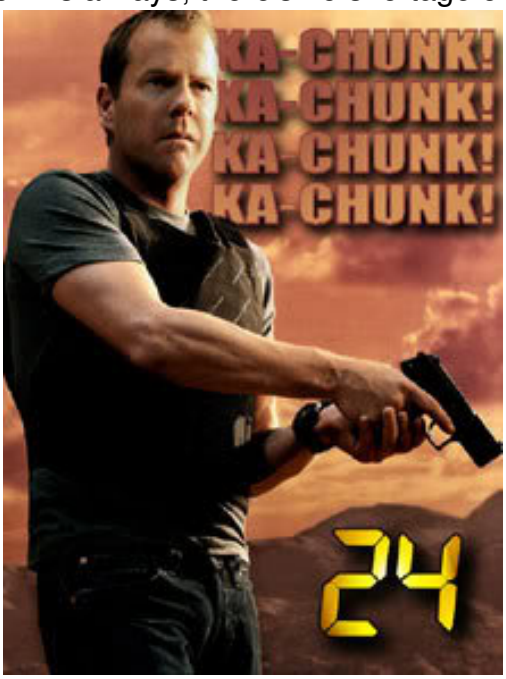
There are still two nukes out there, but now Jack and the Feds have Gredenko in custody to help them get to Fayed. Nadia was exonerated as a traitor. President Palmer is back in the fold. And the Bauer Death Count (tm) is at 15. As always, there's no shortage of drama on "24". Mitch checks in with his weekly recap.



Jack Bauer's calendar goes from March 31st to April 2nd. No one fools Jack Bauer…

Last week I was carping about how they left the entire "is Logan dead or not?" question hanging.

More of the same this week, as not only are we still unclear on the condition of the weasel, there was no additional information concerning last week's revelation regarding Audrey Raines. I guess there are too many other fish to fry, but this seems to be the most disjointed season of "24" I've seen.

However, they do get credit for breaking away from the "CTU Traitor" storyline they use almost every year, as it looks like CTU was compromised from the outside for once. Good thing this is fiction, as I'm not sure I'd be comfortable knowing that one of my country's first lines of defense against terrorism can be hacked by Forrest Gump.

And the credit they earned above just got frittered away by going right back to the same

“24”/Tom Clancy novel stale nugget regarding a maniacal power-mad insider trying to usurp power from the President in order to advance his own agenda (which only seems to be “launch nuclear weapons”). Good Lord, in “24” the USA looks like a frickin’ South American Banana Republic with all the attempted coups going on.

Recap.

As has happened several times this year, we start out the show with confirmation that another person who was wounded at the end of the last show has died; this time it’s the drone pilot, upping Jack’s D.C. to 14. Gredenko and Fayed have also figured out that the plot failed. I guess it was due to not seeing a big fireball emanating out from the direction of San Francisco. Fayed is none too happy, and threatens to shoot Gredenko right then, but is taunted by the older man, who tells him that if he kills him, Fayed will be unable to deliver the next dud-bomb-to-be to it’s intended target.

So Gredenko calls up another of his unlimited number of willing traitors, a lowly security analyst named Mark Hauser, and demands another hack into CTU. Mark isn’t happy about it, but he knows he’s in deep anyway, so he agrees. And how does he accomplish such feats of advanced computer engineering? By turning to his autistic brother Brady, of course! When all else fails, go to the Rain Man device, and have an adorable idiot who just so happens to have a Cray Supercomputer inside his skull. I guess it’s Idiot/Savant Month on Fox, as a couple of weeks ago Dave Matthews guest starred on “House” as an Idiot/Savant who was a musical genius. Man, that would have sucked had they switched it around and had Brady hacking into House’s computer to get at all his porn and drug sites while Dave Matthews played a nice little ditty for Jack. (OK, I know it’s more politically correct to say “autistic/savant”...but given the level of intelligence often exhibited by the screenwriters on this show, I’ll stick to my version of it).

But luckily for them, e_Idiocy.com was able to match up the right retard with the right hero, and we’re off and running, just as soon as Brady finishes watching The People’s Court (sorry...for those of you who never saw “Rain Man”, there are going to be a ton of references coming at you that will fly right over your heads).

Nadia is still in her holding cell at CTU when Doyle returns, and we’re not left hanging much longer regarding her fate, as it’s time to hurry the plot line along. Almost simultaneously, Chloe

intercepts a phone call from Gredenko implicating Hauser while new scummy agent Johnson shows a chip recovered from the Drone pilot's computer that proves Nadia's innocence. Johnson chides Doyle about how he's in t-r-o-u-b-l-e now for abusing an innocent woman, but that's OK, he'll agree to obstruct justice as repaid IOU for what happened in Denver. Doyle takes the chip from the beady eyed loser, and says that he has to stick around for a bit. Uh-oh, this doesn't look good. Is Doyle really that bad of a person? I'm not sure...is Robert E. Lee buried in Grant's Tomb?

