

## TV Review: NBC Continues to Frustrate with Generic 'Deception'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 7, 2013 - 11:47am

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CHICAGO – The brain trust of programmers at NBC continues to make baffling decisions, producing yet another soap-covered drama that feels like it could have been created by a computer trying to replicate the success of other networks. Take a bit of ABC's "Revenge," a bit of AMC's "The Killing," and a dozen daytime soap operas and throw them in a shredder. Despite some decent performances from a cast too talented for the writing here, "Deception" is simply a generic waste of time. It too often reminds one of shows that do the same thing in a more entertaining fashion. Just watch one of them instead.



Television Rating: **1.5/5.0**

I'll admit that soap operas aren't my number one genre of choice but I can still tell when one is working and when one is flopping. There's a confidence on display in the first season of "Revenge" or the reboot of "Dallas" that the viewer can sense that is simply missing here. It feels desperate. Remember that kid in class who tries to copy someone else's style or attitude but comes off as not understanding what works about what he's copying in the first place? You know the teens in high school who were always about a semester or two behind music or fashion trends? "Deception" is the TV version of those dorks.



Deception

Photo credit: NBC

A world-famous socialite (one of those folks who's famous for being rich a la Paris Hilton) named Vivian is the heiress to the Bowers

pharmaceutical empire but she's dead on a hotel room floor before the credits roll. She has an odd-shaped mark on her cheek (perhaps a ring imprint) and drugs in her system. The media and police first presume it's just a rich girl who had too much illegal candy but things quickly turn more mysterious and a childhood friend of Vivian's named Joanna Locasto (Meagan Good), who is now a Detective, decides to find her killer.

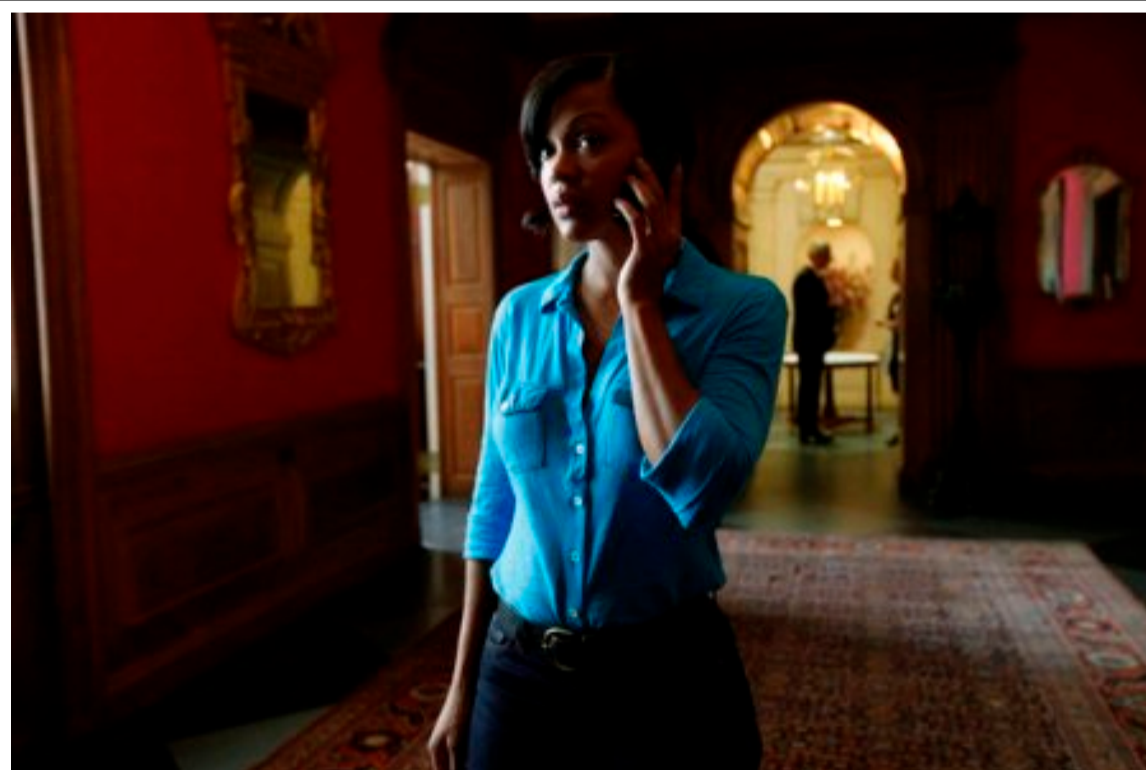


Deception  
Photo credit: NBC

To do so, Joanna has to go undercover in the Bowers family, returning to them as a heartbroken childhood friend of Vivian's looking for emotional support but really searching for secrets. And this family has a bunch of those, of course. And Joanna doesn't even have to look hard to find them. "Deception" is the kind of show where there are two heated arguments within earshot of our crack detective before the first half-hour is over. Apparently just being able to eavesdrop will be enough for this investigation.

Joanna's history with the Bowers will certainly play an important factor in the development of "Deception" as she actually has a physical past with Vivian's brother Julian (Wes Brown). Does she still have feelings for him? What about her partner at the FBI (Laz Alonso)? Patriarch Robert Bowers (Victor Garber) seems supportive of Joanna's involvement with the family, to the point that he even gets her a job at his company, but others — like Robert's wife Sofia (Katherine LaNasa), Vivian's sister Mia (Ella Rae Peck), and older brother Edward (Tate Donovan) — are not happy about the new girl at the mansion.

"Deception" has a number of juicy soap opera ingredients. Drugs, infidelity, secrets — this is another show about beautiful, rich people behaving very badly. I think we get a kick out of thinking that the men and women who have so much money and fame are really even more f-ed up than those who have nothing. It's a genre that will still be thriving long after we're dead and gone.



Deception  
Photo credit: NBC

However, the ones that work bring something new to it. It can be as simple as a spark of creative dialogue or new character types or a strong cast. "Deception" has none of these things. All of the Bowers family secrets are telegraphed from so far away — if you can't guess Mia's secret of the owner of the ring that made the mark on Vivian's face then you just don't watch enough TV. Without interesting twists and turns, we're just left with pretty people and the cast isn't good enough to make them more interesting than that. Good isn't bad (no pun intended) and I always like Tate Donovan but Brown seems predictable, Peck doesn't work, and LaNasa is so smarmy that she should have a curly mustache to twirl.

There are a lot of interesting new shows this season — FOX's "The Following," FX's "The Americans," FX's "Legit," and even parts of NBC's "Do No Harm." At least we're getting the worst new midseason show out of the way early.

*"Deception" stars Meagan Good, Laz Alonso, Victor Harber, Wes Brown, Katherine LaNasa, Ella Rae Peck, Tate Donovan, and Marin Hinkle. It was created by Liz Heldens and premieres on NBC on Monday, January 7, 2013 at 9pm CST.*



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