

HOMELAND: Season One Bible (in progress)

MISSION STATEMENT:

HOMELAND is a psychological thriller.

The show aims to explore the lives of its characters in the context of an imminent terrorist attack on an American city and, more specifically, to dramatize the collision of its two protagonists: SCOTT BRODY, a Marine First Sergeant rescued in Afghanistan after spending nine brutal years as a prisoner of war; and CARRIE ANDERSON, a reckless and mercurial CIA case officer who's convinced that Brody was turned in captivity by Al Qaeda. What begins between them in an interrogation room at Langley soon transforms into a sexual obsession only to end inexorably in the worst kind of betrayal. But that's getting ahead of ourselves. The important point is that their relationship serves to beg the central question of the first season:

IS SCOTT BRODY A TERRORIST?

It is our intention to keep this an open issue for as long as dramatically possible. Certainly the narrative will compel an audience from episode to episode to form an opinion as to Brody's guilt or innocence, but the point is, it should be a fluid opinion, subject to change and debate. So that when he overreacts, for example, to Dana's teenage misbehavior, it will play on multiple levels. Is his flash of temper a hint at a larger violence in the offing, or is it simply the case of a combat veteran suffering the difficult adjustment period of coming home?

Compounding the ambiguity surrounding Brody is the role he's asked to play by the government upon his return. In an effort to bolster a flagging war effort, the great American hero-making machine kicks into gear. Just as the Pentagon and media seized on Pat Tillman and Jessica Lynch, Brody finds himself at the center of a vigorous public relations campaign. His best friend MIKE FABER is tasked with chaperoning him through a series of television interviews, public appearances, and private lobbying efforts. A slick consulting firm is hired to oversee book and movie rights. And though Brody appears content to endure all this, he confesses to Faber a deep ambivalence about the value of his own military service. Drips and drabs of what might be interpreted as an anti-American sentiment begin to leak out. But again, should we view these as evidence that he was psychologically broken in captivity and 'rebuilt' as a sleeper, or the simple disillusionment of a soldier who has come to see his sacrifices as meaningless?

In either case, we are committed to withholding any definitive answer to Brody's status as a terrorist until the end of the first season, at the earliest.

Closely related to our central question is a second:

HOW RELIABLE IS CARRIE ANDERSON?

The private struggle that Carrie wages against her bipolar illness features as a major plotline for the run of the series. Her bouts of mania and depression, drug noncompliance, and rare institutionalizations, become in effect the story of her personal life. Everything else she subordinates to her work. And because she must keep her condition a secret (if she ever hopes to win another foreign posting), Carrie is obliged to seek care outside the traditional psychiatrist-patient paradigm. Presently, it's her older sister MELISSA -- a dermatologist -- who prescribes her medication and monitors the course of her disease. Melissa's life stands in stark contrast to Carrie's -- three kids, a husband, a house in Northern Virginia, and a job she doesn't have to lie about.

More importantly, however, the very fact of Carrie's disorder casts doubt on the proposition that Brody is a traitor. Aside from the 'tapping' (which we will discuss shortly), the lack of any incriminating evidence against him flies in the face of her utter conviction that he's guilty. Is it all in her mind? Has she gone off the deep end? After their round-the-clock surveillance of Brody during the first four episodes, VIRGIL and MAX will certainly come to think so. The former Marine Sergeant appears to them nothing if not a decent man trying to put a nightmare behind him. They actually like the guy.

Carrie does too. She can't help herself. Hours spent watching him have created in her a feeling of intimacy she's shared with no other man. She begins to mimic his habits and behavior -- reading the same books, listening to the same R&B songs, eating the same foods, etc. And when she discovers his wife's persistent love for another man, she knows she's found a weapon to use against the marriage, when the time is right.

Already, we've seen examples of the personal destruction Carrie can leave in her wake. But here's the other thing about her: she's a blast to be around. Sometimes frighteningly, but just as often wonderfully, beholden to moods, she burns more brightly than those around her. She feels more deeply. She flies nearer the sun.

In short, Carrie Anderson *is* unpredictable and unreliable. Does it mean she's wrong about Scott Brody? Not necessarily. But it sure raises the possibility.

OKAY, BUT WHAT ABOUT THOSE FLASHBACKS?

