

TV Review: Fourth Season Premiere of TNT's 'Leverage'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 26, 2011 - 10:44am

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CHICAGO – The game is on and the gang is back in TNT Network's "Leverage," premiering its fourth season on June 26th. Oscar winner Timothy Hutton is again ready to lead his team of con artists, grifters and hackers to stick it to the man.



Television Rating: **3.5/5.0**

The chemistry of the team is rock solid as the new season unfolds. There is some rollover from season three, as former insurance investigator Nathan Ford (Hutton) continues to mentor his team of outside-the-law experts to bring down corrupt capitalists and other shady criminals. Having slept with team member and con artist Sophie (Gina Bellman), Ford must deal with that conflict of interest and his ongoing struggles with substance abuse.

The fourth season begins with an unusual case, a wealthy derivative analyst is missing on a mountain climbing expedition in Alaska. His wife has contacted Ford and his team to join the base camp there and blend in with the collection of German, Japanese and American businessmen adventurers. The missing man turns out to be a whistle blower, and the American millionaire leading the search for him knows that he had a book that will blow the lid off a potential sale of his bad mortgage loans to the Japanese.



Ice Station 'Leverage': Eliot (Christian Kane), Nathan (Timothy Hutton) and Parker (Beth Riesgraf) in 'Leverage'

Photo credit: TNT

While Ford deals with altitude sickness and his discomfort with Sophie, hacker Alec (Aldis Hodge) pinpoints the location of the whistle

blower's body and the presumed book on his person. The two most athletic of Ford's team, Eliot (Christian Kane) and Parker (Beth Riesgraf), set off to retrieve the evidence, while Sophie works the room at base camp, using a con to throw off the Japanese acquisition. It is a race against time, the powerful millionaires and the harsh environment of an Alaskan mountain range.

Hutton is the focus on the show, and uses his portrayal as both a mentor and liability to full extent. He and Devereaux have a good will-they-or-won't-they chemistry and their banter around everything that's happening bodes well for future adventures. Of the rest of the team Beth Riesgraf is most notable as Parker, with a twitchy impatience for inaction, and a moral core that keeps everyone on the straight and narrow. Also, are Parker and Alec hooking up?

Too much is crammed into the premiere, but the atmosphere of the case has a cinematic air to it, especially for fans of "Ice Station Zebra." There are blizzards, mysterious caverns and base tents that have more accommodations than most homes. As happens in these character and story driven dramas, too much has to be explained about the case to create a natural turn of events. Conveniently, it is always the team that is one step ahead of virtually everyone, and Leverage also has that easy use of electronics and visual graphics that is getting annoying.



Christian Kane, Gina Bellman, Timothy Hutton, Beth Riesgraf and Aldis Hodge star in TNT's hit series LEVERAGE.

Photo credit: Eric Heinila/TNT

The episode is entitled "The Long Way Down Job," both noting the mountain location of the assignment and the pressure on the team from a number of outside forces. Towards the end of the premiere the group goes over the laundry list of possible enemies, most intriguing is the Irish mob. The vulnerability of the Leverage team is their greatest strength, and although because this is teevee they will always prevail, but more interesting would be the long way down.

With the steady performance of Hutton, hidden tics and all, plus the chemistry within the team, this season of Leverage should be a lot of fun. The producers just need to know their limitations and rely on that terrific cast.

NOTE: The third season of "Leverage" has just been released on DVD, with extras that include stories about the producers, writers and a behind-the-scenes take on the series. The cast and production crew provide commentary for each episode and of course there is a Season Three gag reel.

"Leverage" premieres its fourth season on Sunday, June 26th at 9pm EST/8pm CST on TNT. Check local listings for channel location. Featuring Timothy Hutton, Gina Bellman, Christian Kane, Beth Riesgraf and Aldis Hodge



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