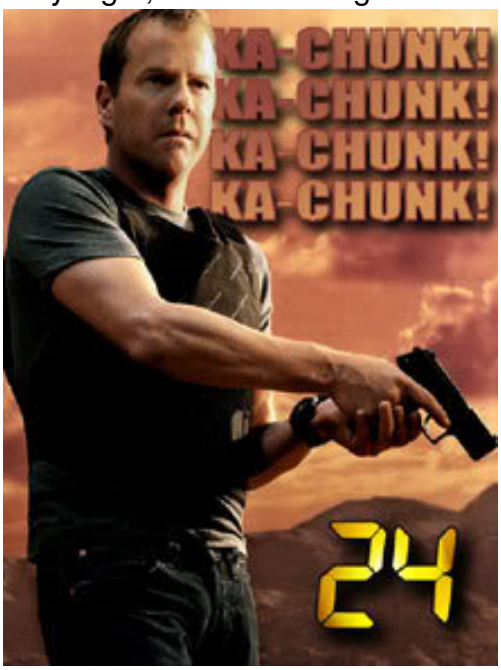
If you are a fan of the show "24", Mitch's weekly recaps are a must read. While still entertaining, the show has gone so far overboard with the writing and implausible scenarios that are taking place ... and none of this is getting by Mitch, he of biting sarcasm and cynicism. Just one episode remains. Monday night, two hours long. Mitch recaps last weeks episode, and looks ahead to the finale.



"In the 18 months where Jack Bauer was presumed dead, Tony Almeida was put in a coma, Michelle and David Palmer were killed, a major hurricane ravaged the Gulf Coast, and Rob Schneider made another movie. See what happens when Bauer isn't around?"...

Did anything really get accomplished this week? Other than Jack killing a bunch more people, and Powers Boothe grumbling more than Allen Iverson at a pre-season practice, I'm not sure we advanced one iota from where the last episode left off.

Recap

Morris covers up Milo's body. I'm not sure who already cleaned up all the brain matter that had to have been splattered all over the place after Milo took one point blank to the forehead, but I guess like potty breaks,

food breaks, and sleep, that's something we really don't have to worry about in 24Land. Nadia is totally bummed out about it all. But at least she's not nearly as hysterical as Marilyn. Nadia tries to get by Zhou-Hans Gruber to stop being upset at Marilyn's wigging...and Zhou-Hans gives Nadia a backhand to the face in response. Guess who doesn't have long to live?

So as they are lining up to get locked into a holding cell, Jack talks with Nadia, telling her they have to do something NOW or else they'll miss their chance. Not helping things is Chloe's acting like a 6th grader, wandering up to them and saying "what are you talking about?". Dumb, dumb, dumb.

But luckily, she doesn't endanger anyone, as a second later, the prison break is on! Morris chokes one!! Jack uses one for a shield (1) and shoots another (2)! He then starts choking Zhou-Hans Gruber, at least until he can get in position to break his neck (3), and then when the one Nadia is fighting with is about to kill her, Doyle charges in on his white horse and blows him away. Hoo-rah...that's what we've been missing for awhile. However, Morris choking some schmuck isn't 1/100th as awesome as Chloe taking an M-16 to some terrorists a couple of seasons ago.

Nadia tries to get things organized quickly. She releases Jack, but lets him know that Doyle is in charge. She then

gives Doyle a "you are going to get SOOO lucky later on" look. Doyle asks, "How many casualties?" "One. Milo Pressman", is Nadia's answer. Nice of you to forget about all the Budd Security guys, Nadia. Yeah, we know they're as expendable as Scott Pollard, Ira Newble, and Dwayne Jones, but you don't have to be THAT cold about them.

