

'Lost' vs. '24' By CARY DARLING

Knight Ridder Newspapers

(<http://lost-forum.com/showthread.php?t=1258>) (TL, Thursday, 12/16/04, 3D)

Aside from those weirdo wives who've taken over Sunday nights, the other new broadcast-TV drama that's got everyone talking -- that isn't the demon spawn of "CSI" or "L&O" -- is the one about those plane-crash survivors stumbling around their own island of Dr. Moreau.

"Lost," which airs at 8 p.m. Wednesdays on ABC, has been one of the water-cooler hits of the season, piling mystery on top of monsters and mayhem.

The fan adulation and speculation surrounding "Lost" (check out www.lostfic.com for the explosion of fan-fiction, some of it blue-state racy, based on the show) is reminiscent of the excitement "The X-Files" sparked in its early seasons.

But the case could really be made that "Lost" is just the new "24," the Fox real-time thriller about a federal agent and single dad staving off terrorism and world destruction, which has earned a loyal following since debuting in 2001. After all, both have the kind of fans who would rather be stranded on an island with only dial-up Internet access than miss an episode, and both feature sweaty guys named Jack trying to save lives.

So, with "Lost" on everyone's lips and "24" launching its fourth season Jan. 9, here's our version of connect-the-dots:

Just Jack

- "Lost"/Jack: Played by Matthew Fox "(Party of Five)," he's a no-nonsense M.D. whose level-headed lifesaving skills and clear thinking are keeping everyone from going "Lord of the Flies." But if he becomes Dr. Hyde when his supply of Bactine and bedside manner runs out, all bets are off.
- "24"/Jack: Played by Kiefer Sutherland, he's a no-nonsense agent whose level-headed lifesaving skills and clear thinking are keeping the world from going kaboom. Well, except for the time he spent much of a season strung out on heroin but, hey, nobody's perfect.

End of the world?

- "Lost:" One fan theory says that these survivors are the only ones left on the planet. But why is this ragtag band of nouveau Adam and Eves -- with a couple of exceptions -- so uniformly good-looking? Which airline were they flying on? Hot Air?
- "24:" The world's lights might go out in 24 hours but, with our luck, the only survivors would be the flighty but appropriately T-shirt-clad Kim (Elisha Cuthbert) and the wild-eyed evil mastermind Victor Drazen (Dennis Hopper). Some Garden of Eden. Watch out for the mountain lions, yo!

Seeing double

- "Lost:" Daniel Dae Kim plays Jin, the meaner half of what may be the world's angriest couple. Too bad Dr. Phil didn't crash-land with them.
- "24:" Before he was juiced up as Jin, Daniel Dae Kim was agent Tom Baker. Little did he know that in a couple of years he'd be the one everyone wants to vote off the island.

Kiss me Kate

- Kate/"Lost": Get that Viagra out of the carry-on. Everyone just knows that romance is going to blossom between Jack and the island's hottest babe, Kate (Evangeline Lilly). Forget starvation, thirst, the threat of imminent attack and week-old stubble, there's always time for some noncable, 8 p.m.-Eastern-time lovin'.
- Kate/"24:"

Jack took time out from hunting terrorists and sweating to make time with Kate (Sarah Wynter). Yes, telling a woman her sister is marrying a terrorist IS an aphrodisiac.

Clockers

- "Lost:" Though the show has been on several weeks, it's only been a few days in island plane-crash time. The minutes sure drag when you're being tormented by monsters, wild pigs and some crazy French lady.
- "24:" Each episode is one hour in Jack's high-voltage life. But Jack should quit his high-stress job at CTU (Counter Terrorist Unit) and become a spokesman for his cell phone company: His phone lasts 24 hours without recharging. Can you hear me now?

Blonde ambition

- "Lost:" Clueless Shannon (Maggie Grace) is forever believing in imminent rescue, showing off her figure and hoping to get back to civilization in time to catch "The O.C."
- "24:" Clueless Kim (Cuthbert) is forever stalked by kidnappers, bad dads and tame wildcats and was probably brought over from "The O.C."

THE FAMILY THAT'S IMPERILED TOGETHER STAYS TOGETHER

"Lost:" It's not all babes and beasts at this carnivorous Club Med. Michael (Harold Perrineau) is using his island time to bond with estranged son Walt (Michael David Kelley).

"24:" Through threats of bombs and disease, Jack and daughter Kim have become closer. And there's nothing like a little nepotism -- Kim got a job at CTU last season -- to make the world safe for democracy.