

TV Review: FOX's 'Lone Star' Features Charismatic Cast, Intriguing Premise

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 20, 2010 - 8:02am

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CHICAGO – In a world where it's becoming increasingly difficult for many people to hold one job or keep together one family, it's not hard to see audiences entertained by watching a man try to juggle two of each. Such is the story of "Lone Star," a very promising FOX soap opera that could be a breakout hit of the season if it survives one of the toughest time slots of the week.



Television Rating: **4.0/5.0**

With a pilot directed by Marc Webb ("(500) Days of Summer," the "Spider-Man" reboot in pre-production), "Lone Star" fills a hole in the broadcast network schedule that you might not have even realized was there. The broadcast schedules have been overrun with procedurals ("NCIS," "CSI"), reality shows, or high-concept dramas that want to be the next "Lost." The result has been the disappearance of a genre that used to rule the ratings — the adult soap opera. "Lone Star" is one of the best of the genre in a long time and if it didn't have a gigantic uphill battle with its time slot, it would be easy to proclaim it an instant hit. We know there are a lot of fans of "Dancing With the Stars," "Monday Night Football," and "Two and a Half Men" out there (and potentially some new ones for "The Event") but those behemoths don't need your ratings help. "Lone Star" does.



Robert/Bob Allen is a charismatic con man (James Wolk, R) ingratiates himself with his wife's (Adrienne Palicki, L) family in the series premiere of LONE STAR, a new drama airing Monday, Sept. 20 (9:00-10:00 PM ET/PT) on FOX.

Photo credit: ©2010 Fox Broadcasting Co. CR: Bill Matlock/FOX

The premiere of "Lone Star" introduces us to an impressive ensemble headed by the charismatic James Wolk as a con man who is about to attempt his greatest job — turning his life legit. Ever since he was a child, Bob Allen and his abusive father John (David Keith) have been running scams and we meet them in the middle of a remarkably elaborate, multi-year, multi-million dollar job. He's the Donnie Brasco of con men, having implanted himself deep undercover in two completely-realized lives as "Bob" and "Robert" and as one of his marks looks like it could fall apart, our hero realizes that he doesn't want to give up either existence.



Robert/Bob Allen (James Wolk, C) is a con man who has meticulously constructed two lives in two different parts of Texas. LONE STAR premieres Monday, Sept. 20 (9:00-10:00 PM ET/PT) on FOX. Pictured L-R: Bryce Johnson, Jon Voight, Mark Deklin, Adrianne Palicki, James Wolk, Eloise Mumford and David Keith.

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As Bob, the most impressive con man in Texas has completely worked his way into a mega-rich Texas oil family. He's married to the daughter (Adrianne Palicki) of the notorious boss (Jon Voight), who's just about ready to hand the keys to the kingdom to his new son-in-law, despite the objections of Clint's actual son Trammell (Mark Deklin). Allen wisely uses another brother-in-law (Bryce Johnson) as an ally against the one who is starting to grow suspicious of all his new relative's nights spent away.

As Clint, Voight blends a perfect mix of malice and Southern charm. With just a few scenes, he embodies a man who will do whatever it takes to make money off his business. The irony, of course, being that this father figure's ruthless pursuit of the all-mighty buck is arguably not significantly different from Bob's actual father. Clint just gets a profile in Forbes Magazine.

On the other side of Texas, "Robert" lives a more blue-collar life with the lovely Lindsay (Eloise Mumford). The scam in Midland, Texas involves more on-the-ground action than in the board room as Allen has been steadily draining his friends and neighbors of their life savings with oil well deals that will never pay off. As this house of cards begins to crumble in the season premiere, Robert/Bob must decide whether to cut one life, disappear from both, or take the daring third door and try and keep them both in play.

So much of the success of "Lone Star" sits squarely on the shoulders of James Wolk. He's not only in nearly every scene of the premiere but we need to believe that he can first build two lives from complete cons but then also would choose to keep them together. Wolk is spectacular. He's charismatic, believable, and crafts a fascinating character in just one episode. The most promising thing is to see where Wolk goes from here in future episodes and if "Lone Star" is a hit then this young man will be a star. The ensemble is strong overall, especially Voight and Keith, but most of the premiere relies on building Wolk's character and he's excellent.

With excellent production values, intelligent dialogue, and fascinating characters, "Lone Star" has an incredible amount of potential. One of the reasons that the show is starting to build significant buzz is that it's not like anything else on TV right now. As so many other network development teams were looking for the next "Lost" or the next "C.S.I.," they never realized that by ignoring one of the most timeless genres on television — the adult-driven soap opera — they would make it feel so new again.

'Lone Star,' which airs on FOX, stars James Wolk, Adrianne Palicki, Jon Voight, Eloise Mumford, Bryce Johnson, Mark Deklin, and David Keith. It premieres on Monday, September 20th, 2010 at 8PM CST.



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