

Sopranos Recap: Episode 8

Written by {ga=mitch}

Tuesday, May 02 2006 7:00 PM -

Mitch is back with his weekly recap of The Sopranos, and he liked this weeks episode alot better than last weeks. The stage is set for what should be a dynamite final four episodes before the series resumes with eight more shows starting in January 2007. Find out what happened, what's gonna happen, and who's gonna get whacked.



Excellent recovery Sunday night from last week's ridiculous show. No sign of Artie or Paulie, minimal stupidity from Christopher, and an excellent script that hopefully sets up a dynamite final four episodes.

Recap: It was a well directed episode that juggled three main story lines; AJ's impending meltdown, Vito's continued attempts to stay alive and find happiness in New Hampshire, and Tony's efforts to deal with both AJ's problems and his own temptation.

Vito has renamed himself "Vince" to the local yokels in New Hampshire, convincing them he's there to write a book...even though he seems to come from the Kitty Kelly School of Writing, and has no real knowledge of his own subject. Mostly, he just waddles around the town, keeping his gaydar actively pinging for Jim, the owner/cook of the diner.

One night Vito is part of a crowd watching a house fire when Jim rumbles up on his Harley Hog in his volunteer fireman outfit, and proceeds to hero himself up to the second floor of a burning building to save a child. Vito is in total lust as he makes goo goo eyes towards the strapping savior who couldn't be more gay if his

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name was J.J. Bullock.

Later Jim invites him to join his table at the bar...where it seems once again that the entire population of this little burg is gay. They kiss outside of the bar, and a freaked out Vito calls Jim a fag and hits him. Once again, we have one of Tony's crews throwing the first punch and then getting the crap kicked out of him. Maybe next week we can have Benny and Vito's battle from the loser's bracket...although I'm sure the Paula Jones/Tonia Harding battle would be better. But Vito eventually goes back to the diner, admits to Jim how hard it is 'to live a lie', and they proceed to mount up a couple of bikes...and then later make out in a field in a "Brokeback Mountain" inspired scene that I could really, really have done without...while my wife could have done without me breaking out spontaneously into a Sam Kinison impression.

Vito's not the only one doing the horizontal mamba, as the 'equipment' is finally working again for Tony, and he's back to his old, horny self. Life is good with Carmela, Little Tony (and I don't mean AJ), and work...so it's time for David Chase to throw some curves at this sickening bit of bliss, and those curves comes in the form of Julianna Margulies as a real estate agent who is representing "Jamba Juice" in their effort to buy a building owned by Tony that was housing a poultry shop. He hits on her right away, and while she rebuffs him, that doesn't stop him from trying, the second time coming at the Bing...with the same results. All that was missing in that scene was Keith Hernandez and Clyde Frazier yelling out "reeee-jected!" and then pimping some crappy hair dye.

But screwing mafia kingpins, even if they are old, fat, and married, always seems to be at the top of the "must do" list for every good looking professional woman not named Melfi. So once Tony agrees to a price that was 57% higher than the initial offer, Julianna decides to celebrate her \$ 24K commission with some champagne and undie ripping with Tony. Unfortunately for her, she unbuttons Tony's expensive shirt in the exact same manner that Carmela buttoned it in the prior scene. Faster than you can say "shrinkage", Tony's guilt becomes too much,

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and he and his blue balls leave the apartment for the comforts of a cold shower and some smoked turkey...oops...one out of two ain't good. So we get some serious anger projection onto Carmela, which she gives right back to him.

I can't wait for the follow-up to Melfi after this one, as Tony spent part of one of his sessions trying to justify his need for some 'extra curricular activities'. More interesting, however, will be the follow-ups to the entire AJ issue...as they appear to have finally hit the breaking point. Melfi's discussion with her own therapist and mentor Elliot might have been some foreshadowing. "It's just a matter of time before he (Tony) decompensates".

