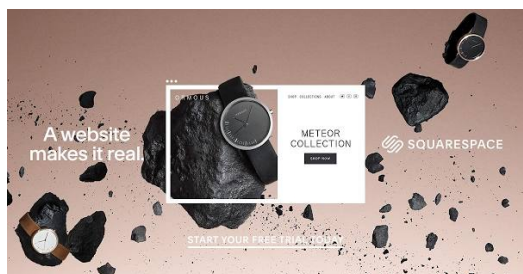




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Review: Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. Season 6 Episode 6 - "Inescapable"

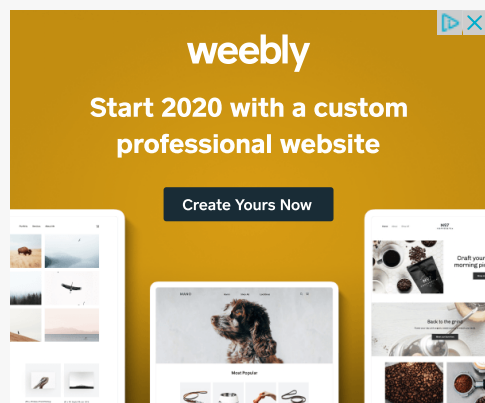
2019-06-21 20:00:00 by Chris Compendio

This feels like The Bad Place



I don't think I've ever experienced whiplash myself, but going back-to-back with last week's episode of *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* and then to this one is giving me a good idea of what it feels like. After two focused and experimental episode, five took us back to standard *S.H.I.E.L.D.*, while six... is focused and experimental. This time, we have what is essentially a Fitz-Simmons bottle episode.

You can Google search for my thoughts on why the bond between Leo Fitz and Jemma Simmons is one of the bedrocks for this television show, and had I been told the pitch for this episode years ago, I would have been all for it. The end results, however, leave something to be desired—specifically, restraint.





It is apparently against intergalactic law for Fitz and Simmons to be happy together, so here they are strapped to a memory machine of some sort. Forced by the Chronicoms to figure out backwards time travel by any means possible, Fitz and Simmons are placed in a digital mind prison of sorts, able to conjure up whatever they want to from their memories.

In other words, they're in Janet's head from *The Good Place*, but as these two have pretty gnarly memories, none goes according to plan. This turns into the Fear Dimension from *S.H.I.E.L.D.*'s 100th episode, which already makes this particular new episode feel less "new." As such, expect some flashes and throwbacks, some of them admittedly welcome.

I recently rewatched early *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.*, and from binging instead of watching week-to-week, I noticed that the Fitz-Simmons relationship isn't as healthy as I remember it being. Sure, there's a strong loyalty between them, but there is low-key manipulation between both parties. That's why the episode got to such a strong start—for once, the show recognizes this.



During key sequences, Fitz and Simmons talk out what exactly they needed and wanted from each other as people, and what they wanted to get out from what were basically "exchanges." Their relationship, as romantic as it was, was also transactional. We see the two during their college days, and even a bit of flashback where Coulson recruits the pair in season 1 era, when the two looked like babies.

Everything starts off quite cleverly written and blocked, with Fitz and Simmons physically inhabiting these memories. They play out in real time, while Fitz-Simmons participate in this "replay" while having their own conversations and observations seamless with everything else around them. This works great for Simmons' revelation that Fitz (a different one, mind you) is not only dead, but married Simmons.

And thank goodness they did this scene, because Simmons' plan to get a past version of Fitz had so many strange ethical and emotional implications that I was sure the show would just skip over. Turns out, sci-fi nonsense and time travel can lead to great drama! You listening, *Doctor Who*?



But of course, this episode is about facing your inner demons, or whatever. Naturally, this manifests in the form of "The Doctor" or "Leopold Fitz," Fitz's nasty Hydra Nazi counterpart from the virtual Framework in season 4. Watching Iain De Caestecker play evil used to be a treat, but it feels like diminishing returns compared to last season's vastly superior episode "The Devil Complex," in which Leopold was basically Fitz's Tyler Durden.

This episode needed to come up with an equivalent for Simmons, so after warding off a child version of Simmons, the episode brings up... some sort of horror film monster version of Simmons that she compartmentalized in a metaphorical box. I must have forgotten about the apparent *S.H.I.E.L.D.* episode where Simmons imagined herself as the girl from *The Ring*.

By the end, I couldn't help but be disappointed that this episode with an excellent premise and a promising start degraded into a complete and utter farce by the last ten minutes—and that's coming after me praising the hell out of the episode where Simmons and Daisy were tripping on space shrooms.

Listen, I get it: *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* has been on for a long time after close calls on the cancellation bubble, and it has earned the right to have fun. In this specific case, it was at too much expense of the characters, especially two beloved characters like Fitz and Simmons. They deserved better.



