

## Sopranos Recap - Episode Five, Final Season

Written by {ga=mitch}

Monday, May 07 2007 7:00 PM -

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Just four episodes remain in one of the most popular hour dramas to ever appear on television. And all hell is about to break loose. How will what happened this week impact the rest of the season? What will become of Tony, A.J., Paulie, and Christupha? Will Meadow become my love slave? Mitch answers all of these questions for us in his recap of last Sunday's episode of *The Sopranos*

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This was one of those episodes where it was like watching a train wreck. I'm not saying it was a bad episode, quite the opposite. But it was uncomfortable in the fact that you were seeing first hand four different men whose lives are spiraling downward to the inevitable crash, and nothing is going to be able to stop it. Like the aforementioned train wreck, it's horrible to watch, but impossible to turn away from.

For Paulie and Chris...who really cares? Their weaknesses and faults have been known for years, and you can honestly say that they deserve any bad thing that happens to them. For AJ, he has been infuriating for years, but in the past season it looked like he was about to get his act together. However, he is too weak to survive something as minor as a breakup, and now he seems destined to follow in his father's footsteps. (And let's give some major props to Robert Iler for going from a pudgy brat 12 year old in the first season into a hell of an actor.)

And speaking of his father, Tony is continuing to alternate between denial and depression...one moment drowning in despair due to the continual degradation of his life and The Family, the other whistling past the graveyard, insisting on convincing himself that everything will work out OK.

### Recap

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Tony wakes up and stumbles down the stairs in his traditional white robe singing “Comfortably Numb”. Heh. Not too much comfort around Casa de Mafioso these days, as AJ is in full “woe is me” mode, laying on the couch mindlessly watching TV and sobbing after his breakup with Blanca. Carmela is desperate to find anything to snap him out of it, so like any good Italian, she recommends food. This is why I prefer being of Scottish ancestry, because our usual suggestion is to “drink more”. AJ answers that food isn’t always the answer, to which Tony answers, “neither is acting like a whining little bitch”. Not much on the warm and fuzzy parenting, but I liked it.

Ah, but AJ is merely second place in the Battle of the Bitchers this week, placing far behind Christopher. It doesn’t start out that way, as Chris is initially enjoying himself, using his father-in-law Al and his hardware store to fence stolen power tools Paulie and Tony are getting from the deal they made with the Cubans when they were in Miami. He’s selling most of them to cops, who then use them on off-the-books construction jobs (including a tacky acoustic ceiling for Chris. Does anyone still have those things?)

Chris gives Paulie his share of the loot, and of course the dumb ox has to come up with several snide remarks regarding Chris not drinking. Later at a cookout for his daughter’s christening, Tony continues ragging on Chris, criticizing him for his non-alcoholic beer, his absence from the gang as of late, and his really crappy barbecuing skills...which may be understandable as Chris isn’t exactly Emeril. Chris starts complaining about his disease (alcoholism), which Tony promptly dismisses, telling Chris to “show some balls”. Chris whines about his mother and father’s addictions, which Tony dismisses as a crutch. I used to have a boss that was about that understanding. I think he’s selling used trailers now.

In a five minute scene that keeps coming up briefly every week, Tony talks to the Feds about the “Arabs or the Arabians” (the themes for tonight’s episodes were malaprops and boobs). Tony fills in Agents Goddard and Harris about his encounter, getting a name and cell phone number from Chris. Tony is hoping for some “banked goodwill”, but all Harris will promise him is a file that would make things easier on him if he were ever convicted of a crime.

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AJ keeps getting worse, breaking down and crying after seeing Blanca again, and then retreating to his room to lay, in Tony's words, "in a fetus position". Which I guess is better than laying in a feces position, because we saw enough of that last week with the sick little Spatafore brat. Tony gives his best fatherly advice, telling AJ to go out and get a blowjob...I guess he had that on his mind after having Carmela's phone call interrupting him setting up a rendezvous with a waitress from the Bing. All I know is that I remember lots of talks from my father to me when I was moping around, and not once did the man recommend that. Bummer.

