

TV Review: FOX Debuts New Comedies in Promising ‘Brooklyn Nine-Nine,’ Horrendous ‘Dads’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 17, 2013 - 9:49am

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CHICAGO – FOX started the season last night with the season premiere of “Bones” and series premiere of “Sleepy Hollow,” and they continue their effort to fill your DVR with the return of “New Girl” & “The Mindy Project” tonight, preceded by the series premieres of “Dads” and “Brooklyn Nine-Nine.” It’s a mixed bag of comedy talents tonight on FOX as “New Girl” has become a pretty consistent show and “The Mindy Project” has quietly developed one of the best ensembles on TV (aided notably by James Franco and Chloe Sevigny in the first two episodes) but the two new offerings premiere with mixed results.

Well, one has potential and the other decidedly does not. “Brooklyn Nine-Nine” with Andy Samberg and Andre Braugher starts with a bit of rocky comedy writing but has a talented enough cast and interesting enough premise to turn it around quickly. I expect it to be one of the more consistently entertaining comedies of the new season. In fact, it could be the only one. On the other hand, “Dads,” from “Family Guy” and “Ted” creator Seth MacFarlane, will just be consistently awful until it’s put of its misery. In a year with MANY choices for the worst new show of the year (wait until you read my reviews of “The Crazy Ones,” “Ironside,” and “Trophy Wife,” among others), “Dads” wins the coveted prize of the show I most want to see go away. And I’m a “Family Guy” fan. I can’t imagine what people who aren’t already attuned to MacFarlane’s sense of humor will think.



Television Rating: **1.0/5.0**

Let’s start at the bottom (that’s where FOX starts the night anyway). Eli (Seth Green) and Warner (Giovanni Ribisi) are lifelong friends who work together at their company, Ghost Child Games, which allows the “Dads” writers a neverending string of jokes that makes clear none of them have played an actual video game or knows how the business world works. Eli is the pothead, creative one, the guy who looks like he just rolled out of bed but comes up with the big idea just in time to close the deal. Warner is the business-minded of the two, married to the lovely Camila (Vanessa Lachey), and constantly pressuring Eli to take work seriously.



Dads
Photo credit: FOX

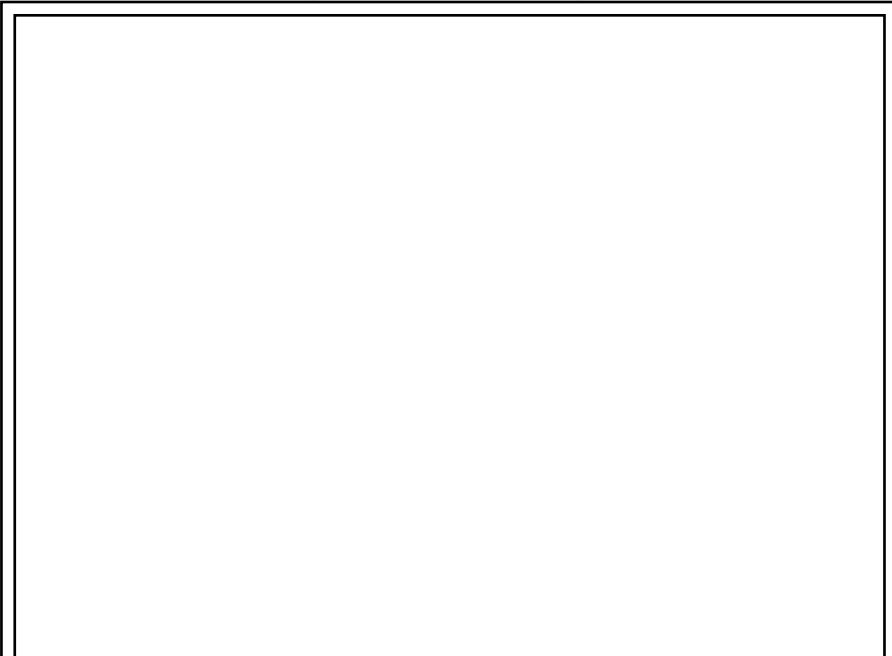
What Eli and Warner have in common more than their business interest is that they both have dads who won't go away. Eli's pop David (Peter Riegert) simply doesn't support him in any way, as he criticizes his entire life while messing up his own. Unsupportive fathers! Hysterical! Warner's dad Crawford (Martin Mull) is the more schlubby of the two, thinking that he's helping his son in the business world but not realizing that he's passed him by. Meddling fathers! Hilarious!

