

## TV Review: ABC Launches New Comedies ‘The Goldbergs,’ ‘Trophy Wife’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 24, 2013 - 1:34pm

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CHICAGO – It takes guts or stupidity to launch an entire night of new programing but that's what ABC is attempting this evening, September 24, 2013. And they're not even doing it consistently in terms of genre and quality. It starts strong with “Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.” and ends on a whimper with “Lucky 7.” In between? Two comedies, one that's OK purely through the talents of the people involved, and one that's just awful. If you're keeping track, ABC's new night goes good-ok-awful-bad. Here are the details on the middle two.



The Goldbergs  
Photo credit: ABC

### “The Goldbergs”



Television Rating: **3.0/5.0**

Don't come back and yell at me if you don't like “The Goldbergs”. I won't blame you in the slightest. And while I think week one could get some nice holdover ratings from “S.H.I.E.L.D.”, I don't see this one lasting too long for a network that hasn't been able to figure out Tuesday night comedy. (And it's super-depressing that “Happy Endings” and even “Don't Trust the B——” lost out to not just this one but especially the



junk that follows it.) “The Goldbergs” is like “The Wonder Years” with louder clothes, louder people, and louder comedy. It’s a bit too shrill to imagine it working long term but if the in-your-face approach of the pilot settles into a more believable groove, the talented cast could keep it entertaining.

The great Patton Oswalt narrates this tale of childhood in the era of boom boxes and the worst fashion of the last century. Before smart phones, before social media, before twerking — “The Goldbergs” should hit a nostalgic spot for its key demo simply through its non-stop parade of references to the simpler joys of the ’80s. I just wish it was as smart in terms of writing as its cast is when it comes to comic timing.

Adam (Sean Giambrone), the character based on Adam F. Goldberg, the show’s creator and the one who will grow up to be Patton Oswalt, video tapes his family with the kind of massive VHS camera that kids today might have a tough time believing existed. He captures the insanity of his house, including overbearing mom Beverly (Wendi McLendon-Covey), hot-temperd dad Murray (Jeff Garlin), headstrong older sis Erica (Hayley Orrantia), difficult bro Barry (Troy Gentile), and grandpa Pops (George Segal).

The comedy on “The Goldbergs” is loud, aggressive, and somewhat abrasive. It’s about families in which people have to yell to be heard and too much of the comedy is immature and poorly constructed. However, Garlin, Oswalt, Segal, and McLendon-Covey? Come on, that’s a really strong comedy cast. Writing on a show like “The Goldbergs” can often come around to match the talents of the people in front of the camera. It’s why so many great comedies start off shaky but improve as the writers learn how to craft comedy for their stars. I hope “The Goldbergs” goes up from here. It has the potential to do so.



Trophy Wife  
Photo credit: ABC

“Trophy Wife”



There are a lot of talented people on the other new ABC sitcom tonight but they can’t save this mess, one of my least favorite shows of the year. While the comedy is abrasive on “The Goldbergs,” it’s insulting on “Trophy Wife.” It’s a pile of cliches on top of stereotypes on top of bad comedy. Again, it’s a shame because, as with almost all shows this year, there’s some notable talent here. But they’re wasted to such a drastic degree on such stale character writing that I doubt it can be turned around.

Kate (Malin Akerman) is the title character, the new spouse of Pete (Bradley Whitford), a nice guy but one on his third union. Kate gets thrown into the naturally complex dynamic of a man on his third family. She has three stepchildren and two ex-wives with which to deal. She’s going to make it. Especially since none of these people are remotely likable.

The first ex-wife is played by the great (and wasted) Marcia Gay Harden as Diane, an ex-Olympic athlete with twin teenagers (Bailee Madison & Ryan Lee). Diane doesn’t like Kate. Kate doesn’t like Diane. I don’t like either of ‘em. The oldest stepdaughter doesn’t approve of the new trophy wife while the stepson approves a bit too much. Then there’s Jackie (the criminally wasted Michaela Watkins), mother of adopted son Bert (Albert Tsai).

Imagine being at the family dinner of the neighbors you like the least on your block. That’s “Trophy Wife.”

“The Goldbergs” stars Jeff Garlin, Wendi McLendon-Covey, Troy Gentile, Sean Giambrone, Hayley Orrantia, and George Segal. It premieres

on ABC on Tuesday, September 24, 2013 at 8:30pm CST.

“Trophy Wife” stars Malin Akerman, Bradley Whitford, Michaela Watkins, Natalie Morales, Ryan Lee, Bailee Madison, Albert Tsai, and Marcia Gay Harden. It premieres on ABC on Tuesday, September 24, 2013 at 8:30pm CST.



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