

FALL
PREVIEW
2013

THE

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TELEVISION

This fall, CBS promises viewers more laughs than “Look out!” in a comedy-heavy lineup seasoned with a dash of drama

For years, CBS has attracted millions of thrill-seeking viewers with top-rated dramas about fascinating forensics experts (*CSI*), the most daring detectives (*Elementary*) and the noblest of naval officers (*NCIS*). Like the yin to its own yang, the network also offers a healthy dose of laughter, earning the No. 1 title with sitcom megahits such as *The Big Bang Theory*, *How I Met Your Mother* and *Two and a Half Men*.

When it came time to debut the new fall season, many in the industry predicted that CBS would lean on dramas with a sprinkling of comedies. Few thought a network with four of the top five comedies in the country might be willing to rest on its laurels. Not so ...

This fall, CBS adds four *more* comedies: *Mom*, *The Millers*, *The Crazy Ones* (Robin Williams returns to TV!)

and *We Are Men*, which CBS Entertainment President Nina Tassler says “will keep us going not just this fall, but going forward.”

And the one new drama set to premiere this fall, nail-biting *Hostages*, looks to follow the successful lead of its dramatic siblings in ratings, if not scheduling: Slated to run for 15 straight episodes like a cable network series, *Hostages* is determined to keep its viewers captive, too.

It’s a change that already has audiences abuzz. As Tassler teases, “With a schedule this solid and strong, shows have to earn their right to stay there. So no one takes anything for granted, and every one of our returning shows—as well as our new ones—has some amazing surprises in store.”

So get ready to LOL or OMG. This season promises to keep us all on our toes. — *Jim Colucci*



HOSTAGES

Hostages, with stars Dylan McDermott and Toni Collette, airs Mondays at 10 p.m. ET/PT on CBS.

22-episode business, because our fans don't want fewer of their favorite shows—they want more." But Tassler and her team were soon won over by the *Hostages* producers' detailed plans for a nail-biting first season, which she describes as "15 really terrific episodes, jampacked with big events and plot twists."

The twists were what lured actors like Collette, who remembers that "when I read the pilot script ... I loved that I didn't know what was happening—although I thought I did. It really was a page turner, and I couldn't put it down." Collette is joined by Tate Donovan as Ellen's

less successful (and less-than-faithful) husband, Brian; Dylan McDermott as Duncan Carlisle, the fed-turned-conspirator/kidnapper; and James Naughton as the president targeted for assassination.

But both *Hostages*' producer and leading lady warn not to blindly accept these simplified descriptions of the show's characters. "The show is a conspiracy thriller—and as such, all is not what it seems," Aranya teases.

"People keep asking Dylan, 'How is it to play the bad guy?'" Collette adds. "But he may not be entirely bad. All of these characters have their reasons for doing what they do. And those reasons will slowly be revealed."

Political intrigue? Check. Personal drama? Yep. Brilliant blond heroine? Bingo. But no, we're not talking about *Homeland*. While CBS' new drama *Hostages* sounds a lot like Showtime's smash hit—it even shares an Israeli origin and similarly thrilling action scenes—this groundbreaking show is sure to take no prisoners.

Based on a previously unproduced script out of Tel Aviv, *Hostages* stars Toni Collette as Ellen Sanders, a Washington, D.C., surgeon whose family is taken captive by a team of rogue FBI agents on the eve of her operation on the president. Commanded to kill her political patient, Sanders is tested in her resolve as a medical professional, as a wife and mother, and as a patriotic citizen. The scope of the story, says producer Alon Aranya, who teamed with writer Jeffrey Nachmanoff to tailor the original script for an American audience, reaches beyond that of the typical television drama. The intricately plotted, surprise-rigged *Hostages* "will be like a feature film designed for TV."

In another notable twist, the series will run for 15 straight episodes with few repeats or interruptions before ceding its time slot in early 2014 to another hotly anticipated drama. (*Intelligence*, which stars *Lost*'s Josh Holloway as a government intelligence operative whose brain has been implanted with a supercomputer microchip, and *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*'s Marg Helgenberger as his agency boss, is scheduled to debut in February.) Such shorter seasons have long been the norm on cable, but as CBS Entertainment President Nina Tassler explains, this is a first for CBS. "We're normally in the

THE CRAZY ONES

Here's to the crazy ones," Richard Dreyfuss narrated in Apple's "Think Different" ad, which won critical raves as well as the 1998 Emmy for best commercial. The spot and subsequent campaign were dreamed up by ad agency TBWA/Chiat/Day, known as much for being creative and innovative as for its many famous clients.

Despite their many achievements, however, we all know that creative people can be a little wacky. Now, CBS brings us *The Crazy Ones*, a sitcom with

The Crazy Ones, starring Robin Williams, airs Thursdays at 9 p.m. ET/PT on CBS.