AJ doesn't have much use for his job at Blockbuster, as he's more interested in dropping f-bombs and talking about video games than helping customers. If the Blockbusters I've visited are any indication, his behavior means AJ will be fast-tracked into managing his own store soon. When he's not screwing off at his job, he's clubbing it in New York, where all his friends leach off from his name to get into hot clubs, and then stick AJ with \$1,800 bar tabs. What a putz! Someone sticks me with a \$1,800 tab, and you can bet your ass I'd end up with some new audio/video equipment from their houses...but AJ's not exactly the sharpest tool in the shed, so he just puts up with it, selling his drum set and hitting up Mommy and Daddy for more cash. He also sleeps in every day, waking up at the crack of noon to watch "Aqua Teen Hunger Force". Funny...I thought he lived in the Soprano household, but he's obviously spent time in the Cyrus abode to learn those tricks.

He's also still feeling the need to 'do something about' Uncle Junior. He finally succumbs to the pressure to be something other than just the son of a mafia Don, and slips a hunting knife into his jacket to go see the incarcerated loon. But he's too nervous, and after almost peeing himself standing there shaking, the knife clatters to the floor before AJ can go OJ on Jr. He's wrestled to the floor and arrested, forcing Tony to call in some favors with a couple of the people at the police station to have him released without being charged with attempted murder.

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What follows is one of the best scenes of the season, as AJ states that all he wants to do is to fulfill Tony's favorite scene in 'The Godfather', where son Michael avenges the attempt on Don Corleone's life. Tony seems genuinely touched by the feelings behind the attempt, but tells AJ it's time to grow up, and not to confuse a movie with real life.

AJ responds by having a panic attack later on in a club...pretty much putting the cherry on his Week From Hell.

So the board is set for the last four episodes. Phil is still after Vito. Tony is about 90% back physically and mentally from the shooting and ready to kick ass. AJ is ready to start following his father's footsteps. And it looks like we have some serious internal issues next week with Bobby Bacala and Paulie going after one another.

Should be a great month of May for fans.

Best Scene: As noted, James Gandolfini and Robert Iler did a fantastic job with their final scene.

Most Humorous Scene: Not really that much side-splittingly funny this week. Sly nod though to the scene where Patsy and Burt were trying to shake down a new Starbucks store. The manager admits that the company couldn't care less if the place was vandalized, and that beating the employees would only result in new employees from corporate. "It's over for the little guy," whines Patsy. Then to make matters worse, Tony sells out the poultry store, ensuring it will also be taken over by a corporate monolith with no need for protection payouts. "What

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the fuck is happening to this neighborhood?" laments Patsy in the last line of the night.

Best Lines: "He's incarcerated for the rest of his unnatural life" – Tony, talking to AJ about Junior.

Latest Whacking Odds:

Dramatic change at the top of the board. Screw it. If the Texans can do it, so can I.

1) Phil (odds – 1:2) – The Mario Williams of the Board. Just a question of who he takes with him.

2) Vito (odds – 1:3) – The only out I see for Vito (other than him coming out of the closet), would be if Jim and the girls from the volunteer fire department get the drop on Phil.

3) Uncle JuniorMummyHead (odds – 4:1) – It'll be a little harder after AJ's inept attempt. Maybe on the next visit Junior can come after him with a broken Metamucil bottle, and AJ can do his best Ray Lewis impression.

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4) Paulie or Bobby: (odds – 5:1) – My weekly decent into madness by predicting something based upon .2 of a second of preview. Someone help me.

5) Benny Fazio: (odds – 8:1) – It wouldn't bother me in the slightest if Chase never bothers revisiting this story line.

6) Artie (odds – 10:1) – See above.

7) Chris: (odds – 15:1) – They've been dancing around 'the Adriana Card' all season. My guess is that it comes to a head in either Episode 10 or 11.

8) Finn (odds – 20:1) – Who?

9) Johnny Sack (odds – 100:1) – You'd get better odds regarding Johnny getting out of prison before the end of the season.