

hollywood q&a

By Adam Thomlison
TV Media

Q: Is the "Lethal Weapon" series coming back? I really enjoy that show, and I quite like the new guy.

A: No, it's not coming back. And though it may disappoint fans such as yourself, "Lethal Weapon" was a troubled show from the beginning, and so its cancellation likely seemed to some (such as star Damon Wayans, and presumably Fox Television) like a welcome release.

The first two seasons of the show were famous for all the wrong reasons — particularly on- and off-set feuding between stars Wayans and Clayne Crawford (leading to Crawford's replacement by "new guy" Seann William Scott), and Wayans' willingness to complain openly about not wanting to do the show.

Wayans finally got his maybe-wish last month when Fox canceled "Lethal Weapon" after its third season.

Wayans may have even made it happen. He actually announced back in October that he was planning to quit, saying that the rigors of working on a stunt-filled cop show were too much for "a 58-year-old diabetic" like himself (he had literally become "too old for this [expletive]," as per his character's catchphrase). However, he and the producers later walked that back a little bit and there was hope for a fourth season. But that hope is gone now.

Of course, the hope should have been slim. Ratings for the third season, the first with Scott in the co-star seat, were down by about a quarter versus the previous season (which itself was less watched than the first).

Whether that Season 3 drop was due to a rejection of Scott in the role or just a continuation of the overall decline is hard to say. But it was asking a lot of fans to accept a new lead character on a show whose whole premise (drawn from the more popular film series) was about the

unlikely friendship of its lead characters.

Q: "Masterchef" is often called the "biggest cooking competition in the world." Is that true? Is it because of the size of the prize or how many spinoffs it has spawned?

A: The phrase "biggest cooking competition in the world" is often used in relation to "Masterchef," but there seems to be no definitive explanation as to why.

It's likely a combination of three factors: the number of spinoffs and the size of the prize, as you suggest, but also good, old-fashioned ratings.

The "biggest" tag has been around for a while. When the American version of "Masterchef" was introduced back in 2010, the announcer plugged it as "the biggest cooking show in the world — a phenomenon in over 110 countries."

That's a nod to both the spinoff count and the ratings. Because while it may be a "phenomenon" in more than 100 countries, the number of distinct versions of the show is actually only 60 (not that 60 is anything to sneeze at). The other 50 or so countries are watching other people's versions.

Taking all those viewers into account, the show is "watched globally by over 300 million viewers," according to Endemol Shine Group, the production company that owns the format.

Returning to your other theory about the prize, the individual prizes given out by each version aren't spectacular, but taken in aggregate they start to add up. The U.S. version offers \$250,000, for example (along with some kind of professional introduction such as a job or a book deal). That's not a lot when other shows are giving out prizes in the millions, but multiply that number by 60 and you start getting to serious money.

Have a question? Email us at questions@tvtabloid.com. Please include your name and town.

STREAMING THIS WEEK



Bob Dylan in a still from "Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese"

By Jacqueline Spendlove
TV Media

NEW ON NETFLIX:

"Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese"

This documentary directed by Martin Scorsese, as the title affirms, follows legendary musician Bob Dylan on his Rolling Thunder Revue tour in the fall of 1975. Dylan was a huge name by this point, selling out major concert venues, and the purpose of the tour was to give him the opportunity to "play for the people," booking smaller venues and cities not usually on the big music circuits. Among his fellow performers were Joan Baez, Joni Mitchell, Roger McGuinn, Robbie Robertson and Roberta Flack, and the tour was loudly praised by critics. Netflix describes the flick as "part documentary, part concert film, part fever dream," and you can watch it as of Wednesday, June 12.

"Murder Mystery"

Adam Sandler ("Happy Gilmore," 1996) and Jennifer Aniston ("Friends") have teamed up again for this mystery-comedy film premiering Friday, June 14. They play New York City detective Nick and his wife, Audrey, a hairdresser with a penchant for mystery novels. After meeting a mysterious stranger on a flight to Europe, the couple gets invited to stay on the lavish yacht of elderly billionaire Malcolm Quince (Terence Stamp, "Superman," 1978). When Quince is found murdered, the two immediately become the prime suspects and soon find themselves on the run in a foreign land, with the real killer still at large. Luke Evans ("Dracula Untold," 2014), Gemma Arterton ("Quantum of Solace," 2008), Adeel Akhtar ("The Big Sick," 2017) and Dany Boon ("Joyeux Noel," 2005) also star.

