

## TV Review: Syfy's 'Alphas' Returns More Confident, Entertaining

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on July 23, 2012 - 2:13pm

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CHICAGO – Two of cable TV's most interesting science fiction programs return tonight just after their 2011 seasons were released on DVD. "Alphas" and "Warehouse 13" are occasionally inconsistent but also sometimes surprisingly effective and the former has a renewed confidence and sets up a very interesting second-season plot arc in its premiere. I was hesitant after the series premiere last year but this show is much easier to recommend now.



Television Rating: **3.5/5.0**

"Alphas" felt a bit too familiar in season one as memories of "Heroes" and "The 4400" dominated my feelings about the series premiere. Revisiting the first season on the recently-released DVD set (the details of which you'll find at the bottom of this review), I was impressed at how the show built its own confident identity as the freshman season went along. That confidence remains as the show tries to defy the sophomore slump with an action-packed season two premiere about a world shaken up by the attempted control of people who aren't like everyone else.



Alphas

Photo credit: SyFy

At the end of season one, Dr. Rosen (David Strathairn) tried to reveal to the world that "Alphas" — men and women with unique super powers — were real. We learn early in the premiere that not only has Rosen's Alpha team been broken up but that the good doctor has been thrown in



a padded cell where he can do no good. The NSA is trying to keep things under control but rounding up Alphas, putting chips in their brains to stop their activity, and throwing them in a prison building is not the best plan of attack.



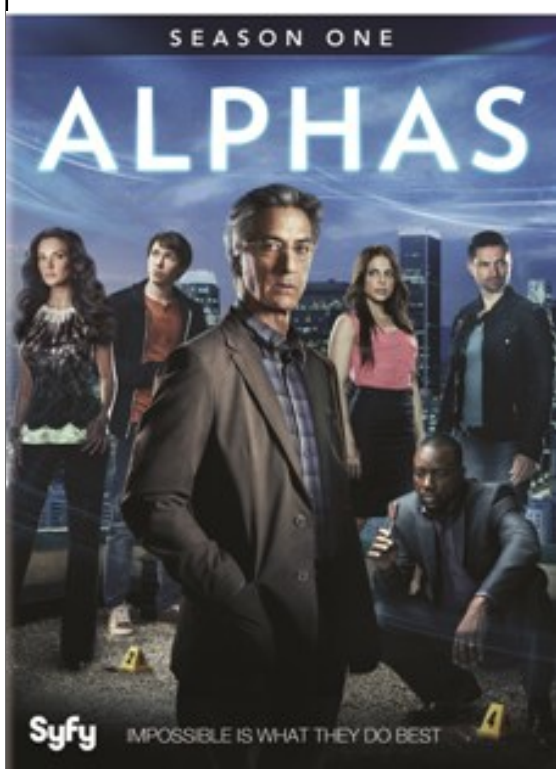
Alphas  
Photo credit: SyFy

Cut to Bill (Malik Yoba) and Hicks (Warren Christie) as they try to stop a three-member team of Alphas who are committing a violent armed robbery. They get one of the criminals and she's thrown in the Alpha prison population where they find the generally peaceful Gary (Ryan Cartwright). Before long, the prison is in full-on riot and the band is back together to try and help fight a world that seems that increasingly hostile to a group of super-humans who can respond to aggression in unique, dangerous ways.

Clearly, there's a lot of room for social commentary here given the story arc of people who are rounded up and imprisoned because they're different but the writers of "Alphas" disappointingly skirt the potential of their concept. It's very well-utilized for tension and action but the best sci-fi uses out-of-this-world concepts to comment on our world and "Alphas" doesn't quite go far enough. It's not quite as smart as I wish it would be although it's certainly headed in the right direction — the second-season premiere is definitely more strongly written than the series premiere.

And it's action-packed. The producers do an excellent job with the tension of the prison sequences in which "good Alphas" are surrounded by dozens of "bad ones." The pacing is a bit off in the mid-section — once it's revealed how Rosen is going to get pulled back into the action, it takes too long to happen — but the final third of this episode is very strong. It should keep people hooked into what looks like a promising season.

**"Alphas: The Complete First Season"**



Alphas  
Photo credit: Universal

**Synopsis:**

Brought together to form one extraordinary team of “Alphas” - people whose unique brain anomalies imbue them with superhuman mental and physical abilities - five seemingly ordinary citizens must take the law into their own hands while working within the government to investigate a new brand of baffling crime. An action-packed thriller starring an electrifying cast led by Primetime Emmy Award winner and Academy Award nominee David Strathairn (The Bourne Ultimatum) and guest starring sci-fi icons Lindsay Wagner (The Bionic Woman), Summer Glau (Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles) and Brent Spiner (Star Trek: The Next Generation), discover a new breed of superheroes in Alphas.

**Special Features:**

- o Extended Premiere Episode
- o Deleted Scenes
- o Comic-Con 2011 Panel Discussion
- o Fan Q&A With the Show's Co-Creator, Executive Producer and Stars

*“Alphas” stars David Strathairn, Malik Yoba, Laura Mennell, Ryan Cartwright, Azita Ghanizada, and Warren Christie. It was created by Michael Karnow & Zak Penn. It returns on SyFy on Monday, July 23, 2012 at 9pm CST. The first season was released on DVD by Universal on July 17, 2012.*



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