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According to Entertainment Weekly, the show, which stars Michael Sheen and Tom Payne, will not return for a third instalment - and fans are both baffled and devastated by the news.MORE: Michael Sheen makes rare comment about baby daughter on Late Late ShowTaking to social media, many expressed their confusion that "low ratings" could be the reason for its cancellation. One person clarified on Twitter: "The streaming views were actually very good for Prodigal Son."There was a drop post COVID, but it's been that way for all shows. I really believe if we make our voices heard we can save Prodigal Son and get it picked up by a streaming service. #SaveProdigalSon.#WATCH: Prodigal Son cancelled after two seasonsAnother was equally frustrated, tweeting: "Fox is making a huge mistake!!! They always cancel the good ones! I love #ProdigalSon!!! #SaveProdigalSon."Meanwhile, a third was convinced that the show would be a success on a streaming platform: "So #ProdigalSon would be great on Netflix or HBO Max. I'm talking #You levels good when it went from Lifetime to Netflix - if it hits a streamer. I need somebody to get on this right now. FOX always plays me like this. It's fun, unique, has an excellent cast. Come. ON."MORE: The Crown series five to recreate this famous Princess Diana momentMORE: Michael Sheen reveals surprising reason why he returned royal honour © Photo: Rex Tom Payne and Michael Sheen in Prodigal SonProdigal Son stars Michael Sheen as infamous serial killer, Dr Martin Whitley, while The Walking Dead star Tom Payne plays his son, Malcolm Bright. The drama series will conclude later this month after the airing of season two's finale.Tom has since spoken out on the cancellation news, writing on Twitter: "What a trip. Playing Malcolm has been a joy and a privilege. The best cast on network TV and the most unique show around. We did it in style. Love to everyone who enjoyed it all along with us. And check out the last two eps! THEY ARE AMAZING." Like this story? Sign up to our newsletter to get other stories like this delivered straight to your inbox. Darkness on network TV can feel a bit by-the-book; in order to impress us with how edgy they're able to be within stricter boundaries than cable and streaming, dramas lard on violence and evil that can feel a bit unmotivated. Which is why "Prodigal Son," a new Fox drama, is in its first three episodes a pleasant surprise: Its central serial killer underplays his viciousness. That's Michael Sheen, the accomplished Welsh actor, playing Dr. Martin Whitley; though I'd be unsurprised if he broke out for sweeps, he is in the show's early going already imprisoned, and for years at that. The show's drama and tension comes not from whether or not he'll be caught but from what impact he has on his son (Tom Payne), a profiler who consults with the NYPD to help find and bring to justice killers. (He was brought into the fold, despite a connection he works to keep under wraps, after as a child having saved the life of one of his father's chosen victims, played by Lou Diamond Phillips.) That son, Malcolm, comes to rely, after years of estrangement, on his father's understanding of the criminal psyche, even as renewed contact with the man whose evil still gives Malcolm uncontrollable night terrors renews, too, trauma and stress. We wonder, more than once in the show's early going, if Malcolm has perhaps inherited more than bad moods from his father. Certain touches of the series felt excessive: A set piece in which snakes crawl out of a cadaver suggested that if one does not have the resources or sensibility of NBC's "Hannibal," it's better to try something different. But performances carry the day, here: Payne is edgy and hopped-up as a young man in a perpetual state of ultra-anxiety, and (though far too young for the part) Bellamy Young makes a welcome return to television post-"Scandal" as Malcolm's mother, a social climber who has pushed past her association with a murderer and wishes her son would too. At the show's center, Sheen cleverly carries off a character with all the urbane wit of Hannibal Lecter, but evil buried further under the surface. He doesn't kill because, as in Lecter's case, it's an amusing game that proves his superiority. He kills because he is godlike and forces he cannot understand or control. The show, though, is completely in control, deploying Sheen carefully, well, and never too much. It's a program that provides a creepy jolt while never reveling in darkness for its sake — perpetually asking what it takes, and what it means, to take control of the potential for evil in oneself, and to each day beat it back. "Prodigal Son." Fox. Sept. 23. Three episodes screened for review. Cast: Tom Payne, Michael Sheen, Bellamy Young, Lou Diamond Phillips, Halston Sage, Aurora Perrineau, Frank Harts, Keiko Agena. Executive Producers: Greg Berlanti, Sarah Schechter, Chris Fedak, Sam Sklaver. It's kinda weird how shows about serial killers can feel like a pleasant place of escape sometimes, no? Such was the case with Mindhunter, which managed to avoid being a parody project and instead offered incisive character studies of its complicated heroes, and such is the case with Prodigal Son, Fox's newest crime procedural that has a delicious twist: