

Fall TV: What to watch

Zehra Madhavan
Copy Editor

The fall season brings a hurricane of new television shows, and it's often difficult to decide which ones to follow and which to skip. But don't worry—I'm here to make sure you don't miss out on any up-and-coming hits. I've viewed the pilots of multiple recent shows, and here's the scoop on the most promising.

Red Band Society

Red Band Society is FOX's take on the recent trend of stories detailing the lives of teenagers diagnosed with illnesses, this time focusing on a motley group of teens stuck together in a hospital's pediatric ward. The main characters, including a wise young boy in a coma, who happens to narrate the entire show (Griffin Gluck, *Just Go With It*) and a spiteful ex-cheerleader with a heart problem (Zoe Levin, *The Way Way Back*), each have their own storyline, but the show's plot revolves around their interactions with each other.

At times, it seems like the screenwriters are trying to force out a reaction, whether it be a laugh or a tug at the heart. Despite this, the show, with its half-*The Fault in Our Stars*-half-*Glee* appeal, is still entertaining, so I've decided to give it a few more chances to redeem itself.

Gotham

Gotham focuses on the adventures of young detective James Gordon (Ben McKenzie, *The O.C.*), who has to learn the ropes of keeping the crime-infested Gotham City out of danger and anarchy. A prequel to the Batman saga, the show is meant to explain the origins of Bruce Wayne and his companions, specifically those who remain out of the spotlight in the films.

The show is certainly not for fans of the lighthearted or cheerful (there was a bit too much gratuitous violence for my taste), but the pilot introduces many questions and leaves some intriguing mystery. Particularly for fans of the both the comic books and the action sequences in The Batman film trilogy, this show is right up your alley, so be sure to tune in and immerse yourself back into this fascinating Batman world.

Selfie

ABC's new comedy series stars former *Doctor Who* lead Karen Gillan as Eliza Dooley, a quirky pharmaceutical sales rep who has an obnoxious addiction to social media, the Internet, and, of course, selfies. The story follows Eliza as she realizes that her thousands of online connections have resulted in zero real-life connections and hires co-worker Henry Higenbottam (John Cho, *Star Trek*) as her marketing manager in order to reinvent her image and learn more about the offline world.

So far, the show seems to hover between amusing and vapid, and it may be a challenge for the screenwriters to transform a two-hour-long story into a few seasons. We'll see if the series can pull its weight, but for now, if you need a lighthearted, no-brain-power-required TV show to wind down with after all your calculus homework, look no further.



Tea Leoni in *Madame Secretary*.

CBS.com

Madam Secretary

Téa Leoni (*Deep Impact*, *Flirting With Danger*) makes her TV comeback in *Madam Secretary*, in which she takes on the role of Elizabeth McCord, an ex-CIA analyst and homemaker who is suddenly appointed Secretary of State of the United States and has to deal with both international issues and power struggles around the office. The show is a modern-day political drama (the pilot even references the Syrian conflict!), and Secretary McCord is supposedly based on real-life former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

The screenwriters leave a large amount of room for character development and strike a good balance of themes in the show, making sure to include equal amounts of the Secretary's political story and her life outside of work. It will be interesting to see what new challenges the capable and powerful main character will have to face in the upcoming episodes.

A to Z

A to Z follows the love story between Andrew (Ben Feldman, *Cloverfield*), a guy's guy with a romantic side, and Zelda (Cristin Milioti, *How I Met Your Mother*), a brilliant lawyer who has a hard time believing in "true love." The pilot introduces the beginnings of a romance between the two characters who each come across as lovable and entertaining in his or her own ways.

The majority of the show will focus on the ups and down of their relationship (from A to Z!)—a refreshing contrast to the typical "boy chases girl" romance trope. The show's format follows that of the now completed *How I Met Your Mother* series, in which a narrator relays the story in a humorous fashion while select snippets are shown onscreen. From the looks of it, *A to Z* is essentially a classic rom-com story in the form of a TV show, so there's no doubt I will keep up with the series.

