

TV Review: 'Human Target' Adds Two Characters to Entertaining Action Series

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on November 17, 2010 - 2:59pm

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CHICAGO – FOX's action series "Human Target" returns tonight, November 17th, 2010, hoping to find the larger audience that didn't really show up to the party in season one. "Human Target" is one of those on-the-line shows, a series that seems to have failed to catch fire but still produces enough smoke to stay on the air. Is this the season it becomes a hit?



Television Rating: **3.5/5.0**

I'm starting to wonder if that will ever happen. There are certain shows that I look at and think the time has passed on that program developing a sizable audience or creative rhythm and the clock is merely ticking to cancellation, "Human Target" is not yet one such show. For action fans missing "24" or the people who love programs like "Burn Notice," there's no reason they shouldn't be watching this well-made program. And it doesn't hurt that "Human Target" seems to be taking itself more seriously in season two, trying to add the emotional weight that might have kept it from becoming a water-cooler hit last season. Two hot female characters and a darker tone are good ways to add variety to a program that sometimes lacked it in the past.



Human Target
Photo credit: FOX

The season certainly starts dark, including a gruesome shot of what happens when a man's hand meets a shotgun blast. Naturally, the season premiere, "Ilsa Pucci," picks up exactly where last season left off: Winston (Chi McBride) has been kidnapped by a maniac and Chance (Mark Valley) and Guerrero (Jackie Earle Haley) are forced to stage a daring rescue. Once that's out of the way and Chance has mentally washed himself clean with six months in a Buddhist monastery, the case-of-the-week kicks in, but this is no ordinary mystery as it will

add two new characters to a show that had a pretty-small and pretty-masculine ensemble in season one.



Human Target
Photo credit: FOX

Most of the pretty ladies in season one were of the guest star variety as the show stuck with three principal players in Valley, McBride, and Haley. That's changing in season two with the addition of the wife of a software billionaire philanthropist named Ilsa Pucci (Indira Varma), who comes to Chance to help her figure out who killed her husband. She's looking for someone "to put [her] in the line of fire. Risk [her] life so [she] can get it back." She challenges Chance's bravery to get him back into the game. Meanwhile, the group becomes involved with a gorgeous, feisty thief named Ames (Janet Montgomery), who seems likely to be a younger, sexier version of Winston — another reckless supporting character meant to balance the suave superhero at the center of the show.

Fans of the program know that Valley has the perfect alpha male charisma to carry a show like this and that McBride and Haley are great supporting actors in whatever they do, so the question is how do the new ingredients change the flavor of the show? After one episode, I'm not yet sold on Varma, who doesn't yet feel genuine. She's trying a bit too hard to sell the upper-crust socialite aspect of her character and does not yet have chemistry with the rest of the ensemble. She's beautiful but not quite believable but that could change. On the other hand, Montgomery could provide a much-needed bit of energetic spark to a show with three leads that can be awful monotone at times. She's the more promising addition.

Overall, the season premiere of "Human Target" may feature a darker tone and new characters, but it's primarily the same program with the strengths and weaknesses of last season. On the one hand, the show features theatrical caliber production values, great action scenes, and a fantastic ensemble. On the other hand, the dialogue is still too forced for even a program like this one and, more disconcertingly, they seem to be running out of ideas. How many times can Chance dress up and go to a high society function where things are obviously going to haywire? And the villain of the premiere couldn't be any more obvious.

I still like "Human Target" but the window of time in which that like will turn to love is closing. With so many options for your viewing time, how long will you stick with a show that's "okay"? We all have a few programs on our season pass that we know aren't among the best on TV but that we still enjoy. "Human Target" still falls into that category, but for how long?

'Human Target,' which airs on FOX, stars Mark Valley, Chi McBride, Jackie Earle Haley, Indira Varma, and Janet Montgomery. The second season premieres on November 17th, 2010 at 7pm CST.



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By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [15]

Content Director

HollywoodChicago.com

brian@hollywoodchicago.com [14]

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