Josh has been taken to the secret lair of Cheng and the rest of Those Chinese Bastards!!!® Cheng calls Phillip, who asks to speak to Josh. "Hi, Gramps....you SUCK!!!" Nope, Josh isn't too happy with his grandfather, and reminds him that just a few hours ago, he was holding a gun to his head and threatening to kill him. Phil assures him that he really wouldn't have done that, it was just to allow him to escape. Now he just wants to kidnap him, and move him away from his mother and out of the country. "I want to protect you from your father's mistakes." Hmmm...to whom is he referring? Lord knows he thinks Jack has made a lot more mistakes than Graem ever did. "We'll start all over again in China", which is only slightly more appealing than "we'll start all over again in Fort Gay, West Virginia" (yes, that is an actual town). "I don't know what the hell you're talking about", Josh responds. Yep...definitely not from the

loins of Graem.

As TCB!!!® get in their convoy to rendezvous with Phil, Jack pops out of the hole, and pops a driver (4). Then he's in another gun battle, where he takes out another machine gun shooting bad guy (5) with his trusty handgun, and then completes his demonstration of "Chuck Norris is a pansy" macho by sliding across the floor to take out another (6). Then he's hot on the trail of Cheng, Josh, and two other pieces of Jack-fodder, shooting the one bringing up the rear (7).

Josh kicks Cheng in the face...good boy...but then pulls the same stupid trick that Eliza Dushku did as Ah-Nuld's daughter in "True Lies"; running away from a terrorist out onto a catwalk hundreds of feet above the street. I immediately jotted down this note: "Chance of dangling high above the ground? 100%"

Jack gets the last straggler (8), and then gets the drop on Cheng, who is out of bullets. C'mon Jack...do a

Christopher Henderson on him, and shoot him anyway. But wait! Josh is right below them, dangling precariously hundreds of feet off the ground. Who would have thunk it? Of course Jack must save him, but that means Cheng gets away...along with the knowledge of how to find Phil and the component. Good to see he's still got his priorities straight. And once again, no one in CTU can cover a back door, so Cheng gets away free. I mean, what were all those other people in Doyle's TAC team doing? I'm not even sure they un-holstered their weapons, as Jack and Doyle did all the killings. Maybe they were back in the truck watching the live feed of the IcePrincess Slutlisa's porn.

But for now, Josh is safe, and he tells Jack about Phil's conversation, but he can't remember any specifics that could help narrow down the search. Josh, THINK!!! C'mon, Jack...do the Vulcan Mind Meld to get it out of him. It worked on Audrey. Doyle finally catches up and Jack tells him, "My father is involved". Doyle - "Why?" Jack - "I'll ask him when I find him."

Unfortunately, it's now time to go away from the action in

Los Angeles, and go back to D.C. Karen says the Russians are moving even more men into the Central Asian Theater...damn, those tickets to "The Producers" must be really hard to come by now. Daniels wastes five minutes rehashing the Lisa story to Karen. "Needless to say...I am ashamed." Needless to say...I am bored.

Tom's disgusted watching porn, but the other guys are having a great time. "Aaannnnddd finally we're done.", Biscuit distastefully announces. Actually, everyone should be impressed. They've been going at it for almost 40 minutes. The Ice Princess Slutlisa heads to the bathroom; Bishop heads towards the electronics. But Kreskin knows he's being set up, and I really don't know why. He's concerned about how distant she was? Give me an effin' break. If a guy is really going to be that in tune to what a woman wants in bed to notice the difference, then he is not going to be the type to demand sex at 2:30 AM, less than 24 hours after a major terrorist attack. I don't know about you, but sex was the last thing on my mind at 2:30 AM on 9/12/2001...so if lover boy was that much of a jerk to want some right then, he's not the type that would be noticing whether or not his partner got off.

Bishop confronts Slutlisa, and she is such a bad actress. So is her character. She hits him over the head with a wine bottle, then hits him a few times with a lamp, and then a couple more times with a few more worn out clichés that were also lying around. Bishop fights back and puts the 124th choke hold we've seen this season on her, but can't finish the job as Biscuit and the bruisers burst in, bagging bad boy Bishop. Isn't alliteration wonderful? Lennox later explains to Bishop that he's toast, and his only options are to cooperate and send the stuff to his handler, which would result in a lesser sentence, or refuse and get the death penalty. Tough Choice, isn't it?

