

Mid-Year Report – The 12 Best TV Series of 2023 (so far)

By Steve Sternberg



Ten years ago, I struggled to come up with a list of a dozen great television series in a single season. At the end of this year, my list of best shows will have more than twice that – and I will struggle to decide which shows make the cut. During the past 3-5 years, as all the major media companies tried to compete with Netflix, they spent enormous sums of money on original content. Drawing new subscribers to their streaming platforms was initially more important to them (and Wall Street) than making an actual profit from streaming. As a result, there are more high-quality television series on more different platforms than ever before.

It's hard to believe it's been just 10 years since Netflix had the first streaming hit with *House of Cards*. Around the same time, Amazon Prime Video and Hulu released their first original scripted programs – Prime Video's first major success came in 2015 with *Bosch*, while Hulu's first signature hit came in 2017 with *The Handmaid's Tale*. CBS All Access (now Paramount+) debuted original scripted programming in 2017, with *The Good Fight* and *Star Trek: Discovery*. It wasn't until November 2019 that Disney+ and Apple TV+ joined the streaming wars, followed by Warner Bros. Discovery's HBO

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Max (now max) in May 2020, and Peacock in July 2020. That's tens of billions of dollars spent on programming that didn't exist just five years ago.



While there's been much debate recently about how the streaming wars have hurt certain non-Netflix companies and have not been good for tv writers and others who make a living from episodic television – going from a standard 22-episode order for most TV shows to having anywhere from 6- to 13-episode seasons has caused much chaos and consternation, as financial models (including the importance of advertiser-supported TV) need to be reassessed. But while not necessarily good for many in the

industry, there's no question that it's been a boon for viewers. One reason is that shorter seasons enable major stars to join series that don't require the same level of time commitment as a 22-episode season would. They can be in a hit TV series, and still have time for other projects.

But while there's more high-quality programming than ever before, the average household subscribes to four streaming services (less than half the available platforms). So, there may well be some series on my list that you haven't seen. This mid-year top-12 list, includes four that just completed their final seasons in spectacular fashion – [Barry](#), [The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel](#), [Succession](#), and [Ted Lasso](#), shows that couldn't be more different from one another. All have elements of comedy and drama, all have brilliant writing and exceptional acting, each had a pitch-perfect final episode, and each left me wishing there was another season to look forward to. You can't ask for much more out of a television series. Seven of the eight remaining shows on my list debuted this season. I'm listing them here in alphabetical order. There are some minor spoilers ahead, but I tried not to reveal too much.



Barry (HBO 2018-2023)

Seamlessly shifting from dark comedy to even darker drama, [Bill Hader](#) is superb as Barry Berkman, a disillusioned midwestern hitman (and former marine sniper), who is trying to redeem himself and escape the violent business at which he so excels.

In season 1, after following his next target to a Los Angeles acting class, Barry becomes drawn to the community of hopeful (but hopelessly mediocre) students. He is especially enamored of Sally Reed ([Sarah Goldberg](#)), one of the more talented students, whose goal of becoming a famous actress seems perpetually out of reach. Barry decides to give up his murderous ways and take acting lessons from Sally's teacher, the pompous, former star, Gene Cousineau (the terrific [Henry Winkler](#)).

Barry soon discovers that changing, and pursuing a more normal life, is not so easy. His violent tendencies are hard to shake, partly because he doesn't understand the difference between being ordered to kill people during wartime and what he does now as a paid hitman. After all, he's still killing bad guys. His clueless fellow students see his occasional rage and talk of killing people as simply "method" acting.

[Anthony Carrigan](#) provides some comic relief as the wonderfully wacky and relentlessly positive Chechen mobster, Noho Hank, Barry's sometime ally and sometime adversary. [Stephen Root](#) shines as Barry's "handler," Monroe Fuches, who makes a living from setting up hit jobs for Barry, and is determined to see his protégé continue his life of crime despite his desire to change.



Episode 5 of season 2 encapsulates what makes this show unique – it is at once funny, tragic, violent, and bizarre. In a typically surreal [Barry](#) moment, the detective in charge of investigating Barry for murder offers to clear him of the crime if he will just kill Ronny Proxin ([Daniel Bernhardt](#)), the man who stole the detective's wife. Barry agrees. Wearing an orange ski-mask and sunglasses, he goes to Ronny's house and starts casually telling him that he was hired to kill him but has decided to let him live if he would just leave town for about a year until things cool down. It makes perfect sense to Barry that Ronny would simply comply. But as he gradually walks around the house, he starts to notice Ronny's many martial arts trophies. From there, the episode takes off into the stratosphere, as Barry not only battles Ronny, but his feral young daughter (also a martial arts expert) as well.

The third season is all about consequences and whether it is really possible to start over. As is the case when [Barry](#) is at its best, situations and events go from thrilling, to funny, to tragic, to dramatic, to funny, and back to thrilling and tragic at the drop of a hat. And through all evidence to the contrary, Barry continues to believe he is just one move away from redeeming himself and becoming a good person, "starting now."

The fourth and final season, which includes a time jump eight years into the future, continues to shift between brutal violence and tragi-comedy. Up to the very last scene Barry believes he is about to redeem himself (in the eyes of God, if no one else). Season 4 won't be for everyone, even hardcore fans of the show. It's hard to live up to the quality of the previous seasons, particularly when you have to wrap up multiple storylines in just eight episodes. The events leading up to the series finale seem rushed, with so much happening it can be confusing. But it's still one of the best shows of the year (so far) – an indication of how great the first three seasons are.



The Bear (FX on Hulu 2022-):

Carmen “Carmy” Berzatto (a fantastic [Jeremy Allen White](#)) is a brilliant, young James Beard Award-winning chef, who has been immersed in the world of fine dining, and has worked in some of the best restaurants in the world. He comes home to run his family’s struggling Italian beef sandwich shop (called The Original Beef of Chicagoland) after his brother Mikey (played in flashbacks by [Jon Bernthal](#)) commits suicide and leaves him the restaurant in his will.

Now Carmy has to deal with a set-in-their-ways kitchen staff who resist his efforts to modernize the restaurant, strained family relationships, and the considerable debt he inherited from his brother’s mismanagement, all while trying to turn the restaurant into a “destination” and restructure how the business does almost everything.

His brother had borrowed \$300,000 from their uncle Cicero, which Carmy needs to figure out how to repay – although it doesn’t seem like much of that money was actually put into improving the restaurant. It also turns out the restaurant hasn’t paid any taxes in the past five years.

