By Natalie Jarvey

NBC IS SET TO JUMP ON THE binge-viewing bandwagon tonight, releasing the entire 13-episode first season of Aquarius online while also airing the David Duchovny period drama each week on linear TV. NBC entertainment chairman Bob Greenblatt proclaimed that the move — a first for a broadcast network — would “push some new boundaries” and give audiences what they want. But NBC may be serving up the binge just as Hollywood is beginning to ask: Have viewers had their fill?

While pioneer Netflix has ridden the binge-viewing trend to media-darling status (62 million global subscribers and a $600 stock price), on May 21 the service quietly began rolling out Canadian co-production Between week-to-week on Netflix and Canada’s City network. At the same time, observers and even Netflix creators acknowledge that the all-at-once model limits media attention on shows beyond the burst around the premiere and might lead audiences to eschew series that feel more like a 13-hour obligation than entertainment.

“I miss having people on the same page,” says Orange Is the New Black creator Jenji Kohan, whose dramedy bows its third batch of episodes June 12. “But it’s kind of a waste of time to lament that because that’s not the way our show comes.”

The comments by Kohan, whose prison dramedy will debut its third batch of episodes June 12, echo Mad Men creator...
Matthew Weiner saying recently that if he created a series for Netflix, he would ask that it roll out episodes over time “so at least there was just some shared experience. I love the waiting [and] marination.”

Others agree. While streamers Amazon and Hulu were quick to emulate Netflix, Hulu is expected to explore non-binge release schedules for its upcoming slate, and Yahoo released Community’s sixth season over multiple weeks.

To be sure, Netflix has benefited greatly since it decided to stream the entire 13-episode first season of House of Cards on Feb. 1, 2013. “For Netflix specifically, binge-viewing is a key differentiator of the service,” explained Pivotal Research Group’s Jeffrey Wlodarczak.

And despite the Between experiment, Netflix chief content officer Ted Sarandos does not appear to be backing down from the binge, telling MIPCOM attendees last year in Cannes that “releasing one episode at a time will increasingly be a thing of the past.”

Data-driven Netflix claims that it is giving audiences what they want. Deloitte’s Digital Democracy Survey, conducted in November, found that 63 percent of those polled engage in marathon viewing and 31 percent binge-watch (defined as watching three or more episodes in one sitting) at least once a week. “The way that we’re watching TV is the way that people have read good novels,” said cultural anthropologist Matthew L. Kohan, who runs ITV joint venture Tomorrow Media.

And they might continue to binge, just less frequently. “I think this behavior will remain for catch-up viewing,” said Bajarin. “But I am slightly skeptical that binge-viewing is a key differentiator because of the way they watch it, because of the binge.”

Many believe outlets — including Netflix — will continue to experiment. Viewers might get shows daily, every other day or in multi-episode batches. And they might continue to binge, just less frequently. “I think this behavior will remain for catch-up viewing,” said Bajarin. “But I am slightly skeptical that binge-viewing of all current-season episodes will be the norm.”

Aquarius producer Marty Adelstein said he was “taken aback” when approached by Greenblatt with the binge plan, but the idea grew on him. “It came out of his frustration of having what he considered some really good shows on and not being able to attract an audience,” said Adelstein, who runs TV joint venture Tomorrow Studios, which produces the series. “He said to me, ‘If you look at cable, people the first year don’t really show up. And then they binge-watch and then they come back.’ We had a unique situation where we had all 13 episodes done and in the can. If we were going to do it, this was the right way to do it.”

Bryn Elise Sandberg contributed to this report.

ANIMATED PILOT CASSIUS GETS GREENLIGHT AT FX

By Lesley Goldberg

FX is looking to expand its animation offerings.

The cable network has handed out a pilot order to animated comedy Cassius & Clay, The Hollywood Reporter has learned.

Written by Modern Family’s Megan Ganz and Archer’s Adam Reed, the duo will executive produce the FX Productions comedy pilot alongside the latter’s animation studio, Floyd County Productions.

