolves around five matchmakers working in a dating agency . The series was produced by Chase TV , the Littlefield Company , Burg / Koules Television , and Paramount Television , and distributed by UPN in its original run and later by LivingTV and Nelonen in the United Kingdom and Sweden respectively . The executive producers were Adam Chase , Warren Littlefield , Mark Burg , and Oren Koules .

Originally developed under the working title Wingwoman , Love , Inc. was intended to be a vehicle for Shannen Doherty . It would have marked her first role in a sitcom . Though picked up by UPN , Doherty was removed from the project at the request of the network due to her poor reception by preview audiences ; Doherty was replaced by Philipps . It was set in New York , but the filming took place at Paramount Studios in Hollywood , Los Angeles and California . UPN heavily promoted the show to attract an " urban " audience , and to that end , paired it with Everybody Hates Chris and included contemporary hip hop music .

The series suffered low viewership despite its high ratings among young Hispanic women ; it was cancelled following UPN 's merger with the WB to launch the CW in 2006 . The cancellation of the series , along with that of other black sitcoms , was criticized by media outlets for reducing representation of African American characters and roles for African American actors on television . Critical response to Love , Inc. was mixed : some critics praised its multiethnic cast , while other cited the storylines and characters as unoriginal and Philipps ' portrayal of her character as unsympathetic . It was never made available on Blu @-@ ray or DVD .

= = Premise = =

Set in New York City , the dating agency Love , Inc. features a staff of single friends desperately looking for love . Newly divorced Clea Lavoy , the creator and owner of the company , seeks out the help of her friend and employee Denise Johnson to reignite her romantic life . She continually struggles to find love despite Denise 's best attempts . The future of the agency is put into jeopardy considering that its success and advertising relied on Clea 's " successful " , nearly decade @-@ long marriage . Love , Inc. also includes the receptionist Viviana , the style expert Francine , and the technician and photographer Barry .

Episodes typically depict the inner workings of the agency , such as their first experience with a lesbian client , a consultation with a former priest , and marketing strategies to appeal to geeks and agoraphobes . Hired as wingmen for their clients , the employees act as " guardian angels for the conversationally challenged " . Each of the five characters have various comedic and romantic adventures outside the agency , like Viviana 's search for an eligible United States citizen to marry in order to secure a green card and Denise 's inability to find true love despite her talent in matching her clients with their " seemingly unattainable soulmates " .

= = Characters = =

The series features five main characters throughout its run :

Busy Philipps as Denise Johnson , a dating consultant and self @-@ described expert at matchmaking , who provides her clients with " come @-@ on lines to use and avoid ; wardrobe and grooming hints , and conversation starters and stoppers " . Despite being characterized as " the Kung Fu master at setting up freaks , " she struggles with finding her own true love . After being contacted by her ex @-@ boyfriend to find the perfect match , she becomes cynical about dating and love , saying " I ? ve been Wing Womaning my butt off " . Philipps described the character 's love life as a " complete disaster " .

Vince Vieluf as Barry , Denise 's roommate and co @-@ worker who serves as the agency 's

technician and photographer . Described as an " idiot savant " , he is characterized as a conspiracy theorist who experiences paranoia about everything from dentists to toothpaste companies . He frequently communicates through " head @-@ scratching non sequiturs " , leading to the characters perceiving him as " operat [ ing ] on a whole other level ... and sometimes on a whole other planet " . Vieluf said the character was pitched as " the only guy on the show " and " the luckiest guy in the world " .

Reagan Gomez @-@ Preston as Francine , the agency style expert who encourages her clients to use and trust their fashion as a way to find a partner . She is introduced as criticizing Clea 's outfit as belonging to a coach for a women 's basketball team and is characterized as the hip worker at the agency . Francine 's storylines were not fully developed and " remain [ ed ] a bit of a mystery " by the end of the show . According to Vieluf , Francine communicates through a " whole different language " and has a special bond with Barry due to their different approaches to life .

Ion Overman as Viviana , an Argentinian receptionist who " solicits personal information in a rather startling way " . She is constantly searching for an eligible American citizen to marry in order to secure a green card . Her heavy accent is written as a source of humor on the show , which led to critics accusing the writers of reducing the character to an ethnic stereotype .

Holly Robinson Peete as Clea Lavoy , the founder and owner of the Love , Inc. dating agency . Clea is " thrust into the dating world " following the end of her nearly decade @-@ long marriage , in which her husband has an affair with a younger woman .