Don't they convict Brody in the mind of the audience? Certainly Brody's memories are intended to cast doubt on his official story, but since they are by definition selective and subjective, we plan always to design them so that they too are open to interpretation. In the pilot, for example, flashbacks reveal for the audience two momentous events in Brody's experience as a POW. His first encounter with ABU NAZIR. And his complicity in the beating death of his Marine buddy, TOM JESSUP.

Since we also show that he's lying about both these events -- to Carrie and to Jessup's widow HELEN, respectively -- they function as teasers to a separate drama altogether; that is, the mystery of what happened to Brody 'over there.' Which we think is almost as compelling as the story of what's happening to him over here.

The Israeli series used the device to great effect, imbuing the former POWs with a sense of danger and damage. And if there's one thing we know about Brody, it's that he's carrying around some pretty serious guilt for the 'murder' of Jessup. Some of other things we will start to learn about Brody:

- 1) The heroic resistance that he and Jessup put up against their interrogators in the face of the most brutal torture.
- 2) The 'breaking' of Jessup, which put the lives of many American soldiers at risk and ultimately led to his own death wish.
- 3) Brody's complex and fascinating relationship with his Grand Inquisitor: the beatific and charismatic Abu Nazir.
- 4) The bond that formed between Brody and Nazir's son, ISSA, who Brody is enlisted to tutor in English and Western culture.

ONE FINAL WORD ABOUT BRODY'S GUILT OR INNOCENCE:

Since Brody will never be seen making bombs or playing scenes with bad guys (at least during the first season), it is important that the idea of an imminent threat to the homeland feels like more than just an idea. For this reason, we plan to introduce a storyline about a *bona fide* plot against America in the second episode. Whether this involves a local imam, or a baggage handler at Dulles Airport, or a Muslim American soldier at a nearby army base, we quickly come to learn that it's really Abu Nazir who's pulling the strings. Once this intelligence comes to DAVID ESTES' attention, he orders his Abu Nazir expert, Carrie Anderson, to put together a counter-terrorism task force. Of course, her secret belief is that Brody must be connected to Abu Nazir's plot, and she enlists SAUL BERENSON, Virgil, and Max (among others) to join her team.

In this way, Carrie can be actively involved in a legitimate CIA operation, overseen by her antagonist Estes, while at the same time keeping the question of Brody's guilt or innocence front and center in the drama.

HOW DOES CARRIE'S INVESTIGATION GO FORWARD?

At the end of the pilot, Carrie believes she's discovered the means by which Brody is communicating with his handlers. Fairly quickly, however, it becomes clear that the CIA cryptographers cannot break the 'tapping' code. They simply don't have enough data. In fact, they can't even say with certainty that what Brody's doing in front of

the cameras isn't just a nervous tic. This throws Saul and Carrie back into an argument over whether or not to resume full scale surveillance of Brody. Carrie is adamant, and by this time, she's armed with the intel that Abu Nazir is planning a major attack somewhere in Washington D.C. Saul can't ignore what seems like more than a coincidence... but he still won't violate Brody's rights without going through the proper channels. Since an appeal to Estes continues to be out of the question, their only option is to go over his head.

However, Saul is reluctant to do even this. And we soon see why. The scene he plays on the seventh floor with one of the Agency's mandarins is an ugly reminder of all that has gone wrong with American intelligence gathering in general and with his own stalled career in particular. In this new age of electronic eavesdropping, unmanned drones, and adversity to risk-taking of any kind, Saul's belief in the value of messy human intelligence -- that is, case officers in the field running live agents against the enemy -- has lost him many allies and cost him more than one deputy directorship. His emotional extravagance, his fierce loyalty to those doing the dangerous work he considers so essential, make him *persona non grata* among the policy makers.

Unhappily for those same policy makers, Saul also knows where the bodies are buried and so manages to leverage approval for a closed end surveillance package on Brody. Estes is to remain in the dark, and Carrie gets four weeks to make her case. It's not ideal, but it's better than nothing.

During this month, Carrie discovers little that can either confirm or deny her theory. Instead, she has a front row seat to the story of a man who, like a lot of returning POWs, can't help but experience the confines of his family as a kind of prison unto itself. And, along with her, we find ourselves investing in his struggle to face down his demons and reconnect with his wife and children. All this informed by, but oddly independent of, our suspicion of him.

