Yesterday Mitch ran through the first two hours of "24" that aired Sunday night. Today the Mitch Man moves on to the second two hours, which were shown Monday night on FOX. This episode featured the return of Renee Walker. Not the Renee Walker we knew and loved from season seven though. An even better version. A distant, dark, vacant, rogue version of Renee Walker. Who hacks off the hand of a Russian mobster with a saw. I'm in love! If you watch "24", and haven't been reading Mitch's recaps ... do yourself a favor and get on board.

Welcome back. Did you miss me? No? OK, let's get right to it, then.

Recap

Meredith Lewinski is still holding back "something" from CTU...yeah, the fact that she's a ho. B ut of course her "holding back" is enough to make Dana and Cole think she's guilty of being part of the assassination attempt, diverting attention away from the real target.

Jack slips $100 to one of the local gangbangers playing across the street from Officer Jimmy's place to find out where Percy might be. So how can you tell Jimmy and Maggie weren't very important? Because Jack shows up just in time to find them accessorized with bullets to the foreheads.
Unfortunately, Jack is too late to catch Percy, but is there in time for
Plot Device Movement #27: Getting Arrested by Clueless Police Officers.

Jack gets tasered as well...and then they screw things up even more by dragging him inside for more fun and games.

Dana gets visited at work by Kevin-Bob the hilljack ex-con, ex-boyfriend...and other than trying to come up with a clever nickname...I don't really care one whit about this plot device. Personal ly, I'd rather watch three hours of hissy fits from Jay Leno and Conan O'Brien than to watch one minute of this, but for the sake of the "loyal readers" here, I'll resist the temptation of fast forwarding through it, just in case something interesting happens (like them pulling out guns Quentin Tarantino style and killing each other).

Meredith Lewinski owns up to the affair when she hears words such as "Lethal Injection". But BubbaHastings still doesn't buy it (too busy thinking about shrimp to concentrate on PAYING ATTENTION).

Chloe wants to punch him, as do I...but it doesn't happen so I'm just left with the hope that he'll joins the ranks of the other 50 CTU heads who never quite got to enjoy that big, fat pension they offer...and get to that point really, really soon.

While Officer Knuckledragger is busy tapdancing on Jack's face, Percy is taking his place at the UN detail. At the house, Officer Knuckledragger's partner is looking very, very concerned. Wh ole lot of help your anguished looks are, Dudley Doright.

(And don't you also know that right now the NYPD Commissioner is popping a Xanex/Mylanta cocktail after seeing how his city's "finest" are being portrayed).

President Hassan takes the call from Bubba, and proceeds to do what any man accused of infidelity would do...lie like a dog...er...what? Really? OK then, welcome to this episode's Unexpected Twist as Omar owns up. An d somewhere, Tiger turns to his Flavor of the Day and says, "that dude is just asking for trouble."

OK...so Omar Hassan has got his creds now as An Honorable Man..and he has zero chance of making it as a U.S. politician.

He needs to learn how politicians do it here.

Deny.

Deny.

Deny.

Stonewall.

Then get on TV and either (a) break down crying with your stupid wife sitting next to you, (b) blame it all on the "Liberal Media", or (c) check yourself into some sort of "Addiction Clinic".

We'll ignore (d) tell the world that the Argentina Bimbette you've been banging is your "soul mate"...hence to be called "Sanfordizing Yourself".

In any case, once he hears his brother own up to The Deed, Fredo Hassan pops a vein...and calls Percy, who tells him to chill, because he promises that his brother will be dead within the hour.

NEW DRINKING GAME!!! You must take a drink anytime anyone on "24" says "within the hour". Combine it with the Jack Bauer DAMMIT! Drinking Game™, and you might rival that woman who was caught driving in Oregon with a BAC of .72
.

Bubba proves to be the typical sniveling jerk we've come to expect from CTU heads not named Bill Buchanan, by not giving any help in finding Jack. I want to see the job requirements for Head of CTU. I'm sure it's very similar to "Telephone Bill Collector", "IRS Agent" or "Political Commentator" in having the phrase "obnoxious dick" somewhere in it.

Officer Knuckledragger wraps up his hand for some more Jack-As-A-Speedbag work, but our hero is having nothing to do with this, and breaks loose. But the "Officer Doright gets the drop on both of them (after Jack breaks some dirty cop ribs), and calls it in...with Jack begging him to check our anything that might have looked suspicious regarding Officer Jimmy.

The Trojan Horse "encrypted" file that Percy placed on Meredith's computer has been decrypted...and now on Sprockets, we get to see Everyone Dance! Time to evacuate the U.N., which is exactly what Percy wants so that he can get Hassan's vehicle to go over a bomb he has set up under a manhole cover.

Officer Doright finds out the Jack is telling the truth, and takes off with Jack towards the UN...and I could have sworn I saw him flip off his Neanderthal partner as he drove by. Jack gets in contact with Cole, who uses his NASCAR training to head off Hassan's car JUST before the bomb goes off, flipping over Cole's car in a perfect "Smokey and the Bandit" half role.

