

## TV Review: 'Golden Boy' Piles Up Clichés Despite Interesting Structure

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on February 26, 2013 - 11:47am

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CHICAGO – As the 2012-13 midseason continues to shock with its complete inability to produce a new hit and shows like “Do No Harm” and “The Job” get canceled after only two episodes while other failures like “Cult,” “Zero Hour,” “Deception” and “1600 Penn” limp to their non-renewals, networks keep throwing things at the wall and hoping they stick. The latest show begging to be liked is CBS’s modest “Golden Boy,” a twist on the cop show that might have been pitched as “How I Met Your Police Officer.” The concept is clever and some of the cast is well above average but the writing, always the most important element of a TV show, is subpar with clichéd dialogue that betrays any possible character development. A lead actor who feels a little less than golden doesn’t help.



Television Rating: **2.5/5.0**

The set-up of “Golden Boy” is a smart one. In present day, a young man is being made the police commissioner of New York City. In fact, he’s the youngest ever to attain that position. How did he get there? He’s being interviewed and the rest of the show takes place in flashback. Will he barter dirty deals and cut corners? Will he rise through the ranks honestly? Knowing that this awkward kid becomes the city’s top cop makes for an interesting dynamic. The problem is that there’s not enough, other than one really strong supporting performance, built upon that dynamic.



Golden Boy  
Photo credit: CBS



Walter William Clark, Jr. (Theo James) is crowned the city's golden boy when he behaves heroically in a streetside hostage situation. He is told that he can take whatever job he wants and ends up a very young homicide detective. Most of his new colleagues don't like the new pretty boy who hasn't earned his way and he gets stuck partnered with Detective Don Owen (Chi McBride), who is just two years from retirement and too gruff to care about his peers but still morally committed to the job.



Golden Boy  
Photo credit: CBS

Clark butts heads with Detective Christian Arroyo (Kevin Alejandro), who has a history with Owen and seems to be the alpha male of the department. Arroyo's female partner, Detective Deborah McKenzie (Bonnie Somerville), tries to get closer to Clark but there seems to be cliques in the station, politics, past betrayals, and as much nonsense as in the case they're trying to solve. It also doesn't help that Clark is constantly distracted by his sister Agnes (Stella Maeve), a girl who he parents as much as brothers, given the way she's increasingly falling into bad behavior.

How does someone so young become Police Commissioner of a city the size of New York? How does anyone of any age? The idea that we can chart Clark's rise up his professional ladder is very smart but the dialogue fights the high concept at every turn. It's either manipulative or cliched. Only McBride breaks through it to create, yet again, a world weary and interesting character. Is there anyone who has done more with less in his career? McBride is far from a household name but he's ALWAYS good in shows like "The John Larroquette Show," "Boston Public," "Pushing Daisies," and "Human Target." He is easily the best thing about "Golden Boy."

In fact, he's too good. We need to be captivated by Clark's story and, as written and as performed, he's just not that interesting a kid. I understand that he needs to start naive for the structure to work but the show needed an actor with that glint of potential and James doesn't show it. He looks like a lost Franco brother and plays the role a bit too bipolar. One minute, he's wide-eyed and naive. The next he's tough as nails. He feels now like a caricature and not a real guy.

Without a true "Golden Boy" to care about and identify with, this midseason program will fall just like the other network offerings in this fascinating season. The networks can't find a hit. "Golden Boy" might work since it moves to Fridays after two Tuesday night offerings this week and next and it might make a good fit with "Blue Bloods" on a night with little ratings expectations. If not, CBS will throw something else into the increasingly-shallow pool.

*"Golden Boy" stars Theo James, Chi McBride, Kevin Alejandro, Bonnie Somerville, Holt McCallany, and Stella Maeve. It premieres on Tuesday, February 26, 2013 at 9pm CST on CBS.*



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By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [15]

Content Director

HollywoodChicago.com

[brian@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com) [14]

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