At the end of the four weeks, Carrie and Saul have no choice but to shut down the surveillance op. Meanwhile, the task force has made significant progress in identifying a sleeper cell in the Metro area with links to Abu Nazir. Increasingly convinced that an attack is imminent and certain that Brody is the linchpin, Carrie can't bring herself to cut him loose. But now that her authorized investigation of him is closed, what can she do?

Which bring us to --

THE BRODY, JESSICA, FABER TRIANGLE:

An intercepted phone call makes Carrie aware of the love affair that Jessica had with Faber during Brody's absence. Further calls make it clear that though it's Jessica's stated desire to be with Brody, she can't help but be troubled by his difficult behavior and distance. Carrie can see what's happening -- that Jessica is backsliding

into her relationship with Faber. And Carrie presses her advantage, finding a subtle way to open Brody's eyes to what's happening under his nose. Essentially throwing a grenade into his marriage.

The resulting scenes between Brody and Jessica are difficult to watch, each pushed over an emotional ledge. Finally, after getting Jessica to admit that she's still in love with Faber, Brody moves out of the house... but not before Carrie has plotted his seduction down to the last detail.

It doesn't take long before they're fucking regularly -- the perfect way for Carrie to keep tabs on him.

BUT THE KIDS TAKE BRODY AND JESSICA'S SEPARATION HARD

Which underscores the fact that Carrie's unorthodox methods can have profound and tragic human consequences. CHRIS' response to his parents' split is especially heartbreaking. Always a good kid in the past, he begins to falter and act out, and Jessica has a difficult time controlling him. He and his best friend, LUCAS -- who happens to be Tom Jessup's son -- get busted for vandalizing Mike Faber's car. Eventually Chris demands to go live with his dad, but that turns out to be problematic as well.

DANA uses the turmoil in the household as an excuse and a smoke screen for her own self-destructive behavior, getting deeper into drugs and older guys. Before the actual separation, Brody catches her with one of these guys and nearly takes his head off. After the separation, he and Jessica put aside their differences to work together and get Dana into counseling. She promptly comes on to her therapist.

HOW DOES IT SOUND SO FAR? BECAUSE WE'RE ABOUT EIGHT EPISODES IN

And, hopefully, things are starting to cook.

Though the relationship began under the falsest of pretenses, Carrie finds herself falling for Brody and living for the stolen moments between them. The damage behind his eyes, the inherent danger in the very fact of him, prove an irresistible draw to one whose own heart craves intensity and whose mind revels in complexity and intrigue. So much so in fact that Carrie goes off her medication in order to realize fully the experience of being with him. Needless to say, with dire consequences.

For his part, Brody is free with Carrie, uninhibited in a way he could never be with Jessica. Carrie makes a point of not asking him for anything and that compels him to offer her everything. Until, of course, he discovers how she destroyed his marriage and insinuated herself into his life.

Meanwhile:

CARRIE'S TASK FORCE IS PLAYING CATCH-UP

Saul is worried, and he doesn't get worried easily. All signs are pointing to an attack somewhere in Washington D.C. in the very near future. Threat assessments have made their way up the chain of command, and a lot of pressure is brought to bear on Estes to preemptively round up members of the sleeper cell that the task force has been following. Saul is dead set against this. He and Carrie have penetrated the group, recruiting a Muslim kid on the inside as an agent, and arresting everybody now might not net the real terrorists plotting the attack. Plus the kid inside has been a rare and valuable source of human intel on how Al Qaeda funds these independent cells. Ultimately, however, Saul and Carrie lose the argument. The FBI conducts a raid, but it proves to be premature, and no evidence is recovered to indicate that this group is actually involved.

Which means the bad guys are still out there somewhere.

SO WHY DOES CARRIE PAY A VISIT TO GUANTANAMO BAY?

Early in her career, one of Carrie's great triumphs was the capture and interrogation of the man who preceded Abu Nazir as commander of Al Qaeda in Iraq. Presently awaiting a civilian trial in New York, he has converted to Christianity. Whether or not this is a genuine conversion or a publicity stunt, he is undoubtedly the foremost authority on Abu Nazir, and Carrie goes down to Cuba to pick his brain. His interrogation in Iraq was soft, conducted over many months of trust-building, and it is widely acknowledged to have yielded more actionable intelligence than any high value target captured before or since. This time, Carrie's meeting with him is just as fascinating... though far less productive. He clearly knows something but won't give it up without an immunity deal... which Carrie realizes is out of the question.