Our titular hero Malcolm Bright (Tom Payne) is a brainy, frenetic serial killer profiler who also happens to be the son of one of New York's most infamous murderers, Martin Whitley (Michael Sheen), aka The Surgeon.When we first meet Malcolm Bright, it is decidedly not his finest hour. Although he successfully tracks down a literal butcher before he can slaughter his next batch of hostages, Malcolm also punches a police chief for shooting the perp instead of letting Malcolm talk him down -- which, to be fair, he was almost able to do. He subsequently gets canned by the FBI, but it's not just this violent escapade that earns Malcolm his walking papers; his bosses also fear that he might be exhibiting some of his father's, uh, impulse control issues. Considering he has to chain himself to his bed each night on account of his very violent night terrors, they might be onto something. Prodigal Son Stars Preview Fox's Dark but Fun Serial Killer ProceduralMalcolm is quickly scooped up by the NYPD because he has a long, storied history with a detective named Gil Arroyo (Lou Diamond Phillips). For Gil, Malcolm's eccentricities are excusable because he knows Bright from way back in the day (the specifics of their connection are revealed late in the episode). He knows Malcolm is a bit unstable, but he also feels certain that he's still one of the good guys. We'll have to wait and see whether Gil's instincts about Malcolm are correct, but Malcolm's sister Ainsley (Halston Sage) and mother Jessica (Bellamy Young) would rather he get out of the murder business all together for his mental health's sake. David Giesbrecht / FOXWhether or not his line of work is advisable, Bright's new surname is quite appropriate for him. Not only is his on-the-spot intellect conveniently boundless, but he's also got hooping blue eyes that glisten with intense giddiness every time he starts poring over the hideous details of any given crime scene. He's fascinated by the mental workings of the mellifluous mind, thanks in no small part to the fact that he has a lot of unanswerable questions about why his father did all of the grisly things that he did.The first three episodes of Prodigal Son parse out of Malcolm's conflicted relationship with his father. Dr. Whitley's crimes are unspeakable, sure, but he presents himself as a peach. And somehow funny? Michael Sheen is dancing with light feet in this role, clearly having a blast playing a serial killer who is at once a duplicitous menace and a charming conversationalist. And he really does give Martin the air of caring deeply about his son in his own wild, and often controlling, way. Meanwhile, Tom Payne is nimble at slipping into pockets of pure mania before bouncing right back into his whip-smart profiler boots. Like his dad, Malcolm has some demons that he's having a devil of a time keeping at bay. Together, they are magnetic as their conversations are filled with gamesmanship. We're left to wonder which of these two weirdo geniuses really has the upper hand during their all-too-brief chats. It might not be good for Malcolm to spend much time with his dad, but it's sure fun for us at home when he does.Prodigal Son Could Fill the House, M.D. Void in Your HeartAnd although the series is obviously anchored by the relationship between Bright and his father (and between Bright and his ever-intrusive subconscious), a lot of creativity goes into the dastardly crimes of the week as well. Gil's tight-knit team -- which also consists of detectives Dani Powell (Aurora Perrineau) and JT Tarmel (Frank Harts) and medical examiner Edrisa Guilfoyle (Keiko Agena) -- are brought in to investigate some exceedingly unusual murder scenes, and it's clear that we're not going to be dealing with any traditional homicide cases. We're going to be watching a serial killer who is a profiler, and that's what's so exciting for us. FEDAK | And on a technical level, our plan was to include Michael Sheen in Season 3, so we and as we proceed, it's not hard to imagine that Bright will soon have to question his own instincts and actions. Until then, it'll be quite a thrill for the couch crowd to see this profiler genius get to the bottom of his various vicious cases, and, as a bonus, the sordid family dynamics at play will make that sure-to-be-awkward Thanksgiving dinner with your backward Uncle Jeff seem cake by comparison.Prodigal Son premieres on Monday, Sept. 23 at 9/8c on Fox. TV Guide Rating: 4/5 Tom Payne and Michael Sheen, Prodigal Son Fox The following post contains major spoilers for Prodigal Son's series finale. Proceed with caution! We're sensing a trend with Prodigal Son's season finales: They usually end with a Whitley sibling stabbing somebody. Little more than a week after the Fox thriller was cancelled, its series finale aired Tuesday night, culminating with a gasp-inducing twist that found Bright stabbing — and perhaps killing? — his own father. (Last season, it was Bright's sister, Ainsley, who turned a knife on Nicholas Endicott. Many times.) During the episode, Martin took Bright up to Vermont, where he was determined to prove to his son that he's no longer the murderous man he was 25 years ago. To drive that point home, he recruited Bright to try and track down an elusive killer known as The Woodsman, who Martin suspected may have recently