

## TV Review: Donal Logue Leads Pack of Misfits in Charming ‘Terriers’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 8, 2010 - 7:39am

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CHICAGO – FX continues their streak of quality programming that includes “Rescue Me,” “Justified,” “Archer,” “The League,” and “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia” with the very-promising-and-entertaining “Terriers,” a new riff on the private investigator drama with a spectacular pack of TV veterans both in-front and behind-the-camera.



Television Rating: **4.0/5.0**

Creator/Executive Producer Ted Griffin (“Ocean’s Eleven”) and Executive Producer Shawn Ryan (“The Shield”) have crafted a clever, witty mystery series not unlike the network’s excellent “Justified” in the way it captures a larger-than-life crime-solver both on-the-job and through his personal problems. “Terriers” is a more erratic program in several ways (some good, some bad) but it is another edgy entry for a network that has helped redefine TV drama in the last decade.



Donal Logue as Hank Dolworth and Michael Raymond-James as Britt Pollack

Photo credit: Patrick McElhenney/FX

After years of failing to find the right project (in mediocre TV shows like “Grounded For Life” and brilliant-but-canceled ones like “Knights of Prosperity”), Donal Logue finally gets the role of his career as Hank Dolworth. Hank is practically a walking cliché — the former cop who also happens to be a struggling alcoholic who still loves his ex-wife — but Logue finds the truth within the archetype and makes this scruffy P.I. feel genuine from scene one. And he only gets better as the season goes along.



L-R: Donal Logue as Hank Dolworth and Michael Raymond-James as Britt Pollack in *TERRIERS* premiering on FX.  
*Photo credit: Mike Muller/FX*

Logue is partnered with the charismatic Michael Raymond-James (“True Blood”) as Britt Pollack. Britt’s a loyal partner to Hank but he serves much more of a dramatic purpose than mere backup. The cast is rounded out by Kimberly Quinn (“House”) as Hank’s ex-wife Gretchen, Laura Allen (“The 4400”) as Britt’s girlfriend Katie, and Rockmund Dunbar (“Prison Break”) as Hank’s former colleague and connection to the force.

The on-camera talent in “Terriers” is clearly talented but the behind-the-scenes crew is even-more remarkable. Shawn Ryan has been one of the most consistent creative voices in television and he’s joined by the great Tim Minear (“Buffy the Vampire Slayer,” “Firefly”) as Executive Producer with episodes directed by Craig Brewer (“Hustle & Flow”), Clark Johnson (“The Shield”), Guy Ferland (an amazing amount of television directing jobs), John Dahl (“The Last Seduction”), Adam Arkin, and Rian Johnson (“The Brothers Bloom”).

What brought all of these A-listers to “Terriers”? At first, the premiere may seem like a relatively generic mystery series. An old friend from the force who hasn’t quite lost his alcoholic ways contacts Hank and asks for help. His daughter recently called in fear for her life. The boys take the assignment and find themselves in a web of corruption, sex, and murder. These are two men who clearly have their own needs as priority #1 but also have strong moral values. The opening scene features them stealing a dog to get free laundry but one also gets the feeling that Britt wouldn’t have taken the job if he didn’t think the dog belonged with the ex-wife he returned it to. They may take a lot of jobs for money, but won’t sell their souls. They’re two great characters.





Donal Logue as Hank Dolworth in TERRIERS Wednesday, Sep. 8 on FX.

Photo credit: Patrick McElhenney/FX

And the strength of the supporting cast should not be under-valued. Laura Allen was great on “The 4400” and has a pitch-perfect chemistry with Raymond-James that only grows stronger in future episodes. And the dynamic between Logue and Quinn is perfect. Quinn wisely doesn’t play Hank’s ex-wife as a bitter shrew, imbuing her with a palpable sense of feeling for her troubled ex along with the awareness that they just weren’t meant to be. A fantastic pair of scenes in the second episode in which Hank remembers a happy moment from their past followed by a current one stands out among the best of the season and it’s notable that what is essentially a mystery-of-the-week series places such emphasis on character instead of crime.

At its best, “Terriers” reminds one of Elmore Leonard’s work in the way that it weaves serious subjects around unique personalities (making the “Justified” comparison — that show is based on a Leonard book — more clear-cut). But Griffin, who wrote the pilot, doesn’t over-play the quirkiness. In fact, the show, especially in its elongated pilot, can sometimes feel a bit too underplayed. As is often the case, it takes a few episodes for the characters to find a three-dimensional rhythm. The premiere is more about potential than an out-of-the-gate success like “Justified.”

The potential of “Terriers” is for a multiple-year hit for a network that has continued to take creative risks. Shawn Ryan took the relatively-generic structure of the cop drama and produced one of the best programs of the last two decades in “The Shield.” The ambitions of “Terriers” don’t seem as high, but the cast and crew are clearly talented enough to take this venture wherever it goes. As the show continued to surprise me over the first few episodes with more and more wonderful character moments per installment as it went along, I started to wonder if this could become one of the best shows on TV. It’s not there yet but the answer is an obvious yes.

*‘Terriers,’ which airs on FX, stars Donal Logue, Michael Raymond-James, Kimberly Quinn, Laura Allen, Jamie Denbo, and Rockmund Dunbar. It was created by Ted Griffin. The show premieres on September 8th, 2010 at 9PM CST.*



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