

TV Review: ‘Burn Notice’ Entertains But Spins Its Wheels

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 21, 2010 - 11:09am

- [Brian Tallerico](#) [2]
- [Bruce Campbell](#) [3]
- [Burn Notice](#) [4]
- [Gabrielle Anwar](#) [5]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [6]
- [Jeffrey Donovan](#) [7]
- [Sharon Gless](#) [8]
- [Spy Shows](#) [9]
- [Television](#) [10]
- [Tyne Daly](#) [11]
- [USA Network](#) [12]

CHICAGO – When we last saw “Burn Notice” lead Michael Westen (Jeffrey Donovan), he was putting his life on the line for Fiona (Gabrielle Anwar) by saving hers. The mid-season premiere picks up shortly after the end of the previous episode with Michael tending to Fiona’s wounds, Sam (Bruce Campbell) trying to figure out who threw Michael’s contact off a balcony, and basic cable’s number one spy trying to snoop and stay alive at the same time.



Television Rating: **3.0/5.0**

Last year, “Burn Notice” was at a crossroads. The writing staff had essentially blown up their own dramatic foundation at the end of season two by suggesting that Michael’s exile in Miami was actually for his own good. Without the mystery of who burned Michael to drive the show as it did in the first good season and the second great one, the third struggled a bit with identity.



Gabrielle Anwar as Fiona Glenanne, Bruce Campbell as Sam Axe, Jeffrey Donovan as Michael Westen

Photo credit: Glenn Watson/USA

Considering this is technically the mid-season premiere (USA’s system of half-seasons was inspired by the writer’s strike but is still annoyingly in place), it’s not surprising that the struggles continue. The balance between the overall arc of the show and its mystery-of-the-week seems off, as it did in season one. It’s not minutes after Michael is in a fire-bombed hotel room that he’s back on a lame mystery-of-the-week and shortly thereafter he’s faking a southern accent and drag racing. Can’t we focus just for one hot minute?





Jeffrey Donovan as Michael Westen
Photo credit: Glenn Watson/USA

"Burn Notice" is an undeniably well-made, slick piece of entertainment but the lack of character development and consistency is starting to make me feel like it will never live up to its true potential. There were signs in season two of a show finding the depth under the cool facade of these beautiful people. Donovan, Anwar, and Campbell are certainly talented enough to play more than just cool, sexy, and clever, respectively, but that's all the writers seem to think they can do. I'm not asking for complex, multi-episode arcs but I can't stand it when a show with this many talented parts never seems to even try to form a sum.

And the disparity between the quality of the overall plot of the show and the individual mysteries seems to be grating on the cast as well. When Campbell and Donovan are allowed to play the mystery of who killed Michael's C.I. or Anwar is allowed to play the emotion of getting closer to her clear soulmate, the mid-season premiere sparkles with the potential of the show. The mystery of the week? You can practically see the actors yawning along with you. And the melodrama of its resolution is horrendously written.

Having said that, a main draw of tonight's episode of "Burn Notice" is something that probably won't even register for half of its young fans - the guest star turn by Tyne Daly, the former co-star of Sharon Gless on the TV classic "Cagney & Lacey". Surprisingly, it's more than just a gimmick in that the moments that reunite Gless and Daly prove that the pair still has genuine chemistry. It's nice to see Gless, the most underutilized actor on the show, given something to do.

"Burn Notice" is still wildly entertaining, but it's becoming more disposable than I once thought it would be. It's gone from potential must-see TV to something enjoyable if you catch it (not that there isn't something to be said for enjoyable escapist entertainment every now and then). The cast is talented enough and the writers have shown signs of development before that "Burn Notice" has the chance to light up again instead of just successfully smoldering for the next few years.

The mid-season premiere of season three of 'Burn Notice,' which airs on USA, stars Jeffrey Donovan, Gabrielle Anwar, Bruce Campbell, Sharon Gless, and Tyne Daly. The show returns on January 21st, 2010 at 9pm CST.



[13]

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [14]
Content Director
HollywoodChicago.com
brian@hollywoodchicago.com [13]

Source URL (retrieved on Apr 24 2024 - 5:00am):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/9780/tv-review-burn-notice-entertains-but-spins-its-wheels>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/briantt>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brian-tallerico>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/bruce-campbell>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/burn-notice>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/gabrielle-anwar>

[6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
[7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/jeffrey-donovan>
[8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/sharon-gless>
[9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/spy-shows>
[10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/television>
[11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/tyne-daly>
[12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/usa-network>
[13] <mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com>
[14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#BRIAN>