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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2006

## NYT TV Coverage: Same Old Song Becomes A "Trend"

I've been reading it for 30 years: network executives just don't have the patience they used to have and shows are getting pulled quicker and quicker. Now the New York Times has spotted this "trend" and example number one is the CBS drama "Smith." They get it wrong both ways. First, anyone could give lists of shows nurtured (like "The Office" and "Seinfeld") and shows canceled quickly from the beginning of TV to today. If anything, the trend in the last ten years -- thanks to cable TV and the explosion of available shows and the lowered ratings for all of primetime -- has been INCREASED patience by the networks for select shows. The key word there is "select" -- some shows stay on the air simply because the head of the network really likes them. Others get pulled completely. Some series show signs of life and hang on for two or three seasons; others become hits. Others don't make it to season two. There is no trend here and the cancellation of "Smith" -- which dropped precipitously from week to week, with even the people who tuned in turning off the set after the first half hour -- is no sign of anything but a flop.

But then the NYT tries to give examples of networks sometimes showing patience this season and they get THAT wrong.

Still, those results were not so different from the experience of several other new shows this fall -- most of which are still on the air. "Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip" has seen its ratings and viewers fall each week, from 13.4 million viewers for its first episode to 8.6 million for its fourth. "Vanished," on Fox, "Kidnapped," on NBC, "Brothers & Sisters," on ABC, and "Jericho," on CBS have all seen their audiences fall from week to week.

Actually, ALL of those shows are still on the air (something they clarified in the next sentence. But they're hardly examples of patience. "Kidnapped" has been canceled, with the network saying that the

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