So Jack is Doyleless when he take the TAC team just down the street to get Hauser, who foolishly grabs a shotgun when they break in, but unlike Markov, he only gets minor wounds for his stupidity. After Jack indirectly threatens to lock Brady up and throw away the key, Mark quickly blabs all to Jack, telling him that he's supposed to deliver information about a nuclear power plant. I'm no nuclear scientist (obviously), but I'd assume that a small nuclear bomb going off at a nuclear power plant would really, really make a mess. Mark is supposed to meet up with Gredenko to give him the information in person, but since he's got a few bullet holes in him, he and Jack will try to convince all sides to allow Brady to make the exchange.

OK...here's what gets me about this show. Brady can hack into a super secure government agency and steal information, but they can't figure out a simple modem to transfer that same information a second time to Gredenko, instead resorting to sneaker-ware?

So Jack has to convince Brady to wear a communications earpiece and get Gredenko out of the car. I was waiting for Brady to say he wanted to drive the car. "I'm an excellent driver. Dad used to let me drive slow on the driveway every Saturday. Uh-oh...five minutes to Wapner."

Where was I? Oh, yeah, trying to stay awake during this stretch of "a special episode of 'Life Goes On', where Corky learns that life doesn't go on if you are riddled with bullets". In any case, Brady's down with being Gredenko-bait. If this doesn't work, Jack plans on putting little girls and puppy dogs at risk.

While they're waiting for the SUV to arrive, we get subjected to more Milo. Johnson evidently is even more of a sleeze than we first thought, as he tells Milo that he gave evidence to Doyle, and that Doyle is concealing it to cover his own ass. Professional that Milo is, he reacts with the utmost calmness and clarity, as he lunges at Doyle, just begging to get his ass kicked...again. But Morris steps in, telling Milo that Doyle actually turned in the evidence to them ten minutes earlier, but that Doyle wanted to check for it's validity, as he got it from "an unreliable source".

Milo apologizes to Doyle, who pats him on the shoulder with a macho “fergedabodit”, as Doyle saunters over to Johnson and lets him know that he “screwed with the wrong guy for the last time, pal”. Looks like we have a new contestant on the Life Expectancy chart.

Nadia is released, and Milo decides that this would be an excellent time for him to put the moves on her. Why not? She’s just be manhandled, arrested, and threatened to be sent away (to Gitmo?) as an enemy combatant...what better time to profess your love and know that she’s thinking clearly? Milo corners her, and while her lips say “no”, her eyes say “do me right NOW”, and we get a make-out session in front of half the CTU staff. Now in a couple of weeks I’ll start working for the same company that employs my wife. I somehow get the feeling that they would frown upon me playing Tonsil Hockey with her on company property in front of everyone. But I guess at important security agencies of the United States Government, it’s all OK.

Enough of this mushy stuff, we need more killings! And we get it, as Gredenko does get out of the car to get the information from Brady, and we learn that Gredenko has told his men to kill him as soon as it’s been downloaded. Wouldn’t you know it? The only sniper equipped with the tranquilizer darts to knock out Gredenko can’t get a shot off because Brady’s in the way. Jack tells him to duck, and as the kid dives to the ground yelling “K-Mart still sucks!”, Gredenko gets the dart, and the rest of the baddies get traditional lead poisoning. So Brady is off to see his brother, and Gredenko is quickly trying to strike a deal with Jack to turn over Fayed and the nukes if he’s granted amnesty.

The other story going on this episode is, of course, the Dr. Strangelove dealings down in the White House Bunker. Lennox is about to announce how many millions of people will be killed in the Middle East when VP Daniels is drug away by the Ice Princess Lisa to be told that they are going to try to revive President Palmer. Daniels tries to force the doctor into not doing it, and is told to pound sand by one of the few people on this show who actually does operate by the rules.

Oh, crap! The President is crashing!!! What horrible timing, as it turns out Daniels is still going through with the strike, despite Lennox telling him that CTU has apprehended Gredenko.

No, wait...that was before the commercial break. Coming back from break, and a few seconds before The Order is given, Daniels receives a call from a completely awake and lucid Wayne, who tells him to stop it. Amazing, isn’t it? I come out of light anesthesia for minor arthroscopic knee surgery, and I’m as groggy as an Irishman on March 18th for the next eight hours.