Before Carmy arrived, Mikey’s stubborn, obnoxious best friend Richie ([Ebon Moss-Bachrach](#)) was running things in a way that can only be called a chaotic and haphazard. Carmy hires Sydney ([Ayo Edebiri](#) in a standout performance), a new, ambitious chef, brimming with ideas, who has her own fine-dining credentials (which makes Carmy wonder why she wants to work at a local sandwich shop). He quickly promotes her to sous-chef, making her responsible for instituting changes that no one is ready to implement. This immediately puts her at odds with Richie and some others among the staff.



The initial conflict between Richie and Sydney is one of the more interesting aspects of the show. He is loud, abrasive, explosive, used to settling disputes with his fists (or a gun), and seemingly has no emotional depth (until we discover he actually does). She is calm, restrained, and efficient, and solves disputes through reason and compromise – but there’s something bubbling under the surface, and you almost expect her to explode at any moment.

The writers and cast do a remarkable job of making you feel the hectic and often frantic pace of the back-of-house staff, helped by a ticking clock and pulse-pounding soundtrack, as well as the overwhelming stress of the kitchen’s claustrophobic environment, as they have to deal with equipment breaking down, stovetop fires, late or incomplete food deliveries, and surprise health inspections. Tempers and temperatures often rise among the overworked “chefs” as they narrowly avoid collisions while racing around the confined space to get everything ready for the crush of hungry and impatient lunch customers every day.

Everything seems all at once on the verge of either triumphant success or catastrophic failure. When Carmy takes one of his many cigarette breaks where he stares off into space, I can’t tell whether he’s processing how to solve the latest problem or it’s simply a look of despair. But then he snaps out of it and jumps into action. In one telling scene, Carmy sees Richie taking Xanax, and asks him why he needs that. Richie tells him, “I suffer from anxiety and dread,” to which Carmy replies, “Who doesn’t?”

As the staff starts to see the results of their labors, and Carmy and Sydney’s unrelenting confidence (bravado?) that they know what they are doing, staff members are gradually won over. Showing the intricacies of the kitchen jargon and making the sausage to the lingering shots of their mouth-watering final dishes, provides details that raise the show to another level.



Each cast member is given their own moments to shine. [Lionel Boyce](#) is Marcus, the restaurant's creative baker, eager to learn new ways of doing things, and inspired by Carmy and Sydney. He starts researching new recipes and adding artistic flair to his scrumptious desserts. [Liza Colon-Zayas](#) is Tina, the wary prep cook, reluctant to make any changes, and resentful of having to take direction from a young upstart. She's gradually won over by Sydney's talent, cooking skills, and relentless efforts to make things run more smoothly. Ebraheim ([Edwin Lee Gibson](#)) is the sturdy, unflappable line cook, whom we discover survived the Somali civil war. [Matty Matheson](#) is Neil, the genial handyman, who doesn't officially work there, but finds his services constantly needed. [Abby Elliott](#) is Carmy's sister Natalie "Sugar" Berzatto, with whom he has a complicated relationship. They have completely different ways of dealing with their brother's death. She comes on board to do the books and help straighten out their finances.

Season 2 is extraordinary, and may be even better than the first season. The show's focus is split in several directions, as the tension is ramped up higher than ever. Carmy and crew have to completely renovate the old sandwich shop space, get all the licenses and permits, design a new menu, and open a high-end restaurant – all in 18 months or they lose everything. Uncle Cicero ([Oliver Platt](#)) invests more than \$500K in the project with the proviso that if they don't open in 18 months, he gets the entire property. The new restaurant will be called *The Bear*, which is a term of endearment the siblings use to refer to one another (derived from Berzatto). This more upscale and inventive restaurant is something Carmy used to dream about opening with his brother. Adding to the tension is the awareness that numerous Chicago restaurants have recently been driven out of business due to the pandemic.

Some episodes are devoted to individual staff members, as Carmy sends them off to learn from some of his former colleagues, which gives each of them a new perspective and helps them work through their own issues. All are fascinating and extremely well done, and provide insights into each

character's motivations, insecurities, and true talents. They all return inspired with their passion renewed, and determined to succeed.



Tina and Ebraheim go to culinary school, Marcus goes to Denmark to learn from a talented pastry chef Luca ([Will Poulter](#)) and develop new desserts, and Richie works for a week shadowing the staff at a top-tier restaurant, to learn how their business operates. There, Richie meets Chef Terry ([Olivia Colman](#) in a brief but great performance), who runs the place. She inspires him and changes his entire perspective with a simple and casual chat while peeling mushrooms). There's also an episode devoted to Sydney's awkward relationship with her father ([Robert Townsend](#)) and her feeling that she always manages to screw up anything she tries to accomplish. And Carmy gets a girlfriend, Claire, who was a childhood classmate (the superb [Molly Gordon](#)), which distracts him at a time when he needs to focus on the restaurant.

Then there's the episode 6 flashback to one of the chaotic and disastrous annual Christmas gatherings of Carmy, Mikey, and Natalie's dysfunctional family and friends, sometime before Mikey's death. Here we start to see the depths of Mikey's despair, which more people might have noticed were it not for the siblings' loudly alcoholic mother, Donna – played by the remarkable [Jamie Lee Curtis](#) in a tour de force, award-worthy performance. The always great [Bob Odenkirk](#) has a cameo as “uncle Lee,” who is either Donna's ex-husband, her current husband (or boyfriend), an actual uncle, or a friend of the family (it's not exactly clear). His calm exterior belies a meanness that is on full display when we see he relishes nothing more than to berate and belittle Mikey in front of everyone. Only Richie seems to understand Mikey's darkness.

Everything comes to fruition in the season 2 finale, as everyone is put to the test preparing for the restaurant's opening, which is preceded by a dress rehearsal for friends and family.

The show might be intensely stressful, but it is also funny, dramatic, thought-provoking, exhilarating, and addicting – and unlike anything else on television. It's second season airs exclusively on Hulu. No word yet on whether there will be a third.



Beef (Netflix 2023)

This is a story about the aftermath of a minor road-rage incident between two seemingly ordinary people (the perfectly cast [Ali Wong](#) and [Steven Yeun](#)). This is a story about two people with very different backgrounds, who are both teetering on the edge of losing it over all the disappointments, inconveniences, and indignities of their daily lives. This is a story about the straw that broke the camel's back. This is also a story about the dividing line between the working class and the privileged, and how it impacts this largely Asian community.