The action-buddy comedy is described as being in the vein of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid and centers on two women living as bandits in a futuristic, post-apocalyptic America. It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia’s Kaitlin Olson will lead the voice cast as Ordwood Cassius, a hard-drinking, quick-thinking, fast-talking bullshitter who has more debts than sense. Lake Bell (Childrens Hospital) will voice Shopcarter Clay, the fastest gun in the post-apocalyptic South who doesn’t go looking for trouble but shares a station wagon with it. Susan Sarandon (Lifet ime’s upcoming The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe) is set as Connie Mack, the cutthroat owner of Wilke’s only saloon and brothel. She runs the booze, the girls and effectively the whole town. Olson, Bell and Sarandon are set as series regulars should the pilot move forward.

Other guest voices set to participate include JB Smoove as Doc Benz, the town’s only doctor, locked in a dysfunctional, co-dependent relationship with Smiffy (who carts the Doc’s ornery, legless ass around), Kevin Michael Richardson (The Cleveland Show, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles) will play Smiffy, the enormous blacksmith, a gentle giant who can fix anything so long as Doc says it’s OK.
Jeffrey Tambor (Transparent, Arrested Development) will voice Waitstill Weeks, the utterly powerless and disregarded mayor of Wilke, who’s barely in charge of his own newspaper, which only he reads.

Stephen Root (King of the Hill) will play Preacher, a chubby, good-natured man of God. Katy Mixon (Mike & Molly) will play “sister-whores” Jack Ruby and Lee Harvey. Robert Patrick (Scorpion) will play Reever Grint, the terrifying tax-collector from Richway — he’s the crooked-est of all the crooked sheriffs.

For FX, Cassius becomes the latest project to be developed from Floyd County Productions after the network inked the animation powerhouse to an overall deal in 2012. The network is also teaming with the company for Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg’s Bigfoot adaptation, which remains in contention. The company’s credits also include short-lived FX animated comedies Chozen and Unsupervised, both of which were canceled after their 13-episode runs.

Ganz, whose credits also include Community, is repped by Brillstein Entertainment Partners; Reed is with UTA and Morris Yorn Barnes Levine Krintzman Rubenstein & Kohner; Olson is repped by CAA and Haven Entertainment; Bell is with UTA and Burstein Co.; and Sarandon is repped by UTA and Del Shaw.

WEB’S GORBURGER SHOW GETS PILOT ORDER AT HBO

By Lesley Goldberg

HBO is ready to give Gorburger a bigger platform.

The premium cable network has ordered to pilot The Gorburger Show, based on the YouTube series of the same name that stars T.J. Miller, The Hollywood Reporter has learned.

Gorburger is described as a talk show hosted by a giant blue space monster (voiced by Silicon Valley star T.J. Miller) who has invaded a Japanese morning talk show and held its staff hostage as he attempts to understand what it means to be human by interviewing celebrities, musicians and cultural icons. The pilot will feature Moby, Ed Helms, Johnny Knoxville and a musical collaboration with Danny Brown and Health as well as a new song from Eagles of Death Metal, the latter of whom previously appeared on one of the YouTube episodes.

The potential comedy series will focus on Gorburger (with Miller also serving as the animatronic monster), who crashes into Earth and takes over a Japanese morning show, despite only speaking English. He uses its surviving (aka uneaten) crew to host and interview the most interesting humans from pop culture, music, art, technology and more. The interview format includes both comedic questions as well as serious fare, including “Where does all the garbage go?” to “Is there a wrong way to kiss your mother?” to “Is the overabundance of technology an attempt to connect to other human beings to feel less lonely or a distraction from your imminent mortality?” Subsequent episodes will reveal Gorburger’s mission on Earth.

The series spent two seasons on YouTube. Miller will pen the pilot alongside the Director Brothers/Gorburger creators Josh Martin and Ryan McNeely. Martin and McNeely will also helm the pilot. Miller, Martin, McNeely, 3 Arts’ Dave Beck, Funny or Die’s Sean Boyle and Mike Farah as well as The Lonely Island’s Akiva Schaffer and Jorma Taccone will executive produce.

