

TV Review: ABC's Promising But Inconsistent 'Don't Trust the B---- in Apartment 23'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 11, 2012 - 9:43am

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CHICAGO – “Don't Trust the B—— in Apartment 23” may seem at first like a cynical, modern program, but it's really a throwback to sitcoms of the '70s and '80s when you think about it's structure. Like so many one-set shows of those days, it's about an oil-and-water, “Odd Couple” who spend a lot of time in their apartment while wacky characters pop in and out of their lives. It's not too far from “Three's Company.” And yet it doesn't embrace its structure, coming off as more pretentious and over-written than the goofy show it should have been (especially with its horrendous title). This B—— thinks it's the smartest in the room when it's, at least to start, the weak link on a great night of comedy.



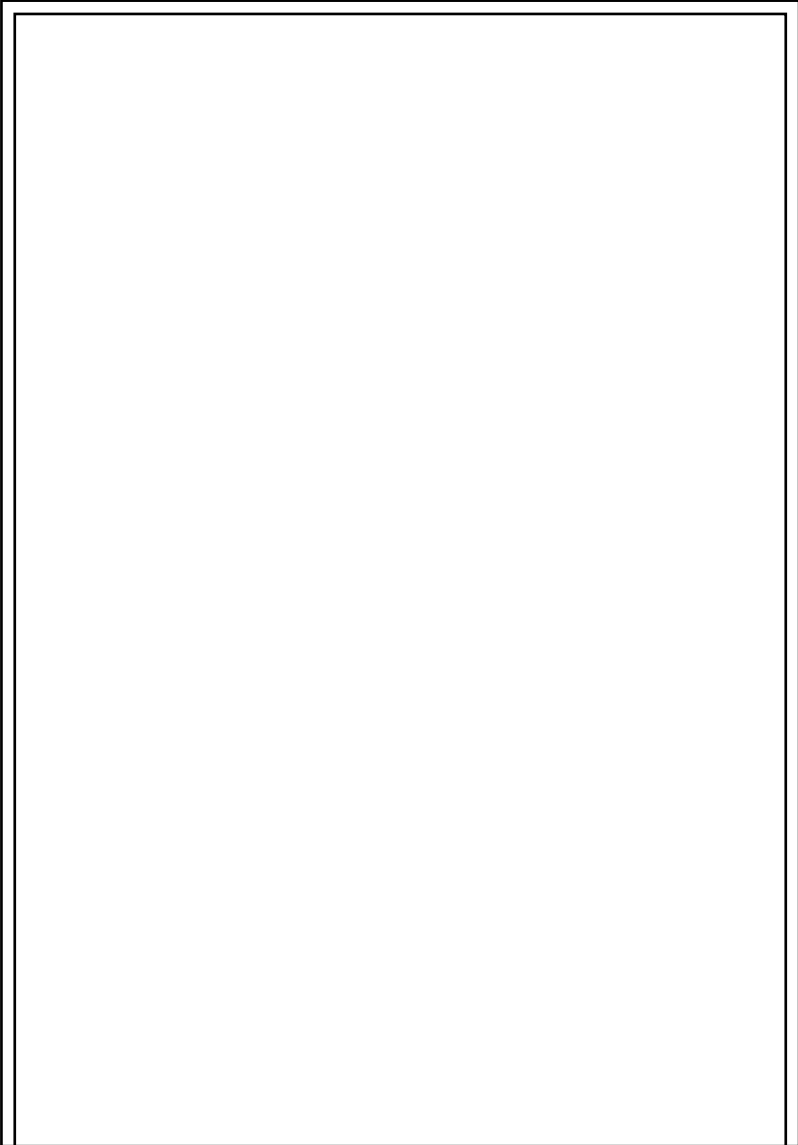
TV Rating: **3.0/5.0**

ABC has really built an incredible night of laughter on Wednesday nights, one that has arguably surpassed the critically-acclaimed and long-standing block on ABC's Must-See Thursdays. “The Middle” is having its best season by far, having developed a consistent, clever rhythm. “Suburgatory” gets better every week and has worked itself into one of the more promising shows on TV. And then there's “Modern Family,” an undeniable smash. “Happy Endings” has been a strong, funny entry in the final slot in this two-hour block but it's done for the season and “Apartment 23” gets a shot in the spot and, well, doesn't live up to the spotlight it's been given.



Don't Trust the B---- in Apartment 23
Photo credit: ABC

It's through no fault of the talented cast, especially the "title character" played by the super-funny Krysten Ritter ("Breaking Bad"). Ritter plays Chloe, a tough New York City hipster who feels something resembling a responsibility to haze the wide-eyed dreamers who come into her web. The latest fly in the spider's path is June (Dreama Walker), a girl who moves to Manhattan for a great new job on the day that her company goes under. She has to move from her fancy new NYC pad to a smaller one (although still HUGE in the context of Manhattan housing) with Chloe, who first comes off super-sweet but changes her tune when she moves in. Chloe is a predator. She pretends to be nice, gets some help with the rent and security deposits, and thenm drives her new roommate crazy. But will June cave like so many have before?





Don't Trust the B—— in Apartment 23
Photo credit: ABC

Circling this “country mouse vs. city mouse” dynamic is the pervert next door Eli (Michael Blaiklock), a guy who is often seen from the waist up because he’s probably not wearing any pants, the odd girl down the hall named Robin (Liza Lapira), and James Van Der Beek as, well, James Van Der Beek, an exaggerated, almost-satirical version of himself. The references to “Dawson’s Creek” are already a little tired after two episodes but there are a few funny jabs at the cult of celebrity in this performance and it could end up being the funniest element of the show.

Van Der Beek is not along in bringing something clever when he moves into “Apartment 23.” Ritter has STELLAR comic timing, adding shades to a character who could have been nothing more than an archetype in the hands of a lesser actress. She’s the best performer on the show and there were times where I found myself trying to look past the flaws of the program just because I so liked what she was bringing to it. If the show breaks out or improves, it’s Ritter who’s going to finally be the star she deserves to be. Walker is good and well-cast but the show belongs to Ritter.

The problem with “Don’t Trust the B—— in Apartment 23” is simple — it’s not that funny. It’s “watchable.” It’s “OK.” But it’s not a show that anyone’s going to be talking about the next day. Honestly, it’s hard to even remember most of the plot details. The show’s writers so desperately want to “play it cool” like they’re not trying hard to make you laugh. And so they don’t really embrace the humorous elements of the show. It’s often like a bunch of hipsters sitting around a coffee shop saying, “Well, isn’t that funny?”...but not actually laughing. No, it’s mildly amusing, but not that funny.

“Don’t Trust the B—— in Apartment 23” stars Krysten Ritter, Dreama Walker, Liza Lapira, Michael Blaiklock, Eric Andre, and James Van Der Beek. It was created and written by Nahnatchka Khan. It premieres on Wednesday, April 11, 2012 at 8:30pm CST.



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