[Steven Yeun](#) is Danny Cho, a hard-working but struggling contractor. He's convinced he would be a major success if there wasn't always something getting in his way – whether it's his lazy younger brother Paul ([Young Mazino](#)), who spends most of his time playing videogames and crypto investing, or his recently released from jail, fun-loving but dangerous cousin Isaac ([David Choe](#)). In addition to supporting his brother, he is trying to scrape together enough money to bring his parents over from South Korea. While Danny often seems content, even happy, there's a simmering rage just under the surface. As he says in the first episode, "I'm so sick of smiling."

[Ali Wong](#) is Amy Lau, owner of a successful plant-selling business she is about to sell for \$10 million (to an annoying rich white potential buyer played by [Maria Bello](#)). She has learned all her life, from her father ("a Chinese guy from the Midwest") and mother (a Vietnamese immigrant), to suppress her emotions – talking about their feelings just wasn't done. Her stay-at-home Japanese husband George

(Joseph Lee), a sculptor who lives in the shadow of his late famous artist father, constantly irritates her with his sense of privilege, and obliviousness to the hard work she puts in every day to become successful. She also has to deal with her wealthy, condescending mother-in-law (Patti Yasutake), which makes her even more determined to build her own fortune.



Amy is dissatisfied with both her professional life and her passionless marriage. While she often seems happy, there's a simmering rage just under the surface. When confronted by incompetence, clueless friends and colleagues, or inconsiderate family members, she puts on and maintains a plastic smile that never quite reaches her eyes.

One day, in a big-box store's parking lot, Amy (in her white Mercedes SUV) cuts off Danny's pickup truck. He starts honking at her and she gives him the finger out the window as she drives away. This is the last straw for both of them. A high-speed car chase ensues through the bougey L.A. suburbs, as their respective rages finally bubble over. She gets away from him, but he manages to get her license plate number and tracks her down. From there, both of their lives spiral out of control as they become obsessed with ruining one other.

Their ongoing feud escalates – from the petty and humorous (he urinates all over her recently refurbished bathroom, she inundates his business with negative Yelp reviews) to the significantly more dangerous, with neither caring much about the carnage or casualties they leave in their wake.

They become almost co-dependent as their beef seems to be the only thing that animates or excites either of them (other than the gun Amy keeps locked in her safe that she periodically uses in an unconventional manner).



There are moments of hilarity and absurdity sprinkled in with tragedy, miscommunication, and bad decisions. Through it all, we gradually start to realize that out of all their friends, family, and colleagues, they are the only ones who actually seem to understand one another.

Beef isn't for everyone. It can be relentlessly depressing. But the acting is remarkable as both [Wong](#) and [Yeun](#) give riveting performances as they melt into their roles and somehow create empathy for characters that should not be at all likeable. You root for them to avoid the train wreck that seems more inevitable with each episode – until the explosive and surreal season finale. It is unclear whether there will be another season. Given how this one ended, it's not necessary. But it would be a wonderful bonus.



The Diplomat (Netflix 2023-)

[Keri Russell](#) stars as Kate Wyler, the newly appointed U.S. Ambassador to the U.K., who starts her job just as an international crisis is unfolding. A British aircraft carrier in the Middle East is attacked and many crew members are killed (was it Iran, the Russians, rogue elements from either country, or someone else?). A career diplomat used to operating in war zones, Kate has to forge new alliances in London, which include a no-nonsense CIA station chief ([Ali Ahn](#)) and the U.K. Foreign Secretary ([David Gyasi](#)).

The Diplomat is reminiscent of another excellent political drama, *Madame Secretary*. Both feature a strong, charismatic woman who is entering a maelstrom of political intrigue in a high-level position previously held by men. And each is underestimated by their new colleagues, superiors, and

subordinates, until she quickly demonstrates that she's the smartest (and most competent) person in the room.

Intelligent, compelling, and suspenseful, with crisp pacing and some unexpected turns, combined with a strong cast, make *The Diplomat* hugely entertaining.



This political thriller is also a romantic comedy. In addition to dealing with international crises, Kate also has to navigate her on the verge of ending but never quite over marriage to the high-profile former ambassador Hal Wyler ([Rufus Sewell](#)), whose reputation as a rogue but brilliant and effective operator often overshadows her. He's expected to now be the ambassador's "wife," as Kate once was, but this is not his style, and it is virtually impossible to reel him in. There's an implausible twist that forces the couple to stay together despite the growing and mutual attraction between Kate and the Foreign Secretary. Then there's the romance between Kate's assistant, deputy chief of mission at the U.S. embassy ([Ato Essandoh](#)), and the CIA station chief.

I've seen some reviews complaining about the absurdity of the whole premise of the show, pointing out that American ambassadors to the U.K. are typically prominent presidential campaign donors or ex-cabinet officials (not career diplomats), it's largely a ceremonial position, and that many of the protocols portrayed in the show are ridiculous. They further point out that someone like the Kate Wyler character would never be offered a U.K. ambassadorship, nor be considered for V.P. To me, this is just the type of thing people say when there's really nothing negative to say about a show but have decided they want to write a negative review. Most professions portrayed on entertainment TV take dramatic license seen as ridiculous by actual real-life members of those professions – I can't tell you how many times I've heard friends or family members in the medical profession tell me they cringe anytime they watch *Grey's Anatomy* or *The Good Doctor*. But you seldom, if ever, see reviews

pointing out how absurd they are. Because they are entertainment television shows, not documentaries.

The excellent cast includes, [Nana Mensah](#) as White House Chief of Staff, [Michael McKean](#) as President of the United States, and [Rory Kinnear](#) as U.K. prime minister. It's been renewed for a second season.



The Last of Us (HBO, max 2023-)

Based on the highly popular video game of the same name. The series opens in 2003, right before a rapidly spreading pandemic leads to the near total collapse of civilization. A mutated strain of the Cordyceps fungus (which usually attacks insects) causes a parasitic brain infection that turns humans into violently cannibalistic zombie-like creatures. The show quickly jumps twenty years into the future, to 2023, when the U.S. government has become an authoritarian state. The military ruthlessly controls its citizens as it tries to deal with the ever-increasing population of monsters. This includes setting up quarantine zones, bombing major cities with infected populations, and killing innocent civilians outside the quarantine zones before they can become infected.

The show's first episode has a genuine creepiness and feeling of foreboding. From the ominous atmosphere that indicates something might not be quite right, to the brief background scene (if you blink, you miss it) that indicates things are about to go dangerously bad, the suspense continues to escalate throughout.