abducted a young woman named Jeannie Larkin. Perhaps by finding Jeannie and neutralizing The Woodsman, Martin could convince Bright he was truly a changed man. In the end, they did suss out The Woodsman, and they did rescue Jeannie Larkin — but Bright called the cops on his father anyway, and a betrayed Martin quickly returned to his old ways. "I was a good father," Martin told Bright. "But you? You were never a good son." As Martin approached Bright with a knife in his hand, Bright turned the weapon on his father at the last second, driving it into Dear Old Dad's stomach. And when Bright's NYPD colleagues located the men in the woods moments later, Dani had an appropriate question for Bright when she noticed his father on the ground: "What did you do?!" Below, Prodigal Son co-creators Chris Fedak and Sam Sklaver unpack Martin and Bright's final confrontation, offer some teasers about where Season 3 would have gone, and update us on the series' possible resurrection. TVLINE | Even though this episode ends with a cliffhanger, it felt — to me, at least — like it also worked as a series finale. As you wrote and produced it, were you planning the episode as a potential series ender? FEDAK | No. We were approaching it as, "What's the most exciting way to end Season 2?" We also felt, like you do, that it is not a series finale that doesn't work because we've been cancelled. It still does work... This isn't like ALF being captured by the government before they were cancelled. It's still a good and exciting story. SKLAVER | What COVID taught us is that you're never sure what tomorrow is going to bring. When we knew Fox had ordered 13 episodes, we needed each one to feel like a finale. If we were only able to produce 11 episodes, then it would end with Martin in Vivian's car, and that would be cool. If it could only be 12, then it would end with Martin and Bright on a sea boat, and that seemed like a pretty great finale. We kept pushing the bar and putting ourselves in these crazier and crazier situations. The finale really feels like we've earned everything that happens in that moment, but it's pretty crazy to know, in 13 episodes, we were able to tell this story. We found it very satisfying. We have a whole Season 3 story locked and loaded, and we don't want to stop telling this story. But we're feeling good about how this ended on Fox. FEDAK | If you're a network out there looking for a story, we have one. It's ready to go. Sam and Chris will get on the phone. I feel like a rug salesman. "Come on down to Crazy Chris si!" SKLAVER | I know. The fans are working so hard to get our show renewed. I feel like I need to do my part, as well. TVLINE | To that end, what can you say about what was in store for Season 3? SKLAVER | Without sharing too much, it was going to be the best season of television ever produced. FEDAK | That's true. That's true. SKLAVER | [Laughs] No, we have a really fun Season 3 pitch. We don't want to give too much of it away because we're still hopeful of being able to tell that story. But Bright stabbing Martin at the end wasn't going to make anyone's life easier, and I think our show flourishes when all of our characters face adversity. Bright and Dani just kissed, but they're not going to be able to get past this. Gil and Jessica are in a good place. There's so many places that we could jump off from the ending of this season, and that's what's so exciting for us. FEDAK | And on a technical level, our plan was to include Michael Sheen in Season 3, so that gives you a little bit of insight into where we were going. He was definitely going to be a part of the show. TVLINE | To what degree are conversations happening about bringing the show somewhere else? FEDAK | It's not really Sam and I having those discussions. Those conversations are being had. I can't speak to them, because it's more of a studio thing. The one thing we'll say is Warner Bros. has been an incredible advocate for the show. They've been great to us, and they've been very supportive, and they love the show. And Fox loves the show, too. The executives that bought the show and championed the show were all advocates and all gutted by the situation we've found ourselves in. So we're hopeful, but it's a studio thing now. TVLINE | Assuming this episode does stand as the series finale, is there an interpretation of that final scene you want fans to have? Like, should we assume Martin dies in those woods? FEDAK | I like open-ended finales, but then again, I know there's Chuck fans that still want to kill me. [Laughs] SKLAVER | Chris and I are both pleasers, as a personality trait. I would just like fans to be very happy with this finale. However they want Martin to be at the end — I know how I imagine Martin being in the end, but I don't want to say something that makes someone less happy, you know what I mean? [Laughs] FEDAK | What a wimp. SKLAVER | No! I just want people to be happy when a son stabs his father in the gut. I hope that sparks joy for someone. [Laughs] I guess it is an open-ended finale, but I'm very happy with it, and I hope people are happy with it, as well. TVLINE | So much of this finale centers on Martin's capacity to change. Did either of you believe he truly could? Or did he simply want to believe he could change? SKLAVER | I'll just say it: Even if