

TV Review: Premiere of 'From Dusk Till Dawn' Lacks Originality

Submitted by [DaveHC](#) [1] on March 10, 2014 - 4:03pm

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CHICAGO – It's been a year of datings that has seen venerable characters like Norman Bates and Hannibal Lecter solidly re-envisioned by the small screen. So how fare the Gecko Brothers? Not all that great sadly. This overly slick redux of the fantastic film "From Dusk Till Dawn" (1997) not only suffers from pretty people syndrome but borrows so heavily from the original film that it feels less like homage and reboot than redress and reshoot.



Television Rating: **2.5/5.0**

The series premiere picks up on the Geckos, fresh from their latest botched job, as they hit a gas station for fuel and supplies on their way to split up the loot with their employer Carlos. A couple of hostages and a standoff later, the major revelations are that Richie Gecko is crazy but also has visions, Seth Gecko speaks in stilted Tarantino gangster patois for no particular reason, and Carlos the employer (played well by Wilmer Valderama) is dangerous and the head of an organization that may be heavily involved in the occult as well as the drug trade.

Vampires and demonic entities are hinted at in the form of two forgettably beautiful hostages and the standoff is perpetuated by a pair of lawmen that seem lifted directly from the cutting room floor of "No Country For Old Men" auditions.



From Dusk Till Dawn

Photo credit: FX

Playing to type isn't the problem here. The show does well with that. But it also doesn't distinguish itself either. D.J. Cotrona as Seth and Zane Holtz simply can't pull off the sort of grizzled manic energy that George Clooney and Quentin Tarantino did in the original film. Far more interesting is Don Johnson who seems to have taken over the Michael Parks lawman role from the original. He brings gravitas and is by far the

most compelling of the characters but the choices made about what to do with him will leave virtually anyone disappointed by the end of the show.

Jessie Garcia as the deputy Freddie Gonzalez, who must now follow vengeance' road to bring down the Geckos, is almost invisible onscreen. In short nothing stands out. The only solid stylistic moments involve near aping of line delivery from the first film. There are also plotting problems for what little bit of plotting there is. Carlos inexplicably and illogically refuses help to the boys at a key point potentially costing himself millions of dollars.

To the credit of showrunner Robert Rodriguez the series does look good and doesn't exactly skimp on the gunplay. The problem is the whole thing still comes off as lifeless as most TV type fare. The fanbase for Supernatural, or even Buffy and Angel have nothing to worry about here unless the show finds a way to standout from the pack which seems unlikely given just how little sense of humor is on display.

The idea of a TV show based on "From Dusk Till Dawn" is a good one. But that film is a rough act to follow. People remember Dusk as a throwaway action horror romp but in actuality it has great character development and a lot of fairly sophisticated twists and turns on top of all it's genre conventions. El Rey is a Hispanic, English language general entertainment network launched by Rodriguez that plans to offer a lot of genre type stuff not available on other networks. This also is a good idea. "From Dusk Till Dawn" will probably need some retooling if it's going to represent the best of what such entertainment can offer.

"From Dusk Till Dawn" stars DJ Cotrona, Zane Holtz, Don Johnson and Jessie Garcia. It debuts on El Rey on March 11, 2014 at 8pm CST.



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