The infected (as they are called here – not zombies) are always a threat, often unseen in the shadows before they suddenly strike. Unlike the undead in other TV shows or movies, these are faster, stronger, harder to kill, and scarier. Also unlike most series in this genre, the creatures don't

automatically rise up after they die, they have to be infected when they're alive. There are different stages of the infected, based on how long they have been exposed to the fungus, each stage significantly more dangerous than the previous one. While the zombies with which most of us are familiar eventually just rot over time, the infected just get bigger and stronger. For those who hate zombie shows, they are only shown sparingly after the second episode, as the series focuses more on the impact all this has on the human behavior and relationships of previously ordinary people.



The series follows Joel ([Pedro Pascal](#)) and Ellie ([Bella Ramsey](#)). He is the only major character we are introduced to before society collapses. Having been traumatized by events that took place at the start of the pandemic, over the next 20 years he has become a hardened black-market smuggler, doing whatever is necessary to survive (while still trying to maintain some semblance of his humanity). One of the few people Joel lets into his new life is Tess (the terrific [Anna Torv](#) in an all-too-brief appearance), another hardened survivor who becomes his smuggling partner.

The leader of a resistance movement ([Merle Dandridge](#)) asks Joel and Tess to smuggle 14-year-old Ellie out of Boston's quarantine zone. She is the only person known to be immune to the virus. There is supposedly a lab at a university in Colorado where they are trying to find a cure for the fungal infection. Ellie's blood may be the key to developing a vaccine. Joel and Tess part ways in episode 2 (you'll have to watch to learn why). Joel is also searching for his younger brother Tommy ([Gabriel Luna](#)), a former soldier who joined the resistance. Tommy did not return from a dangerous mission, and Joel wants to find out what happened to him and if he's still alive.

[Pedro Pascal](#) is superb, portraying Joel's weary (and wary) but seemingly self-assured intensity. The remarkable [Bella Ramsey](#) (best known for her recurring role as Lyanna Mormont in [Game of Thrones](#)) gives an equally riveting performance as Ellie. A sharp contrast to Joel, she's quirky, with a sardonic sense of humor, seemingly innocent and naïve but ready to take up arms and learn how

to survive as they escape increasingly escalating threats. She more than holds her own with her more established co-stars, which is no small feat.

Over the course of their travels, Joel and Ellie face numerous dangers across a post-apocalyptic America, both from the infected and from various groups of humans – some raiders, some military, and some in communities that formed to fight the military or to just survive – all of whom are distrustful of strangers. Some pose deadly threats, while others become temporary allies.



Top-notch guest stars include: [Nick Offerman](#) in a rare but great non-comedic role as paranoid survivalist Bill, who has spent years preparing for doomsday, but now lives with his lover, Frank ([Murray Bartlett](#)); the terrific [Melanie Lynskey](#) (*Yellowjackets*) as Kansas City militia leader Kathleen, a revolutionary whose soft-spoken and friendly demeanor belies the ruthless terrorist she has become; [Scott Shepherd](#) is a seemingly benevolent preacher of a struggling community, living in a former Silver Lake resort, who has done horrific things to survive and protect his followers. Joel and Ellie have to fight their way out of the latter two situations.

In a show like *The Walking Dead*, Joel and Ellie's new friends would have become part of their group, while battles with the Kansas City militia and the Silver Lake community each would have lasted for an entire season or more. Here, each takes up just a single episode or two. Allies and adversaries alike are quickly killed or left behind, and our heroes move on to continue their journey.

Obviously this type of show is not for everyone. The infected are kind of disgusting to look at, there's violent and sudden death and destruction, and even those with whom you sympathize and root for display morally ambiguous (and not so ambiguous) behavior. But Joel and Ellie remain a compelling duo, and if you like dystopian, post-apocalyptic dramas, you'll be hard-pressed to find a better one.

The Last of Us is one of those rare series that gained viewers with each episode throughout its first season. It was renewed right after its highly rated premiere.



The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel (Prime Video 2017-2023)

The first season of this smart, witty, and all-around great comedy starts out in 1958, as we meet Miriam “Midge” Maisel ([Rachel Brosnahan](#)), an upper-middle-class Jewish housewife, who has everything she thinks she’s always wanted – a seemingly perfect husband, two kids, and an elegant upper West Side apartment in New York City.

Then her husband Joel ([Michael Zegen](#)), a struggling comedian wannabe, leaves her following his dismal performance at the Gaslight Café in Greenwich Village. A drunk and distraught Midge, returns to the Gaslight, where she goes on stage and does a profanity-laced impromptu set venting about her situation, and is promptly arrested for indecency.

Midge discovers she has a talent and love for stand-up comedy. The Gaslight’s manager, Susie Myerson (the wonderful [Alex Borstein](#)), who knows raw talent when she sees it, becomes Midge’s manager. She is also encouraged by controversial comedian great, Lenny Bruce ([Luke Kirby](#)), who was arrested the same night as Midge for using obscene language in his act. Adding a fictionalized version of the real-life revolutionary comedian, sheds some light not only on how restricting this time was for women, but how dangerous it was for any entertainer who crossed the line of what society deemed appropriate.

The show’s five seasons take Mrs. Maisel (as she’s known in her act) from a comfortable 1950s happy-homemaker life through the gritty 1960s Greenwich Village comedy scene and beyond.



Everyone from the main stars to the supporting cast are experts at their craft and are given enough snappy dialogue to keep things moving along at a brisk (and funny) pace. The top-notch ensemble cast is involved in several ongoing side stories. The main one focuses on

Midge's relationship with her cantankerous manager, Susie Myerson. The show is just as much about Susie's journey as Midge's. Other storylines include her extended family – her ex-husband, the father of her children, with whom she remains friends, parents Abe (the award-winning [Tony Shalhoub](#)) and Rose ([Marin Hinkle](#)), and former parents-in-law, Moishe ([Kevin Pollack](#)) and Shirley ([Caroline Aaron](#)). [Tony Shalhoub](#), in particular, has many award-worthy scenes.

[Jane Lynch](#) has a fun turn as stand-up comic, Sophie Lennon, who uses a fat suit and other schtick to portray a frumpy, uncouth housewife from Queens in her act (she's actually a wealthy, snobbish Manhattan socialite). She and Mrs. Maisel's each have nothing but disdain for the other's type of comedy. Susie Myerson is caught in the middle when she becomes the manager for both. Baby Boomers might see shades of Joan Rivers and Phyllis Diller in the two comedians.

