

## TV Review: AMC Begins Final Arc of Beloved 'Breaking Bad'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on July 29, 2013 - 11:37am

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CHICAGO – Walter White is back. Those four words mean more to loyal fans of "Breaking Bad" than any other this Summer. After only eight episodes last season, technically known as the first half of season five, fans are more eager than ever for the return of this brilliantly plotted program, one of the most ambitious and accomplished of its age. We're two weeks off from the premiere but here with an early review of the most anticipated final season of a program since "The Sopranos."



Television Rating: **5.0/5.0**

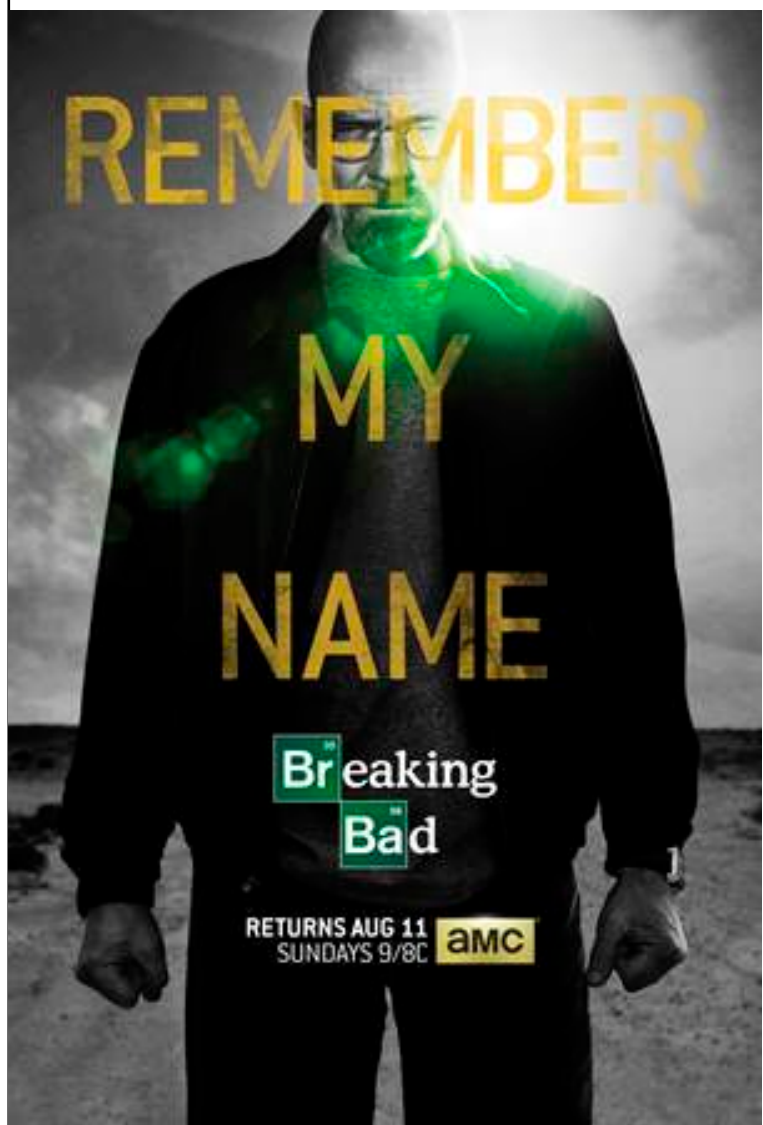
Don't panic Heisenberg fans. I would never spoil too much of the excellent "Blood Money," airing August 11, 2013 on AMC. So much of the genius of "Breaking Bad" is in the plotting, the way Vince Gilligan and his team stay one step ahead of their audience, foreshadowing where they're going (it's amazing how much so if you go back and rewatch the first four seasons) without ever telegraphing their many twists and turns. There have been mountains of articles written recently about how Gilligan will end the saga of the milquetoast teacher who turned into Scarface but the joy to this viewer is in not knowing exactly where things are going but being confident that the journey will be a remarkable one.



Breaking Bad  
Photo credit: AMC

Staying as vague as I can, the mid-season premiere of "Breaking Bad" opens with two scenes meant to echo the first half of season five directly. The pre-credits scene (and has there ever been a show in which the pre-credits tags were better at setting the tone for the program to follow?) takes place in the same time period as the first pre-credits scene of the season (Walter's birthday buying weaponry). It's clearly been some time, things are not well for Walter, and he's got a trunk full of enough weapons to take on the DEA (I'm just guessing...not a spoiler).

We get a little more of a glimpse of this future, one in which Walter's domestic life has truly collapsed and his legend has grown, in a fantastic mood-setter for not just this episode but the entire final arc.



Breaking Bad  
Photo credit: AMC

The episode then jumps back to exactly where we left off in 2012 — Hank (Dean Norris) on the crapper. He emerges from the bathroom, pretty much convinced that he's put the pieces together and discovered that Walter White is Heisenberg. The man with whom he has shared so much of his life and sits not far on his family tree is also essentially responsible for him almost being killed, among many other horrible crimes. Naturally, it's a revelation that devastates Hank. He has a physical response and has to leave. I'll leave it there but the suspicion that most of this season would be about Hank and Walter in a final showdown seems accurate.

Meanwhile, Walter is honestly trying to go straight. He's running the car wash with Skyler (Anna Gunn) and considering opening new ventures to launder their piles of cash. Speaking of the green stuff, Jesse (Aaron Paul) isn't handling his new-found fortune too well. The title of the episode refers to how he feels about his financial state and he goes to Saul (Bob Odenkirk) with the desire to give most of it away. It's poisoned. Tainted.

Isn't everything in Walter's circle? That poisoned feeling seems to permeate the whole premiere and I feel like it's Gilligan's end game in general. It's too late for Walter. The very world around him is poisoned by his actions and he can't clean the blood of his money through a car wash. As the tension builds between Walter and Hank, this season promises intense moments but you may not see one more so than the final act of "Blood Money." It's a slow episode overall but it builds to a series-defining moment that should make Twitter explode.

Creative confidence has long been a hallmark of "Breaking Bad" but the program has rarely seemed more sure of where it's going than it does right now. We drift from great programs when it feels like the writers know about as much about where their characters are going as we do (see frustration about the recent seasons of "Mad Men" and "Dexter," although the latter has renewed confidence now that it's in a final season). I don't think there's ever been a moment of doubt in the entire arc of "Breaking Bad" but it's more notable than ever. In Vince Gilligan we trust.

*"Breaking Bad" returns to AMC for its final season on August 11, 2013 at 9pm CST. It stars Bryan Cranston, Anna Gunn, Dean Norris, Aaron Paul, RJ Mitte, and Bob Odenkirk.*



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