NEW ON AMAZON PRIME:

"Absentia" (Season 2)

The sophomore season of this gripping drama recently wrapped on AXN, and you can stream it in full on Friday, June 14. Stana Katic ("Castle") returns as Emily Byrne, an FBI agent who went missing while pursuing a notorious Boston serial killer. She was declared dead in absentia, only to turn up six years later in a cabin in the woods with no memory of the time she's been missing. Season 1 followed Emily as she struggled to rebuild her life, with her husband remarried and her son being raised by him and his new wife. Worse, Emily soon finds herself on the run after learning she's implicated in a string of murders. The new season finds her trying to rebuild her relationship with her son, while still haunted by her past and trying to find out more about it.

"Too Old to Die Young"

Danish director and screenwriter Nicolas Winding Refn is known for the "Pusher" trilogy, "Drive" (2011) and "Valhalla Rising" (2009), among others, and he wrote and directs this 10-episode crime drama. The gritty series stars Miles Teller ("Whiplash," 2014) as Martin, a corrupt Los Angeles cop who gets drawn into the seedy criminal underworld populated by all manner of violent characters, from the Yakuza to the Russian mafia to Mexican cartel assassins to bloodthirsty teenage gangs. Acting as his assassin buddy's getaway driver, Martin takes on some hits himself, but only if he deems his target low enough to be worthy of bumping off. He

works under the guidance of the vengeful Viggo (John Hawkes, "Deadwood"), who takes it upon himself to kill people he feels have done wrong (and in this setting, there are a lot of them). All told, it's 16 hours of Refn's trademark slow pace, and you can get immersed in it starting Friday, June 14.

NEW ON CBS ALL ACCESS:

"Strange Angel" (Season 2)

This historical drama centers on Jack Parsons, a brilliant rocket engineer who started out as a janitor in a chemical factor in the '30s before going on to become a major figure in the U.S. space program. That was by day — by night he was heavily involved in the world of the occult, participating in sex magic rituals under the leadership of occultist Aleister Crowley. The series is based on Parsons' biography, "Strange Angel: The Otherworldly Life of Rocket Scientist John Whiteson Parsons." Jack Reynor ("Glassland," 2014) plays Parsons in the series, whose career begins to take off in Season 2 with the country fully engaged in World War II. Meanwhile, he and his wife, Susan (Bella Heathcote "Pride and Prejudice and Zombies," 2016), grow ever more heavily involved in their new religion, inviting the cult into their home and forming a closer relationship with Crowley. The series returns Thursday, June 13.

NEW ON HULU:

"12 Monkeys" (Season 4)

The fourth and final season of this Syfy series is available to stream starting Saturday, June 15. Loosely based on the 1995 movie of the same name starring Brad Pitt and Bruce Willis, the TV series stars Aaron Stanford ("Nikita") as a scavenger who's recruited by a team of scientists in the year 2043 to travel back in time to 2015 to stop the release of a virus. The virus was set loose by an organization known as the Army of the 12 Monkeys and caused a plague that killed billions and eventually decimated the human race. The series jaunts back and forth between the two timelines, with Cole and brilliant virologist Dr. Cassie Railley (Amanda Schull, "Suits") working to find the identity of the mysterious leader of the Army of the 12 Monkeys. The series is wrapped for good now, but that just means you can settle in and binge it in full.

"Vice" (2018)

This biographical drama racked up the most nominations of any film at this year's Golden Globe Awards (winning one) and went on to receive a slew of other nods and accolades, including eight Oscar nominations and one win. It stars Christian Bale ("The Dark Knight," 2008) as Dick Cheney, vice-president to George W. Bush, and follows his path to the powerful post. Amy Adams ("Arrival," 2016) plays his wife, Lynne Vincent Cheney, and Sam Rockwell ("Moon," 2009) plays George Dubbya. Steve Carell ("The Office"), Tyler Perry ("The Paynes"), Lily Rabe ("American Horror Story"), Shea Whigham ("Boardwalk Empire") and Alison Pill ("Scott Pilgrim vs. the World," 2010) also star. The movie streams Monday, June 10.



Stana Katic stars in "Absentia"