



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on January 28, 2016

## Series “Lucifer” Makes Satan Seductive — and God a Stern Killjoy

The Devil entered American homes Monday night, at least in a sense. Oh, it wasn't the first time, but usually it's not so explicit. For Monday saw the premiere of *Lucifer*, the new Fox network series that makes Satan the main character. And this is no Devil with a pitchfork and horns but is precisely what the theologically sophisticated would expect him to be: attractive and alluring — a supernatural seducer.



Fox's *Lucifer* (shown) is a “Brit-accented rogue helping humans while being harassed by angels,” [writes](#) reviewer Valerie David, who also tells us that the show is “redemption for the Devil.” [Deadline.com](#) presents the storyline, [reporting](#), “The series follow the story of the original fallen angel. Bored and unhappy as the Lord of Hell, Lucifer Morningstar (Tom Ellis) has abandoned his throne and retired to LA, where he owns Lux, an upscale nightclub.... Lucifer is enjoying his retirement, indulging in a few of his favorite things — wine, women and song — when a beautiful pop star is brutally murdered outside of Lux.” One thing leads to another, and Lucifer ends up helping the police solve crimes and working on the side of justice.

In this capacity the Devil allies himself with Detective Chloe Dancer (played by Lauren German), who, of course, doesn't look like any female cop you'd ever actually meet. Lucifer, however, is the dark angel most could meet but not recognize: Billed by Fox as “Hot as Hell,” he certainly reflects the biblical description of Lucifer as “perfect in beauty.” The writers also make him likable, charming, witty, and fun-loving as he lives his life of wealth and indulgence. And while the show projects the loose sexual mores one might expect, Lucifer also plays the populist and exhibits our new faux morality: political correctness. He takes pains to point out that while he hates hip-hop, he's not racist and loves the black music genre the blues; he makes a statement against the domestic abuse of women; and he terrifies a school bully, telling her there's a special place in Hell for her kind.

But if this is supposed to be scary, *Lucifer's* implicit portrayal of Heaven is no more appealing. The Wikipedia [entry](#) on the D.C. Comics character Lucifer (on which the show is based) states, “The violent, aggressive, totalitarian, vengeful, and dictatorial aspects of Heaven's rule are represented mostly by the Archangel Amenadiel, who has a particular hatred of Lucifer and leads attacks of various kinds against him.” Ah, the poor Devil only wants to be left alone, but the Lord will give him no peace! (Message: Christianity is all wrong about that Prince of Peace stuff.)

One should wonder what hope this presentation gives for the afterlife. Hell is so unattractive that even the Devil has emigrated, and Heaven is supposed to be some kind of eternal North Korea. If only we could all be immortal in the flesh and forever young like Lucifer and spend eternity indulging wine, women and song at Lux — and helping solve crimes so we don't feel like complete wastrels. Of course, there's only “pleasure in sin for a season,” and even the most devoted hedonist would eventually descend into melancholia and meaninglessness, even if it takes 10,000 years. And suicide won't be a



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way out (you're immortal, remember?).

But *Lucifer* isn't aiming to propound sound theology or philosophy; a boob-tube demagoguery inculcating erotic attachment to vice is its stock-in-trade. And it signals this in its opening scene. Lucifer is stopped for speeding and — after making clear that the policeman's actions couldn't possibly be driven by duty, but only a desire to exercise power and punish — manipulates his mind and seduces him into taking a bribe, saying "You break the law sometimes, don't you?" The cop, almost trance-like, bares his soul and responds "Sometimes ... I put my siren on and drive really fast for no reason at all, just 'cause I can." Lucifer then states alluringly, "Right? And why wouldn't you? It's fun. It feels good to get away with something, doesn't it?" (video below).

Yet the most telling interaction is that between Lucifer (L) and the Archangel Amenadiel (A), who, sporting dark wings and a dour demeanor, is portrayed as more devilish than the Devil himself. Just consider the dialogue in their second meeting:

A: I've been watching you, Lucifer.

L: You perv.

A: And I'm not sure I like what I see. You're showing restraint, mercy.

L: You scared I'm turning my back on the dark side, bro?

A: Lucifer, there is a balance here that we must maintain. I strongly suggest you do what I told you to do and go back to Hell.

L: Don't threaten me, Amenadiel. I mean, you don't want to start a war.

A: I would love a war. Oh, Luci, My hatred for you grows stronger with every visit.

So this is Fox's topsy-turvy theology: The Devil wants to cease doing evil; God insists he resume. The Devil is happy to live in peace; God's emissary wants war. The Devil is willing to live and let live; the Lord's angel is consumed by hatred.

What happened? Did the networks tire of portraying priests as child molesters?

It is in the first meeting between Lucifer and Amenadiel (played by D.B. Woodside), however, that the writers touch on a deeper issue — shallowly. The exchange:

L: Look, remind Dad that I quit Hell because I was sick and tired of playing a part in his play.

A: I'm gonna warn you against disrespecting our father, Lucifer.

L: Yeah, well, our father's been disrespecting me since the beginning of time, so pot-kettle, don't you think?

A: You are a mockery of everything divine.

L: Thank you. Thank you, but lately I've been doing a fair amount of thinking. Now, do you think I'm the Devil because I'm inherently evil, just because dear old Dad decided I was?

Of course, this question is asked rhetorically, with the clear implication that it's all arbitrary. Why, God could be the Devil! Don't you see?! As the Obi-Wan Kenobi character [put it](#) in another mish-mash of Hollywood philoso-babble, "Luke, you're going to find that many of the truths we cling to depend greatly on our own point of view." *Lucifer* thus either presents us with dualism — the notion that good and evil are two equal and opposing forces in the Universe — or today's widely accepted moral



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relativism. Dualism is a philosophical error because, as C.S. Lewis once pointed out, good and evil cannot be said to be just that unless labeled so with some yardstick. And if that yardstick can be used to measure and judge them, it must be above them and greater than they are (i.e., God).

Having said this, it doesn't seem based on the first episode that *Lucifer* ascribes equal power to God and the Devil. Nor can it be the typical atheism-spawned relativism, stating (almost never explicitly) that there can be no right or wrong because there is no yardstick, no God (I examine that [here](#)). It doesn't entertain Dostoevsky's [idea](#) that if "God does not exist, everything is permitted" or French poet Charles Baudelaire's warning, "The devil's finest trick is to persuade you that he does not exist." Rather, *Lucifer* truly peddles Lucifer's purest line, that satanic message of the world's first rebellion: God exists. Even the Devil exists. But what does it matter? God is just like that father you rebelled against, a hypocritical killjoy with arbitrary rules, exercising power and handing down punishment just 'cause He can. And if Lucifer can ignore the restrictions placed on him and leave Hell, leaving church and doctrine ought to be nothing at all.

If it feels good, do it. The Devil sure does.



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