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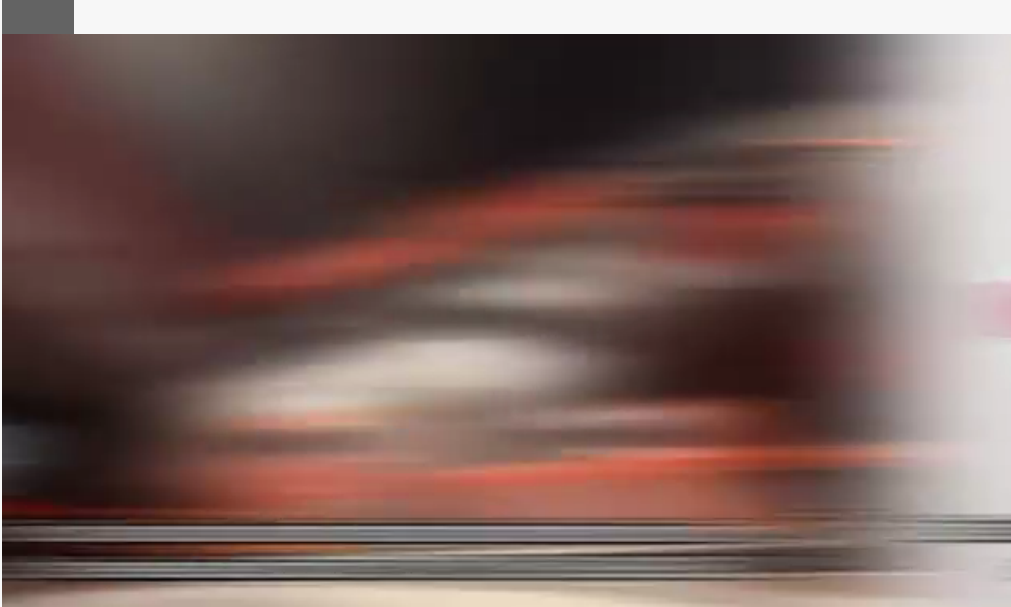
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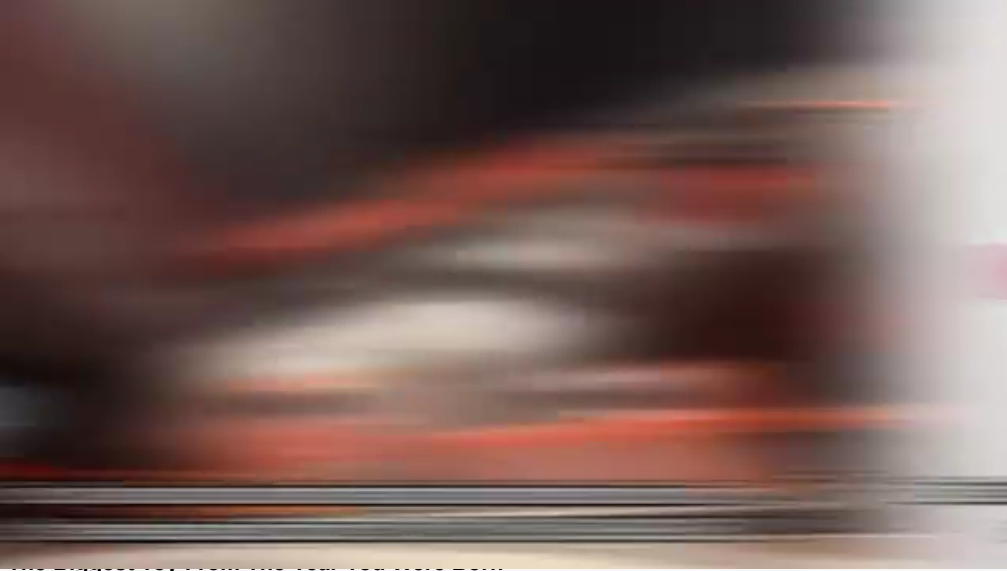
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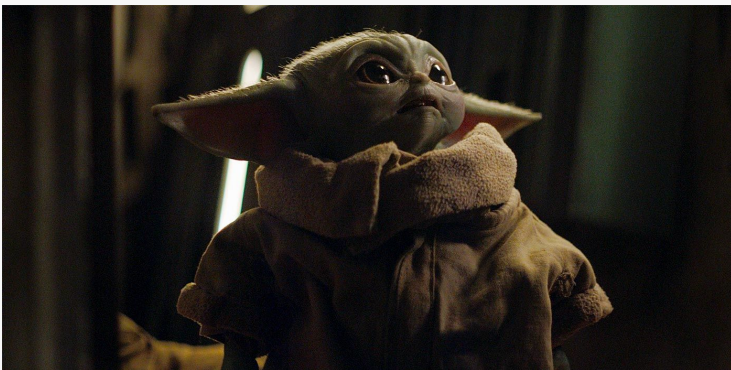
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Disney reveals launch windows for Marvel Disney+ shows, second season of The Mandalorian

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In an earnings call yesterday afternoon, Disney CEO Bob Iger revealed when fans can expect to see the company's upcoming slate of Disney+ shows. Pretty much everything is set to debut after the summer movie season, likely in an attempt to not cannibalize the ticket sales of Marvel's films this year. First up is *The Falcon and Winter Soldier* for August, followed by *The Mandalorian* Season Two in October, and rounded off with *WandaVision* in December.

Iger also stated that there will be much more *Mandalorian* coming after the second season. That could be hinting at spin-offs or possibly shorts, but the CEO didn't clarify. As well as that, Iger said that the *Star Wars* universe will be focusing on television productions in between now and whenever the next trilogy launches. Disney clearly isn't slowing down, even if "fans" are angry.

I kind of expected *WandaVision* to launch in December. The project was originally slated for 2021 and releasing it in December would still technically count as 2020. That's kind of a dick move, but I'd also

rather Disney take the time to make sure that show is solid. Same goes for *Loki*, which was conspicuously absent from this earnings call.

As for *The Mandalorian*, I have a feeling Disney is going to drive that series into the ground. Just call it a hunch, but Iger talking about "more" doesn't fill me with confidence.

