

TV Review: ABC's Reboot of 'V' Feels Rushed But Promising

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on November 3, 2009 - 12:46pm

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CHICAGO – Reboots of classic TV programs have been a tough sell lately as shows like “Bionic Woman” and “Knight Rider” have failed to connect with critics or audiences. The long-in-the-works reboot of “V” feels like a more appropriate and timely attempt to rekindle a dead franchise, as the depressing state of the world seems downright in need of an alien savior. With only one episode available for critics, it's too soon to tell whether or not “V” will suffer the same fate as its recent remake brethren or if it will rise above and be another feather in the cap of a network that has been creatively rejuvenated with shows like “Modern Family” and “FlashForward”. The premiere is deeply flawed but there's reason to believe “V” could be a hit.



Television Rating: **3.5/5.0**

“V” opens with three title cards that read...

“*Where were you when JFK was assassinated?*”

“*Where were you on 9/11?*”

“*Where were you this morning?*”

Immediately, the sense of self-importance is clear. This is not a cheesy, B-movie take on “V”. The intention to be taken seriously is overly telegraphed, as if there's a subtitle that clarifies the creator's intentions to be more like “Battlestar Galactica” than “Knight Rider”.



Morena Baccarin.

Photo credit: David Gray/ABC

The “morning” compared to the assassination of JFK and the tragedy of 9/11 is the one in which the sky over all of the major cities of the world was simultaneously covered by the arrival of the “V,” humanoid alien visitors from another world. They need a resource abundant on our planet and water and are willing to offer incredible healing powers and remarkable technology in exchange. They are all beautiful, charming, and eerily unemotional, but people are drawn to them, especially in a time of need.



Alan Tudyk, Elizabeth Mitchell .
Photo credit: David Gray/ABC.

The lead characters in “V” include FBI Counter Terrorist Agent Erica Evans (Elizabeth Mitchell, “Lost”) who is cautious about the visitors but more concerned with tracking down a sleeper cell that has been more active since their arrival. She is partnered with the great Alan Tudyk and is clearly the lead of the show, a character who learns something about the Vs that will alter the course of the entire series.

Erica has a teenage son named Tyler (Logan Huffman), who has been adrift for a few years but finds himself drawn to the new visitors, especially the cute one who wants to make him an ambassador between the humans and the aliens.

Supporting characters include the eager reporter Chad (Scott Wolf), the cautious Father Jack (Joel Gretsch, “The 4400”), and the secretive Ryan (Morris Chestnut), who seems inspired to action by their arrival but not for the reasons you may first believe. Lourdes Benedicto and Laura Vandervoort co-star and Morena Baccarin could become the face of the series as the leader of the Vs, Anna.



Joel Gretsch, Lourdes Benedicto, Logan Huffman, Elizabeth Mitchell,
Morena Baccarin, Scott Wolf, Morris Chestnut .
Photo credit: Bob D'Amico/ABC.

In today's cluttered TV landscape, it's essential to grab an audience quickly, but there's a difference between fast-paced and cluttered and a fine line between riveting and unbelievable. "V" regularly crosses both of those lines with its eagerness to do what a lot of other series would have done in half a season in one episode. It's not 20 minutes before we're on-board a V ship and every scene features a new series-rattling twist. The whole episode feels rushed more than it should.

And yet, that rushed pace sets in motion several plot threads that should intrigue viewers enough to come back for week two and beyond, anchored by one of the strongest ensembles of the season. Mitchell can more than carry a show and Baccarin gives a smooth, confident performance that truly delivers. Chestnut and Wolf already have arcs that most shows would have devoted half a season too, but the cluttered tone of the premiere might make audiences more likely to tune into week two to see how it's uncluttered. With only four weeks of new shows and then a hiatus, it's clear that ABC and the producers of "V" want to grab an audience quickly. The premiere is constantly trying to grab you.

I wish the action of the premiere of "V" had been extended to at least a two-hour debut or maybe even over the course of a few episodes and if the show's writers keep up this ridiculous pacing, I think audiences will drift away. It was the characters on "Lost" and "BSG" that drew fans in as much, if not more, than the twists and turns. It's way too soon to tell if "V" can develop those kind of characters but the potential for greatness is definitely there. Certainly more than "Bionic Woman".

'V,' which airs on ABC, premieres on November 3rd, 2009 at 7PM CST. It stars Juliet Mitchell, Alan Tudyk, Logan Huffman, Scott Wolf, Joel Gretsch, Morris Chestnut, Morena Baccarin, Laura Vandervoort, and Lourdes Benedicto.



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By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [18]
Content Director
HollywoodChicago.com
brian@hollywoodchicago.com [17]

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