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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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"Friday Night Lights" Vs. "Studio 60"

My friend Sam wondered why I insisted "Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip" was a disaster and likely to be canceled by the end of the season. Why wouldn't they show some patience with it? As I've said before, networks have always killed some shows immediately and shown tremendous patience with others -- it's been that way since the beginning of TV. That patience doesn't always pay off, of course. But why do some shows get a second chance? Usually there's SOMETHING they can point to as encouraging in the ratings. "Studio 60" has dropped every week since its premiere. It's squandering a terrific lead-in: "Heroes," a growing hit at 9 p.m. that should attract the same literate, young demographic "Studio 60" wants. Even worse, "S6oOTSS" loses more viewers in the second half hour. (In other words, even the people that tune in are getting bored before the show is over.) In comparison, look at "Friday Night Lights," the show that is going to take over "Studio 60" in a (probably pointless) one night stunt next Monday night at 10 p.m. It airs Tuesday at 8 p.m. and has to be a self-starter opposite ABC's smash hit "Dancing With The Stars," (the #2 rated show last week) the older skewing CBS drama "NCIS" (ranked #14 last week among all shows), the CW's female hit "Gilmore Girls" and in the spring "American Idol."

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS

Week #1 -- 7.18 million viewers

Week #2 -- 6.28 million viewers

Week #3 -- 6.61 million viewers

Week #4 -- 6.33 million viewers

Now compare that to Studio 60, which debuted earlier.

STUDIO 60 ON THE SUNSET STRIP

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