

## TV Review: AMC's Controversial 'The Killing' Tries to Win Back Fans

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 1, 2012 - 9:17am

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CHICAGO – When season one of AMC's hit mystery show "The Killing" came to a conclusion, Detective Linden (Emmy nominee Mireille Enos) thought that the case of Rosie Larsen had been solved and most of the show's fans were furious that she was wrong. Can "The Killing" survive the wave of anger after a season that viewers thought would wrap up the murder investigation at its core only to be left with a cliffhanger? The investigation is still open. After watching the two-hour premiere ("Reflections/My Lucky Day"), I'm left with most of the same concerns I had when it began but I'm torn — reminded of what definitely works about this program but increasingly frustrated by that which does not.



TV Rating: **3.5/5.0**

"Reflections," directed by the excellent Agnieszka Holland (Oscar-nominee "In Darkness"), opens shortly after the end of the season one finale, "Orpheus Descending." The letter that AMC included with the press kit asked that we not give away a few major plot points, including what happened after the screen cut to black in season one, as Belko was approaching Councilman Richmond (Billy Campbell) with a gun, seeking vengeance against the man that he thought killed Rosie Larsen, so I will tread very lightly. At the end of that season, Linden discovered that the key piece of evidence that allowed them to arrest Richmond was a forgery — a photo from a security camera that hadn't been operable in months. How Linden handles that information, especially since her partner Holder (Joel Kinnaman) now appears dirty since he gave it to her, is the key focus of the two-part premiere. If it's NOT Richmond, what's he hiding? Why would Holder frame him? Who can she trust?



The Killing

*Photo credit: AMC*

Linden doesn't have the only arc in the first two episodes. Without spoiling much, there is a lot of focus on three secondary characters in two arcs: The two people closest to Richmond, Jamie (Eric Ladin) and Gwen (Kristin Lehman), and Rosie's father Stan (the excellent Brent Sexton), a man caught on a nightmarish rollercoaster of emotion as he thinks his daughter's case is closed and then learns that it most definitely is not. Emmy nominee Michelle Forbes does not appear on the first night of "The Killing" and Campbell's role is limited, allowing the writers to explore characters like Jamie and Stan with more depth than they ever did in season one.



The Killing

*Photo credit: AMC*

Those of you who vented on message boards and through social media about the season one finale of "The Killing" should probably move on. And I don't say that lightly. I'm still a fan of this show but the sense that you were betrayed, that you were promised one thing and given a cliffhanger, is not going to go away on the first night of "The Killing." There are definite developments including the loss of a major character and an interesting back story for another but it feels like we're further than ever from discovering the truth about Rosie when the episode ends. In fact, we're not much closer than we were after the first two hours of season one.

But I'm not yet sure that I mind. One needs to approach "The Killing" from a different angle. The suggestion by some TV journalists that this is nothing more than a "CSI" show wrapped in pretentious clothing is nonsense. The level of dialogue, the cinematography, the acting — it's



better than most shows and not even in the same league as most network mysteries. Showrunner Veena Sud has long said that this was a show about the aftermath of a murder and that's the only way to approach it and have it critically work. It's reaching a similar thematic level as David Fincher's "Zodiac" in that it's about what horrible crime does to the people that investigate it and obsess about it as much as it is about solving the actual crime itself. I think the biggest mistake made in the entire history of "The Killing" was when AMC chose to advertise the show with "Who Killed Rosie Larsen?," setting up viewer expectations for a resolution when the show was never really about that. I'm also not about to give up on a show with this level of performance — Enos gives one of the best performances on TV and Sexton, Forbes, a more-confident Kinnaman, and Campbell could match her in season two.

And yet I'm still concerned. They're clearly not going to wrap up the mystery of Rosie Larsen until the end of season two at this point but they can't spin their wheels thematically for too long. Episode two of the two-hour premiere ends in a familiar way and I thought to myself that the writers could be going through the motions for at least another episode. We need to feel like something is building even if it's not directly related to the mystery. We need to feel Stan unraveling and Linden needs to get more intensely, emotionally involved. Throw us a complete left turn — something to talk about on Twitter that changes the tone of conversation about the show as it is now. Break down the walls of this dark, overcast mystery and give it a bit of fire. The cast and the writers are up to the challenge. Let's see if they take the risks necessary to take "The Killing" back to the incredible TV it could be or if they repeat themselves on their way to an inevitable conclusion to the Larsen mystery. The former could make this one of the best shows of the season, but I'm concerned we're in for the latter.

*"The Killing" stars Mireille Enos, Billy Campbell, Michelle Forbes, Joel Kinnaman, Eric Ladin, Kristin Lehman, Jamie Ann Allman, and Brent Sexton. It returns for its second-season premiere on Sunday, April 1st, 2012 at 7pm CST.*



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By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [17]

Content Director

[HollywoodChicago.com](http://HollywoodChicago.com)[brian@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com) [16]

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