



Partner Marisol Nichols reluctantly believes in Ron Eldard's abilities.

## 'Blind Justice'

A credible argument can be made that Steven Bochco, of "Hill Street Blues" and "NYPD Blue" fame, is the greatest creator of TV police drama ever. He filled those series with vivid, flawed characters and made their sorrows and successes almost Shakespearean. So what are we to make, then, of his newest cop drama, "Blind Justice," which by comparison seems so conventional? Perhaps, having raised the bar so high, the temptation is too great to merely stroll beneath it.

"Blind Justice," which Bochco created with scripters Matt Olmstead and Nicholas Wootton, is about a detective, Jim Dunbar (Ron Eldard), who lost his sight when, in the midst of a shootout, his partner suddenly lost his nerve. Rather than retire on a full pension, Dunbar is determined to prove he can be just as effective — maybe even more effective — as he was before. Although the other detectives in the squad room salute his heroism, they are convinced he is now as useful as a shot glass at an AA meeting and maybe just as dangerous.

Before the fateful shootout, Dunbar's wife, Christie (Rena Sofer), discovered he was having an extramarital affair. She didn't ditch him, partly because

of his plight, but she isn't over it either. That leaves Dunbar feeling guilty and insecure, a situation he complicates by using the sanctuary of their home to vent his frustrations.

"NYPD Blue" presented its central character, Andy Sipowicz, as basically a good man whose flaws nearly had destroyed his life and his career. Bit by bit, year by year, he underwent painful transformations that ultimately allowed him to triumph over his demons. Here, it's almost the opposite. When we meet Dunbar, he already is transformed. On the job, he is the epitome of patience, composure, determination and forbearance. Home life still is prickly, but even there we see signs of hopefulness.

In terms of drama, this translates into scene after scene in which fellow detectives and civilians tell Dunbar he is incapable of doing his job and scene

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BY  
BARRY  
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airdate  
10-11 p.m.  
Tuesday, March 8  
ABC

### the bottom line

A too-perfect hero is the focus of a workable, but unspectacular, cop drama.

### BLIND JUSTICE

ABC

Steven Bochco Prods. in association with Paramount Network Television

**Credits:** Executive producers: Steven Bochco, Bill Clark, Matt Olmstead, Nicholas Wootton; Producers: Jeffrey Downer, Dayna Bochco; Co-producer: Jeremy Belin; Creators: Steven Bochco, Matt Olmstead, Nicholas Wootton; Director: Gary Fleder; Teleplay: Nicholas Wootton, Matt Olmstead; Story: Steven Bochco, Nicholas Wootton, Matt Olmstead; Director of photography: Kramer Morgenthau; Production designer: Paul Eads; Editors: Jonathan Shaw, Farel Jane Levy, Conrad Gonzalez; Music: Mike Post; Set decorator: Mary Ann Biddle; Art director: Mindy Roffman; Casting: Julie Lowry Johnson, Scott Gorkinger. **Cast:** Jim Dunbar: Ron Eldard; Karen Dettanourt: Marisol Nichols; Christie Dunbar: Rena Sofer; Tom Selway: Reno Wilson; Marty Russo: Frank Grillo; Lt. Fisk: Michael Gaston.