But nothing seems to be working, as when we next see AJ, he's at his job at the pizzeria, and after seeing a Young Couple In Love at one of the booths, he starts weeping again, and promptly quits his job. Another cute musical touch from David Chase, playing "White Flag" from Dido in the background. Dido may not be quitting, but that's about all AJ knows how to do.

So what does any father need most when he's concerned that his adult son is a total loser? Someone to come up to him and demonstrate how other kids the exact same age can succeed. In this case it's Patsy Parisi giving Tony a thick envelope of money from gambling, thanks to his son Jason, who is running a gambling operation while at Rutgers along with his friend Jason Gervase, two wild and crazy guys "majoring in cash and minoring in ass". Nice work if you can get it. Tony looks at the two young men acting like normal men would in a strip club (oogling at the naked bodies), and you can see the look of sadness in his face showing clearly that he is wishing beyond anything that his son could be like them. You know the old saying, Tony...be careful what you wish for.

The minor aggravation Chris felt towards Paulie gets dialed up several notches when Paulie sends his goonish nephew and his friend to steal some of the power tools from Al's shop. Al catches them in the act, and they lie their way out of it, which didn't fool Chris for a minute. And when you can't fool someone as dense as Christufa...you know you're a bad liar. Chris confronts Paulie, who first denies trying to steal them, and then refuses to pay for them. This prompts Chris to go to Tony, who tells him to go get "whatever it is you drink" while he finished "important business" with Sil and Bobby. Rejected, Chris leaves.

Meadow seems to think AJ is suicidal, as she recognizes many of the same warning signs that a college acquaintance showed prior to jumping off a building. Tony takes this news into his next session with Dr. Melfi. He had been prepared to stop going to therapy, but he now feels

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that he will need to go on with it “forever”. He does believe that AJ will kill himself, and it’s tearing Tony apart as he blames himself for having “rotten genes” that have “infected my kid’s soul. THAT is my gift to my son.” And once again, Tony says a line that has been repeated several time this season, and appears to be the theme of it all; “is this all there is?” I’ll let you know in four weeks, Tony, when we see if you live or not. If you does, no it won’t be “all there is”, as we’ll probably get a movie in a year or two (or five, knowing David Chase).

Chris attends to an AA meeting, where he goes off on “his boss” and how poorly he’s being treated, complaining that his inability to socialize is taking food out of his child’s mouth. No, Chris, your inability to THINK is what’s screwing things up. And later on, he once again brings up the Adriana thing, whining to a WASP-y corporate type about how wrong it was that he didn’t get enough props for taking Tony’s side in the dispute with Adriana. Hello! Earth to Christufa! You’re damn lucky Tony didn’t whack you along with her after the coke addictions both of you had led things to that point.

So the Jasons are having a party at the Bing. Tony has to order AJ to go along. The day I would have bitched about my father ORDERING me to go indulge in underage drinking and getting lap dances from strippers would have been the day I needed to be committed. Which may not be a bad idea for AJ. He does at least attend therapy with probably the Worlds Worst Psychiatrist. AJ admits to thinking about suicide and goes on medication. Hopefully not the type that creates really bad reactions when mixed with copious amounts of booze.

Back at Al’s Hardware, Little Paulie and Jason Molinaro strike again (and WTF is with all the Jasons...can’t Chase figure out another first name for these guys?) Chris handles the news in a very mature manner, going up to Little Paulie’s card game and throwing him out the second story window, breaking six vertebrae. Uncle Paulie reacts with similar dignity and decorum, using his Cadillac to assist Chris with some landscaping work at his McMansion.

Meanwhile, the now medicated AJ attends Jason and Jason’s Excellent Boob-fest. And I must say that I believe Chase broke the record this week for the number of different topless women showed on a one hour dramatic show on cable TV. I’m not 100% certain, so I think I’m going to have to do some research of some of the episodes of “Rome” and/or “Cathouse” to make sure. Yes, it’s a dirty job, but nothing is too menial if it benefits the readers.

