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Recap: The Mandalorian Season 1, Episode 6 - The Prisoner

2019-12-16 20:00:00 by [Chris Compendio](#)

Like Ocean's 11, but stupid

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One of the clear strengths of *The Mandalorian*, especially in the earlier episodes, is that the eponymous character is not perfect—far from it. He trips, falls down, gets shot, gets covered in mud, and so on. We love an underdog. But it's still important to remember that Mando is pretty damn good at his job and this sixth episode has some enjoyable gunslinging action that showcases those skills.

It's too bad that everyone else around him in this episode was an annoying, incompetent prick. While this show needed a change of scenery and some fresh blood, this episode squanders its potential with odd pacing and incomprehensible character decisions.

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The gig economy has gotten rough in the galaxy with Mando tapping into an old connection and going back to that wretched hive of scum and villainy for a job. The job he takes is simple: break into a New Republic prison ship, get a prisoner out, and leave. But this is deemed to be a five-person job, so Mando finds himself part of a five-person motley crew.

And a colorful crew it is, composed of characters played by familiar actors—we have an ex-Imperial sharpshooter played by Bill Burr, a Devaronian devil-looking guy played by the imposing Clancy Brown (accidentally looking like a demonic Mr. Krabs), a flirty Twi'lek played by Natalia Tena, and a droid voiced by Richard Ayoade. Basically, they're some kind of suicide squad.

All are unbearable in their own way. Burr's character is macho and antagonistic for no good reason, Tena's character is a rip-off Harley Quinn, Brown is an idiot brute, and Ayoade's comedic talent is wasted to be a humorless robot. This episode could have had a fun ensemble of do-no-gooders, but instead, they come across as an overstuffed clown car.



The change of scenery from Western frontiers to sterile, white corridors acted as a decent reminder that the galaxy is under new management. With no real extensive look at the New Republic in the new sequel trilogy, this is the most tangible presence they've had in live-action *Star Wars* yet. Insignificant for the most part, but neat for fans.

The corridors support the idea that this is more of a middle-tier *Doctor Who* episode than prestige Disney-funded television. Luckily, the action, choreography, and cinematography mostly make up for it. Facing off against some New Republic security droids, Mando finally displays his "special" combat skills in a brief action scene that felt like everything that the show was missing.

Meanwhile, his dirtbag new friends stand and watch like dopes. Even with the context of the later twist, the general incompetence of this crew just doesn't make a lick of sense. I don't expect these folks to be up to speed with advanced military tactics or anything, but they stroll around the hallways with no caution—is this episode supposed to be suspenseful and gripping, or fast and frenetic? I can't tell if it's acting, directing, or editing to blame for the shaky pacing and tonal confusion.



Everything else I have to say about the episode is just nitpicking—the crew's "elaborate" plan to backstab Mando was contrived and not really thought out. Worse, the cat and mouse game that eventually results is less than exhilarating. There's what is practically a ticking time bomb in the background, but no urgency whatsoever. Those 20 minutes seem to tick on for eternity.

Nonetheless, seeing Mando finally being a badass provided some satisfaction. We often forget that he is somewhat of a legend and to see him expertly and smartly take down all of his opponents reminded us that he's the main character, not that little baby Yoda. Vs. Bill Burr, Mando straight-up went all Batman and I'm all for that.

There's only two episode left before the season wraps up. It's been a great season of world-building, and this vignette approach of episodic storytelling is a bold idea for *Star Wars*, but this episode is living proof that there is still much to iron out.



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Parasite wins Best Ensemble Cast at the Screen Actors Guild Awards

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I don't have many regrets, but if I had one that's been kicking me for the past few months, it would be my review for *Parasite*. When I first saw the movie I enjoyed it, but didn't love it like most other critics, but the longer I've spent away from

the movie, the more and more I enjoy it. *Parasite* is a brilliant satire and the fact that it's been able to earn heaps of critical praise despite a very real language barrier is incredibly impressive. Consider this me formally saying that my opinion has changed on it and that now I'm a Bong fan for life. After all, it's not often that a foreign language picture is able to make history in the way that *Parasite* is currently doing.

Adding on to its historical importance, Bong Joon-Ho's thriller made history last night at the Screen Actor's Guild Awards not once, but twice. First, *Parasite* has become the first foreign language feature to be nominated for its most prized award, Best Ensemble Cast. Not only that, but *Parasite* was able to take that award, becoming not only the first South Korean movie to win a SAG award, but also the first foreign language movie ever to win the Best Ensemble Cast in the award's 26 year history. And like a

great dad, Bong Joon-Ho sat in the crowd with recording his cast accept the award with a smile beaming across his face.

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