

TV Feature: 2011 Fall Network TV Schedule Predictions

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 9, 2011 - 10:27am

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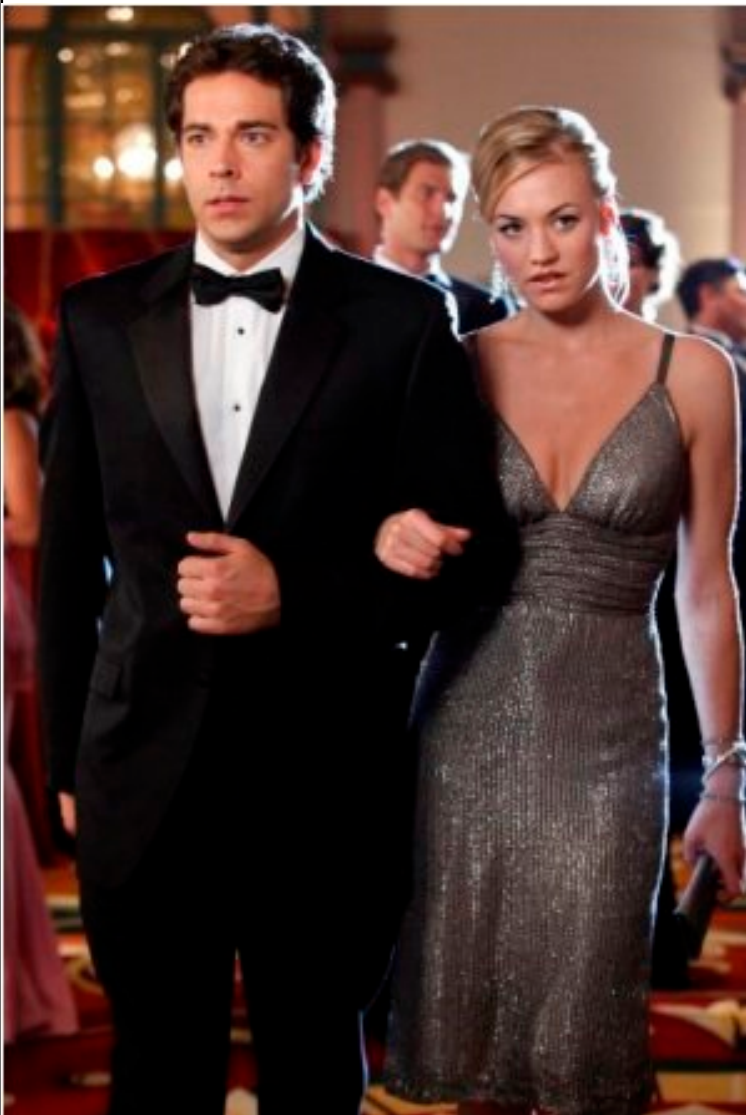
CHICAGO – A week from today - May 16, 2011 - the TV networks will begin the annual unveiling of their fall schedules, and a very-hazy picture will be much clearer by the end of next week. There will be a few miracles, but some hearts will surely be broken. With more programs on the bubble than ever before, what will be renewed and what will be shown the door? Let us guide the way with our fearless predictions, network by network.

NBC (May 16th, 2011):

[Update \(May 11, 2011\): NBC has renewed “Harry's Law” and canceled “Law & Order: Los Angeles”](#) [24]

[Update \(May 12, 2011\): NBC has \(likely\) renewed “Chuck”](#) [25]

[Update \(May 12, 2011\): NBC has \(likely\) renewed “Parenthood”](#) [26]



Chuck
Photo credit: NBC

Bubble Shows: “Chuck,” “Harry’s Law,” “Law & Order: Los Angeles,” “Outsourced,” & “Parenthood”

The peacock has been one of the most troubled networks for years, a situation deepened by the notorious “The Jay Leno Show” debacle, so it seems appropriate that they’re pushing out of the gate first to reveal what, I expect, will be the most overhauled schedule of the fall season. The fact is that, like most networks, 2010-11 was a bust for NBC with shows like “Outlaw,” “Chase,” “Perfect Couples,” and “The Cape” failing to find an audience. It took almost the entire season for the network to find a new hit program (“The Voice”), but it’s unlikely that the show will return until 2012. So what will Fall 2011 look like on NBC?

We know it will look different, significantly different. “Outlaw,” “Undercovers,” “The Paul Reiser Show,” “Perfect Couples,” and “Chase” have already been given the axe. It is nearly certain that “The Event” and “Law & Order” Los Angeles” (a program that has struggled even more since the overhaul that kicked Skeet Ulrich out the franchise’s notorious revolving door) will join them and the programmers will finally be able to wash their hands of most of the 2010-11 season.

