

TV Review: HBO's Daring 'Eastbound & Down' Returns For Second Season

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 26, 2010 - 2:49pm

- [Ana De La Reguera](#) [2]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [3]
- [Danny McBride](#) [4]
- [David Gordon Green](#) [5]
- [Eastbound & Down](#) [6]
- [Efren Ramirez](#) [7]
- [HBO](#) [8]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [9]
- [Jody Hill](#) [10]
- [Marco Rodriguez](#) [11]
- [Michael Pena](#) [12]
- [Stevie Little](#) [13]
- [Television](#) [14]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [15]

CHICAGO – There's no more daring performance on television right now than what Danny McBride does on HBO's hilarious "Eastbound & Down." Watching McBride deliver a performance that is this completely fearless in a medium so often dominated by the fear that comes with appealing to the lowest common denominator is reason alone to watch the season premiere of HBO's "Eastbound & Down," easily one of the funniest programs on television right now.



Television Rating: **4.5/5.0**

The second season premiere, airing tonight, September 26th, 2010, finds McBride's Kenny Powers deep south of the border in Copales, Mexico, running a cockfighting ring under the name Steve and saying things like "*you pay Steve when his cock wins.*" In one of Powers' typically-great bits of narration, we learn that Kenny is "*haunted by the sacrifices he's had to make*" after leaving North Carolina and every remaining bit of fame and love behind.



Danny McBride in HBO's Eastbound and Down
Photo credit: Fred Norris/HBO

For the second season, "Eastbound & Down" has ditched the setting and all of the supporting cast (except for Stevie Little as Kenny's number one fan Stevie, who returns in episode two after hunting Kenny down) but its over-sized central character remains the same. Kenny Powers is still seeking fame, respect, and adoration through the haze of his insane ego. He's just doing it in Mexico instead of the South.



Danny McBride in HBO's Eastbound and Down
Photo credit: Fred Norris/HBO

The first episode is a bit of a transition for "Eastbound & Down" and fans who fell in love with the amazing six-episode first season may be a bit thrown off by its rhythms. It's not many shows that can completely change location and cast and not suffer any growing pains at all and the season premiere is a little thin on laughs when compared to the six episodes of the first season. But, by the end of episode one, Kenny is back on a baseball team and the second episode is one of the best in the history of the series as Stevie returns for the "Hispanic adventure" and Kenny tries to figure out what he could really achieve by playing for an unpopular Mexican baseball team.

Other supporting players in season two include a love interest for Kenny (the gorgeous Ana De La Reguera), the maniacal owner (Michael Pena) of Kenny's new team, his manager (Marco Rodriguez), and a neighbor (Efren Ramirez) who helps Kenny out when he makes mistakes like shooting Stevie in the leg.

There are certain shows that one can safely say are "for everyone." I think any demographic can get something rewarding out of "Modern Family," "Boardwalk Empire," or even "Mad Men." I would never conceivably suggest that a show like "Eastbound & Down" is for everyone. There are more slang referrals to genitals in a typical half-hour than any other program in recent memory. This show will certainly offend some people who tune in unprepared for what's to come and I can't blame them at all.

However, the fact that the season premiere of "Eastbound & Down" contains a few dozen variations on the joke about "Steve's cock" should not diminish the writing on this program. Comedy rarely gets the credit it deserves and there's a false impression that if you're being arguably offensive than you're taking the easy joke. That's not always the case. Yes, going for jokes about breasts and balls is usually a sign of desperation, but it's not always the rule.

The writers on "Eastbound & Down" aren't offensive for the sake of being offensive; the offensive behavior fits their character. They're just being consistent and, in their own way, using the offensiveness for the sake of realism. The way they have turned this larger-than-life character into more than a mere caricature is remarkable. People like Kenny Powers exist. You just rarely see them on television.

And that's what's so great about "Eastbound & Down." It's like nothing else out there. The only disappointing thing about "Eastbound & Down" is that the season is only seven episodes long. Perhaps it's better that we get Kenny Powers in small doses.

'Eastbound & Down,' which airs on HBO, stars Danny McBride, Stevie Little, Ana De La Reguera, Michael Pena, Marco Rodriguez, and Efren Ramirez. The second season premiere, directed by Jody Hill, airs on Sunday, September 26th, 2010 at 9:30PM CST.



[16]

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- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/eastbound-and-down>
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