

enemy. She is at once more candid about pursuing her desires and not quite so tortured about telling the truth. But it's no wonder she drinks as many goblets of red wine as any table-flipping Real Housewife. Even newly minted cynics need to take the edge off.

Emily Nussbaum is the television critic for The New Yorker.



I'M WATCHING: Prime Time's Body Count (and Cringing)

Murder is everywhere—and the victims are usually women. Enough is enough, says writer Margaret Lyons.

Somewhere between a blood tsunami on *Game of Thrones*, an artfully arranged corpse on *Hannibal*, and a gleefully violent torture scene on *Scandal*, it hit me

on my couch one night: I sure am watching a lot of murder shows.

I'm not morally or socially opposed to violence on television at all. I watch *Breaking Bad* the way pilgrims venerate saints. Until a few months ago, the prospect of gore wouldn't have kept me away from a show. But then, halfway through an episode of *The Following*, as a woman stabbed her own eyeballs out, I hit a limit I didn't know I had.

No more. I'm begging.

According to my unscientific count, of the roughly 160 new and returning scripted dramas set to air this year, 131 include rape and murder, 15 do not, and 14 I'd classify as "haven't yet." And plenty of other shows will involve coerced sex, attempted rape, armed robberies, suicides, and other sundry horrors. You know, the light stuff.

Look, of course life-and-death situations have inherently high stakes and are dramatic. I'm not the only person who's lost a weekend to an *SVU* marathon. I don't wonder about why shows are violent. I do, however, wonder why so many of them are and also about the *ways* they are violent—because that violence seems to be overwhelmingly directed at women. According to national crime data from 2011, 77.6 percent of murder victims nationwide are actually male—so why is TV so obsessed with female victims? And then there is the ever-more-upsetting forensic quality of the violence we see, which is supposed to add "authenticity." But I wonder, if the shows don't worry about

the accuracy of the victim's gender, why do they worry about ultrarealistic bruising or vivid and specific torture?

I don't need a break from all the goring and stabbing and shooting and slashing just because it disturbs me. It's the horrible opposite—I need a break because these shows are all blending together into a sea of desensitizing sameness. I don't want to be as blasé about coroners cutting into cadavers as I am about deli guys shearing off slices of bologna. I'm becoming an expert in things I don't want to be expert in, like how to scrape under victims' fingernails, spritz for blood residue, and identify the real killer by connecting the trophies he collects from his victims to his tragic childhood. *Hannibal* had a scene last season of a detective lamenting the toll these gruesome crime scenes take on him. The scene was artfully framed by a murder victim's peeled-back skin.

Here's my wish: I want to watch a good, scripted drama that does not involve rape or murder. A show about a fourth-grade teacher in a struggling rural school. A recovering alcoholic trying to keep her job at a tech start-up. An ex-real estate mogul who becomes a goatherd. Anything! I don't need it to be sunshine and lollipops—I just don't want to watch anyone put a drill in someone's thigh or listen to someone gargle her own blood. Or rather, I just don't want to watch that yet again. ■

Margaret Lyons is a pop-culture critic who writes for New York magazine.



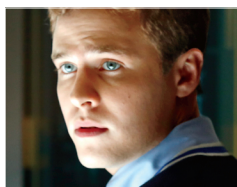
5. James Wolk in *The Crazy Ones* (CBS)

In this comedy about a dysfunctional ad firm, Wolk and his dimples are in charge of persuading clients via seduction. Yeah, we can see that.



6. James Spader in *The Blacklist* (NBC)

As a criminal big shot who helps the FBI, Spader's the kind of creepy you can't look away from. Talk to us on *glamour.com* after the jaw-dropping premiere.



7. Iain De Caestecker in *Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* (ABC)

The goofy, problem-solving Brit sidekick makes the world a better place for superheroes—and keeps us giggling.

And Since Woman Cannot Live on TV Alone...

Please allow us to recommend two juicy reads and a movie too.

The Bald Mermaid Interior designer Sheila Bridges bares her head and her heart in this stunning memoir.

Sister Mother Husband Dog Delia Ephron (Nora's sister) talks love, loss, and life in her laugh-through-your-tears collection of essays.

Thanks for Sharing Pink acts...and she's good. —M.A.