NBC has already renewed their demo-friendly sitcoms on Thursday nights — “Community,” “Parks and Recreation,” “The Office,” and “30 Rock”. And it seems likely that they will realize that six comedies on Thursday nights was a mistake and stick with those four renewals, in that order, on the night that NBC used to dominate. It also would be ridiculous if they didn’t renew one of their biggest hits, “Law & Order: SVU.”

What does that leave? The network is left with four real question marks, in order of most-likely-to-be-saved to least-likely: “Parenthood,” “Harry’s Law,” “Chuck,” and “Outsourced.”

With so many programs ripe for cancellation, it raises a big question — could they possibly have that many programs on deck to replace them? Keep in mind — this is the network that aired possibly the most reviled show of the 2010-11 season in “The Paul Reiser Show.” If they’re looking at another program of that quality versus renewing “Outsourced,” they may stick with the devil they know. Even with my projections, they’re going to have to fill five hours of programming with six new shows. That seems like enough for a network unable to find a new hit and could save shows that would otherwise be canceled.

The good news for fans of NBC Monday nights is that, with caution about the annual “Chuck” story, I think that the night will stay the same simply because they have enough to worry about the rest of the week. They may consider moving one of those Monday night shows to Wednesday nights just so they don’t have to fill a complete night of new programming. We’ll know next week. Keep those fingers and toes crossed “Chuck” fans.

Sunday: Reality Programming (Apprentice, America’s Next Great Restaurant, etc.)

Monday: Chuck, Parenthood, Harry’s Law

Tuesday: The Biggest Loser, NEW DRAMA, Law & Order: SVU

Wednesday: NEW COMEDY, NEW COMEDY, NEW DRAMA, NEW DRAMA

Thursday: Community, Parks and Rec, The Office, 30 Rock, NEW DRAMA

Friday: Specials, Dateline NBC

Saturday: Repeats

FOX (May 16th, 2011)



The Chicago Code
Photo credit: FOX

[Update \(May 11, 2011\): FOX has canceled all of their bubble programs, including "The Chicago Code" \[27\]](#)

Bubble Shows: "Breaking In," "The Chicago Code," "Human Target," & "Lie to Me"

FOX is such an unusual case because they have significantly fewer hours to fill than their competition. They're not touching Sunday nights, having already renewed that block of animation, and they won't change Saturday nights. Add this to the fact that they only program two hours a night, so that means they really only have TEN HOURS to play with every week.

Start doing the math. "Fringe," "Bones," "Glee," and "Raising Hope" have already been renewed. That leaves us with 6.5 hours. Simon Cowell's "The X Factor" is sure to take up at least two hours and possibly as many as four. (For the sake of argument, I think they're going to start with two.) Even though it's Cowell, you'd hate to commit four hours to something before you know it works. So, we're down to 4.5 hours. They've already announced Steven Spielberg's new sci-fi program "Terra Nova" — 3.5 hours left. How many will be new shows? They couldn't possibly renew all of their bubble programs — there aren't enough hours on the network.

What this means is that "Traffic Light" is certainly gone to red. Forget about it. It also makes "Breaking In" unlikely, although they may end up partnering it with "Raising Hope" on Tuesday nights, depending on the quality of what could possibly replace it.

What about the dramas? At MOST, they'll save one of the three bubble shows — "The Chicago Code," "Human Target," "Lie to Me." I can't see them bringing back the latter two since it seems clear now they will never be more than a modest hit. "Chicago Code" looked like it still could become a bigger success but then last Monday had to hit and the program fell to a series-low number in the key demo that makes it unlikely to save. I wish we knew when they made the decision. Just because they announce on the 16th doesn't mean that they wait till the 15th to decide. If they came to a conclusion on "The Chicago Code" before May, I think it's on the fall schedule. But those recent numbers are brutal. It's as 50/50 as I've ever seen in this prediction game. Flip a coin.

