

Excellent Ensemble, Quality Writing Click on TNT's 'Trust Me'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 20, 2009 - 1:35pm

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Television Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – We have good news for fans of “Will & Grace” and “Ed”. The stars of those two shows have been lucky enough to have lightning strike their careers again with TNT's “[Trust Me](#) [19]”.

Gimmicks and concepts may get an audience to tune in for a premiere episode, but television is still primarily a medium that lives and dies on the quality of its writing. Even the best ensembles will find themselves looking for other work if the writing doesn't click. And it's often difficult for TV stars who find success once to land another project with the same caliber of writing (ask [Jason Alexander](#) [20], [Brad Garrett](#) [21], or the cast of Fox's “[Back to You](#) [22]”.)



Tom Cavanagh, Monica Potter, Eric McCormack
Photo credit: Art Streiber

Referred to by its own leads as "Madder Men," "Trust Me" is a modern take on the world of advertising, more concerned with the inter-office politics of the modern industry than AMC's incredibly dense and riveting program. "Trust Me" focuses on Mason ("[Eric McCormack](#) [4] of "Will & Grace" fame) and his creative partner Conner ("[Tom Cavanagh](#) [18] from "Ed"). The two work at the ad firm Rothman, Greene, & Mohr and have formed a successful team over the years with Mason being the more intellectual of the two and Conner the emotional partner who can sweet-talk a client and close a sale.



Eric McCormack, Tom Cavanagh
Photo credit: Karen Neal

Mason, the art director, is a responsible family man with a beautiful wife named Erin ([Sarah Clarke](#) [13]), while Conner is the impulsive, emotional, single guy. In the first episode, after the death of the creative director for the firm, Mason gets the job over Conner, creating a rift between the two. The second episode focuses on trying to satisfy a testy client.

Meanwhile, a new hire, the award-winning Sarah Krajicek-Hunter ([Monica Potter](#) [12]) joins the team and shakes things up in her own way. It's interesting to see creative people respond to new blood as a double-edged sword. Sarah will clearly make the company better but also take some spotlight away from Mason and Conner. That kind of conflicted dynamic happens in creative industries every day.

Rounding out the team at Rothman, Green & Mohr is the junior creative team (meaning comic relief) of Hector (Geoffrey Arend) and Tom (Mike Damus) and their often-tough supervisor Tony Mink ([Griffin Dunne](#) [6]).

Two things stand out in the first two episodes of "Trust Me" and should allow most viewers to answer affirmatively to the ultimate question for a new series - will you keep watching?

First, McCormack and Cavanagh are surprisingly good. They've been underrated on television before but their chemistry here is believable and witty. Most shockingly, I had let go of "Ed" and "Will" within minutes. It can often be tough for actors to shake their previous characters but McCormack and Cavanagh do so without going too far from the kind of material that they are best at delivering. As for Potter, it looks like she'll be allowed to develop an interesting character (and show a sense of humor she hasn't often been able to do) and every series could do a lot worse than having talented actors like Dunne and Clarke in small roles.



Eric McCormack
Photo credit: Karen Neal

Second, the team behind "Trust Me" understands that for a show like this to work it needs to be clever, witty, and quickly paced. Created by Hunt Baldwin and John Coveny, two of the co-executive producers behind the underrated writing on "[The Closer](#) [16]," the first two scripts for "Trust Me" are two of the best of the massive slate of mid-season programs.

"Trust Me" is proof that knowledge of the subject matter can never be underestimated. Baldwin worked at J. Walter Thompson in Chicago on major campaigns in the '90s and John Coveny was at Leo Burnett at nearly the same time. They both jumped from advertising to TV writing but the old axiom of "write what you know" has clearly served them well.

The first two episodes display both a knowledge about how the world of advertising works and an understanding that "Trust Me" will only succeed if we believe that these are the type of intelligent, quick-witted people who could become superstars in their industry. It is easy to do so because of the caliber of the writing.

TNT has found hit after hit with shows like "The Closer," "[Saving Grace](#) [14]," and "[Leverage](#) [23]," but "Trust Me" has the potential to break out to an even wider audience. It doesn't have the gravity of a show like "Mad Men," so I don't expect critics or award-giving groups to jump all over it, but it is something that not a lot of television is in this lackluster 2008-2009 season - consistently entertaining.

Read more about [the big-screen premiere and Chicago party for "Trust Me" \[24\]](#).

"Trust Me," which airs on TNT, stars Eric McCormack, Tom Cavanagh, Monica Potter, Griffin Dunne, Geoffrey Arend, Mike Damus and Sarah Clarke. The premiere airs on Monday, Jan. 26, 2009 at 9 p.m. CST.

Note: HollywoodChicago.com editor-in-chief Adam Fendelman will be interviewing "Trust Me" star Monica Potter. Stay tuned to HollywoodChicago.com for that interview.



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