Don't let humor die: Robin Williams and the truth about suicide

Julia Bannon
Photography Editor

Our friend, our hero, the funniest man in the world. On August 11th, we broke down in shock at the news that Robin Williams had committed suicide. There were tweets and news updates; everyone knew in a matter of minutes, and everyone mourned. The world asked: how could a man who brought us so much joy not do the same for himself?

Suicide isn't discussed frequently enough. It tends to hide out for a while until we've let our guard down; then it jumps back into dark action, and we remember. Suicide keeps coming



reellifewisdom.com

Williams acting in the Academy award-winning film, *Dead Poet's Society*.

back, and we keep asking: why is it here at all? A question of well-intentioned ignorance.

External and internal happiness are not mirrored, and Robin Williams is neither the first nor the last "happy person" to commit suicide. It isn't nearly as simple as being happy or sad. Depression has layers of complexity, and comes in many different forms for many different reasons. Now, in Williams' memory, we must take the opportunity to look at what causes tragedies like his.

We need to correct the notion that suicide is for attention or that it's an easy choice. Suicide does not work alone; depression is its partner. Depression is hopelessness in its severest form, and in addition to being upset that people take their lives, we should be upset that people suffer to begin with.

We can't keep saying that the victim is the perpetrator; depression isn't a choice. It's a disease that waits, dormant. Depression is elusive, hiding under the surface, only seen as the faltering embers of lit coals, flickering from underneath the cracked surface of its host. Nobody chooses to suffer.

"There's a little voice that says: 'jump'," said Williams in 2006, eight years before his death. "It isn't caused by anything. It's there. It waits."

Robin Williams didn't take his life—his disease did. Rather than saying he killed himself, we should say he died of depression.

A man who made us relentlessly happy suffered just as anyone can. When the world pretends funny people are immune and dismisses their pain

rather than lending support, it makes their struggle all the more difficult.

Robin Williams drained himself to bring happiness to others. He gave and gave without anybody giving back. Pretending he had no reason to suffer is a dishonor when, like any other person with depression, he had no way not to.

Our friend, our hero, the funniest man in the world. Robin Williams taught us so much while he was with us. We can learn something from every inch of his giant mark, even the etchings of his last moments. So let's not remember him as just another victim of depression. Let's remember him as the person who taught us to make a change in how we think about it.

A Successful Procedure

Ally Santa Maria
Arts & Review Editor

The Knick could have gone terribly wrong. It could have turned into one of those flashy hospital shows where the doctor is a drug addict and the hospital is slowly falling in on itself. It could have been one of those medical soap operas your grandma watches on daytime TV. But it isn't.

Directed by Steven Soderbergh, *The Knick* is an electrifying show, figuratively and literally (the Knickerbocker hospital does have some electrical issues). The show takes place in the year 1900

and is inspired by an old hospital of the same name located in the heart of Harlem—or should I say in the heat of racism and poor housing conditions—and, most importantly, disease. The head surgeon, John Thackery, (Clive Owen) is just your ordinary doctor from the 1900's—racist, addicted to cocaine, full of anger issues, and changing the world of medicine as people know it. The show is jam-packed with historical references; it almost seems like Soderbergh tried to fit a chunk of history class into one show.

But that's the best part. Every



hitfix.com

The Knick excites audiences with the perfect balance of drugs and racism.

second of the show is immersed in the 1900s, which allows for constant conflict. Whether that means watching Thackery twitch from

for softies. It's unapologetically realistic in the operating room. There are never any great saves in the *Knick*. Heck, the first

episode opens with Thackery in the operating room attempting to save a pregnant woman and her child from a hemorrhage. Both die. Nothing here is standard procedure and every surgical scene represents another attempt to help improve the medicine of the time.

All in all, *The Knick* is able to put a refreshing twist on a typical hospital show. The constant conflict and frequent historical references are suspenseful and interesting. Seriously, the show combines history, drugs, blood, and racism into a chaotic hospital without putting too much weight on one subject or too little on another. What's not to like?