

TV Review: Fifth Season of ‘Justified’ Launches with Dark Edge

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 7, 2014 - 11:38am

- [Brian Tallerico](#) [2]
- [Damon Herriman](#) [3]
- [Elmore Leonard](#) [4]
- [Erica Tazel](#) [5]
- [FX](#) [6]
- [Graham Yost](#) [7]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [8]
- [Jacob Pitts](#) [9]
- [Jere Burns](#) [10]
- [Joelle Carter](#) [11]
- [Justified](#) [12]
- [Michael Rapaport](#) [13]
- [Nick Searcy](#) [14]
- [Television](#) [15]
- [Timothy Olyphant](#) [16]
- [Walton Goggins](#) [17]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [18]

What a great time to be a TV junkie. NBC’s “Community” is back in prime form with the return of Dan Harmon. HBO launches the incredible “True Detective” on Sunday and “Sherlock” returns stateside next weekend. There’s enough quality out there that FX’s “Justified” could get lost in the shuffle. Don’t let that happen. With a smart pair of season-opening episodes, “Justified” is back with its complex blend of humor, action, wit, and southern charm. As the writers do every season, the tone has been tweaked again this year, resulting in a start that feels darker, deadlier, and more dangerous than the last few seasons. This is great TV.



Television Rating: **4.5/5.0**

The season premiere, “A Murder of Crowes,” introduces us to who I suspect will be the “big bad” for the season, Daryl Crowe Jr. (Michael Rapaport, who seems to be pushing his accent a bit too hard in the premiere but strikes an effective physical presence), part of the now-extended clan of Crowes, a family of Southern criminals that includes the series’ punching bag, Dewey Crowe (Damon Herriman). Dewey has been so badly abused by Raylan Givens (Timothy Olyphant) in the past that he’s actually received a settlement, bringing him into some money. There’s nothing worse than a redneck with money. It brings out the bad people on his family tree.



Justified

Photo credit: FX

As it so often does, the first few episodes of “Justified” send a few plates spinning. Few shows have more deftly managed various plot threads over the course of a season, while also throwing in the occasional stand-alone story, as “Justified.” So while we meet the malevolent Daryl and his family of freaks this season, we also see expanded roles for now-series-regular Wynn Duffy (Jere Burns), who travels with Boyd (Walton Goggins) to Detroit after a drug deal goes very wrong. Boyd is still trying to get Ava (the criminally underrated Joelle Carter) out of the legal predicament that ended last season and the premiere features stark acts of violence on the part of Mr. Crowder. Boyd has long been a fascinating character in terms of moral balance. Goggins makes him such a riveting, three-dimensional person that we often forget that he’s a cold-blooded maniac, especially when those he loves are in jeopardy.



Justified

Photo credit: FX

That’s what’s so remarkable about “Justified” — the way its writers, led by the great Graham Yost, understand how Elmore Leonard worked in the gray area of right and wrong. Raylan Givens is far from a perfect guy, as exemplified by the fact that the season opens with him in trouble for essentially abusing Dewey Crowe. He often crosses the line but for results that he would consider justified. Similarly, Boyd Crowded does what he thinks is justified for his survival and safety.

The characters are well-written but it's the cast of “Justified” that has never garnered the acclaim it deserves. Olyphant and Goggins are as charismatic as anyone on TV right now and the supporting cast has become equally fascinating, at least in its darker corners (Givens’ supporting players on the legal side have always been a series’ weakness in terms of character development). And this year the show is loaded with guest stars from Rapaport to Burns to Amy Smart to Alicia Witt to David Koechner to Dave Foley, of all people. Everyone wants to take a trip to “Justified.” Who can blame ‘em?

If you need to catch up, Sony released a beautiful Blu-ray/DVD/UltraViolet release for season four. Many shows get this later in their run and the studio that handles them begins to streamline and bare-bones their home releases. Such is not the case with “Justified,” which not only features stellar HD transfers but 10 audio commentaries and interesting bonus material. It’s a great home release for a great show.



- Special Features:
- o 10 Commentaries
 - o Outtakes
 - o Deleted Scenes
 - o Deadly Serious: Constable Bob
 - o The Veterans’ Experience
 - o Anatomy Of An Episode
 - o Becoming Boyd
 - o Script To Screen: The Finale

“Justified” stars Timothy Olyphant, Walton Goggins, Joelle Carter, Nick Searcy, Erica Tazel, Jacob Pitts, Damon Herriman, Michael Rapaport, and Jere Burns. It returns to FX on January 7, 2014 at 9pm CST. “Justified: The Complete Fourth Season” was released by Sony on December 17, 2013.



[19]

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