Gorburger extends HBO’s relationship with Miller, who stars in the sophomore comedy Silicon Valley. He next appears alongside Ryan Reynolds in Fox’s X-Men spinoff Deadpool. Miller is repped by CAA, Becky and Jackoway Tyerman. Martin and McNeely are repped by Principato-Young and attorney Lev Ginsburg.

For HBO, Gorburger joins a comedy pilot slate that also includes its projects starring Sarah Silverman, Issa Rae and Whitney Cummings.

SPIKE RENEWS INK MASTER, ADDS REDEMPTION SPINOFF

By Lesley Goldberg

SPIKE TV IS EXPANDING ITS TATTOO business.

The Viacom-owned cable network has renewed Ink Master for a seventh season and ordered spinoff Ink Master: Redemption to series.

Season seven of the flagship series will return with another round of 16 episodes in spring 2016 — matching its highest order to date. Season six of Ink Master will bow June 23 at 10 p.m. ET/PT.

For its part, Redemption will focus on participants from previous Ink Master seasons who left unhappy with their tattoos and return to the shop for a new one. The series will feature six half-hour episodes, with production starting in the summer for a September debut.

Ink Master has become a valuable franchise for Spike. Season five averaged 2.2 million total viewers, its highest-rated among adults (and women) 18-49. The series ranks in the top five among adults (and women) 18-49 in its Tuesdays at 10 p.m. slot and is one of the cable network’s most gender-balanced shows.

“At Americans spending more than $1 billion annually on tattoos, Ink Master has definitely hit a chord with viewers and has continued to grow as one of our most gender-balanced original series,” Spike senior VP original programming Chachi Senior said in a statement. “The show’s viewers are not only fans of the amazing artwork displayed, they are also invested in the human canvases and what happens when a client leaves unhappy ... we have created Ink Master: Redemption to help answer those questions.”
Two Relativity Board Members Resign After Clash With CEO

By Tatiana Siegel

RELATIVITY MEDIA CHIEF EXEC
Ryan Kavanaugh is fighting back at a report that his 11-year grip on the mini-
studio is in danger. Kavanaugh has must-
ered the support of Relativity’s board
of directors to remove Colbeck Capital
partners Jason Colodne
and Jason Beckman — who
Relativity fingered as the
source of a recent negative
story about Kavanaugh in
the New York Post — from
the board. A source told
The Hollywood Reporter
that the pair
resigned under pressure on Wednesday.

The move comes on the heels of the
May 22 report that said Kavanaugh, who
founded Relativity in 2004, is scram-
bling to raise $200 million to pay off debt
that
is due in less than a week. The story added
that if the mogul can’t secure the funds
before May 31, several debt holders —
primarily Colbeck — will seize control of
the studio, possibly ousting him as leader.

Relativity insiders immediately
slammed the story as false, insisting that
the debt has been serviced and that two
banks have been added as backers in the
run-up to an IPO that is eyed for the sec-
ond or third quarter of 2016. Relativity
released a strongly-worded statement to
THR on Wednesday: “Ryan Kavanaugh
remains fully in control of Relativity.
Under Ryan’s leadership, Relativity has
successfully recapitalized its balance
sheet by refinancing its existing debt
and raising additional capital in the
form of debt and equity.”

The statement continued: “At the
board’s request, Colbeck Capital has
resigned from the Relativity board of
directors, and some with an axe to grind
are clearly mounting a desperate attempt
to spread false rumors about the company.”

Kavanaugh declined comment on the
boardmembers’ removal.

Colodne, who once resigned from his
Wall Street job at Patriarch Partners
after appearing on an episode of Real
Housewives of New York, and Beckman
joined the Relativity board in 2012 after
Colbeck played a key role in a $350 mil-
lion debt financing deal with Relativity
that used to fund films and for busi-
ness expansion. New York-based MESA
Global also advised on the capital raised
in that deal.

But since striking that deal three years
ago, Relativity has struggled at the box
office, with its biggest hit coming via
Safe Haven ($71 million domestically).
Of its four films released in 2015, its top
domestic grosser has been The Woman
in Black 2: Angel of Death, with $27 mil-
lion, while The Lazarus Effect pulled in
$26 million domestically. Before I Wake,
which was scheduled to open May 8, was
moved to September. However, sources
say both Woman in Black 2 and Lazarus
Effect are profitable, as is Kevin Costner
starrer Black or White, which Relativity
picked up at the Toronto International
Film Festival and released in January.

