

'We fought before every scene in which we had a fight'

Phase of the 'Moon'



Bruce Willis and Cybill Shepherd's tumultuous relationship on- and off-screen made "Moonlighting" memorable.

By MICHAEL GILTZ

TWENTY years after it debuted, "Moonlighting" is still a constant presence for stars Cybill Shepherd and Bruce Willis and show creator Glenn Gordon Caron.

Shepherd and Willis, who shot to fame on "Moonlighting," famously had their ups and downs — with their own lives and with each other — during the show's storied run.

The third season of "Moonlighting," which some consider the show's best — and a season fraught with interruptions, delays and agita on the part of ABC execs — is being released Tuesday on DVD (Lion's Gate).

"I think we'd be fine working together," Shepherd says. "People sure want Bruce and I to work together again. They want the 'Moonlighting' reunion, obvi-

ously, but Glenn doesn't know how to do it.

"He feels like we shouldn't revisit it because we did it so well. Just leave it in the past," Shepherd says.

Tuesday's DVD release reminds everyone of one of the most tumultuous, nerve-racking, controversial and exciting seasons for any show in TV history.

"I do have a diary that I kept," says Shepherd. "I dictated it into a cassette recorder. And I wouldn't want that published."

Everyone knows about the on-set fighting, the delayed scripts, the weeks between original episodes and the prints — delivered to ABC so late the nights they aired, the network saw the new episodes the same time as America.

And, in the midst of it all, Shepherd gave birth to twins.

"Oh, how in the world did I do that?" laughs Shepherd, just back from Sundance with her new movie "Open Window." "I really don't know how."

The show only produced 15 episodes in that third season, thanks to that pregnancy, a skiing accident with Willis and the lengthy delays as Caron crafted scripts. But the results were legendary.

One episode began with a Movietone newsreel story about the lack of episodes. Another episode — a stop-gap clip job — featured gossip queen Rona Barrett on the set talking with cast members about their squabbles.

And then there's Maddie getting married to a dweeb she barely knew, Dave and Maddie finally sleeping together and perhaps the most famous "Moonlighting" episode of all: "Atomic Shakespeare," their re-telling of

"The Taming of the Shrew."

The fights ("I once threw a director's chair against a wall," admits Shepherd) didn't get in the way. In some ways, they helped.

"When we met, Bruce and I had this great sexual chemistry and also the idea of sending each other up," says Shepherd.

"We would see the absolute worst in each other as characters, as David and Maddie. We fought before every scene in which we had a fight.

"At some point, I realized it and mentioned it to Bruce and he said, 'Yeah, you're right.' That didn't change it."

The twins Cybill gave birth to played a big role, too.

"When we did the interviews and commentary for the DVDs, Bruce thanked me profusely for getting pregnant because it made it possible for him to do 'Die Hard.'"