End of episode. And now we have to wait until next week to see if everyone is alright, dammit (drink!).

What?

Oh. Yeah...I forgot.

Nevermind

7 PM - 8 PM

Surprise, surprise...both Cole and President Hassan are alive. So I guess the show won't be retitled "3" this year. Cole sees Percy walking around looking guilty as hell, and takes off after him.

FredoHass is tipped off by Percy about the failed attempt, so he rabbits after Bic-ing another Disposable CTU Agent in the neck.

Understandably in such a threat of life and limb, there was only ONE guard keeping an eye on Kamistan's entire First Family (other than the Prez), so once Fredo took care of him, he was free and clear to run away.

Cole is tracking down Percy in the 100th Abandoned Building we've seen used for this very same purpose in the 8 seasons of "24". Being that Cole was alone, you knew Percy was going to get the drop on him, and then try to use him for his escape (which is successful 50% of the time).

But Cole is truly this year's Good Guy (at least at this point), and instead of calling CTU and having them clear a path, he tells them that the he is with the assassin...which did not exactly thrill Percy.

Plot Device Movement #83: Getting the Drop on non-Jack CTU Co-stars Only To Be Shot In the Back by Jack Bauer One Second Before Killing the Good Guy.

I must say, Jack's Body Count is off to an outstanding start this year.

Hey! Percy stole Viggo Mortensen's tattoos from " Eastern Promises "! Which means that the Russian Mob is involved.

Excellent!

Russians make some of the coolest villains.

Just think of Season 6 of "24" with Boris the Blade (and remember what happened to him?).

So much more fun than ThoseChineseBastards!
TM
that kidnapped Jack.

Omar is taken to CTU, which means we have a possibility of *Plot Device Movement #7: An Attack on CTU Facilitated By Stupidity.*

Hassan is told about his brother's betrayal, and his first reaction is to want a conjugal visit with Meredith Lewinski.

Rah! Bill Clinton LOVES this guy!

Chloe lands a great verbal uppercut to Bubba's ego in reminding him what a giant douchebag he is, and Bubba goes into full CYA Mode, starting with kissing her ass.

YES!!!!! We finally get the excuse we've been waiting for to bring in my future wife, the one and only Renee Walker. Seems like years before she was working undercover in the same Russian mob that Percy belonged to. And she is now in New York, instead of DC.

As is Jack.

Just when the entire free world needed BOTH of these people to be in the one city where they

would be needed...here they are.

How Convenient!
TM

Hey, I don't care what it takes to get her back...just do it.

FredoHass gives a quick call to the Russian Godfather (played the great character actor Jurgen Prochnow), henceforth to be called Vitaly Corleonovich. Why? Because I can. Corleonovich tells Fredo not to worry, because once he "has the materials in his possession", nothing else will matter. So my guess is that FredoHass is in it for the Jihad Mullah, and Corleonovich is in it for the Yehaw! Moolah!

(Yes, I am now resorting to awful puns.

This is what happens when I'm covering four hours in one week, rather than just one hour).

Like a Massachusetts voter, I am officially over the President. I'm also once again not enamored with her weasel staff, as they press Omar to continue the talks.

Just like last year, President Taylor isn't blessed with the Clue Phone Gene that would allow her to let someone take...oh, I don't know...45 minutes or so to regroup after a traumatic moment before continuing on with HER agenda.

OTOH, getting Hassan out of CTU does raise his chance of survival by 1,000%.

The Corpse Formerly Known as Percy isn't quite done causing problems, as he triggers a HAZMAT alert. Seems Percy was in contact with some weapons grade uranium. YES! What season would be complete without *Plot Device Movement #1: A Weapon of Mass Destruction on American Soil!*

Holy George Mason's Ghost, Batman!

Omar Tells All to Bubba, and we now see where we're going with all of this. Seems that Iran...er...Kamistan was this close to developing a bomb, but didn't have enough weapons grade uranium.

Enter Vitaly Corleonovich and his Olive Importing and Black Market USSR Bomb Material Warehouse, ran by one of his sons.

The one about to lose body parts faster than Jeff Goldblum in "The Fly".

Bubba asks Renee...who is now pictured in the Webster's Dictionary next to the word "Damaged"...to go back inside as "her cover was never blown". Right. I'm sure the Russians never bothered reading a paper, watching the news, or going online for the three months or so when her picture and name were splashed all over the free world as one of the people responsible for saving the President of the United States the year before.

But I could be wrong...something that has happened once or twice before (hah! snorts my wife)...anyway, comments from the peanut gallery aside...it may have been a busy news cycle that week and they didn't get around to covering that.

Perhaps it was during the same week that Michael Jackson and Farrah Fawcett died...which would make it totally understandable that the networks and newspapers couldn't find the time and resources to cover something so mundane as an attack on the White House.