= = Production = =

Love , Inc. was developed under the working title Wing Woman and promoted as a " new ' Hitch ' -esque comedy " . The show 's concept was based on an article from The New York Times that discussed dating services . Production was handled by Chase TV , the Littlefield Company , Burg / Koules Television , and Paramount Television . The Littlefield Company suggested that the show 's creator Andrew Secunda collaborate with executive producer Adam Chase , who had previously worked on Friends . The series was Secunda 's first experience creating a television sitcom . Marta Kauffman , Liz Tuccillo , and Mark Burg and Oren Koules also contributed to the series as executive producers . On April 12 , 2005 , UPN announced that Doherty was in talks for the lead role while Reagan Gomez @-@ Preston was being considered for the role of the lead character 's " longtime friend , co @-@ worker and roommate " and Ion Overman for an unspecified part . Overman said she was attracted to part since she was searching for a job and viewed the series as a " very cool concept " . On April 18 , Holly Robinson Peete was confirmed to have joined the cast as the boss to Doherty 's character .

The series was originally designed as a star vehicle for Doherty , who portrayed Denise Johnson in the unaired pilot . Denise was Doherty 's first role in a television sitcom . Doherty said she immediately loved the script for the pilot , which she described as " hysterical , " but felt intimidated by the role given her inexperience with comedy . The series was initially marketed as featuring Doherty and Peete , before United Paramount Network ( UPN ) announced it would pick it up on the condition Doherty was removed and the character was recast . According to TV Guide , Doherty was poorly received by preview audiences . When queried by an interviewer about the removal of Doherty from the show , executive producer Warren Littlefield said the actress was " fabulous " in the role . According to Littlefield , Doherty actively wanted to change her negative reputation from leaving Beverly Hills , 90210 and Charmed through acting on the show . Peete praised Doherty 's performance on the show , saying " we had so much fun and such a great vibe " . UPN Entertainment president cited the rationale behind Doherty 's departure through the " standard going @-@ in @-@ a @-@ different @-@ direction reason " . Rachel Cericola of TV Fodder listed Love , Inc. as one the " four promising sitcoms for the upcoming TV season " due to the behind the scenes drama involving Doherty 's replacement .

UPN announced that Busy Philipps was cast as Denise on July 25 , and later billed as the show 's star . According to Vince Vieluf , the casting change from Doherty to Philipps led to the series being retooled as an ensemble show featuring all the members of the agency rather than focusing on

Denise . Vieluf said the alterations in the series ' premise were due to concerns that " people would get tired of a show that was only about the mishaps of one person ' s love life " . Page Kennedy reported that he was considered for a part on the show , but rejected it for the role of Caleb Applewhite on the second season of the ABC drama Desperate Housewives . Retired Los Angeles Lakers player Rick Fox guest starred in three episodes as David , one of Clea ' s love interests . The casting of racially diverse actors was identified with UPN ' s position as " the only network to actively program for an African American audience " . Tim Good of the San Francisco Chronicle pointed to the show ' s casting as the only way in which it acts as a " positive reference " . Even though the show was set in New York City , filming took place in the Bluhdorn Building at Paramount Studios in Hollywood , Los Angeles , California , and used the multiple @-@ camera format . Transitions between scenes feature images of New York City set to contemporary music , such as The Black Eyed Peas ' single " Don ' t Phunk with My Heart " and Kelis ' single " Milkshake " . Todd R. Ramlow of PopMatters described the music as a further attempt to appeal to " an ' urban , ' black @-@ white audience , " and praised the musical choices as a " nice try at crossover for a network whose shows usually target a black demographic " . Aaron Korsh wrote the nineteenth episode as freelance work .

= = Episodes = =

The title for each episode references a popular sitcom .

= = Reception = =

= = = Broadcast history = = =

On August 6 , 2005 , UPN officially ordered the series for thirteen episodes . The network later ordered a full season of twenty @-@ two episodes of the show on November 7 , 2005 amid speculation that it would be cancelled . In 2006 , LivingTV broadcast the series in the United Kingdom , and it was broadcast by Nelonen in Sweden in 2008 . UPN paired the series with Everybody Hates Chris , Eve , and Cuts in order to attract an " urban " audience . The network moved WWE SmackDown to Fridays in favor of scheduling Thursdays as focused on sitcoms . This decision was made to establish a " night of scripted programming " and draw more attention from film studios to purchase advertising space for their upcoming releases . Critics questioned the network ' s belief that Love , Inc. and Everybody Hates Chris would appeal to the same viewership , and noted the difference in quality between the two , with Love , Inc. frequently cited as the inferior show . While the series initially retained 59 % of the audience from Everybody Hates Chris , the marketing strategy proved unsuccessful when it lost a majority of the viewership in later episodes .

Cericola reported that Love , Inc. earned an average of 3 @.@ 6 million viewers per episode and an article in The Hollywood Reporter stated that the series garnered an average of 1 @.@ 0 / 3 Nielsen rating / share in the 18 ? 49 demographic . It ranked 141st among broadcast television networks in the 2005 @-@ 2006 television season . According to the Nielsen Company , the show achieved high ratings among " Latina adolescents Ages 12 @-@ 17 " and earned 3 @.@ 4 million viewers in that demographic for 2005 . It ranked above two other UPN sitcoms : One on One and Half & Half for Latin women in the 12 @-@ 17 age demographic , and in " the top half of all UPN series " for total viewership . The series premiere saw a 6 % increase in the 18 ? 49 age range , 53 % in women between 18 and 34 , and 118 % in women between 18 and 49 from the show that aired in the same time period during the last television season .