Relativity is said to have some of the
most lucrative overseas output deals and
typically has covered 90 percent of its
investment before releasing a film in the
U.S. The company’s business model is
based on the assumption that no pic will
earn more than $100 million worldwide.

The studio, which is set to release an
additional seven movies before year’s
end including Sundance breakout The
Bronze, says that 85 percent of its pics
are profitable. And though films remain

SEE PAGE 5

FOR UP-TO-THE-MINUTE
INDUSTRY COVERAGE

THR.COM/BUSINESS
MAY 28, 2015

FROM PAGE 4

Relativity’s main profit driver, the company also makes money from its highly profitable TV and sports and brand representation divisions (CBS recently picked up to series Limitless and will give it a plum spot in its primetime lineup after the network’s highest-rated series, NCIS). A source says those divisions are projected to account for nearly 40 percent of Relativity’s profits by 2016 and half by 2017.

While speculation abounds in Hollywood, Ron Burkle, who is a major investor in both Relativity and Colbeck and a Relativity board member, privately remains a supporter of Kavanaugh, according to sources, though he didn’t respond to a request to comment for this story. In 2012, Burkle acquired most of the equity interest in Relativity that had been held by New York hedge fund Elliott Management. Kavanaugh continues to maintain majority control of the company.

In October, Dune Capital’s Steve Mnuchin teamed with Kavanaugh and a group of investors to buy a significant portion of debt and equity owned by Elliott. At the time, Mnuchin joined Relativity’s board as a non-executive co-chairman, assisting the company on strategic issues and its capital structure in the run-up to a possible IPO.

Last month, Relativity struck a $250 million deal with San Francisco-based VII Peaks Capital. But the Post story alleged that access to that capital is being blocked by Anchorage and Colbeck over the terms of that deal, a point that a Relativity insider denies.

MORGAN, WALMART SETTLE
SUIT OVER HIGHWAY CRASH

By The Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — Actor-comedian Tracy Morgan has settled his lawsuit against Walmart over a New Jersey highway crash that killed one man and left Morgan and two friends seriously injured. Terms of the settlement are confidential, Walmart and Benedict Morelli, the attorney for Morgan and his two friends, said in a statement.

“Walmart did right by me and my family, and for my associates and their families,” said Morgan. “I am grateful that the case was resolved amicably.”

Walmart U.S. president-CEO Greg Foran added: “Our thoughts continue to go out to everyone that was involved in the accident. While we know there is nothing that can change what happened, Walmart has been committed to doing what’s right to help ensure the well-being of all of those who were impacted by the accident. We worked closely with Mr. Morelli, and we are pleased to have reached an amicable settlement that ends this litigation. We are deeply sorry that one of our trucks was involved.”

Morelli stated: “Walmart and I worked diligently to reach this settlement for the plaintiffs and their families. Walmart took full responsibility for the accident, which we greatly appreciate.”

A Walmart truck slammed into the back of a limo van carrying Morgan and the others in Delaware last June. Comedian James “Jimmy Mack” McNair was killed, while Morgan suffered head trauma, a broken leg and broken ribs. Walmart reached a settlement with McNair’s two children in January.

The truck driver, Kevin Roper, faces several criminal charges, including death by auto, in state court. He has pleaded not guilty.

Morgan suffered what his lawyer has referred to as a traumatic brain injury. Morelli said in March that Morgan wasn’t fully recovered but was “working very hard to get better, physically, emotionally and mentally.” Morgan had hoped to attend the 40th anniversary show of Saturday Night Live in February but was unable to.

Passengers Ardley Fuqua and Jeffrey Millea also suffered serious injuries in the June crash and were plaintiffs in the lawsuit against Wal-Mart.

According to the criminal complaint, Roper was operating the truck without having slept for more than 24 hours.