The series shows some women (Midge and Susie) encountering the sexism and sexual harassment of the time and fighting it and (eventually) rising above it, while showing others giving in to it (Sophie) and being held back by it (Midge's mom). It's a fascinating look at several well-drawn and distinctly different female characters, and how their different backgrounds, families, and support groups result in how they deal with the limiting times of everyday misogyny and discrimination they were born into.

The first four seasons show Midge's ups and downs as she struggles to break through the male-dominated stand-up comedy world.



The fifth and final season is an extremely satisfying ending to Mrs. Maisel's story. Time-jumping back and forth to her past in the 1950s, to her present in the 1960s when she's trying to make it as a stand-up comedian, to the early 2000s as we see what her future holds, is comedy writing (and acting) at its very best.

We see events foreshadowing the tragic 1966 death of Lenny Bruce (which is not shown). Midge gets a job as the only "lady writer" on the #1 late night talk show, *The Gordon Ford Show*, which at first is little more than a token position until the writers' room and its exclusively male writers start to realize how talented she is. Much of the season revolves around Midge trying to get her big break by appearing as a guest and performing her stand-up routine on the show (which Gordon, played by [Reid Scott](#), initially refuses to allow).

There's also a mysterious future feud between Midge, now a top-drawing comic, and Susie, who has become one of the top talent managers in the business, which comes to a funny and poignant resolution. The series finale, right up to the pitch-perfect final scene, is as good as TV comedy gets.



Poker Face (Peacock 2023-)

Charlie Cale (the charismatic [Natasha Lyonne](#)), has an extraordinary ability to read people and determine whether they are lying – a handy skill for a former poker hustler to have.

A powerful mob boss has her banned from playing for money in Nevada, but he takes a liking to her and hires her as a cocktail waitress at one of his casinos. But when her lie-detecting skills unmask the casino boss's son ([Adrien Brody](#)) and his enforcer Cliff ([Benjamin Bratt](#)) as murderers, it puts a target on her back and she goes on the run. As the gangster boss tells her over the phone, "There's no place off the grid that's far enough off the grid that we

can't find you." That's an assertion she puts to the test as she hits the road in her Plymouth Barracuda.



She comes across a new cast of characters each week, along with a new murder mystery she can't resist investigating. The description blurbs for each episode on the Peacock guide ends with, "Charlie suspects foul play." That's what every episode is about. The formula is basically the same – we see the murder of the week at the beginning of each episode, then we flash back to see how Charlie comes to town and gets a job where the crime just happens to occur. She is the only one who suspects the real criminals, and sets out to solve the crime and reveal the true culprits.

Clearly inspired by classic 1970s and 1980s network procedurals such as [Columbo](#) and [Murder, She Wrote](#) (with elements of [The Fugitive](#) thrown in), this modernized retro comedy-drama is what they call a "howcatchem" (rather than a "whodunnit"). The viewer knows who committed the crime, the only suspense is in how Charlie will trip them up – while avoiding mobster Cliff, who is hot on her trail in virtually every episode.

Just like those procedurals from the '70s and '80s, each week has well-known guest stars as either perpetrators or victims. The weekly guest list has included, [John Ratzenberger](#), [Brandon Michael Hall](#), [Lil Rel Howery](#), [Danielle Macdonald](#), [Chloe Sevigny](#), [Judith Light](#), [S. Epatha Merkerson](#), [Simon Helberg](#), [Ellen Barkin](#), [Tim Meadows](#), [Jameela Jamil](#), [Cherry Jones](#), [Tim Russ](#), [Luis Guzman](#), [Nick Nolte](#), [Joseph Gordon-Levitt](#), [Stephanie Hsu](#), and [Rhea Perlman](#).

Part of the appeal of [Columbo](#) was [Peter Falk's](#) charisma, instantly recognizable voice, and the surety he is going to solve the crime every week – despite (or because of) the fact that the criminals never take him seriously until it's too late. The same is true for [Natasha Lyonne](#) here. Just like sitcoms, these are situation dramas – people aren't tuning in for the plots, but rather to see the stars in slight variations of the same situation week after week.



Since each episode is a self-contained story with a new supporting cast, some episodes work better than others. The only real drama is whether Cliff will catch up with Charlie. We know she's going to solve each week's murder. The singular device of how she solves each crime – not based on highly honed detective skills, but rather simply because she can tell when someone is lying, should get tiresome after a few episodes, but somehow doesn't. It also stretches credulity that an unarmed woman can confront murderers every week and tell them she knows they are guilty, yet continue to be unscathed (a stranger in town with no local connections should be relatively easy for a killer to dispose of). But these are just minor quibbles for a show that is so thoroughly enjoyable and eminently bingeable.

The season finale is simply brilliant. For the first time we see the gangster ([Ron Perlman](#)) who ordered Cliff to track down Charlie. The episode opens with a montage of the many times Cliff came close to finding her over the course of the past year. Then... I won't spoil what happens, but it perfectly sets up next season (it's been renewed).



Rabbit Hole (Paramount+ 2023-)

Gripping spy thriller with [Keifer Sutherland](#) as John Weir, a master of deception and corporate espionage. He and his team of high-tech experts succeed by seeing every angle and accounting for every possible scenario as they set up elaborate schemes that require split-second timing and extreme confidence to pull off.

Unlike [Keifer Sutherland's](#) previous incarnations in [24](#) and [Designated Survivor](#), John Weir is no reluctant hero. In fact, whether or not he's even a good guy is questionable. As the series opens, he comments that he enjoys "being hired by rich people to ruin other rich people's lives." But what's not questionable is that the people he is facing off against are real bad guys.



In the first episode, John is hired by a friend and former colleague to thwart a Treasury Department investigation of his client. But the tables are turned as John becomes victim of his own kind of deception. He's framed for murder by powerful and shadowy forces bent on ruining him and subverting democracy. Was he betrayed by his friend, or were they both victims of a larger conspiracy? A deadly cat-and-mouse game ensues, as deception is everywhere, and nothing is what it seems.

[Keifer Sutherland](#) still has the charismatic presence he brings to virtually everything he does. The rest of the cast is excellent as well. [Meta Golding](#) is Hailey, a woman John meets at a bar and sleeps with, who gets sucked into his world and is forced to go on the run with him after an attempt on their lives. She may or may not be in on the scheme to frame him. [Charles Dance](#) is John's former spy father, whom John hasn't seen for years and does not trust – is he working with or secretly against him? [Jason Butler Harner](#) is Miles Valence, John's best friend and former colleague, who may or may not have committed suicide. [Lance Henriksen](#) is Crowley, who may or may not be the man behind the effort to frame John and take control of the country.

