

## Pandering to the Nerds

Written by Dave Howard

---



With the success of "Heroes," NBC is starting up its Monday night Sci-Fi "Nerd-a-thon" lineup. Three new shows ("Bionic Woman," "Chuck" and "Journeyman") explore regular folks whose live

s are changed when they obtain superpowers.

Pilots, in general, don't knock my socks off. The actors haven't felt up their characters enough. The cast doesn't work well together yet. The writing team hasn't gelled. Usually, you need a few episodes to see where it is going and for the series to find its center.

That said, here is a sneak peak. One is pretty dang good.

It's been a bit of a drought in the "20-something hot chick kicking ass" genre. Despite an implausible setup, "Bionic Woman" is off to a promising start.

### **BIONIC WOMAN**



Jamie Sommers (Michelle Ryan) is a San Francisco (though to this Giants fan it looks more like

## Pandering to the Nerds

Written by Dave Howard

---

Vancouver) bartender and surrogate mom for her teenage sister. After announcing to her boyfriend that she's done got herself knocked up the two are slammed by a Mack truck. Luckily, Jamie's boyfriend is a Top Secret Government Doctor who implants the bionics. Of course, he does so without her consent. We then meet an assortment of bad guys who may be good and good guys who may be bad. The most interesting is Jamie's run in with Sarah Corvis ( [Katee Sackhoff](#)

) the first, now evil, bionic woman. The two form a love-hate relationship that could be the real foundation of the show. Corvis's backstory is the awesome. After sleeping with one of Bionic Scientists she becomes a scorned stalker set on revenge. Regrettably it looks like this story line will be killed off after the second episode. Bionic Woman is off to a good start.

## CHUCK



Chuck (Zachary Levi) is an overly mild mannered clerk for the Nerd Herd, a "Geek Squad" type outfit. Broken-hearted by his college girlfriend, Chuck hasn't been able to get himself back up on the horse. All this changes when his estranged college roommate Bryce (now a rogue secret agent) sends him an email just before he is killed. Chuck opens the email and a program transforms him into a human computer of super secrets. He is then the target of all government agencies and protected by hottie Yvonne Strahovski

The pilot is directed by McG and tries to meld a sensitive comedy with an action packed drama. As a result, neither of them works. This is where NBC starts really pandering. Charming Geek gets to hang with ass kicking beauty queen yada, yada ... I get it. There is one sequence with Bryce (Matthew Bomer) that is an eye-popper but they kill him (?). That's the show I want to watch! Never before has a guest spot in a pilot had such potential for a starmaking. Watch out for Bomer, this kid is about to explode. Despite some good humor and a couple of fun action sequences-- "Chuck" sucks.

## JOURNEYMAN



"Journeyman" rocks. A San Francisco (not San Francouwer) newspaperman, Dan Vassar, (Kevin McKidd) travels through time to help people. No lengthy backstory needed. It just happens. It becomes more complex when, back in time, he is reunited with his old, now

## Pandering to the Nerds

Written by Dave Howard

---

deceased (or is she?), girlfriend. And yes, this good family man is still in love with her. It doesn't help at home when he disappears for days at a time. The pilot is constantly twisting with plenty of mini-cliffhangers and you can't help but get caught up in it. Refreshingly the city of San Fran is a character in the show as well, including a very real moment in San Fran history-- Terrel Owen's big catch against Green Bay in the '97 playoffs. Unlike the other two shows "Journeyman" has strong layman characters and a rock solid script. Also the sci-fi aspect of isn't as in your face, it's more of a strange dramatic series. This show is the biggest winner of the three, yet the hardest sell. If NBC is dumbass enough to cancel it look for it being picked up elsewhere.

So will NBC's gamble on the tech audience (who tend to be males 20 to 35) payoff?

My guess is that they took all the shows they could find and are throwing them up against the wall to see what sticks. Hopefully, it will be "Journeyman" but even though "Chuck" isn't that great it has more core elements for its target audience.

Can't wait to say I'm wrong? NBC has decided to put all three shows on Free Video on Demand a week before their premieres. Simply go to the Entertainment menu to check 'em out.