



VARIETY MIDDLE EAST NEWSLETTER



CBS PREMIERE MONDAY
TONIGHT AT 8/7C

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8/7C

THE BIG BANG THEORY
NEW SERIES
8:30/7:30C

TWO AND A
HALF MEN
9/8C

RULES OF
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9:30/8:30C

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TV

Posted: Sun., Sep. 23, 2007, 11:21am PT

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Recently Reviewed

CW Now

CW, Sun. Sept. 23, 7 p.m. (Series)

By BRIAN LOWRY

Produced by Telepictures and Warner Horizon. Executive producers, Lisa Gregorisch-Dempsey, Mike Miller; supervising producer, Steve Longo; line producer, Robert Willrich; director, Barbara Sherwood.

Hosts: Tanika Ray, Chris Balish. Correspondents: J. Boogie, Chi-Lan Lieu.

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The CW is trying something old and something new to fill the 7 o'clock hour Sunday, a slot where the fledgling network has relatively little to lose or gain. "Online Nation" is really just "America's Funniest Home Videos" culled from the web, but "CW Now" attempts to trump the TiVo generation by weaving advertisers into a wannabe hip lifestyle magazine, mixing exotic activities and locales with hard pitches for buying "Halo 3" at Wal-Mart. A step beyond product placement into just plain product, the show itself is less offensive than the trend that it represents.

Churned out by the producers of "Extra," "CW Now" does create its own sort of "Where's Waldo?" game, burying the media buyers amid a fast-paced format that globe-trots from Hong Kong to Australia in seconds, mixing new gadgetry from Microsoft and funky activities (snake massage!) with promotion for CW shows and more mundane products.

Wildly enthusiastic hosts Tanika Ray and Chris Balish try to make it all look absolutely fabulous, and by halfway through Sunday's premiere, you're ready to hit both of them with tranquilizer dart. Fortunately, they seem relatively sedate next to correspondent/Halo promoter J. Boogie, who is well advised to keep his first name a secret.

Geared toward those with an attention span bred by YouTube, it's still hard to imagine much of the target audience sitting through an entire half-hour (which, watching these programs, feels like a really long time) of either new series.

The more troubling aspect of "CW Now," however, is the principle of pulling a fast one over on the audience, of offering a magazine devoted to the good life that just happens to weave sponsors throughout. Granted, infomercials are nothing new, yet they're still mercifully mostly relegated to late night and early mornings on local TV and cable, not trotted out in primetime.

CW has broken some ground in this arena already with its ad-based "content wraps," but if that felt like a modest step forward, "CW Now" is a stumble back — a concept whose only real innovation is taking hucksterism to a new time, if not quite a new level.

Running Time: 30 MIN.

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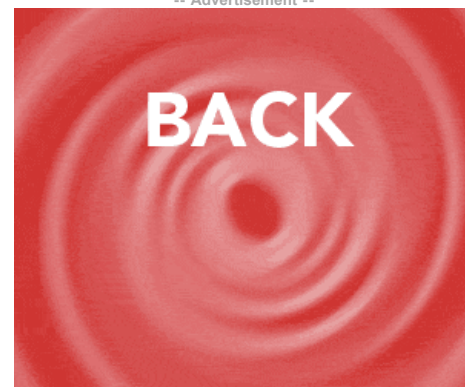


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