You may feel like you're falling down a rabbit hole as you try to figure out what's going on. The action shifts back and forth in time in such a way that it can be confusing. The brisk pacing, action, and strong cast, however, make you overlook some of the more ridiculous plotlines. It's almost as if the writer's couldn't explain what just happened, so decided to add another twist followed by another turn. But it's so well done, it actually makes the eight-episode series more interesting (and entertaining) – particularly because the way it all ends finally seems to make sense (if you don't think about it too much). I'm definitely up for another adventure down another rabbit hole. But there's no word at this writing as to whether the show will be renewed for a second season.



Silo (Apple TV+ 2022-)

Based on the popular book series by Hugh Howey. In a dystopian future, roughly 10,000 citizens, the last of humankind, live in a giant bunker called the Silo that extends down 144 stories underground. No one knows who built the Silo, why they all live there, or what happened to make the outside world's atmosphere poisonous and unlivable. The residents have been told that all historical records were destroyed 140 years ago during a rebel uprising that was put down by the Founders.

It is illegal to own (or look for) any artifacts or information from before the Silo was built. Any public dissent is a punishable offense. People see lights in the sky at night but have no concept of stars or other planets. Someone finds old Pez dispensers and has no idea what they are. Knowledge of the outside world or anything before the Silo was built is virtually non-existent.

There is a book of laws and rules written by the Founders called the Pact, listing the many regulations all citizens must adhere to. Most residents of the Silo believe these rules are meant to protect them, but they are really designed to keep them ignorant and under control. It's similar to a constitution, but has two mysterious prohibitions. The first is that no mechanical form of transportation is allowed. While the technology exists to build lifts to move people and supplies, they are forbidden. With no elevators, escalators, or even pulleys, traveling from the top levels (called the "Up Top") to the lowest levels (called the "Deep Down") is arduous and time consuming – most residents never journey more than a level or two from where they were raised. This creates segregation and social division between levels. The second is no magnification beyond a certain power. This serves to maintain the limited knowledge of the Silo residents, and hinders any real scientific or medical advancement. Stronger magnification levels might also enable someone to discover what is actually outside the Silo, which the powers that be want to remain hidden..



There is one over-arching and immutable rule – don't ask to leave the Silo. If you do, you are forced to do so. Once you utter the words (and someone hears you), you can't take it back. No one who has ventured outside the Silo has ever returned. The Pact's

mantra is recited by the Mayor whenever someone is exiled to the outside, "*We do not know why we are here. We do not know who built the Silo. We do not know why everything outside the Silo is as it is. We do not know when it will be safe to go outside. We only know that day is not today.*" The residents believe that going outside the Silo means quick and certain death.

There are windows and screens throughout the Silo, showing the barren outside landscape, which includes the bodies of those who tried to leave (they are just left where they collapsed and died). But do these images show an accurate picture? There are a few who believe the mysterious and powerful Judicial division is lying to the residents and showing fake scenes of the outside world, so they can maintain control of the population. As one person asks, "What if everything you know to be true, everything you've been told by the people you love, was in fact just one big lie?"

While you might start out thinking you've seen this all before, you soon realize that you haven't. [Silo](#) has its own unique voice, complex themes, intersecting story arcs, and surprising twists. By the end of episode four, no less than four of the main characters we've been introduced to and expect to lead the series going forward are gone. We don't meet the show's main ongoing protagonist until the second episode. The writers trust the audience to figure out what's really going on at the same time the major characters do.

Here are some of the main players.



Rebecca Ferguson (who appears in *Dune* and the upcoming *Mission: Impossible* movie) is riveting as Juliette Nichols, the Silo's best engineer, who initially works in one of the lower levels. When we first meet her, she is performing a dangerous and unprecedented maneuver to fix the main generator, which is on the verge of being irrevocably damaged (which another event that I won't mention here, lead the former sheriff to recommends her as his replacement. She reluctantly takes the job and discovers a long-standing conspiracy that puts her in constant danger, as she's not sure who's involved, who knows the truth, or whom she can trust.



Hip-hop artist, Common, is sinisterly emotionless as Robert Sims, the head of Judicial security. Tim Robbins is good as always, playing Bernard Holland, a by-the-book head of the Silo's IT department, who may be more powerful – and more aware of what's really going on than he seems. It is not clear (until it is) whether he is Juliette's ally or adversary. David Oyelowo and Rashida Jones are the sheriff (before Juliette), Holston Becker, and his wife Allison, who works in the IT department. There are several early conflicts which result in them questioning Pact doctrine. Allison believes the outside world is not as toxic as the Judicial division would have everyone believe. She decides to go outside and seek answers – Holston later follows suit. They are both seen on the view screens collapsing and dying soon after being exposed to the outside. Geraldine James is Ruth Jahn's, the Silo's elected mayor, who is loved by the residents of the Silo. She's one of the few who walks from top to bottom to meet her constituents. She has a secret relationship with sheriff Holston's deputy, Sam Marnes (Will Patton). Each has an early conflict with Judicial that ends in tragedy.

There are some themes that will resonate in today's world – a societal lockdown keeping people stuck in a confined space, the central government decides what history can be taught, the government controls who can marry and who should and should not have children (women need to

receive permission to have birth-control implants removed), and the use of sophisticated disinformation campaigns.

Apple TV+ has become something of a destination for sci-fi fans with shows like [For All Mankind](#), [Foundation](#), [See](#), and [Severance](#). This season, [Silo](#) joins its stable as one of the best sci-fi series on the air.



Slow Horses (Apple TV+ 2022-)

Based on Mick Herron's 2010 novel of the same name. British MI-5 agents who screw up are exiled to Slough House, a decrepit London building that serves as an administrative purgatory, where drudgery and paperwork are the tasks of the day. Known derisively as "slow horses," these outcasts report to the notorious Jackson Lamb (played with relish by [Gary Oldman](#)). Seemingly past his prime, slovenly, borderline alcoholic, and contemptuous of those he is forced to oversee, Lamb's acerbic and obnoxious demeanor belie the keen mind of a legendary intelligence officer (still respected by the higher-ups at MI-5). As the opening song, *Strange Game* (by Mick Jagger) goes, "Surrounded by losers, misfits and boozers..."

