

The last couple episodes of "24" have lacked the action and excitement of the four hour opening weekend, as the writers of the show have been setting the season up with plot developments. If you've been watching this show for any length of time, you know this will change soon. And there's a couple of well known actors set to enter the fray as new characters as well. Mitch recaps this past Monday's episode, and makes some bold predictions on what's yet to come on TV's most exciting show.



When bad things happen to good people, it's probably fate. When bad things happen to bad people, it's probably Jack Bauer...

When we left our intrepid crew last week, President Palmer-Lite was giving a half-assed speech, Biscuit Lennox was twirling his figurative moustache in anticipation of using the Constitution as toilet paper, Walid was doing his best Inspector Clouseau routine, and our hero Jack was demonstrating to his brother why they put warning labels on plastic bags telling people "not to put them over your head".

We are also two weeks into the part of this column where I'm supposed to make fun of my stupid predictions in the "Final Thoughts" part...but once again I haven't been proven wrong yet. OTOH, the only thing I've been proven right concerning last week is the Karen Hayes/Biscuit Lennox feud...but seeing that was on the previews, it didn't exactly take Kreskin to figure that one out.

But unfortunately for action junkies, we're at the point where they can't start showing much more non-stop action until they take a slight pause and set up some more plot. We also must get to the obligatory points in each season where (1) an unscrupulous president or high advisor

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takes advantage of a terrorist crisis to make a power grab and (2) Jack gets held hostage.

Yep...one of those annoying but necessary episodes where NOTHING gets resolved and all the plots get more confusing.

Recap.

Sorry it took Chad Lowe awhile to make his first appearance as Deputy Chief of Staff Reed Pollock. Seems he's been a bit busy lately hanging out in Divorce Court. It's lucky he's got this gig, as the only other offer on the book was some television commercial that was snagged up by Kevin Federline. Reed is the equally disgusting henchmen to Tom "Biscuit" Lennox (Biscuit, of course was Peter MacNicol's character on "Ally McBeal". Get used to seeing it). Hilary Swank sits at home laughing her ass off about the typecasting that puts Chad as a pathetic person leaching off from a famous person.

Seems Biscuit has all kinds of new laws he wants to implement immediately, most inspired by "Mein Kampf", and Karen has a bit of a problem with that. So Biscuit wants her O-U-T, and sends Reed out to do the dirty work.

Jack is still doing the Ziplock Freshness Test on his brother's pumpkin head. At the end of Round 1, Graem is a broken man, sobbing pitifully while telling Jack he doesn't know anything. Jack doesn't believe him and moves in for Round 2. Seeing him coming, Graem's tears dry up just about as quickly as does my daughter's after I agree to her latest demands, and he goes into "Save My Ass" mode, spilling the beans to Jack that his company actually hired Darren McCarthy to oversee the dismantling of the Russian nukes. Yeah...he Saw them go Over to the terrorists. Dad has now organized a security team to stake out McCarthy's last known hideout.

So it's into the JackMobile to find them...but not until after Jack and Marilyn exchange a look

as they're walking out of Graem's mansion. You know the one...it's where she lets him know "yeah, I'd do you again in a heartbeat". I see my wife giving the TV screen that look every now and then when there is a close up of Kiefer, and it really pisses me off. I guess she could say the same thing whenever I catch a close-up of Jessica Alba, but I digress.

Back at CTU, Nadia has found herself unable to work efficiently as her status as a "Middle East National" has led to her security being curtailed...Biscuit's Non-executive Orders sure kick in fast. This calls them to fall behind since we all know only five people do actual work at CTU; Bill, Nadia, Milo, Morris, and Chloe...the rest are just there for terrorist fodder when the inevitable attack upon CTU comes (and you know it will). Milo and Morris even stop sniping at each other for a few minutes as they try to coordinate the search for Fayed, the intel from Walid, and Jack's input regarding Family UberDisfunctional. At one point, Milo confronts Bill concerning Nadia's slow work, and Bill tells him about the latest Civil Rights Rape. Milo gets irked, and later logs into Nadia's workstation as himself so that she has all the clearance she needs to later betray her adopted country.