"Dads" tries to be a mix of old-fashioned, multi-camera, laugh-track sitcom with MacFarlane's brand of edgy, offensive, modern humor. Imagine an '80s sitcom with racist, homophobic, misogynist jokes peppered through like a 13-year-old punk kid's Facebook page posts. The writing on "Dads" is so straight-up horrendous that one wouldn't be surprised to see it in the middle of a "Family Guy" episode as an attempt by MacFarlane to satirize bad sitcom writing. It's poorly directed and performed as well but it comes back to the writers who think jokes about Asian schoolgirls and "Brokeback Mountain" (in 2013!) are funny. It almost leads one to think that MacFarlane is punking people a la Andy Kaufman. "What's the worst thing I could put on TV and get my fans to watch?" Don't play along with his little sadistic game.



Television Rating: **3.5/5.0**

On the other hand, and it will look like "Insert Your Favorite Sitcom Here" if you watch it after "Dads," is the often-funny and promising "Brooklyn Nine-Nine." Blending "The Office," "Barney Miller," and Andy Samberg's "SNL" personality into a weekly series has real potential. Working with a few veteran writers of the great "Parks and Recreation," Samberg stars as Detective Jake Peralta, the gifted/lucky cop who can crack jokes through a case and still get his man. He has the best arrest record but takes his job the least seriously.



Brooklyn Nine-Nine
Photo credit: FOX

Jake immediately butts heads with his new, by-the-book captain, Ray Holt (the great Andre Braugher). Holt orders him to wear a tie around the station and follow procedure. The oil-and-water dynamic feels a little overplayed in the premiere but will surely settle into something more organic. The two VERY different performance styles by Samberg & Braugher make them a unique comedy duo in a landscape that could have used more originality in its new sitcom offerings. And it helps that the supporting cast is uniformly strong, including Melissa Fumero as the Peralta's closest competition in terms of total arrests, the funny Terry Crews as the Sergeant now afraid to do anything dangerous because he just had baby girls, Joe Lo Truglio as the awkward guy with his heart in the right place, and Stephanie Beatriz as the toughest female cop in town.

The ads may have made "Brooklyn Nine-Nine" look a bit too much like an extended Lonely Island "SNL" sketch for some viewers. That's not the lineage to remember here. It's "Parks and Recreation" in a NYC police station. It's got that awkward but lovable and relatable sense of humor. A few too many easy jokes in the premiere can be forgiven for setting up the characters and premise. Even "Parks" wasn't great to start. Could "Brooklyn Nine-Nine" reach those comedy heights? It's possible. Certainly more so than "Dads."

One final note — FOX didn't make the premiere of "New Girl" available but I have seen the first two episodes of "The Mindy Project" and they're both very funny. With great turns from Franco, Mindy Kaling, Bill Hader, Chris Messina, Seigney, and more, this is a spectacular ensemble. Check it out.

"Dads" stars Seth Green, Giovanni Ribisi, Martin Mull, Peter Riegert, Vanessa Lachey, Brenda Song, and Tonita Castro. It premieres on FOX on Tuesday, September 17, 2013 at 7pm CST.

"Brooklyn Nine-Nine" stars Andy Samberg, Andre Braugher, Terry Crews, Melissa Fumero, Joe Lo Truglio, Stephanie Beatriz, and Chelsea Peretti. It premieres on FOX on Tuesday, September 17, 2013 at 7:30pm CST.



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