The show , as well as a majority of UPN ' s programs , were officially cancelled due to the network ' s merger with the WB Television Network ( the WB ) to form the CW in 2006 . Fern Gillespie of The Crisis was critical of UPN ' s decision to cancel the series given how the network " in one swoop , wiped out five of its eight African American comedies " for the creation of the CW . Gillespie expressed disappointment at the lack of African American sitcoms on the three major networks by

saying : " Without that opportunity for some of the younger artists to hone and develop their skills , it will potentially have a generational impact . " Critic Tim Goodman identified Love , Inc. as one of six shows " geared for an African American audience " and featuring " an African American lead actress " that were cancelled during the merger . He equated these cancellations as a sign of networks " eliminat [ ing ] niche programming " . The series was never made available on Blu @-@ ray or DVD .

= = = Critical response = = =

Love , Inc. received mixed critical feedback . Ebony 's Zondra Hughes praised the show as one of the shows " the networks promise will keep you spellbound " and identified Peete and Overman as its primary " star appeal " . While reviewing its broadcast on LivingTV , a reviewer from Daily Record listed the show as its " pick of the day " and suggested it for viewers who would " fancy a giggle " . Diane Werts of Newsday found the characters to be " vibrantly well @-@ defined " and the writing " smart , with a light touch " . Peete received a nomination for the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Actress in a Comedy Series in the 37th NAACP Image Awards , but lost to Tichina Arnold who starred in Everybody Hates Chris .

The Futon Critic 's Brian Ford Sullivan praised Vieluf as the standout despite his limited role , but felt the execution of the matchmaking premise was inferior to that done in the 2005 film Hitch . Variety 's Laura Fries wrote that the series had " a quirky vibe , personable cast and snappy writing , " but likened it to the " proverbial old maid " by determining that the storylines and characters required more original material . Jon Bonné and Gael Fashingbauer Cooper of Today commended the series for its multiethnic cast , but wrote that it " struggles to salvage some screechingly bad jokes " . Bonné and Cooper called the show one of the network 's " most vulnerable properties " following the reports of UPN 's closure .

Metacritic , which uses a weighted average , assigned a score of 28 out of 100 based on 17 reviews , indicating " generally unfavorable reviews " . Virginia Heffernan of The New York Times criticized the writing for being " unsparkly and sometimes labored " and relying too much on sitcom conventions . Paul Brownfield of the Los Angeles Times criticized the series for being " unintentionally unfunny " , comparing it to the fictional sitcom " Rom and Bored " featured in the HBO comedy @-@ drama The Comeback . The Sun @-@ Sentinel 's Tom Jicha wrote that Love , Inc. was a " lethal combination of a stupid show and a suicidal time slot " . The Chicago Tribune 's Maureen Ryan called the series a " grating comedy " that is " destined to be a footnote in history as the show that premiered after ' Everybody Hates Chris , ' and most likely faded shortly thereafter " . Miami Herald 's Glenn Garvin summarized the show as " humdrum " , and Doug Elfman of the Chicago Sun @-@ Times dismissed it as " negligible " . Mike Duffy of the Detroit Free Press found the series to be a " trite little laugh @-@ track factory " . Common Sense Media 's Jill Murphy called the show an " unoriginal look at finding love " filled with " stereotypical clients " , and Karla Peterson of The San Diego Union @-@ Tribune criticized it for being " neither funny nor particularly youthful " .

Critics negatively responded to the character of Denise and Philipps ' performance , and cited both as annoying and unsympathetic . Heffernan described Denise as having a " smug fix @-@ it type " personality similar to Cher Horowitz from the 1995 film Clueless without the charm or charisma . USA Today 's Robert Bianco gave the series a half of a point out of four and called it on the " worst and laziest " comedies of 2005 . Bianco was critical of Philipps ' performance , which was described as " constant motion ; her face contorting , body twitching , voice braying " and transforming the show into something " truly unbearable " . Orlando Sentinel 's Hal Boedeker felt that Phillip 's character was an " overbearing know @-@ it @-@ all " . Matthew Gilbert of The Boston Globe called the show a " one @-@ joke affair " and wrote the premise behind Denise had the " same irony that failed to make Alicia Silverstone 's Miss Match very interesting " . The Pittsburgh Post @-@ Gazette 's Rob Owen favored Doherty 's portrayal of the character , which he described as " brimming with self @-@ confidence , " and criticized Philipps ' Denise as a " dizzyingly neurotic nutcase " . Ramlow called the series " boringly un @-@ hip " and wrote that the women were "

needy and desperate " and " one @-@ shtick ponies " in comparison to those from Sex and the City .