

## TV Review: ‘Medium’ Jumps Networks, Still Delivers Thrills

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 25, 2009 - 3:24pm

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CHICAGO – When NBC committed five hours a week to “The Jay Leno Show,” we knew a few corners would have to be cut when it came to scripted programming at the peacock network but no one really expected that the consistent (both creatively and in the ratings) “Medium” would get the axe. NBC’s unwanted program has found a new home on CBS and makes the network jump largely unaltered and ready to keep delivering the thrills that fans expect.



In what would have been a cruel joke on the audience if CBS hadn’t save the day, the fifth season of “Medium” ended with Allison Dubois (Patricia Arquette) in a coma. After playing with the traditional “dream sequence opening” of the show, the sixth season premiere of “Medium” opens with Allison coming back to life. But has she returned the same?



Medium  
Photo credit: CBS/Michael Yarish

Fans of the show will remember that Allison was concerned that the removal of her brain tumor would take away her gift, a psychic ability to solve crimes. Now, of course, with no gift, there’s no “Medium,” but the writers of the season-six premiere are awfully clever in how they bring Allison back to fighting form.

After waking from her surgery, Allison has minimal use of the right side of her body and, apparently for the entire summer, has had nothing but sleep-filled nights. No visions means no crime-solving and it’s left Allison a bit lost. She heads back to the police force to offer her assistance as a paralegal - the reason she was brought on in the first place - simply to make some money.





Medium  
Photo credit: CBS/Michael Yarish

It turns out that as Allison's body heals, so does her power. Like a limb twitching to life, Allison starts to have waking visions, sometimes of just a few minutes in the future. It's almost like she sees alternate timelines and then reverses back to the starting point. Will her power remain like this or return to dream form? It's unclear, but it's a very well-used device in the first episode, as it starts to become unclear whether you're watching something actually happen or something that Allison sees MIGHT happen. It makes for intriguing television.

The intrigue in episode one surrounds the case of a sports reporter allegedly being stalked by a crazed fan and videotaped in her most private moments. (The parallels between the case and the real tragedy of what happened to ESPN's Erin Andrews can't be avoided, making one wonder if it's a coincidence or if the "Medium" writers are going for "Law & Order"-esque "ripped from the headlines" drama.) Of course, there's more to the stalking case than meets the eye.

The case itself in week one is a little predictable and stale. I like "Medium" when it's honestly dark and scary and I hope the switch to CBS doesn't soften what can be a very grim show.

Surprisingly, the strongest material in the season premiere of "Medium" is within the Dubois family. Arquette and Jake Weber have developed such an easy-going believable chemistry that it's taken for granted. And with the strong young actresses who play their daughters, the Dubois family is one of the most genuine on TV. I love that the writers throw in real issues like taking the kids to school and financial hardship. By grounding the Dubois in reality, the supernatural elements of "Medium" are easier to take.

The fact is that good-not-great shows like "Medium" find themselves on the surprising end of the cancellation axe every year. (Just ask the team behind "Without a Trace" and "My Name is Earl".) They don't all get a second chance on another network. But now that CBS has brought "Medium" back to life and given it a perfect timeslot on Friday nights, I think it could actually be on longer than it was on its original network, especially if they keep delivering episodes this solidly entertaining. Allison Dubois would have to see far into the future to see the end of "Medium".

*'Medium,' which airs on CBS, stars Patricia Arquette, David Cubitt, Maria Lark, Miguel Sandoval, Sofia Vassilieva, and Jake Weber, and was created by Glenn Gordon Caron. The season six premiere airs on Friday, September 25th, 2009 at 8PM CST.*



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