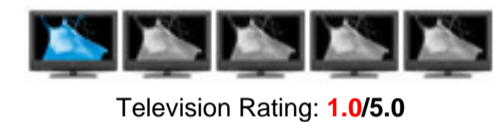


TV Review: Sole New FOX Drama ‘The Mob Doctor’ Likely to Be First Cancellation of Season

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 16, 2012 - 4:04pm

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CHICAGO – When the cliches of one genre aren’t enough, try two. Such seems to be the creative foundation of the awful new FOX series “The Mob Doctor,” a likely bet to be the first new show of the year to meet the axe of cancellation and not merely because it’s awful but because it’s in a brutal time slot up against “2 Broke Girls,” “The Voice,” and “Dancing with the Stars.”



However, “The Mob Doctor” would have difficulty finding an audience in the best time slot on TV simply because it’s dramatically uninteresting and essentially pretty insulting to your intelligence. About five minutes in and this Chicago resident was rolling his eyes at yet another cliched portrayal of the criminal underworld of the Windy City, this time with a medical twist. The foundation of “The Mob Doctor” is not that ridiculous in that there could be an interesting character drama written around how nefarious underground types get the medical attention they need. This is not that show. This is a soap opera disguised as something else and most soap writers would say its plotting was ridiculous and its characters were two-dimensional.



The Mob Doctor
Photo credit: FOX

Said characters are led by Dr. Grace Devlin (Jordana Spiro of “My Boys”), the title character. She’s an up-and-coming resident at Roosevelt Medical Center who also happens to be under the thumb of the most powerful crime syndicate in town led by mob boss Paul Moretti (Michael Rappaport). It turns out that Grace’s brother owed Moretti’s bookies enough money in gambling debts that she had to step in and offer her medical services to save his life. Not only does she remove a screwdriver from the forehead of a wanted mobster but she’s ordered to let an important witness suffer a little “accident” on the operating table.



The Mob Doctor
Photo credit: FOX

The mob half of “The Mob Doctor” is only part of the plotting as Grace has a medical drama cliché quota to fulfill at the hospital where she has a best friend (Floriana Lima), boyfriend (Zach Gilford), tough-but-supportive boss (Zeljko Ivanek), and rival (Jaime Lee Kirchner). The hospital drama plays just as unbelievably as the mob stuff but it’s the graft of the two that really suffers.

Part of the problem is in the casting. Spiro was a decent comedienne on “My Boys” but she doesn’t fit in this part. She just doesn’t have the charisma or the gravity that the part demands. Although to be fair, it’s an impossible role for most actresses. Grace Devlin has to be girlfriend, daughter, doctor, mobster, and more in one premiere and it’s the lack of definition at the center of this show that causes it to fall apart. Devlin is always responding to what’s in front of her and we never get to know her or care about her before the clichés of the script demand that we do so. Exchanges like this — “*This isn’t legal!*” “*Well then it’s a good thing we’re not lawyers!*” — should be enough to send an actual mobster after the person who wrote it.

Crimes against the art of TV writing aside, the key word here is clichés. It’s a script and a show that simply wallows in them, never giving the cast much of a chance to rise above them and present something worth caring about. We could use more good hospital dramas on TV and we could use more mob shows. But maybe next time they shouldn’t try to fulfill both needs with one program.

“The Mob Doctor” stars Jordana Spiro, Floriana Lima, Zach Gilford, Zeljko Ivanek, Jaime Lee Kirchner, Jesse Lee Soffer, Wendy Makkena, Michael Rappaport, William Forsythe, and James Carpinello. It premieres on FOX on September 17, 2012 at 9pm CST.



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