

## TV Review: 'Past Life' Fails to Reincarnate Anything Entertaining

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on February 9, 2010 - 12:59pm

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CHICAGO – FOX's new supernatural drama "Past Life" is a laughable waste of time, a show that feels like an inferior version of a dozen other programs, coming off as a weak variation on "Medium," "The Ghost Whisperer," and countless other procedurals. A blend of manipulative melodrama, visions of the other side, and a weakly mystery, the show comes off like "CSI: The Lovely Bones" and, yes, it's as awful as that sounds.



Television Rating: **1.0/5.0**

The key problem with "Past Life" (and it's only one of many) is that the similarly vision-driven "Medium" thrives largely because of the stellar work by Patricia Arquette and the focus on her family as much as her visions. In other words, you need strong characters to mix with the supernatural mumbo-jumbo and the leads on "Past Life" are impossible to care about and lacking in the charisma needed to make a show like this work. There's no Mulder and Scully in this dull program and that's the key flaw although it would even be hard for Gillian Anderson and David Duchovny to bring this dead script to life.



Past Life

Photo credit: Jeremy Cowart/FOX

The lackluster duo at the center of "Past Life" are Dr. Kate McGinn (Kelli Giddish) and former cop Price Whatley (Nicholas Bishop). McGinn is a past life specialist, one who believes that not only are we all reincarnated but that we can regress and tap into memories of the people we used to be, sometimes to solve a cold case. Whatley minorly plays the skeptic but he has a manipulative emotional subplot about a dead wife that makes him want to believe. Richard Schiff pops up in a small role and looks like he wants to be anywhere else.



Past Life  
Photo credit: David Moir/FOX

In the first episode, a young man named Noah is having nightmarish flashbacks of drowning and is clearly somehow related to a missing girl from years ago. Noah screams "I saw the man who killed me!" and has flashbacks that are about as clear as a bad music video. As he pieces together what he's seeing, McGinn and Whatley basically go along for the ride and seemingly with complete police cooperation. There's a moment in the premiere where the FBI search a boat based on so little actual evidence that I laughed out loud. It's less believable than that we could actually access memories of people we used to be to bring criminals to justice.

The writing on "Past Life" is awful and the paper-thin dialogue isn't helped by the boring Bishop and the bizarrely personality-less Giddish, a woman who never once comes across as genuine, looking more like a model than anyone interested in solving crimes. As with all shows of this nature, the chemistry of the leads needs to be strong to maintain interest and Bishop and Giddish have none. Their banter isn't funny nor believable and they're focused so heavily on shoving as many plot twists as possible into each episode that the characters never register.

As vampires are to films, the hereafter seems to be to television with shows like "Medium," "The Ghost Whisperer" and "Ghost Hunters" finding loyal followings. But this odd blend of the supernatural and the procedural misses what is most important about both genres - being entertaining. Don't waste any of your life on this mess.

*'Past Life,' which airs on FOX, stars Kelli Giddish, Nicholas Bishop, Ravi Patel, and Richard Schiff. The show premieres on February 9th, 2010 at 8pm CST before moving to its regular time slot on February 11th, 2010 at 8pm CST.*



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