Martin can change, he killed 23 people. And he can't be in this world. That's not up for debate. While the son in Bright wants to believe his father doesn't have this darkness in him anymore, the profiler and the FBI agent knows, like Bright says, that Martin isn't for this world. It's not up to them to decide if Martin is allowed to be out. FEDAK | I totally disagree with Sam. [Laughs] I'd like to advocate for the serial killer in this version of the story. Can Martin change? I think the answer is kind of yes, maybe. But he is a psychopath. Michael [Sheen] had a very interesting take on this, even from the beginning of the show, which is that he can make the world what he wants it to be. It's not like he feels tied to those 23 murders. He's made a decision over time to say, "I'm not this person anymore." But that doesn't mean he can actually control it totally. TVLINE | And a few scenes earlier, we see Martin come out of that cabin, having hurt The Woodsman, and he looks exhilarated by what he's just done. Is that the moment when Bright realizes, "This is a lost cause?" SKLAVER | The scene before that is, in my opinion, one of the most interesting scenes we've ever done on our show, where Bright has to convince his father to hurt someone, when all Martin is telling us is that he doesn't want to do that. It's akin to forcing someone in recovery to take a drink. That scene is as consequential as what happens afterward. I'm not sure if Martin walks out of there exhilarated, in my mind, although he is in a place. He's under a spell. But it's a spell that, in some ways, Bright pushed him toward. There's the reading you had, which is very valid, that this man will never change. But there's also the reading of, "This man is in this space because I pushed him there," and how that could affect Bright going forward is a very interesting story to me. FEDAK | You could look at that final confrontation, and Martin is so upset with his son, not only for calling the police but for getting him to hurt somebody. And you kind of understand why he's mad! In a way, he's been betrayed. SKLAVER | Bright wasn't the best son. He was the best profiler. He found Jeannie Larkin and saved the girl. And that's the problem with Bright: He's always been a son and a profiler. And the need to save a life caused him to be a bad son, for sure. TVLINE | Looking back on this season, was there anything else — a scene, a storyline — that you'd hoped to explore but didn't get the chance? FEDAK | At the beginning of the season, we had a JT story that was part of our first episode, which touched upon the Black Lives Matter movement and racism inside the police force. What happened was, COVID affected the show, and whenever something would happen in regards to [production changes], we'd have to change the story, we'd have to make moves. There were parts of that story that we weren't able to address in Season 2 that we'd hoped to get to. It was something that we had to address in a different way, with the hope that in Season 3, we'd be able to come back and give that more air and time to breathe. SKLAVER | The other thing is, toward the end of this season, we started to really love Martin out in the world — in the finale, but even in that that beach house with Vivian. We've done a lot of episodes with Michael, and he's always in Claremont or he's in flashbacks. He's always on our stage. Once we could put him out in the world — I think Michael felt it, too — it was just another version of Martin Whitley, and it's a version that I loved. Take what you will from this, but it was something we were very interested in pushing further in Season 3, just getting Martin out of Claremont more and giving this complex character even more dimensions. Your turn, Prodigal Son fans! Grade the series finale in our poll below, then hit the comments with your full reactions. It looks like there will be no more cases for Malcolm Bright to solve. Fox is pulling the plug on Prodigal Son after two seasons. EW has learned. The decision to cancel the psychological crime drama instead of moving forward with a third season is said to have been a difficult one for the network but ended up coming down to ratings. The final episode of season 2—"The Last Weekend," which airs May 18—will now serve as the series finale. Prodigal Son stars The Walking Dead alum Tom Payne as Malcolm Bright, a gifted profiler who works with the NYPD, including detective Gil Arroyo (Lou Diamond Phillips), Dani Powell (Aurora Perrineau), and J.T. Tarmel (Frank Harts) to solve cases. Bright is also the son of an infamous serial killer, Dr. Martin Whitley, played by Michael Sheen. Scandal alum Bellamy Young plays Malcolm's mother, the wealthy socialite Jessica Whitley. Academy Award winner Catherine Zeta-Jones joined the cast in season 2, playing Dr. Vivian Capshaw, who works at Claremont Psychiatric, the facility where Martin is serving his sentence. Prodigal Son was one of a host of shows from executive producer Greg Berlanti, who is also behind many of the DC shows on the CW, such as The Flash, Supergirl, and Superman and Lois. Related content: It looks like there will be no more cases for Malcolm Bright to solve. Fox is pulling the plug on Prodigal Son after two seasons. EW has learned. 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