Plot Device Movement #106: Hoping Your Audience Will Totally Forget Relevant Facts From Previous Seasons.

Jack's about to leave again...but feels the need to go in for a reunion with Renee when he hears that she's going back undercover. Jack doesn't think Renee is ready to go back in...and then sees the scars on her arm from an attempted suicide. Just another woman unable to face real life after being in the presence of Jack Bauer and is now nuttier than Crispin Glover.

See also; Raines, Audrey.

Omar breaks up with Meredith Lewinski now that he realizes that he can't jeopardize it all just for a little extra action. Meredith sniffles a bit, walks out the door...and looks at her speed dial for FallBack Guy. Did I see a Windemere, Florida exchange there? (OK...that's two for today...but only one for this hour, so I'm still sorta within quota).

I'm sure her second call will be to the National Enquirer...and the third will be to Playboy to arrange the photo shoot.

What a Country!

Jack interrupts the meeting setting up Renee's re-entry into spook work, telling Bubba that Renee is just a little too craaazzzyyyy to do this. Bubba doesn't care (surprise!). So Jack does the only honorable thing...he volunteers to go with her.

Of course Bubba accepts.

And hopefully that's the last we'll see of Jack saying "I have to get on a plane" until late in the 24th hour.

While Jack and Renee are catching up on The Good Old Days in the car on the way to meet Contact #1, Kevin-Bob calls Dana at work to harass her. Suddenly I'm looking back longingly at the wonderful sub-plot that was the First Old Man trying to track down the details of his dead son.

As the clock runs down for this week, Renee is trying to hook back up with her old contacts. She goes into some seedy auto parts store, and chats up Ziya, offering to cut him into the deal she has going (hehe...she said "cut").

Poor guy has a detection bracelet on, so because of that, he can't take her to see her old squeeze, Vladimir. No problem, Renee knows how to get those nasty little things off.

With a frickin' saw!!!! (and totally emotionless eyes while doing it).

Plot Device Movement #274: Hacking a Russian's Forearm Off. Ready? Cut!

"WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!?!?!", screams Jack.

"I'm just getting started", replies Renee coldly.

Have I mentioned lately that I love Renee?

Final Thoughts

OK, so Renee didn't cut Ziya's hand off. Checking the official site, she just sliced off his thumb so that she could slide the parole bracelet off. It was still pretty damn awesome.

Still not quite yet to the point where we can start listing possible traitors...but that should come within the next few weeks. I should also be ready to put a "Life Expectancy" list up next week, however.

Notice how Jack's face was barely disfigured from the beating he got from the Knuckledragger?

I've seen less marks on someone after getting inadvertently elbowed in the face by a three year old.

Then again...he is Jack Bauer.

My early guess on the whole Dana/Jenny/Starbuck vs KevinBob thing: Other than "I Don't Give a Flying Rat's Ass", my guess is that Dana will have enough of a breakdown that will require Chloe to step in and re-assume the crown of Queen Geek.

Email from a certain Browns writer whose work is often seen on the front page of TheClevelandFan.com. Gary writes, *And every time I see Brian Hastings, I expect him to be babbling randomly about "deep fried shrimp"; "shrimp and steak"; "shrimp and chicken"; shrimp kabobs", you get the idea. If the writers had any sense of humor, sometime within this day someone within CTU will order in dinner and it will be shrimp. Hastings will toss it aside and say "you know I can't stand shrimp."*

Gary rocks. And as last year, feel free to voice your opinions about where things are going. I

have no problem mentioning them in this column (if they are any good).

And if I'm in a generous mood, I might even give you credit for them (and for the record, Gary...I did already have the side comments about Bubba and shrimp...and about Officer Knuckledragger embarrassing the NYPD brass in my notes before I read your email.

Signed...Joe Biden).

With "24" falling back on two of their favorite sources of villains, Middle Eastern Men and Russian mobsters, I really wondering where else they can go? We've also had crazed Yugoslavians, Mexican drug lords, Neo-nazis, Chinese, and every kind of American Corporate Conspiracy Group imaginable.
So do they keep retreading, or do they branch out next season?

Some suggestions.

- Could have some crazed Frenchmen trying to blow up the US supply of deodorant. (Yeah, like the whole lot of them wouldn't surrender just upon hearing Jack Bauer's name).

English hooligans sabotaging the World Cup Soccer tournament being held in the US. The y get the Irish to help them by promising them all the beer they can drink.

They must therefore plan numerous bank raids to be able to afford the bar tabs.

Terrorist Eskimos pissed off about Al Gore melting their polar ice caps, and coming down to wreak vengeance (I didn't say they were MENSA members).

Canada launching covert terrorist attacks after Mark Cuban tries to buy the Montreal Canadiens and relocate them to Las Vegas.

Bauer Body Count - 3. With Renee in full gonzo mode, I get the feeling we might reach record numbers this year as Jack will have to continually have her back.