Switching back to the good stuff, Cheng calls Phil about how he doesn't have Josh, but still demands the component. Phil tells him tough shit regarding the component...no kiddie, no componie. Cheng threatens Phil...who laughs at such idol tomfoolery. Gotta give him credit; James Cromwell is making Phillip Bauer into one of the greatest villains this show has ever had.

There is a new guy from Division at CTU. Ben looks to be a total anal retentive jackass who thinks doing an immediate investigation into the security breach is more important than finding the component. That must be some interview process for many of the positions at CTU: "Are you a totally clueless fool with no sense of timing who is willing to put the entire world on a back burner while you chase your own tail? You are? Congratulations! You're hired!"

Morris gives Nadia a pep-talk, regarding her leadership, and implores her to ignore the jagoff from Division, and her own feelings of guilt regarding Milo. Yes, the two of them do have something in common...bwack-bwack-bwack.

Jack calls Marilyn to tell her that Josh should be back at CTU in a few minutes. If she's smart, she'll say "screw that, I'm taking him somewhere safer. Like Baghdad."

Cisco Product Placement time! OOPS...Suvarov knew about the setup from Bishop, and gives Daniels two hours to turn over the component or forensic proof of its destruction. Two hours...how convenient. Also nice to know that all these former KGB agents are operating with impunity in Washington, spying on anyone they want. Anthony Gonzalez is so jealous. And another thing on the totally illogical side; where do we have a military base that would need to be taken by Russia as a defense against China? Have these idiots ever friggin' looked at a globe? Or did we erect a Fort Outer Mongolia while I wasn't looking?

In any case, it's not looking good for the White House. So what we really need is a completely preposterous plot twist to come from out of left field to set up an escape from BadWritingHell.

Ring-ring...telephone call for Biscuit from Phil, who demands to talk to Daniels, telling him he'll turn the

component over to them if they give him Josh, a pardon, and clear passage to a country of his choice. Yes, we are now at a 9.9 on the Ludicrous Scale.

Does anyone really question whether Daniels will agree to this or not? Didn't think so. So Doyle actually gets away with fooling Jack this time, diverting his attention, and then spiriting Josh away, giving him a "Mandarin For Dummies" book to occupy his time.

Jack is not happy. That's OK, neither are 90% of the fans of this show concerning these stupid plot twists.

Final Thoughts.

So where is Phil planning on running off to if he turns over the component to Daniels? Despite his proclamations of all the great things that China will become over the next ten years, I don't quite think they'll be welcoming him with open arms after he betrayed Cheng.

Next week...Cheng dies! (no duh). Morris saves Chloe's life! Buchanan returns! Jack saves the world! And hopefully an entire new team of writers is hired for next year.

Two hour finale show next week...and then I have to find something else to bitch about.

Best Scene: Jack goes Rambo!

Jack Bauer Bad Guy Body Count: 39. The way this week went, I was picturing in my mind Jack acting like Legolas in "The Two Towers", keeping a running count as he was blowing people away ("35, 36, 37").

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. 2 hours to go...last chance for me to look foolish.

The Ice Princess Slutlisa - 10 more minutes. For the moment, joining Wayne Palmer and Charles Logan in medical limbo. Chance of living through the day? 90%

Chloe - 1 more hour. I guess she could be the shocking death of this season, but I highly doubt it. I just need to add some people here on the last week of predictions. Chance of living through the day? 90%

Cheng Zhi - 1 more hour. I think he'll be dispatched in the first hour, leaving the last hour focused on Jack finding Phil. Chance of living through the day? 0%

Phillip Bauer - 1 ½ more hours. I'm going to change up my prediction in regards to him, and say that he'll somehow manage to find a way to escape one more time (with the help of Charles Logan?). Chance of living through the day? 75%.

Off the List

Zhou-Hans Gruber - I said he would get shot in the neck by Jack. Close enough.

Mark Bishop - He and Chad Lowe are about to be best friends.

My Faith in the Writers Coming Up with a Satisfactory Conclusion - but I will say that this season has been perfect for a sarcastic cynic like myself.