A preliminary investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board estimated that Roper was driving 65 mph in the minute before he slammed into the limo van on the New Jersey Turnpike. The speed limit on that stretch of the turnpike is 55 mph but was lowered to 45 mph that night because of construction.

Hilary Lewis contributed to this report.

VIACOM, MEDIACOM RENEW CARRIAGE DEAL

By Georg Szalai

VIACOM AND SMALL U.S. CABLE operator Mediacom Communications on Wednesday said they have renewed their carriage agreement for the former’s networks, which include MTV, Nickelodeon, Comedy Central, BET and others.

Financial terms and the length of the new agreement weren’t disclosed.

In addition to continued carriage of 19 Viacom cable networks and Epix, the companies said Mediacom subscribers will also get access to additional programming across devices, including “a substantial increase in free VOD and expanded TV Everywhere functionality that allows viewers to watch Viacom programming both in- and out-of-home.”

“We appreciate Viacom’s willingness to enter into a reasonable agreement that takes into consideration our consumers’ sensitivity to pricing and the alternative ways content is consumed today,” said Mediacom chairman and CEO Rocco Commissio in a statement. “We are pleased to have reached a comprehensive deal with Mediacom that delivers strong value for our brands and provides even better ways for Mediacom customers to enjoy their favorite Viacom content,” added Viacom CEO Philippe Dauman. “Mediacom has been an outstanding partner for many years, and we look forward to continuing to grow our businesses together.”

 By The Associated Press
Swinton Circling Role in Doctor Strange

By Borys Kit

TILDA SWINTON IS ON HER WAY TO the Marvel Universe.

The actress is in negotiations to join Benedict Cumberbatch in Marvel Studios’ Doctor Strange, which will be directed by Scott Derrickson.

Strange is Marvel’s supernatural hero, a formerly cocky surgeon who loses the use of his hands and, while on a last ditch attempt to heal himself, discovers magic.

Strange’s mentor is a Tibetan mystic known as the Ancient One, who is training pupils to be the next sorcerer supreme. In the comics, the character has been a man, and Marvel Studios initially was searching for a male actor.

But the studio rethought the role and has now made it female. If a deal is made, Swinton will play the Ancient One.

Doctor Strange has a release date of Nov. 4, 2016. The movie is set to begin shooting in November in the U.K. Kevin Feige is producing.

Joining a Marvel movie is the latest move for Swinton, whose film résumé reveals an actress that refuses to be pigeonholed in any way.

The actor will be seen with Amy Schumer in Judd Apatow’s upcoming comedy Trainwreck, and she has appeared in the last two Wes Anderson movies, The Grand Budapest Hotel and Moonrise Kingdom. In between, Swinton gave a show-stopping performance as a brutally poised but unbalanced villainness in Snowpiercer, Joon-ho Bong’s sci-fi movie that starred Chris Evans.

Swinton won an Academy Award for best supporting actress for 2007’s Michael Clayton and played the angel Gabriel in the 2006 adaptation of DC Entertainment’s comic Constantine.

Marvel had no comment.

Swinton is repped by UTA and Hamilton in the U.K.

WONDER WOMAN EYES PINE FOR MALE LEAD

By Rebecca Ford

CHRIS PINE IS IN NEGOTIATIONS to join Warner Bros.’ Wonder Woman, starring Gal Gadot.

Patty Jenkins is directing the female superhero movie. She came onboard in April after Michelle MacLaren exited the project citing creative differences.

If the deal sticks, Pine will play Steve Trevor, the love interest of Gadot’s Diana Prince. Warner Bros. had no comment.

The pic is set to open June 23, 2017.

Pine’s credits include Z for Zachariah, Into the Woods and Horrible Bosses 2. He’ll next be seen in Coast Guard drama The Finest Hours, and he’ll also return for Star Trek 3. Pine is repped by CAA, John Carrabino Management and Gendler & Kelly.

DWA ENLISTS REITMAN TO WRITE, HELM BEEKLE

By Gregg Kilday

TAKING HIS FIRST PLUNGE INTO animation, Jason Reitman will write and direct Beekle, an adaptation of children’s book The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend for DreamWorks Animation, the studio announced Wednesday.