The motley crew of agents who were deposited at Slough House because of embarrassing failures or just bad luck are a surprisingly talented bunch (when properly motivated), and somehow keep being pulled into investigations of major threats to Britain.



In season 1, when MI-5's Deputy Director-General Diana Taverner ([Kristen Scott Thomas](#)) tries to blame Slough House for a failed MI5 false-flag operation that results in potential disaster, the slow horses spring (or trot) into action in an effort to uncover the truth and save a hostage (and themselves) in the process – all the while trying to stay one step ahead of elite MI5 operatives determined to stop them and blame them for the mission's failure.

Season 2 may be even better than the first season, as they no longer needed to spend time introducing us to all the characters and the dynamics of Slough House (each season is just six episodes). We get right down to business here. When former field agent Richard Bough ([Phil Davis](#)) recognizes a man who tortured him during the Cold War, he follows him to a bus, where he dies of an apparent heart attack. Jackson Lamb finds Bough's hidden phone under his seat with the single word message, "cicada," on the screen, and gets his team to investigate. Cicada is a theory that Russian sleeper agents have been embedded in British society, which MI-5 had previously dismissed as a hoax.

The agents are in considerably more danger as one of their own dies suspiciously and they investigate, going all out to find the killers. At the same time, they discover the Russians' plans and race to stop them before they set off a chemical attack on the streets of London.

Part taut conspiracy thriller, part workplace comedy, the sharp writing and [Gary Oldman's](#) terrific performance make [Slow Horses](#) a winner. It's been renewed for a third and fourth season.



Succession (HBO 2018-2023)

One of the buzziest shows in the past five years, this is that rare series that actually lives up to the hype. If you haven't seen [Succession](#), it's difficult to adequately explain how good the fourth and final season actually is. The brilliant writing is surpassed only by the brilliant acting (or vice-versa).

One might think a series about unlikeable and privileged one-percenters (actually 0.001 percenters) is not a recipe for broad success (and, in fact, it was never the ratings hit the press implied it was). But razor-sharp writing, fierce acting, and effortless shifts between comedy, tragedy, and family drama, make [Succession](#) compelling and entertaining viewing. This, despite none of the main characters (or secondary characters, for that matter) having any redeeming qualities or being even remotely likeable. The main characters might all be victims of a tyrannical father (or boss), but their own awful behavior makes viewer empathy difficult.

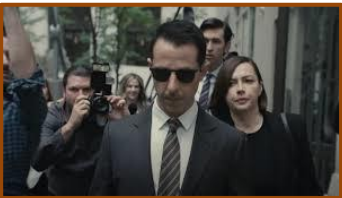
For those unfamiliar with all things [Succession](#), here is a not-so-brief overview.

When Logan Roy, an aging Rupert Murdoch-style media tycoon has a stroke in the first episode, his adult children start jockeying for control of the family's international media and entertainment empire. When he recovers and lets them know he has no intention of stepping down anytime soon, all types of power plays, backstabbing schemes, and elaborate infighting ensue, as personal ambitions collide with family loyalties, and adversaries smell blood in the water.

In season 1, we are introduced to the powerful, ultra-wealthy, and largely dysfunctional Roy family.



Logan Roy (the brilliant [Brian Cox](#)) is the billionaire founder of Waystar RoyCo. a giant conservative media and entertainment conglomerate (which is clearly meant to mirror Fox News, but also contains aspects of Disney). The company's assets include, a conservative cable news network, a theme park, a cruise line, and a movie studio. He is ruthless and misogynistic, a tyrant and a bully, who treats his four adult children as nothing more than pawns on a chess board. All Logan cares about is money and power. In season 3, when one of his kids asks him why he's doing something that they see as a betrayal, he replies, "Because it works. I fucking win. Go on, fuck off, you nosy fucking pedestrians."



Kendall Roy ([Jeremy Strong](#)) is Logan's second son, and is initially presumed to be Logan's successor. In the first two seasons, he struggles to prove he is worthy, while battling substance abuse. At the end of season 2, he finally stands on his own two feet, making a stunning move that shocks his family, thrusts their company into chaos, draws new battle lines between him and his father, and sets the stage for everything that happens the following season.



Roman Roy ([Kieran Culkin](#)) is Logan's middle son. He is immature and does not take his responsibilities seriously. But he's street-smart and has people skills, which Logan uses to great effect. He is the most desperate for his father's approval. Despite all evidence to the contrary, he continues to think his father believes in him. He often seems to be the most empathetic of the siblings, not wanting to do the wrong thing, but it's really a defense mechanism against his aversion to confrontation and being made to look the fool – which invariably happens anyway.



Siobhan “Shiv” Roy ([Sarah Snook](#)) is Logan's only daughter. She was a left-leaning political fixer, whose views clash with the conservative Waystar RoyCo. media company. But she comes back to work for her father when he dangles the CEO position (which she longs for but never gets). Shiv thinks she is much more qualified to run the company than her brothers, but Logan, who has a general disdain for women, keeps shutting her out of major decisions.



Tom Wambsgans ([Matthew Macfadyen](#)) is Shiv's fiancé and later her husband, and one of the most put upon (and under-rated) characters in the show. He is the head of Waystar's global conservative news outlet. He is a people-pleaser and vies for more power, but is thought of as an outsider by the family's inner circle. He is quick to ingratiate himself to anyone who may eventually be in the top position. He makes a surprise move in the season 3 finale that stuns Shiv and leads to even more fireworks. He has a central role in the final season, with his potential future contingent on who ultimately gains control of the company.



Connor Roy ([Alan Ruck](#)) is Logan's eldest son from his first marriage. He wants more involvement in the family business, but he is not seen by the others as particularly qualified for anything, and has been shunted aside. In season 2 he announces he plans to run for President of the United States (despite Roman telling him, “You’ve never done anything, ever”). Connor's much younger girlfriend and eventual wife, former call-girl, Willa ([Justine Lupe](#)), is the only one who believes in him.



Greg Hirsch ([Nicholas Braun](#)) is Logan's bumbling but opportunistic great nephew. He's the grandson of Logan's estranged brother, Ewan Roy ([James Cromwell](#)). He is often manipulated and tormented by Tom, who he sees as something of a mentor. He's barely tolerated by the rest of the family. He's a lot more ambitious, and not quite as inept as he initially seems. He often comes up with key information (or gossip) that helps one side or the other, and you can't always tell which side he's actually on. He seems to bend whichever way the wind is blowing.

