One of the more popular features on the site as of late, film/TV critic Mitch Cyrus recaps last Sunday's episode of the Sopranos. Find out what you missed, what's gonna happen next, and who's gonna get whacked.

I'll come right out and say it. This was the weakest episode I've seen this season. David Chase seems to feel that it is necessary to feature every single character in at least one show this year, and consequently we have to deal with the obnoxious, psychotically insecure Artie as the main story.

And we got no break on the secondary story, as Christopher continues to show that the cocaine he's been snorting all those years has reduced his IQ to Forest Gump levels. Funny; I don't recall "Will & Grace" previously coming on at 9 PM on HBO…but given the painfully stupid and embarrassing inclusion of stars playing themselves (Ben Kingsley and Lauren Becall), I wondered if I had failed to turn the channel away from NBC after watching "The West Wing". What's next? Kevin Bacon showing up and connecting himself to Chris in four moves?

Recap: As we open, we find that the two hit men sent from Naples might be more interested in sight seeing than in whacking Rusty. But what the hell; I guess hit men are no different than any other businessman in a new city…and given the corporate shenanigans that most big businesses do, perhaps they'll screw up fewer people's lives than say…an executive from Enron going to Vegas with a corporate card.

But enough channeling Michael Moore. At Vesuvio's Tony is hosting a dinner for his Capos and the main New York crew, celebrating "new blood" in the form of a couple of new wise guys we've never seen before. My guess is that next week they'll be the main story line for Chase. Phil is still in a foul mood due to Vito…who is nowhere to be found. Despite his temporary reprieve, it is doubtful Vito will live Happily Ever After, as Carlo has a detective friend on the case.

The hit on Rusty goes down, and it's about damn time SOMEONE from my "Whacking List" bites the big one. I was getting to the point with my accuracy that I could apply for a job as a weekend weather forecaster. But Rusty and his driver get popped right in Rusty's driveway, and it's relatively gross, so that's a good thing. Phil later congratulates Tony on the success, and Tony subtly denies any knowledge of it.

Unfortunately, the potential coolness of the show goes straight downhill after that, as we put up with lameness for about 40 of the next 45 minutes. The main points:

Artie is a pain in the ass. If I ever found out I had a week to live, I'd want to spend it listening to Artie and Paulie talk, as those two assholes could make that one week feel like an eternity. Artie blathers on and on to his customers, completely oblivious to any conversations they may have been having when he interrupts. His business is also going downhill as a great new Italian restaurant has opened up in the neighborhood that has all the folks from the Old Country waiting hours to get in, tired of the same old same old that is on Artie's menu.

Benny Fazio and Artie's Albanian hostess Martina have been running a credit card scam, and that ends up biting Artie in the ass as well, as American Express pulls their business from Vesuvio's. This causes Artie to go ballistic on the staff, which

for some reason doesn't exactly pick up company morale. Benny and Martina have also been having an affair, despite Benny's wife being pregnant. That one of Tony's crew is having an affair isn't surprising. That someone as good looking as Martina would hook up with an ugly little gnome like Benny is a shock. The credit card scam is being assisted by Murmur, Chris's AA sponsor and fellow hood. The amusing part on how it all works is that at one point Murmur gets some card numbers from a Jewish hotel clerk, who probably isn't aware that he's selling them to what may be Arab terrorists.

Christopher takes his trip to LA with Little Carmine to pitch their movie to Sir Ben Kingsley. Quite honestly, the scenes with the two gumbas and the actor were about as bad as I've ever seen. All Carmine and Chris needed were powder blue and rose colored tuxedos and top hats, and they'd officially be Dumb and Dumber. They pitch their stupid movie, and Sir Ben takes it with the same interest as he'd show someone pushing "Gandhi's Revenge". Lauren Becall just happens to wander by when they are at an outdoor Bistro, inviting Kingsley to peruse the Luxury Lounge, where stars get all kinds of high grade merchandise given to them…just because they are stars. I've always thought Miller Brewery should do something like that for me, since I almost single handedly keep them in business…but nooooo.