Written and illustrated by Dan Santat, Beekle, the 2015 recipient of the prestigious Caldecott Medal, tells the story of an imaginary creature searching for a child to befriend him.

Beekle is the first project to be put into development by DWAs new co-presidents of feature animation Bonnie Arnold and Mireille Soria. DW development executive Damon Ross, who brought the project to the studio, will oversee along with DWAs head of development Gregg Taylor.

“Welcoming Jason onto this project is a true coup, as his incredible ability to tell heartfelt character-driven stories with a signature comedic tone makes him the perfect choice to bring this beloved book to the big screen,” Arnold and Soria said in a joint statement.

Reitman is repped by WME.

PLEMONS, JONES, KIRKE ADDED TO CAST OF MENA

By Rebecca Ford

JESSE PLEMONS, CALEB LANDRY JONES and Lola Kirke are joining Tom Cruise in Men, which Doug Liman will direct.

Principal photography has begun on the Universal and Cross Creek pic, which stars Cruise as a hustler and pilot who is recruited by the CIA to run one of the biggest covert operations in U.S. history.

Also starring in the film are Domhnall Gleeson, Sarah Wright, Jayma Mays, Benito Martinez, E. Roger Mitchell and Alejandro Edda.

Cross Creek is fully financing Men, which is produced by Cross Creek’s Brian Oliver and Tyler Thompson, alongside Imagine Entertainment’s Brian Grazer and Kim Roth and Quadrant Pictures’ Doug Davison.

The pic is set to bow Jan. 6, 2017.

Plemons, who appeared on Friday Night Lights and Breaking Bad, will next be seen in Black Mass with Johnny Depp. He is repped by TalentWorks and Hirsch Wallerstein.

Jones has Roland Emmerich’s Stonewall and John Michael McDonagh’s War on Everyone coming up. He is repped by CAA, Untitled Entertainment and Bloom Hergott.

Kirke’s credits include David Fincher’s Gone Girl and Noah Baumbach’s Mistress America, which premiered at Sundance. She is repped by ICM Partners and One Entertainment.
Twenty One Pilots’ Blurryface Debuts Atop Billboard 200

By Keith Caulfield, Billboard

TWENTY ONE PILOTS SOARED TO ITS first No. 1 album on the Billboard 200 chart, as the duo’s new effort, Blurryface, winged its way to a chart-topping debut. The set, which was released on May 18 through Fueled by Ramen Records, moved 147,000 units in the week ending May 24, according to Nielsen Music.

The Billboard 200 chart ranks the most popular albums of the week based on multi-metric consumption, which includes traditional album sales, track equivalent albums (TEA) and streaming equivalent albums (SEA).

Blurryface’s debut is powered by pure album sales, as the album sold 134,000 copies in its first week.

Blurryface is Twenty One Pilots’ fourth album, and the follow-up to their breakthrough set Vessel. The latter disc, released in January 2013, has sold 265,000 copies and peaked at No. 8 on the Billboard 200 chart. Though the album hasn’t sold a huge amount, it has been a consistent seller. That consistency — and gradual accumulation of new fans on a weekly basis — helped set up Blurryface’s handsome first week. Vessel has sold more than 1,000 copies per week since its release, but has never sold more than 11,000 copies in a single frame. On average, it has sold 2,000 copies per week.

Twenty One Pilots is the seventh act to collect its first No. 1 album in 2015. The duo follows Meghan Trainor (Title), Twenty One Pilots, featuring Tyler Joseph (left) and Josh Dun, is the seventh act to collect its first No. 1 album in 2015. The latter disc, released on May 18, was another likely beneficiary of the Billboard Music Awards, as the album rose from No. 13 to No. 8 with just over 36,000 units — its best weekly sum since the frame ending March 8.

Last week’s No. 1 album, the Pitch Perfect 2 soundtrack, slipped to No. 3 in its second week with 74,000 units — down a relatively modest 31 percent.

Dance music star Zedd zipped onto the list at No. 4 with his album True Colors launching with 50,000 units (of which 39,000 are pure album sales). Zedd previously topped out at No. 38 with his last album, 2012’s Clarity.