Coming back home:

CARRIE WALKS INTO A PROPELLER

It's Brody. And he's freaking out. Saul's got him locked up in a safe house in Georgetown. During her absence, Brody paid an unexpected visit to his old home and interrupted Virgil's team rolling up the surveillance operation -- removing microphones and cameras, etc. He was forcibly subdued there and transferred to the safe house. Where he's been demanding to see Carrie ever since.

By the time she arrives, Brody's only gotten angrier. He's pieced together how she manipulated him into a relationship, and how she's been playing him ever since, and he's fucking furious about it. He demands to know why she and the CIA have put him under surveillance. Of course, she believes he's being disingenuous. He knows damn well why he's being surveilled. So she refuses to answer the question directly, and when she takes a seat across from him in the locked room, it feels for all the world like the beginning of an interrogation session. Which it probably is.

With Saul watching on the closed circuit monitor, Carrie goes to work doing what she does best. But it's complicated by the fact that her feelings for him have evolved beyond the certainty that he was turned in captivity. She carries a huge amount of compassion for him and even love. Still, she's committed to obtaining his confession.

MIGHT THERE BE ENOUGH JUICE TO BASE AN ENTIRE EPISODE THERE?

Maybe. Call it "The Safe House." Have Carrie and Saul take turns with Brody in the room. Introduce the prospect of sleep deprivation, pharmaceuticals. Get to the truth no matter what it takes, no matter how long it takes...

Except that the truth Brody finally offers up isn't the truth that they were expecting. It's not that he's an Al Qaeda agent... or that he was turned in captivity. It's his wrenching admission that he beat Tom Jessup to death with his bare hands. That is his deepest darkest secret. That is his deepest darkest shame. Carrie watches him carefully, as he breaks down completely. Either this man is innocent, she thinks, or the most accomplished liar I have ever met.

She steps out of the room to consult with Saul, who's completely sold by the performance. She's not so sure. Maybe Brody was made to kill Jessup as a first step in breaking him psychologically. After all Jessup died within the first two years of their captivity. Presumably Brody was no longer of much intelligence value after that. And yet he was kept alive for six more years. Why?

Saul agrees to send her back in for one more marathon round.

HERE'S WHAT SHE LEARNS:

That Abu Nazir was indeed present during Brody's interrogation in Syria. That Brody lied about it to prevent the U.S. from authorizing a drone strike on Nazir's compound, which would've almost certainly resulted in the death of Issa -- Nazir's son -- the boy Brody tutored for eight years, the boy he grew to love as if he were his own. And, in fact, that's who Brody is communicating with by 'tapping.' Together, he and Issa developed this secret language so that they could talk freely with each other in Nazir's house.

And what's Brody telling Issa now? To sit tight. To keep the faith. Because Brody will come back and rescue him from his father, from a life of violence and terror. Just as he always promised he would.

Now, even Carrie's convinced that he's not a terrorist.

And when she opens the door and lets him leave the safe house, where does he go... but back to Jessica and his family.

ENDGAME

There is one big muscular move left in the season. And that is the revelation that Tom Jessup is actually alive, that *he* is the POW who was turned by Abu Nazir, and that he is in the United States now, spearheading the coming attack.

Once Brody learns of this, he demands to be included in the effort to stop Jessup. Though things are far from good between him and Carrie, they manage to work together to thwart Jessup's mission to blow up the Pentagon.

Brody winds up killing Jessup for a second time and saving the more than 20,000 people who work in the building.

THE TWIST

Brody is feted by the media as a hero all over again. Standing in front of the cameras with Jessica, Dana, and Chris, there is enthusiastic speculation that he will run for the open Congressional seat in his district.

In her apartment, Carrie watches Brody on television with mixed emotions.

And somewhere back in Syria, Abu Nazir is watching the very same broadcast with his son, Isaa, now 16 years old. There appears to be nothing but genuine affection between them. And though Abu Nazir should be devastated that his plot against America has been foiled, a satisfied smile tugs at the corners of his mouth instead. The implication is clear if not definitive: this was his plan all along. Not to blow up the Pentagon after all, but to play the very long game indeed. That is, to insert a sleeper in the highest halls of American power.

FADE OUT:

END OF FIRST SEASON