Chris and Carmine tag along uninvited to the Lounge, and Chris is so taken aback at the lifestyle that he responds like any moronic gangster with a substance abuse problem would: by getting a hooker, some booze, and several lines of coke. That's not falling off the wagon; that's bunging cording off the wagon as it rolls over the New River Gorge Bridge. Surprisingly, Ben takes a pass on the movie and Chris plows deeper into his vices. Give him credit though, as he finally calls Murmur to fly out there and help him deal with it. Tony gives him some grief when he comes back, and responds to Chris's whining by asking him how many more times he's going to "play the Adriana card". Excellent bitchslap, Tony.

Artie and Benny finally get into the rumble we've anticipated almost as much as

the latest Evander Holyfield comeback bout (it was with Butterbean, wasn't it?). Artie fires Martina over the credit card scam, and after she insults Artie in a totally humiliating manner, he rushes over to Benny's house, calls him out on it, and once Benny throws the first punch, Artie turns the table and beats the crap out of him. Somewhere in the world there might be a gangster that is more of a punching bag than Benny…but I'm not sure where (remember Phil and his boys doing a tapdance on Benny's face last season). Seriously, this was right up there with the "cripple fight" episode of South Park…all that was missing was someone yelling "Timmah!"

Tony tries to play intermediary between the two superlightweights, forcing Benny to accept holding his parents' anniversary dinner at Vesuvio's and Artie to apologize. All is going well for all of about two minutes until Artie runs his mouth about Martina in front of Benny and his family. Benny catches him in the kitchen and sticks his arm in a large pot of scalding marinara sauce. Ouch. I think I'll have something with Alfredo sauce tonight, thank you.

There are only five episodes left. If David Chase wants to delve off on a tangent and focus on a non-mob character, he needs to do one with Dr. Melfi. Other than that, it's time to get back to the family in regards to AJ and Meadow on one side, and dealing with Chris and his problems on the other, rather than using him as comic relief. From the previews (here I go again), I might get my wish. It looks like the main story next week will be about AJ's upcoming implosion and (I hope) introduction to Tony's 'business'. Let's just hope so.

Best Scene: Tony and Artie talking at the Bing. Yeah, I couldn't stand Artie for most of the episode, but this was a decent scene where Tony was trying to placate his childhood friend, including lying about how good the food was at Da Giovanni's. Artie is full of self-loathing; starting with his lamenting about Tony's ability to have any of the strippers he wants, and ending with him making a snide remark concerning his old restaurant getting torched by Tony.

Most Humorous Scene: In a sick, sick way, it has to be the mugging of Lauren Becall by Chris and Murmur to get her swag bag. Becall telling them to "get the fuck away from me", and then getting punched in the face was classic…but as I admitted earlier…I'm a twisted individual. Even funnier that Chris tried giving the bag to Tony as gratitude…who was less than enthused (a pocket dog carrier? Just what Tony needs). Runner up was Artie popping the rabbit that was eating his lettuce (grown from seeds smuggled in illegally from Italy). Later, the rabbit ends up on the menu.

Best Lines: "We were just discussing La Cage Aux Fat" – Christopher, talking to Carlo about Vito.

Latest Whacking Odds:

I hereby vow to never, ever, ever make another prediction based upon previews (yeah, I said that last week as well). Several changes now that Rusty's sleeping with the fishes, and in light of the Artie/Benny feud.

1) Vito (odds – 1:5) – Phil's anger, plus the mentioning of the detective do not bode well for our jolly rotund antique lover.

2) Phil (odds – even) – Enough already…let the Hairdo have one last blaze of glory, and then have someone go all Joe Pesci on him.

3) Benny Fazio: (odds – 5:1) – There are two ways this one could go. Either

Benny keeps running his mouth about whacking Artie, and Tony or Chris take him down, or Benny does actually take out Artie and then gets whack in retaliation.

4) Uncle JuniorMummyHead (odds – 4:1) – I'm not forgetting about him…even if the scriptwriters are.

5) Paulie: (odds – 8:1) – Didn't see any of Paulie after the initial Wise Guy party. Nothing wrong with that.

6) Artie (odds – 10:1) – See above.

7) Chris: (odds – 10:1) – The meltdown that started in Hollywood could push Christuhfuh over the edge.

8) Finn (odds – 12:1) – No change…and no chance he and Meadow get married.

9) Johnny Sack (odds – 20:1) – I'm still sticking to my speculation of Phil whacking Vito, then Johnny paying back his favor to Tony by having Phil put down….which might also mean that Johnny will get out of prison on some technicality and resume control of the New York family for the 8 episode finale season next year.