

## TV Review: Julia Louis-Dreyfus Returns in HBO's Hilarious 'Veep'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 22, 2012 - 9:39am

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CHICAGO – With the same profane-yet-brilliant rhythm he brought to the Oscar-nominated “In the Loop,” Armando Iannucci now tackles weekly television in the very funny “Veep, a new comedy that doesn’t quite feel like it’s going to change the landscape of TV sitcoms or earn the rapturous praise of its night-mate (“Veep”) but is nonetheless one of the straight-up funniest shows on TV.



TV Rating: **4.5/5.0**

The obvious parallel may be to Sarah Palin given that “Veep” is a show about a female vice president but this is far from “Game Change.” The stellar Julia Louis-Dreyfus stars as Selina Meyer, a smart former senator who was the brightest star in the political solar system at one point but has found her goals and aspirations reduced to red tape, bureaucracy, and in-fighting. “Veep” might not be Joe Biden’s favorite show (although it might hit dangerously close to home). Vice President Meyer is forced to attend functions when the President is too busy, has her speeches redacted, and must essentially deal with political spin more than actual issues. If you think about “Veep” for too long, it can actually get kind of depressing — politics have become more about tweets than action.



Veep

Photo credit: HBO

In fact, the first episode centers around a tweet that threatens to completely derail a green initiative that has become the focus of Meyer’s time in office. If she could ever get it off the ground. In a spectacular scene, Meyer attends a event only to find that most of the attendees haven’t

shown up because they're upset about the aforementioned tweet. From here, "Veep" becomes a fascinating series of damage control maneuvers followed by further fires that need putting out. One involving a truly tasteless joke that Meyer awkwardly tells when her speech gets completely redacted by the President's annoying staff liaison just before giving it leads to some truly hilarious moments of damage control. A line about font size growing on tomorrow's headline as they bicker is truly hysterical.



Veep  
Photo credit: HBO

That's a good word for most of "Veep." Whatever criticism I could levy at it is offset by the fact that I haven't laughed this much at a premiere in some time. The font line, a bit about "Simon & Garfunkel," an amazing exchange involving confusion as to how to use a Keurig coffee maker — there are so many smart, fast-paced bits of dialogue in "Veep" that, much like "In the Loop," you could easily miss them. This is one of the most verbally adroit shows on television in a long time. Iannucci and his team waste no time and hold no hands. "Veep" is in-your-face comedy with enough profanity and insults to make Kenny Powers cringe. "Veep" postulates that most of the people behind-the-scenes of our power players are aggressively playing power games themselves whether it's to get closer to the Veep, POTUS, or just to get laid.

The other players in "Veep" include the loyal aide Gary (Tony Hale of "Arrested Development"), the guy quick enough to whisper an important piece of information about the conversation about to start to Vice President Meyer or even scribble it on her coffee cup. He wouldn't take a bullet for her but he'd be the first to help after she got shot. The great Matt Walsh plays her spokesperson Mike, someone who clearly has her back but doesn't give much thought to anyone else in the office. He's supportive of the Veep and abusive to all others. Walsh is very, very funny. Rounding out the cast are the younger players, Chief of Staff Amy (Anna Chlumsky), ambitious newcomer Dan (Reid Scott), her executive assistant Sue (Sufe Bradshaw), and the aforementioned annoying liaison Jonah (Timothy C. Simons).

She has perfect timing but Louis-Dreyfus may not have been the best choice for this material. After the premiere, I don't quite yet believe that she's the charismatic power player who would get to this office. Sure, the point of the show is that it's essentially a useless position but it still takes a political whiz to be offered it in the first place. Louis-Dreyfus seems too beleaguered from the very beginning to be completely believable as one of the power figures of her party. Her timing is impossible to criticize but I'm not yet sold on her casting. The rest of the cast is pretty much perfect — Chlumsky brings the same energy she did to "In the Loop," Walsh & Hale are hysterical, and Scott is more interesting in the premiere here than he ever was on "My Boys."

Where does "Veep" go from here? Will every episode be about damage control and failures of government? That will get tired pretty quickly. I think it was a good idea to start with eight episodes in the first season and there are hints that the supporting characters could get arcs of their own, especially Chlumsky and Scott. I don't ever expect this to be "The West Wing" but it's going to need a little depth to go from the really funny, good show that it is now to a great one. I know I'll be watching to see if it does.

*"Veep" stars Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Anna Chlumsky, Matt Walsh, Tony Hale, Sufe Bradshaw, Timothy C. Simons, and Reid Scott. It was created by Armando Iannucci. It premieres on Sunday, April 22, 2012 at 9pm CST on HBO, followed by "Girls."*



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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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