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Later the boys hit a frat party, where AJ starts to feel like he fits in, once again getting the “celebrity son” treatment, being paraded as “Tony Soprano, Jr” in order to intimidate some local frat boys that owe gambling money. When that threat doesn’t work on a certain trust-fund baby, the boys drag him out, rough him up a bit, and then decide that he could really use a pedicure; with sulfuric acid. Bet that would take care of Diggler the Disgusting Toenail Fungus character. In any case, AJ helps hold down Biff, and you can tell in his eyes that he’s coming out of his Blanca funk, and thinks he has finally discovered his calling in life.

With that in mind, it’s back to the Bing to see where his future will take him. Tony lets Chris know how all the finances will shake out after all the boostings, landscaping, and hospital bills. Chris goes over to Paulie to make nice, and decides that if he ever wants to get back into everyone’s good graces, he needs to start drinking like a fish and making a total blabbering idiot of himself. A couple of hours later, he’s totally sloshed, rambling on and on about being a father. Like all of us asshole men do when one of our buddies gets too inebriated and won’t shut up, they (mostly Paulie) respond by making nasty jokes at his expense. And as usual, Paulie eventually crosses the line, making a crack about Chris’ baby daughter eventually working as a stripper at the Bing.

Chris staggers out of there, and since his sponsor is out of town, he decides to barge in on JT, who is alone and working on a script for “Law and Order: Parking Violation Unit”. It’s a moving script about a meter maid who gamely struggles on despite near crippling carpal tunnel syndrome. JT really doesn’t want to hear Chris’s whining (join the club), and tries to tell him to just work the program to get straight again. Chris is too busy with his Pity Party, bemoaning his fate in life, and making threats to go to the Feds and blow everything up, with the objective of eventually living a good life in Arizona under the Wit-less Protection Program. JT tells him that he doesn’t want to hear it, and tries to get him to leave...so Chris turns around and shoots him in the head. OK...that was a bit of a shock. But I guess it shouldn’t have surprised me, since Chris was ALWAYS hitting JT in the head with something; his laptop, his award trophy...so lets just add one last thing to the list. Chris staggers home, and tries to put back up one of the destroyed trees before going in.

We end with some more staggering home, as Tony pulls in from the Bing, hears a vehicle come barreling up the driveway, and pulls out a sawed-off shotgun from the center console. I wonder how much that option cost? No need to worry though, as it’s just AJ returning from his kegger. In the kitchen, Carmela and Meadow are still up and talking about Meadow’s “mystery

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date”, so they all sit down for a charming family get-together.

The calm before the storm.

**Best Line:** “Less filling. Tastes like ass”. Tony’s comment about Chris’s non-alcoholic beer. And he is so right.

**Best Scene:** As has been the case so often this year, the best scene was Tony at Dr. Melfi’s office. Emmy time again for James Gandolfini after Tony can barely contain his grief and frustration when detailing AJ’s problems, and his guilt in passing on his predisposition towards depression to his son.

**Latest Whacking Odds.** Damn...I had JT on the list almost all of last year, and now that I take him off, Chris whacks him. Sorry, JT...my bad.

- 1) Paulie (odds – even) – This battle between he and Chris will not end well.
- 2) Chris: (odds – even) – The more I think of it, the more I believe that Paulie will kill Chris, forcing Tony to take him out in retaliation, making things worse for Tony as the guilt of ignoring Chris, and in not killing Paulie when he had the chance will eat at him.
- 3) Phil (odds – 2:1) – No Phil sightings this week. Looks like they pick back up on that impending war next week.
- 4) Carlo (odds – 4:1) – With Paulie and Chris about to take each other out, I still pick Carlo to be the one hit by Phil’s crew.
- 5) Uncle JuniorMummyHead (odds – 5:1) – I think he checks out early in the last episode.
- 6) Bobby: (odds – 6:1) – The other possible target of Phil.
- 7) Silvio (odds – 10:1) – Still feel the need to keep the entire main crew on the list.

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8) AJ (odds – 15:1) – At this point, I think AJ might actually be safe. He'll cause Tony more grief alive and following his footsteps than he would if he died.

9) Tony (odds – 15:1) – The way this could all shake out, Tony may be worse off living than dying at the end.