Palmer comes out of a medically induced coma, and he's ready to take on Deep Blue in a chess match three minutes later.

He better be real sharp, though, as Daniels has decided that he really, really, really wants to blow stuff up...including the Constitution...and that he's still in charge of the country. "Get me the Attorney General!", he snaps. Looks like he wants to fire more than just a few prosecutors this time.

Final Thoughts.

President Palmer picks a power mad vice president who tries to usurp power...a complete rerun from season two, and about as lame of a plot device as I've seen since Kim and the Cougar.

Chloe kisses Morris right in front of Milo to "check his breath"...and now this week we get Chloe turning green from witnessing Milo plant one on Nadia. I'm turning green as well, but it's not from jealousy. Welcome to CTU Middle School.

Next week we get the freshly turned Gredenko talking with Fayed. With nine hours of show time left. Hmmm...I wonder if they'll catch Fayed and retrieve the bombs next week?

I think it's now obvious with this week's story that Mike Doyle is really a Good Guy with just one or two (or fifty) little flaws. And I also think we'll end up finding out that the Denver Incident was something that Doyle took the fall for to protect someone else (Johnson?).

I'm predicting that Tom Lennox will have a lot to do with resolving the pending power struggle between Palmer and Daniels. The revelation that Daniels forced Lennox to lie about Assad's involvement in the bombing will probably be the turning point.

Best Scene: Seeing Wayne Palmer awake, and coming to the realization that the bomb blast might have actually destroyed the waffling mechanism in his brain that was making him such an annoying character. The “kick-ass” Palmer is much better.

Jack Bauer Death Count: 15. Add the drone pilot Jack shot last week who expired at the start of the show, and another one of Gredenko’s henchmen.

Who’s the Traitor?: Looks like we may not have one for now...so in it’s place I’m going to put another list together.

The 24 Milk Carton. Have you seen these people?

Ex President Logan. Last seen flat lining in an ambulance after being used as a pin cushion by his wacky ex-wife.

Martha Logan. Was she re-arrested after getting Mrs. Subarov’s help, or given a medal? You think Aaron Pierce will now be sleeping with one eye open after seeing what she can do?

Phillip Bauer. It would be impossible for that tall of an elderly gentleman to stay completely hidden from the US Government. What? You say Osama bin Laden is 6’5”? Nevermind.

The Blue Man Conspiracy Group. Have they completely forgotten that a cabal of mysterious former associates of Graem Bauer snuck someone into the White House Bunker and tried to kill the president?

Marilyn Bauer. Last seen screwing up Jack’s head even more than it already was.

Josh Bauer. Hopefully spending time with a therapist after seeing his criminal dad killed and his grandfather taking him hostage.

Walid. Who? Oh, yeah, the other guy whose hospital bed Sandra Palmer gets to stand over and fret.

Audrey Raines. Or at least her name, as it was brought up last week, and not uttered a single time this week.

Life Expectancy: Unscientific wild assed guesses on how much longer certain people will still be breathing and the chance they have of living through the day. 9 hours to go.

Daniel's tenure as Commander-In-Chief – 1 more hour. Yes, I know...I said "one more hour" last week. But hopefully this "Seven Days in May on Nyquil" coup-de-tat doesn't drag on much longer.

Tom Lennox – 2 more hours. Just in case Powers Boothe forgets that he's not on "Deadwood" anymore, and takes a knife to Biscuit after the little gnome tells the AG about the Assad Lie. Chance of living through the day? 75%

Morris – 2 more hours. Same as before. Maybe they're setting us up with the Soap Opera CTU, and we'll go back to the "Building of Death CTU" shortly. Chance of living through the day? 33%

Milo – 3 more hours. Same thing as Morris. Chance of living through the day? 33%

Johnson – 3 more hours. IF a CTU attack/betrayal comes, it'll be from this jerk. If it doesn't, he'll do something stupid in the field, and end up being taken out (probably by Doyle). Chance of living through the day? 10%

Phillip Bauer – 4 more hours. That is if he doesn't stay forever on the milk carton. Chance of living through the day? 50%.

Fayed – 7 more hours. Still heading towards the inevitable? 0%

Mike Doyle – 7 more hours. I'm leaving him on the list, but I think they're still setting him up to be the main partner of Jack for some time to come. Chance of living through the day? 80%

Gredenko – 8 more hours. Saw Rade Serbedzija, the actor who plays Gredenko, in the movie "Shooter" over the weekend (review out tomorrow). When you see it, you'll know immediately what lies ahead for him after the first time you see him in a scene. Chance of living through the day? 0%