

## Two Paws Down for ABC's Downward Dog

By Paula Tudor

ABC has cancelled a number of promising shows over the years, most recently the surprisingly funny, *Imaginary Mary*, starring Jenna Elfman. It seems that none of the networks are willing to give their shows time to find an audience, despite the fact that there are endless channels and streaming services clamoring for our attention. Adding insult to injury, new shows are constantly being added that perhaps should have never even seen the light of day. This is certainly true of ABC's newest sitcom, *Downward Dog*.

I am not sure how it is possible to mess up a show that gives people a glimpse of the world from a dog's perspective, but apparently it is. *Downward Dog* focuses on the life of a rescue dog named Martin and his relationship with his human, Nan. Nan is a busy career woman in an on-again, off-again relationship with a guy named Jason. Unfortunately Nan's hectic lifestyle does not leave a lot of time for Martin. This would be a sad concept if executed properly, but it isn't. In fact, Martin isn't even particularly likeable, even for a dog lover like me. To begin, Martin's "voice" doesn't match his appearance. Even more annoying is the fact that Martin's mouth moves almost every time he has a thought, like he is thinking out loud. As if that weren't enough the dog cusses, which doesn't exactly make him seem like a lovable canine.

*Downward Dog* is based on a web series, so I tracked it down on YouTube to see how it compared to the televised version. I thought perhaps the original series had something to offer that would make it worthy of primetime. Over the years I have watched and reviewed many web serials and have actually come across a few that should be considered for television. *Downward Dog* is definitely not one of them. The web version is every bit as unwatchable as the televised version. Even the production quality stayed the same from web to TV. The Internet offers an endless amount of shows across a variety of platforms so it is difficult to see why ABC thought *Downward Dog* was a good bet. I actually consider it a slap in the face for people I know who have put a lot of time and money into making a quality web series and are still struggling to find an audience.

In terms of the writing, acting, and production quality, *Downward Dog* looks like something someone came up with off of the top of their head one boring, rainy afternoon. I would like to think that the creators of the original *Downward Dog* at least had good intentions for their show; but that is difficult to believe considering that it doesn't seem like a lot of work went into creating it. It is basically one long monologue given by a dog. ABC changed this a little in the televised version to give dialogue to the human actors. Unfortunately this does nothing to improve the show since they are also unlikeable. Ultimately ABC needs to cut their losses and put this dog down as soon as possible.

Downward Dog airs Tuesday nights on ABC at 8|7c.

The original Downward Dog web series can be viewed on YouTube.

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