

## TV Review: Christian Slater Strikes Out Again With Dull ‘The Forgotten’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 22, 2009 - 8:02am

- [ABC](#) [2]
- [Anthony Carrigan](#) [3]
- [Bob Stephenson](#) [4]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [5]
- [Christian Slater](#) [6]
- [Heather Stephens](#) [7]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [8]
- [Jerry Bruckheimer](#) [9]
- [Mark Friedman](#) [10]
- [Michelle Borth](#) [11]
- [My Own Worst Enemy](#) [12]
- [Rochelle Aytes](#) [13]
- [Television](#) [14]
- [The Forgotten](#) [15]

CHICAGO – In the United States, the remains of 40,000 people remain unidentified. ABC's new mystery “The Forgotten” is about a civilian, victims rights group led by Alex ([Christian Slater](#) [6]) who tries to solve the cold cases that the officials have left behind because there are no relatives to push for them. They identify the unknown. Sadly, the show probably deserves to remain a mystery to viewers as well.



Television Rating: **2.0/5.0**

A disembodied voice rings out over a shot of a dead woman on the side of a road in Chicago - “I was like you. Then this happened to me.” What is this? “[The Lovely Bones](#) [16]”? The narration of a corpse being wheeled into a morgue as she claims that she’s “waiting to be found” is more than a little creepy and arguably in bad taste, but the concept of “The Forgotten” is that only a select group of Windy City citizens care enough to hear this poor woman’s story from beyond the grave. They solve the cases everyone else leaves behind.



Anthony Carrigan, Christian Slater, Michelle Borth, Bob Stephenson, Heather Stephens.

Photo credit: ABC/Adam Taylor

The problems of “The Forgotten” are common to bad TV - ridiculously cliched dialogue, overdone technical cues, and a mystery-of-the-week that fails to intrigue the audience. There are exchanges in “The Forgotten” that are so overloaded with cop show stereotype (even if the characters aren’t exactly cops) that one wonders if they’re not being played tongue-in-cheek and then one remembers that the show is produced by Jerry Bruckheimer, someone not exactly known as the king of subtlety.



"ABC's "the forgotten" stars Bob Stephenson as Walter Bailey, Heather Stephens as Lindsey Drake, Christian Slater as Alex Donovan, Michelle Borth as Candace Butler, Anthony Carrigan as Tyler Davies and Rochelle Aytes as Detective Grace Russell.  
Photo credit: ABC/Frank Ockenfels

Of course, not all TV should be subtle. If "The Forgotten" is cliched, is it at least fun? Maybe you missed the part about the post-mortem narrator? The problem with "The Forgotten" comes in a blending of tones. Watching beautiful people deliver predictable dialogue is one thing but using it to tell the serious stories of John and Jane Does that make up the foundation of "The Forgotten" may have been a fatal flaw.

"The Forgotten" isn't completely unmemorable. Star Christian Slater would seem to be the perfect fit for a weekly mystery and proved he worked in the TV format in "My Own Worst Enemy," last year's show that had enough significant problems to warrant cancellation but none of them had anything to do with what Slater delivered. If this show comes together, it will be largely due to what Slater brings to it.

It doesn't hurt to have Bruckheimer's producer power behind the show either. The cast is almost uniformly beautiful. This is the most red-carpet ready victims rights group on the planet. The show almost looks too good, adding to the overly polished, too beautiful, not gritty enough sheen of the entire project. Some viewers will be drawn in by the fact that "The Forgotten" looks theatrical quality with detailed, varied sets and interesting cinematography.

Ultimately, that's the problem with "The Forgotten". The show telegraphs its sense of self-importance about giving a voice to the unheard with such two-dimensional, predictable dialogue that it draws attention to the production value more than what will always drive television - character and plot. It's hard to say if that will change as subsequent episodes don't drive the concept into the ground as strongly as the premiere, but viewers may not remember this show long enough to find out.

A mystery show needs to have characters the audience finds interesting like "[The Mentalist](#) [17]," mysteries of the week that have great twists and turns ("CSI," "Law & Order") or, preferably, both ("[Bones](#) [18]," "[Castle](#) [19]"). "The Forgotten" has neither.

One final note, Chicago readers will get a kick out of the use of our favorite city in the world on the show as the Blue Line is a major part of the mystery in week one and major streets like Ashland and Kedzie play a role. The show feels a bit too slickly shot to truly be set in LA - a West Coast sheen in a Midwest city - but it's always nice to see Chicago play a major role on such a big stage.

*'The Forgotten,' which airs on ABC, premieres on September 22nd, 2009 at 9PM CST. It stars Christian Slater, Michelle Borth, Heather Stephens, Bob Stephenson, Anthony Carrigan, and Rochelle Aytes. It was created by Mark Friedman.*



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- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/christian-slater>
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- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/my-own-worst-enemy>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/rochelle-aytes>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/television>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-forgotten>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-lovely-bones>
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