At the FDR Memorial Detention Center, Walid is still ingratiating himself to the local enemy combatants...er...Americans of Middle Eastern descent. He finds out that one of them smuggled in a cell phone and is in contact with the outside world. I know they are making those cell phones smaller every day, but DAMN...that still makes me wince thinking about how he snuck it in there. I wonder how long it'd take to scrub all the KY Jelly off the screen and buttons? (and thank you for that disturbing mental picture, Mitch).

So now it's Walid's job to take Heydar's phone away from him without being detected and then dial out so that CTU can get all the data from it. Luckily, it seems Walid went to Fagin Elementary School, and manages to stumble in front of Heydar and swipe it out of his shirt pocket. Heydar? It's more like HeyStupid. In any case, Walid gets the info to CTU and is about to slip the phone back when Heydar notices it's missing and all of a sudden we have an NBA game breaking out with Haydar and his boys playing the parts of Ron Artest and Jermaine O'Neil.

Good thing Walid first got all that crucial information to CTU. Oops...never mind. We officially have Red Herring #1 revealed as the detainees weren't "connected"; they were only getting their information off from a web site that was accessible to the entire world...at least to those

that aren't too busy downloading porn.

At various points during the episode there were about 60 seconds of total screen time for McCarthy and the Bimbette. Very minor in the overall scheme of things but it did include the only Fayed sighting of the day with McCarthy telling him the search for a new trigger man was taking longer than he thought. McCarthy states that he has an idea for someone but "he may have to force him to do it". Paging Analyst Morris!

Karen Hayes has been officially neutralized. Reed has dug up enough lackeys to lie about Bill's involvement in releasing Fayed years earlier due to some stupid technicality ...seems they didn't have one ounce of evidence against him. The damn commies! So rather than fight it, she wimps out, and Palmer-Lite wimps out in accepting her resignation. She asks to be assigned to CTU and is on her way to Los Angeles. In 24 Universe, that should only take three episodes.

Speaking of that, thank God that McCarthy's hangout was only ten minutes away from Stately Graem Manor! Jack leads the handcuffed gnome into the building, and then secures him to a bookcase in McCarthy's office so that he can investigate a noise. Jack encounters an armed thug, and proceeds to kick his ass. But then he's struck from behind by another armed thug he didn't see coming. WTF? Where is Jack's "spider-sense" that normally allows him to KNOW if someone is sneaking up behind him? It must have been disabled while he was imprisoned. Those Chinese Bastards!!!™

Good thing for Jack that Daddy dearest is right behind them, telling Thug #2, "it's OK, that's my son". Yeah, that's what you think...because once Graem has been freed, the thugs turn on Jack and Phillip, with Graem giving orders to take them away and "call me when it's over". Wow...I haven't seen that kind of a relationship between a parent and a child since Angelina Jolie and Jon Voight.

Final Thoughts.□

I am SO disappointed that they're showing Jack doing a bunch of things next week. I really was concerned that he would be killed in the first ten minutes, but now that suspense has been ruined (where is that sarcasm emoticon when I need it?).

I'm not sure Dear Old Dad is going to be so lucky, though. By the way, was I the only one struck by the "family resemblance" of the Bauers? We have James Cromwell at about 6'6" and rail thin. Kiefer Sutherland at 5'10" and buffed up. And then there is Paul McCrane at 5'2" and 225 pounds of pure marshmallow. Now despite my CYA prediction below...I'm thinking that the producers of the scenes from next week are throwing another Red Herring, and Dad might just survive.

Sandra Palmer is soon to earn her "Kim Bauer Pain In The Ass Award". She is going to be so pissed at Walid's fate that she'll end up screwing something up big time...probably in the form of blabbing about something or another that's supposed to be secret, with the terrorists benefiting from the information. Second guess? She forces the Feds to close the FDR Memorial Detention Center...and then we'll find out that one or more of the gang that tap danced on Walid's face really IS a terrorist.

