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## TV review: Gay detective in 'Ice Blues'

David Wiegand, Chronicle Staff Writer  
Friday, September 5, 2008

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**Ice Blues:** A Donald Strachey Mystery. Starring Chad Allen, Sebastian Spence and Sherry Miller. Here digital cable-on-demand channel, available today.

### IMAGES



Courtesy of the Here! Network

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"Ice Blues," the fourth installment of the Donald Strachey mystery films on the gay-themed on-demand channel, Here, really pushes the envelope of standard TV movies about private detectives. Oh, there's that thing about Strachey being very out and happily partnered, but what's really shocking is that the series is set in Albany, N.Y.

OMG, are TV audiences really ready for upstate New York?

Strachey, played by former child actor Chad Allen, is a not terribly successful PI whose partner is Tim Callahan (Sebastian Spence), a staff member for the New York state Senate. Tim is a bit of a fussy budget but completely devoted to his gumshoe husband. (You might find yourself wondering just how much legislative aides make in the Empire State when you get a load of the house Don and Tim live in.)

This time, Strachey's client is actually Tim himself, who receives an anonymous \$3 million donation to a shelter for at-risk kids from a young man who is later found murdered. When the victim turns out to be a member of a family of extremely powerful attorneys, Strachey suspects that the more recent murder may be linked to the unsolved killing of the young man's father 12 years ago. The suspect in the earlier case happens to be the widow of the first victim and the mother of the more recent victim.

Director Ron Oliver keeps Ron McGee's script moving at a fast clip, which almost prevents us from pausing long enough to realize that the plot isn't entirely realistic. But the performances do hold our interest, particularly those of Allen and Spence in the central roles and guest star Sherry Miller as the possibly murderous widow.

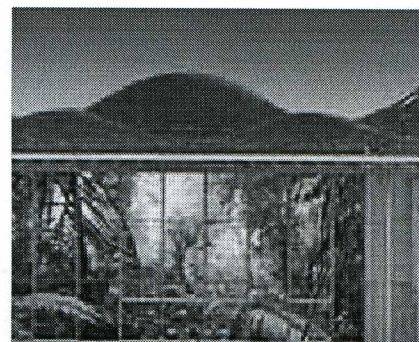
It's very cool that Strachey and Callahan have such a secure and unapologetically open relationship. I'm not sure that absolutely no one they encounter would have even the slightest problem with that, but one can hope.

Allen is the series' best asset. He has an easygoing acting style that makes his character appealing, the kind of guy you'd like to have living next door, if it weren't for those pesky home invasions by the thugs who are trying to get the \$3 million back. He's also a good-looking guy without looking like a Ken doll with Botox.

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