Sundays: Animation

Mondays: The Chicago Code, House

Tuesdays: Glee, Raising Hope, NEW COMEDY

Wednesdays: X Factor, Terra Nova

Thursdays: X Factor, NEW DRAMA

Fridays: Bones, Fringe

Saturdays: America's Most Wanted, Cops

ABC (May 17th, 2011)

[Update \(May 13, 2011\): ABC has renewed "Happy Endings," canceled "V," "Brothers & Sisters," "Mr. Sunshine," "No Ordinary Family," "Detroit 1-8-7," and "Off the Map" \[28\]](#)



Happy Endings
Photo credit: ABC

Bubble Shows: "Better With You," "Body of Proof," "Brothers & Sisters," "Happy Endings," "Mr. Sunshine," & "V"

Ugh. My head hurts when I think about the life of an ABC programmer. They have had SO many programs that somehow just missed the mark, even though they must have looked good on paper. It's like they're cursed by the ghost of "Lost." How else to explain the total failure of "FlashForward," "No Ordinary Family," "Detroit 1-8-7," "My Generation," and "V"? Half of those programs have already been canceled and the ones that haven't are likely to be so next week (with the possible exception of "V").

The biggest question mark for ABC has to be what to do with their marginal comedies. "The Middle," "Modern Family," and "Cougar Town" have already been renewed, and I think that ABC will agree with NBC that three hours of comedy will simply never work and pull Wednesdays back down to two. That leaves one spot at 7:30pm CST for three shows — "Better With You," "Happy Endings," "Mr. Sunshine." The numbers first looked most positive for "Happy Endings," and that's the program that I still think has the best chance, largely due to the best reviews that could build word of mouth. (Please watch it. Don't make me review "Mr. Sunshine" again this fall. It won't be pretty.)

As for dramas, it took almost all year for the network to find a reasonable hit in "Body of Proof." It's not a breakthrough, but they'll take it. "Grey's Anatomy," "Castle," and "Private Practice" have been renewed, and it would be stunning if "Desperate Housewives" didn't come back. The network has hits — they just can't find any new ones.

As for "Brothers & Sisters," most of this year it looked like it would be canceled, but recent stories about budget cuts and a possibly shortened season makes it look like it's coming back. At least for one more year. Or half a year. It's better than nothing.

Sunday: NEW DRAMA/REALITY, Desperate Housewives, Brothers & Sisters

Monday: Dancing With the Stars/The Bachelor, Castle

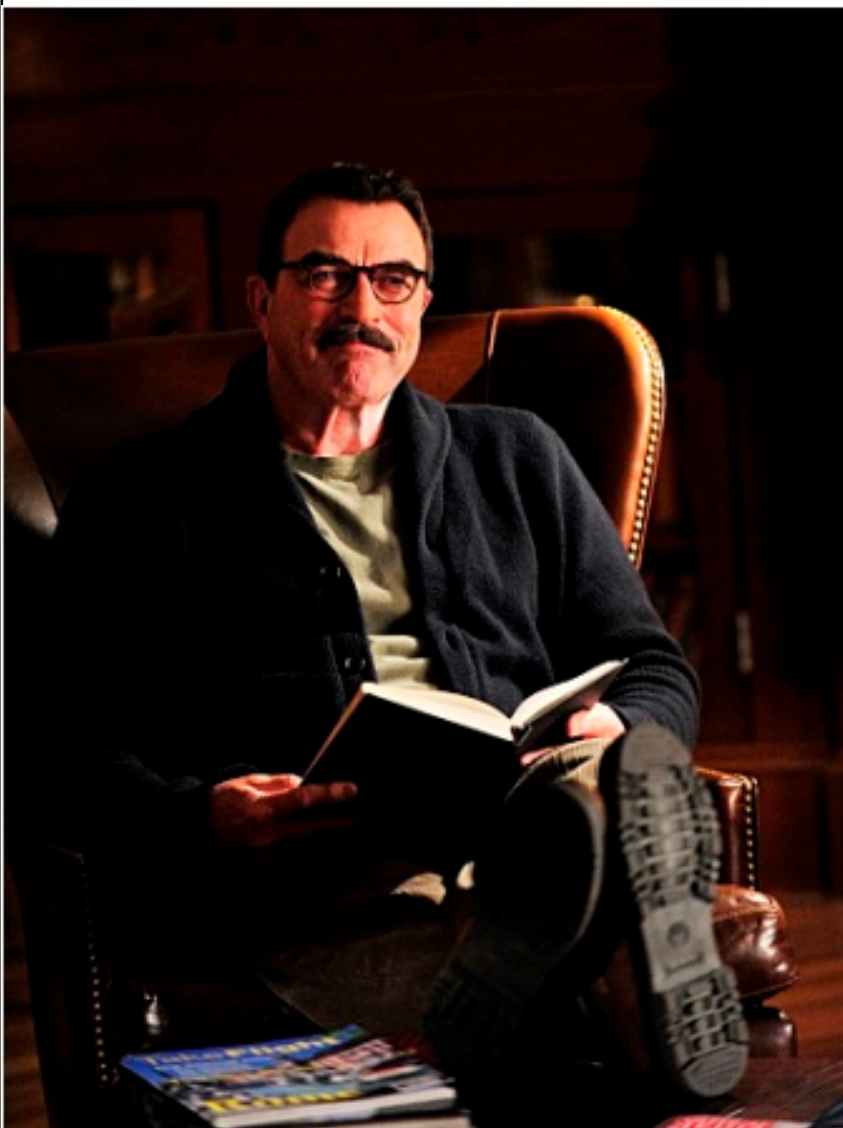
Tuesday: NEW DRAMA, NEW DRAMA, Body of Proof