I am not at all pleased that we are once again to have a Vice President trying to usurp power. It didn't really add that much when it happened to David Palmer in the second season, and now it's about to crop up again with Powers Boothe going after Wayne Palmer. Why does almost every day long attack of terrorism seem to lead to some coup attempt or another in 24 Universe?

Best Scene: Nothing truly stands out this week. Lots of exposition that will hopefully start paying off soon.

Jack's Current Body Count: 3. Again this week, no additions to the Body Count. Jack should have just saved himself some time and capped BrotherCreepy, but there's still time for

that. I'll say with 99% certainty that this goes up by at least two next week when he escapes from the Stupid Henchmen.

Who's the Traitor?: Current "Favorites" in order of probability:

1. Nadia. Milo is going to regret signing in for her.

2. Reed Pollock. If Biscuit Lennox isn't a traitor, just a goose stepping jerk who hates Liberty, then the slimy Reed probably is.

3. Vice President Boothe. Don't even know his character's name yet...but I know he's EVIL.

4. Milo. Could he be setting Nadia up?

5. Biscuit Lennox. What are the odds that he has pictures of G. Gordon Liddy and H.R. Haldeman in his office?

6. Morris. Only as a reluctant traitor.

7. Sandra Palmer. As mentioned above, I don't think it'll be intentional.

Life Expectancy: Unscientific wild assed guesses on how much longer certain people will still be breathing. I'm also adding in the chances that they'll live through the entire day. Only 18 hours to go.

Phillip Bauer – 1 more hour. We already know from the previews that Jack escapes the clutches of Graem's evil henchmen. Not so sure about Farmer Hoggett, giving Jack even more incentive to torture the little gnome before sending him to Hades. Chance of living through the day? 10%

Graem – 4 more hours. I'm bumping this up a bit as I think Graem has several more secrets to reveal before his usefulness to the story is done. But don't be surprised if it takes another twist due to his wife and kid. Chance of living through the day? 1%

McCarthy – 5 more hours. He gets a little more time as well as he and his Bimbette will need time to blackmail Morris about the triggers. Chance of living through the day? 0%

Morris – 8 more hours. I've never been more sure of a plot twist than I am with this one...which probably is good news for Morris, as they'll be another twist that proves me wrong. If not, he's toast. Chance of living through the day? 25%

Nadia or Bill Buchanan – 9 more hours. I'm going with an "either/or" pick here. Either Nadia is the traitor and dies, or else Bill succumbs to the Mason/Chapelle/McGill/Dessler disease that seems to affect CTU heads. Chance of BOTH living through the day? 33%

Fayed – 11 hours. I'm sticking with my time frame for him to exit and Gredenکو to take over the Chief Villain role. Chance of living through the day? 0%

Mike Doyle (Rick Schroder) – 14 more hours. Still know nothing about him. Chance of living through the day? 50%

President Logan – 16 more hours. He's GOT to be a buddy to Powers Boothe. I'm just praying they don't totally cop out and try to rehabilitate him as a good guy/advisor to Wayne Palmer. Let me remember him as the scumbag he truly is. Chance of living through the day? 75%

General Gredenکو – 17 hours, 40 minutes. As mentioned above, Fayed will be dispatched at some point which will leave Gredenکو as the main bad guy...and they always get it in the end. Chance of living through the day? 0%

Audrey Rains – 17 hours, 50 minutes. Sorry, Audrey, but you shouldn't have signed on to do that idiotic show "The Nine". So she gets TerriBauered in the end. Chance of living through the day? Who cares?

Falling off the list:

Walid – Now that his spying has only turned up Red Herring #1, and he only got the shit kicked out of him instead of a dirt nap...he'll spend the rest of the day in the hospital. And as long as it isn't the CTU infirmary, AKA The Alamo of the Medical Recovery Wards, he'll be fine.