Like Swift’s 1989, Trainor’s Title benefited from the Billboard Music Awards, as the two-time winner and show performer’s disc shot from No. 12 to No. 5 with a 45 percent gain (to 47,000 for the week). The album sold 24,000 copies during the frame (up 60 percent) — its best since the week ending March 8.

The Voice winner Sawyer Fredericks entered at No. 6 with The Voice: The Complete Season 8 Collection, as it bowed with 41,000 units. He immediately earned the highest-charting effort from a Voice contestant, surpassing the No. 9 peak of season-three winner Cassadee Pope. (Her debut effort, Frame By Frame, debuted and peaked at No. 9 in 2013.)

Brantley Gilbert vaulted from No. 69 to No. 7 with Just As I Am (39,000 units; up 358 percent) in the wake of a deluxe reissue of the album on May 18. Referred to as the Platinum Edition, the new re-packaging includes eight bonus tracks.

Ed Sheeran’s x was another likely beneficiary of the Billboard Music Awards, as the album rose from No. 13 to No. 8 with 38,000 units (up 18 percent). Sheeran performed the album’s “Bloodstream” on the show. x also grew by 20 percent in pure album sales, to 19,000 for the week.

The soundtrack to Furious 7 fell from No. 5 to No. 9 with just over 36,000 units (down 11 percent) in its 10th week on the album chart.

And Jamie Foxx nabbed his fourth Top 10 album with Hollywood: A Story of a Dozen Roses, as the new effort bowed at No. 10 with 36,000 units. It follows Unpredictable (released in 2005, No. 1 for three weeks), Intuition (2009, No. 3) and Best Night of My Life (2010, No. 6).
AQUARIUS
By Tim Goodman

NBC’s NEW MINISERIES AQUARIUS has one thing going for it: star David Duchovny, who is pretty much solid in everything. But while watching this pastiche of 1960s cliches that tracks the killings of Charles Manson through a trippy Los Angeles, you’ll feel like seeing him on The X-Files, instead.

As Detective Sam Hodiak, who kicks a lot of ass and plays a little guitar, Duchovny winks, smirks and acts the hell out of the role. But he’s probably still not enough to make you stick with the show. After the two-hour pilot, NBC is putting the rest of the series online at NBC.com. Maybe Aquarius, created, written and executive produced by John McNamara (In Plain Sight), was something that the network loved in the pitch and then kind of forgot about in one of those “we loved Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt once too” moments. Who knows? But you have to wonder when some entity other than Netflix or Amazon dumps 13 episodes into the ether without much thought.

Even Mad Men struggled with the ’60s, a decade hopelessly prone to cliche, corny costumes and please-don’t-say-that dialogue. Indeed, the challenge McNamara faces here is how to craft a drama about Manson (Gethin Anthony), hippies, race relations and Republican politics without sinking into stereotypes. He does not pull it off.

Manson in Aquarius seems less a scary, mesmerizing presence than a hipster with some songs that are supposed to be great, but pale in comparison to the hits of the era. Duchovny’s detective is an old-school cop used to kicking around bohemians and minorities because that’s what cops did back in the day. He’s paired with a young partner named Brian Shafe (Grey Damon), and the two don’t work up much of a connection. In other words, Shafe is no Dana Scully.

Anthony isn’t particularly convincing as Manson; all the girls who flip for him come off as clueless, since the actor doesn’t convey the allure. There’s a 16-year-old runaway, Emma (Emma Dumont), at the center of the intrigue, whose parents (Brian F. O’Byrne and Michaela McManus) are completely and utterly mismatched, but that’s not enough reason for her to flee into the arms of Manson, so it’s hard to get invested in her story.

That’s true for the series as a whole. As you watch Aquarius, you long for a creepier Manson or a more atmospheric look at a generation. What you get instead is a show that, with its well-worn tropes and copycat vibe, feels dated before the first commercial break. Unless there are Mad Men outtakes ready to be unveiled, let’s hope for a moratorium on TV about the 1960s.

Airdate: Tonight, 9 p.m. ET/PT (NBC; after the premiere, the entire miniseries can be found online at NBC.com).
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