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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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"Studio 60" Update

Aaron Sorkin's drama about life on a "Saturday Night Live"-like variety show has been picked up for a full season, even though it continues to struggle in the ratings. The show has settled down to about 7.5+ million viewers a week, almost half of the lead-in from the hit "Heroes" and less than half (this week) in the coveted 18-49 demo it should flourish in. The show will definitely be moved come January to a new timeslot. [Sorkin complains to the Hollywood Reporter that everyone discusses ratings and all that instead of the show itself.](#) (Mind you, he never minded people discussing the ratings when the show was "The West Wing" and the ratings were sky high.) But I decided to take him up on it and watch last night's episode.

Like most people, I remain disappointed. (And of course, it's not true critics aren't discussing the show. After two or three episodes, a number of critics weighed in and said the show's promise had been derailed.) Several storylines: the Christian star of the show was in hot water for saying the Bible says homosexuality is a sin, several of the cast members were locked up by a small town police force for speeding, a Japanese conglomerate was making a major investment and the studio exec was in hot water for her ex-husband's claim that she didn't want to have kids and would avoid hiring a woman who did have kids.

As always, the show is fairly well-written and well-cast. Everyone is pretty good, led by Matthew Perry. And guest star John Goodman (as a small town judge) was very good. (He's sure been wasted the last few years with not enough good roles.) The problem as always is the tone and subject matter. Half the show was spent dealing with press fallout. Matthew Perry righteously argued with his star about why she's a bigot for objecting to gay marriage. (He was right, of course, but who cares?) Again, they're putting on a sketch comedy show but still debating the major issues of the day as if this were the White House. And finally, every single time that we glimpse a sketch that they're working on for

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