HOSTAGES: NINO MUÑOZ/CBS

a cunning conceit and all-star cast that's poised to bring the advertising profession's supercharged energy to the genre of half-hour comedy.

The brainchild of John Montgomery, the executive creative director of Chicago-based ad agency Leo Burnett, and nurtured by executive producer David E. Kelley, *The Crazy Ones* snagged Oscar winner Robin Williams for his long-awaited return to series television. Williams' hyperkinetic character, Simon Roberts, is "an idea guy who's been on everything but skates," says the 62-year-old comedy icon. "I watched a documentary about ad guys, and a lot of them live on the edge. Their whole job is to think outside the envelope, and at the same time get an idea down to the simplest, purest image, to fight for your consciousness.

"And," Williams adds, "they can be kind of crazy." That's where Simon's daughter Sydney, his partner at their joint small agency, comes in. After seasons of slaying vampires as Buffy, Sarah Michelle Gellar says she was happy to become the organized, ambitious and type-A Sydney, whose task of wrangling her unfocused father, while finding her own place in the industry he dominates, may be just as exhausting. "To me, some of the greatest parts of [*Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*] were the funny moments," Gellar explains of stepping into this lighter role. "And I got to a point where I thought, 'I've cried a lot. I'm ready to be funny.'"

WILLIAMS: JASON BELL/CBS; MILLERS: MICHAEL YARISH/CBS

Helping to make that happen is Bill D'Elia, himself a longtime ad man-turned-TV writer, and now one of *The Crazy Ones*' executive producers. The inspiration for the pilot, he explains, "was this idea to have fun with how we create advertising. Not to denigrate the products, but the process, and [as ad execs] ourselves." With a pitch like that, it's easy to see why real-life clients are clamoring to come on board; McDonald's is featured in the pilot, and D'Elia expects to include two or three more real brands among the fictitious ones on Roberts & Roberts' roster.

Williams attributes the show's quality to its writers and advisors, many of whom are "real ad agency execs, who tell us stories that are just insane." Williams and Gellar might be able to contribute some stories of their own, too: Williams recently shilled for Snickers, and Gellar has done more than 100 commercials—including, at age 7, a spot for cake mix, directed by D'Elia. It goes to prove, she adds, that it's just all one, small *crazy* world.



The Millers—with stars Margo Martindale, Will Arnett and Beau Bridges—airs Thursdays at 8:30 p.m. ET/PT on CBS.



THE MILLERS

When Greg Garcia co-created *Yes, Dear* in 2000, he drew upon his life as a happily married husband and father. But with his latest creation, he reimagines his life going a whole different route: no kids, no more marriage and—gulp—an unexpected new roommate: "I wondered, 'What would happen if I didn't have children, and was divorced, and if my parents got divorced and had to live with me and my sister?'"

The hilarious result of such musings is *The Millers*, starring Will Arnett as Nathan, a recently divorced roving news reporter looking forward to the single life. What he's not looking forward to is revealing his change in marital status to his visiting parents, controlling Carol (Margo Martindale) and absent-minded Tom (Beau Bridges).

Rather than being shocked, however, Tom is inspired to leave Carol, who ends up rooming with Nathan while Tom moves in with Nathan's sister, Debbie (Jayma Mays). Thus begins a fraught, funny new living situation that threatens to cramp Nathan's just-achieved single-guy style.

"This is a fictional version of my family," says Garcia, who is still married, as are his parents. "But my parents are exactly like these two—they'll kill me for saying that, but they are. They love each other, but give each other grief."

Garcia has become an expert in nontraditional family dynamics, from the oddball Hickey brothers in *My Name Is Earl* to the financially challenged clan at the center of *Raising Hope*. With *The Millers*, the writer says he wanted to preserve that flavor of comedic dysfunction, while creating a more traditional type of comedy, complete with audience laughter. "And to get that classic feel, of an *Everybody Loves Raymond* or an *All in the Family*," he explains, "you've got to get a great cast."

So Garcia recruited Arnett, and immediately thought of J.B. Smoove to play Ray, Nathan's co-worker and cameraman. Martindale, who won an Emmy for her villainous role on *Justified* and more recently appeared in the dramas *The Americans* and Showtime's upcoming *Masters of Sex*, here "does a comedy star turn that is pretty remarkable," marvels CBS President Nina Tassler. And the actress is happy for the change of pace. With *The Millers*, "this is a joy I haven't gotten to experience in a while," Martindale says. "I'm exercising an old muscle, and it's coming back."

When it came to casting Tom, Garcia reached out to Bridges, who had played the senior Mr. Hickey on *Earl* and was happy to work again with that show's mastermind. As Bridges prepared for *The Millers*, "I asked my wife at breakfast, 'How would you describe this show?'" the actor says. "And she said, 'It's just a typical American family.' Because we all have challenges. But underneath it all, there is a caring and a love in this show, and that comes from Greg Garcia. He always writes comedy with a heart."



