

The Top 51 TV Shows By State, Part Two

by Joe Mulder

Welcome to the second in what you could be forgiven for believing would never actually become an ongoing series. It's been a while, but we're ready to tackle Part Two. In case you missed [Part One](#), here's the list so far.

The Top 51 TV Shows By State

Alabama: "Any Day Now" (Lifetime) – 1998 - 2002

Alaska: "Northern Exposure" (CBS) – 1990 - 1995

Arizona: "Alice" (CBS) – 1976 - 1985

Arkansas: "Evening Shade" (CBS) – 1990 - 1994

California: "L.A. Law" (NBC) – 1986 - 1994

On we go. The next five...

COLORADO

"South Park" (Comedy Central) – 1997 - present

Many artists and entertainers like to think that they bravely take on powerful targets and satirize them; in today's mass media, "South Park" alone actually does it.

With no particular dog in the political fight ("I hate conservatives, but I really fucking hate liberals," "South Park" co-creator Matt Stone has said), the show can take on the issues of the day on a case-by-case basis, often taking the piss out of an argument so effortlessly that it's difficult for anyone who's seen a particular episode to take a particular political stance seriously anymore (see "Butt Out," about Rob Reiner and anti-smoking campaigners, or "Something Wal-Mart This Way Comes").

And, in the wake of the Mohammed cartoon controversy a few years ago, what did they do? They put up an episode featuring a quick clip of a cartoon version of Mohammed, which Comedy Central censored. And, to make it clear that they weren't putting a Mohammed cartoon on TV just to do it, they concluded that very episode with a scene in which Jesus, George W. Bush and some other random American people crap all over each other, and on an American flag. Secure in the knowledge that this scene would not be censored, they let Comedy Central make their point for them.

Often you hear talk of "courageous" performances or "courageous" works of art. In an America where folks like the Dixie Chicks end up drowning in Grammys and someone like Sean Penn has multiple Oscars (I'm not saying they're unworthy of those awards, but that's not really my point), it could be argued that courage in art does not exist. An act can

hardly be considered courageous, after all, if nothing is at stake. If in fact courage in art does exist in today's America, however, then it has been exemplified by "South Park."

And, let's not forget, the show is often painfully funny. And no less so after 12 years on the air.

CONNECTICUT

"Bewitched" (ABC) – 1964 -1972

I have never in my life seen an episode of "Bewitched," nor have I seen the 2005 Nicole Kidman/Will Ferrell film that was based on the TV show. As far as I know, "Bewitched" the TV show was about a witch, her husband, and the witch's family, who try to break the couple up every week, using witchcraft. At least, that's the impression that a person who skims "Bewitched's" Wikipedia page would get.

I cannot tell you any more than that about "Bewitched," and in that respect, I feel like I have failed you.

I *can* tell you that the battle for the title of "Top Show Set In Connecticut" proved tighter than a person may have thought, due to "Who's the Boss?" Both shows were on ABC, both shows ran for eight seasons, and both shows were Top 10 ratings hits in their respective heydays. "Who's the Boss?", of course, focused on a cartoonishly Italian former major league baseball player who, along with his daughter, moves to a posh Connecticut suburb to work as a live-in housekeeper for a divorced female advertising executive, her son and her horny mom.

In the end, I had to give the title to "Bewitched" simply for having a more realistic plot.

Also, I'm sure if this website had a wider readership I would undoubtedly be ambushed outside my house tomorrow by a large, angry mob of "Gilmore Girls" fans. A mob that I could probably beat up single-handedly, but, still.

DELAWARE

"The Pretender" (NBC) – 1996 - 2000

Thank goodness for "The Pretender;" I'm not sure what we'd do about Delaware if this show hadn't existed.

I never watched the show, this this action-thriller-comedy-scifi-drama about a grown-up child prodigy whose genius was used for nefarious purposes by a shadowy organization known as The Centre (located in Delaware!) must have had loyal, passionate fans, because after it went off the air it apparently spawned not one but two TV movies that continued the story along.

Luckily for me, I have a huge "Pretender" fan in my own family, in the person of my cousin Noelle. I figured

POOP READING

Delaware's best (and quite possibly only) show deserved more of a write-up than I was capable of giving, so I asked her for her thoughts. Here's what she had to say.

What made "The Pretender" so great was the fact that it was a mystery, comedy, drama, action, and sci-fi show all in one. I loved the fact that you could experience different occupations through the main character, Jarod, as he helped people solve mysteries. All the while he is also searching for his family and discovering the world like a child which makes for amusing and nostalgic scenes. The supporting cast has great chemistry and one-liners that keeps the balance between drama and comedy. This was a show the whole family could watch, and the only one my family watched together. Unfortunately this great series was not advertised adequately and never caught on while only a few years later, "Alias" hit the scene. "The Pretender" still had four great seasons, even with its cliff-hanger ending.

Thanks, Noelle. I couldn't have said it better myself. I mean, I *really* couldn't have, because I never saw "The Pretender."

FLORIDA

"Miami Vice" (NBC) – 1984 - 1989

Once again, and I hate to keep saying this, but I must admit that I never watched "Miami Vice" (it was just a few years before my time). So then how, you must be asking, can I possibly name it the top show ever set in Florida over such contenders as "The Golden Girls," which ran longer and won far more Emmys (including at least one Emmy each for all four Golden Girls themselves), or "Dexter," which may in fact be one of the best TV shows ever?

Well, for starters, *People Magazine* once said that "Miami Vice" "was the first show to look really new and different since color TV was invented." Also, there's the small matter of how "Miami Vice" basically invented every single thing you think of when you think of the 1980s.

Look... back in the mid-'80s, when I was attending first grade in Sacred Heart, Minnesota (population as of the last census: 549) and everyone in my grade was lining up for the class picture, the photographer thought it was extremely clever to give every kid a nickname as he was positioning him or her for the photo. My friend Perry showed up to school that day with spiky blonde hair and a loud, brightly-colored shirt, so the photographer called him "Don Johnson"... and *we all knew who that was*.

So, "Miami Vice" it is.

GEORGIA

"The Dukes of Hazzard" (CBS) – 1979 - 1985

I wrestled with this one, I really did. Should it be "Matlock," which ran forever and starred TV icon Andy Griffith? Or should it be "The Dukes of Hazzard," which had fast cars, the world's hottest woman and the occasional explosion?

I chose "The Dukes of Hazzard," and not just because when we were little kids my brother and I used to wear cowboy boots and refer to ourselves as "Bo" and "Luke," to the extent that when we moved to a new town in the early '80s the local grocer thought those were our actual names. And not just because an effective punishment tool for our mom was to threaten that if we didn't behave at the store, we might be forced to get into her Chevette via the door, instead of being allowed to climb in through the windows like the Duke boys did. And not just because of Catherine Bach as Daisy Duke (although if that was the only reason, it would be sufficient).

No, "The Dukes of Hazzard" endured in the popular culture long after it was off the air, even being remade in 2005 as a feature film that paled in comparison to the series, completely screwed up the Boss Hogg/Roscoe P. Coltrane dynamic, but nevertheless provided the perfect nostalgic diversion for my brothers and cousins to indulge in the night before my cousin's wedding.

Also: Catherine Bach as Daisy Duke. Did I mention Catherine Bach as Daisy Duke? Because: Catherine Bach as Daisy Duke.

And there you have it; look for Part Three in this series coming soon. Hopefully sooner than the four months it took to get from Part One to Part Two. Up next: Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa. Also, I realize that, from an alphabetical standpoint, this is the one where we should have put DC. But that probably deserves it's own column.