Wednesday: The Middle, Happy Endings, Modern Family, Cougar Town, NEW DRAMA

Thursday: Wipeout (or other special/reality programming), Grey's Anatomy, Private Practice

Friday: Supernanny, Primetime, 20/20

CBS (May 18th, 2011)



Blue Bloods
Photo credit: CBS

Bubble Shows: "\$#! My Dad Says," "Blue Bloods," "Criminal Minds: Suspect Behavior," "CSI: NY," & "Mad Love"

In overall viewers, the eye network is still #1, but it's a several-year stranglehold that is definitely weakening. While the other networks have banked on reality hits like "Dancing With the Stars" and "American Idol," CBS has successfully drawn older viewers with more traditional programming but, like all the networks, they struggled in the 2010-11 season. With eight new shows debuted over the course of the year, even the ones that seem likely to return aren't exactly hits. And as "The Big Bang Theory" continues to slide on Thursday nights (they're way down in the key demos) and drama swirls around "Two and a Half Men," this is one of the few years that there could be a significant shake-up at the #1 network.

Of the new programs, "Chaos" has already been canceled and it seems likely that the under-performing "\$#! My Dad Says" and "Mad Love" will follow the Freddy Rodriguez program out the door. After strong opening numbers, "Criminal Minds: Suspect Behavior" has been sliding fast, losing an unacceptable portion of its hit lead-in. I think it's a goner. And "The Defenders" is essentially canceled already.

That leaves “Mike & Molly,” “Hawaii Five-0,” and “Blue Bloods.” The first two perform well enough (especially when one adds DVR numbers for “Five-0”) that they are very likely to return, although I’m predicting a move for “Hawaii” to the more escapism-friendly Friday nights (and wouldn’t be surprised if “Mike & Molly” shifted to Thursdays).

The big question mark is “Blue Bloods.” The fact is that it doesn’t perform well overall, but it has a loyal following, which is something that all of the networks could use nowadays. I think that Selleck will just barely make the cut.

Finally, what of “CSI: NY,” which has been on the bubble all year? Part of me wants to say that if they’re killing one franchise expansion (“Suspect Behavior”), they won’t kill the other. It also kind of feels like it’s “NY” or “Blue Bloods.” I can’t really say why, but I have a feeling “NY” is done. It’s my “on a limb” prediction and could very well be wrong, but don’t forget that CBS has a track record of surprise cancellations of eroding veterans (“Without a Trace,” “Cold Case”).

Sunday: Amazing Race, Undercover Boss, CSI: Miami

Monday: How I Met Your Mother, Rules of Engagement, Two and a Half Men, Mike & Molly, NEW DRAMA

Tuesday: NCIS, NCIS: Los Angeles, The Good Wife

Wednesday: Survivor, Criminal Minds, NEW DRAMA

Thursday: BBT, NEW COMEDY, CSI, Mentalist

Friday: NEW DRAMA, Hawaii Five-0, Blue Bloods

THE CW (May 19th, 2011)



Nikita

Photo credit: The CW

Bubble Shows: “Hellcats,” “Nikita,” & “One Tree Hill”

The fact is that The CW doesn’t have that much money or time to develop or market new programs, so one can’t expect more than, at MOST, 3 new programs. “Smallville” is over and they have to fill that slot behind “America’s Next Top Model” (recently occupied by the horrendous “Shedding For the Wedding”). “Hellcats” is performing horribly enough that they could probably do better with repeats, so that’s probably gone too.

That adds up three hours to fill, and so “Nikita” will get a second season, but probably not much beyond that (and I expect it to move to Friday as “Supernatural” makes a better fit on Thursday nights with “Vampire Diaries”).

Monday: 90210, Gossip Girl

Tuesday: One Tree Hill, NEW DRAMA

Wednesday: America’s Next Top Model, NEW REALITY/DRAMA

Thursday: The Vampire Diaries, Supernatural

Friday: NEW DRAMA, Nikita

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [30]

Content Director

HollywoodChicago.com



[29]

brian@hollywoodchicago.com [29]

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