MOM

Mom, starring Allison Janney and Anna Faris, airs Mondays at 9:30 p.m. ET/PT on CBS.

As the executive producer of a trio of today's top comedies, Chuck Lorre might want to take some advice from his *Big Bang Theory* character Sheldon: Look into cloning. Because this fall, after already bringing forth the *Big Bang*, plus *Two and a Half Men* and *Mike & Molly*, this man in demand is bringing his fourth sitcom to CBS.

Co-created by Lorre and *Men* writers Eddie Gorodetsky and Gemma Baker, *Mom* is the story of Christy (Anna Faris), a 30-something waitress at a posh Napa Valley restaurant who struggles not only with the challenges of being a single mom to a rebellious teenage daughter and a young son, but also with addiction. Christy's new sobriety will continually be tested now that her man-hungry mother, Bonnie (Allison Janney), herself a (barely) recovering alcoholic, has reappeared in her life, armed with passive-aggressive insights and questionable advice.

"I've always wanted to tell the story about somebody trying to reclaim his or her life after destroying it, repairing the damage of perhaps a poorly thought-out lifestyle," Lorre says of his latest inspiration. With *Mom*, "we get to see the second act of Christy's life. I think the idea of a second chance is a very American theme."

After building a successful career on the big screen, Faris chose *Mom* as her first TV project, similarly moved by the show's complex dynamic and message. "On film, I've played a lot of very simple characters, so now it's fun to play someone like Christy, who's so complicated," explains the 36-year-old actress and real-life mom to year-old son Jack with her husband, actor Chris Pratt. "Christy is flawed, but trying to be

better. She has the best of intentions, but doesn't always know the right way to get there. I think we all have issues like that to some degree, whether it's from not yet achieving your life goal, or not being sober, or having financial struggles. I think that's why from page one as I read this script, it felt like Cinderella's shoe. I realized, 'Wow, this is me!'

After winning four Emmys during her stint on *The West Wing*, Faris' co-star Janney is already TV royalty, and was equally eager to become America's new favorite mom. "The best comedies deal with the reality of recognizable situations without always trying too hard to be 'funny,'" Janney says. "With *Mom*, everybody will be able to recognize the truths behind this very frustrating relationship."



We Are Men stars Kal Penn, Tony Shalhoub, Chris Smith and Jerry O'Connell, and airs Mondays at 8:30 p.m. ET/PT on CBS.

WE ARE MEN

B

ecause *We Are Men* focuses on four recently single guys who share questionable counsel around their apartment complex's pool, we asked the four stars of Monday's new comedy to summarize their show using just four words.

"*We are divorced men*," says Jerry O'Connell, jumping in proactively much like his character, Stuart, the Speedo-sporting Ob-Gyn suffering through his second contentious nuptial breakup.

"*Bad at committed relationships*," adds Tony Shalhoub, whose Frank is a garmento and four-time groom who now lives happily between girlfriends, vowing never to marry again.

"*Good guys, bad ideas*," says Chris Smith, who plays naive Carter, the youngest and most recent addition to this cynical group, after he was dumped at the altar midceremony.

"*Friendship, love, mistakes, ridiculousness*," finishes Kal Penn, whose character, Gil, harbors hopes of reconciling with his ex-wife after he was caught having the world's least satisfying affair.

"I was basically a little bit of all four of these guys," remembers *We Are Men*'s creator Rob Greenberg, who was a new divorcee himself five years ago. After years as a producer of another marital-status-teasing comedy hit, *How I Met Your Mother*, Greenberg was inspired to write about his new phase of life after noting that "everybody handles divorce in different ways. Some people are wounded, while others attack. Some never want to get in another

relationship, and others jump back in. Some are philosophical, some blame their exes. I realized divorce is a ripe area [for comedy] because of how people react to it."

In *We Are Men*, the guys bond over the mutual failures of their relationships. "While divorce is a negative situation, I think [*Men*] takes a positive spin on it, and says that there is life after divorce," O'Connell explains. "And that with the help and support of friends, you can get through what is an awful time."

"These are guys who, a lot like your friends, make mistakes and do ridiculous things, but at the end of the day they're there for each other," says Penn. "I thought it was a nice way of depicting friendship, and it's also pretty real."

TV has brought us such strong four-way friendships before, in shows like *The Golden Girls* and *Designing Women*. But never before have we seen the male version, a show depicting what four such disparate men are truly like, and how they relate to each other, when no women are around. As Greenberg theorizes, "There's a particular feeling to being alone with your guy friends. You can be more uncensored." That's why, he says, these four *Men* are ready to join the girls and women among the ranks of classic TV comedies. "I think *Sex and the City* is a good model for this show, too, but in reverse," Greenberg explains. "That show was about four characters' love lives, work lives and family lives—but ultimately, it was about their friendship when they came together as a foursome." **U**