In the fourth and final season, we see the culmination of all the in-fighting and backstabbing. And it's not pretty. Brilliant, but not pretty.



In the third episode of the final season, everything suddenly and stunningly come crashing down as an unexpected event turns the siblings' confidence into panic and personal tragedy momentarily overshadows business concerns. From there we get spectacular acting showcases from [Jeremy Strong](#) (Kendall), [Sarah Snook](#) (Shiv), [Kieran Culkin](#) (Roman), [Matthew Macfadyen](#) (Tom), and [Alan Ruck](#) (Connor).

Subsequent episodes leading up to the explosive series finale are just as good. Some of it is chilling (and hard to watch) in its portrayal of events that seem to mirror recent revelations about what may actually have been happening behind the scenes leading up to and following the 2020 Presidential election at a certain conservative media news company – and what might have occurred had the cable news network acted differently on election night.

Suddenly untethered to the centrifugal force that was Logan Roy, would any of the siblings swim with the sharks, become the sharks, or be consumed by the sharks? As it turns out, all three are true.

Some final deceptions and betrayals play out as this game of thrones spirals toward its inevitable conclusion. And as a sign of any great series finale, you're left wondering what happens next.



Ted Lasso (Apple TV+ 2020-)

An American college football coach ([Jason Sudeikis](#)) is hired to coach the AFC Richmond Greyhounds, a mediocre Premier League soccer team in England – despite the fact that he has no experience with the sport and doesn't even understand the rules or basic terminology.

In season 1, the team gets a new owner, Rebecca Welton (the wonderful [Hannah Waddingham](#)) as a result of her divorce from the former owner, the philandering, misogynist, billionaire, Rupert Mannion ([Anthony Head](#)). She has an ulterior motive for hiring Ted, as she wants to ruin the team (to get revenge on her ex, who still sees the team as his baby). When she sees Ted's unusual ways start to work, however, she has a change of heart and wants to win. [Jeremy Swift](#) is Rebecca's sycophantic assistant, Leslie Higgins, who initially has nothing but disdain for Ted, but eventually grows to respect him and become a key ally.

Surrounded by feuding players, a negative press corp., and fanatical team fans who scream "wanker" every time they see him in public, Ted Lasso's determination to succeed, his confidence in his own ability and his team's talents, and his unrelenting niceness and folksy charm, gradually win over even his harshest critics. Especially when the team eventually starts to win some games.

Season 2 is remarkable in that when you think you know exactly where the series is going, it veers off in a completely different direction. While the comedy is still solid, the show gets significantly darker in tone. A new team sports psychologist ([Sarah Niles](#)) is brought in to counsel the team. After

bumping heads with Ted, she develops a strong relationship with him. We start to discover some of the trauma and emotional baggage behind Ted's smile and continuously pleasant demeanor. For the first time, we see cracks in Ted's armor.



[Brett Goldstein](#) fantastic as Roy Kent, a surly, established, but aging champion, feuding with Jamie Tartt ([Phil Dunster](#)), who is an egotistical, young rising star on the team. Roy eventually retires and becomes one of the team's coaches. [Juno Temple](#) is a revelation as Keely Jones, a smart, ambitious model who dates both Jamie Tartt and Roy Kent (at different times), increasing the tension between the two stars. She develops a close friendship with Rebecca and eventually becomes the club's manager of marketing and public relations.



[Nick Mohammed](#) is Nathan Shelly, the teams former kit manager whom Ted promotes to assistant coach. He lacks confidence, but is extremely knowledgeable about the sport and often develops winning strategies. In season 2 he does something that shocks Ted and stuns the rest of the team, setting up several storylines the following season. [Brendan Hunt](#) is a gem as Coach Beard, Ted's long-time assistant and best friend, who came with him from America. [James Lance](#) is excellent as Trent Crimm, a cynical reporter, who is initially critical of Ted's coaching, but slowly starts to come around. He is imbedded with the team in season 3 so he can write a book about them.

The third and final season is often as poignant as it is funny. I think it is just as good as the previous seasons, particularly the superb series finale. It gave story resolutions and some new beginnings for many of the main characters, and left me wanting more. A great ending to a great series. While it appears to be over, several things happen in the finale that would lend themselves to continuing the story of the team. Cryptic comments from some cast members have done nothing to quell the rumors.



Will Trent (ABC, Hulu 2023-)

Every year I try to include a new broadcast series on one of my lists of excellent television. This year, it's *Will Trent*, which is based on Karin Slaughter's detective novels. It's unusual for a new procedural drama to be instantly filled with so many interesting characters, none of whom fit neatly into the cliched variety that seem to populate so many new shows these days – particularly on broadcast networks. The first couple of episodes manage to entertainingly introduce us to all the main players, without too much exposition, gradually revealing how several of them have inter-related histories and connections. It's also unusual to see the mostly traumatic backstories for most of the main characters, and really get a feel for what drives them and how they became who they are today.

Ramon Rodriguez is perfectly cast as Will Trent, a damaged but brilliant special agent of the Georgia Bureau of Investigations (GBI). His observational skills are legendary, as are his quirkiness, blunt dismissiveness of those who can't keep up with him, and awkwardness in dealing with colleagues. Dapper and always dressed in a three-piece suit, he carries both physical and psychological scars that stem from his rough childhood in the Atlanta foster care system – which is one of his driving forces to help others. He's dyslexic, so instead of taking notes like other cops, he speaks into his tape recorder – which is a good device for him to explain to the viewer how he's thinking about solving the crime.

Scorned by most of Atlanta's police department (APD) for having launched a police corruption investigation, they nonetheless have to acknowledge his unique gifts in solving crimes that stump everyone else. The APD is forced to work with Will and the GBI on major cases.



The show has a strong ensemble cast. [Sonja Sohn](#) is Will's no-nonsense boss, Amanda, who has problems with his style, but is constantly defending him to others. [Lanthea Richardson](#) is Faith, an APD officer who has a personal grudge against Will, but is forced to partner with him on the first case of the season. Her mom was a decorated cop caught up in his corruption probe.

[Erika Christenson](#) is great as Angie Polaski, an undercover vice detective, a recovering addict who we eventually discover shares a past with Will. Their relationship is one of the more fascinating on television. Angie's new partner, Michael ([Jake McLaughlin](#)), comes across as an arrogant ass, but is also a top-notch detective. He had a one-night stand with Angie years before, and she is not particularly happy about having to team up with him now.

The show has been renewed for a second season.