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Review: Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. Season 6 Episode 3 - "Fear and Loathing on the Planet of Kitson"

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A weird space comedy you didn't know you wanted



There's a bit of irony with how *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* in its infancy used to be unfavorably compared to *Firefly*. Over five years later, and here we have an episode that will have me enthusiastically declare *S.H.I.E.L.D.* to be the more entertaining Whedon Space Show. Granted, *S.H.I.E.L.D.* is on season six, while *Firefly* was canceled after just one, so it's had more time to grow and get me invested in the characters. Perhaps that's how the show earned to right to do this ridiculous romp of an episode.

Do you like Mack, May, and Yo-Yo? Well, they aren't in this episode at all.

Do you like... Davis, Piper, and Enoch? You'll get a lot of them here,

especially the latter. "Fear and Loathing on the Planet of Kitson" may be

destined to be a divisive episode of *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.*, and I'll happily land on the side that loves it.



After the moral dilemma that Fitz faced in [last week's episode](#), he and his synthetic, emotionless, Vulcan-like companion Enoch are kicked off the ship by the very people he saved, rendering that whole dilemma useless. Only given a single casino chip, the pair has no choice but to try their luck at the notorious planet Kitson ("Please check in your weapons and moral high ground," a receptionist tells the two before they enter the casino).

What results is an amusing buddy plot line, with Fitz attempting to exploit Enoch's computer-like mind, while Enoch attempts to learn about friendship and emotion. At one point, Enoch is baffled by the concept of "bluffing," learning about it the hard way. It's a bit sitcom-y, with each of the two learning a valuable life lesson at the end of it all, but Iain De Caestecker has already proven to have chemistry with just about any scene partner, and this pairing is no different.

It also helps that the plot line is lifted with interesting visuals, quite unusual from the usual earthbound palette in S.H.I.E.L.D. The light is dark and moody, extras look quirky with weird costumes and props, and a synth-heavy musical score plays throughout. It's like an edgier version of the *Star Wars* cantina, with some *Blade Runner* atmosphere thrown too.



On their tail is Daisy and Simmons, and through their plot line, we get the episode title's namesake. A lot of television shows would probably have an episode with a title based on *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, but there were some quite obvious visual inspirations from the Terry Gilliam film adaptation that made its way to this episode's style.

Let's just say that those Xandarian snails that were first mentioned in last week's episode comes back in a big way. With that comes a number of odd and surreal camera techniques, angles, and effects. While a good chunk of the episode is a trip, a lot of it is played for laughs. Just replace Johnny Depp and Benicio Del Toro with Daisy and Simmons, put them in a space casino, and you're set. It's something that I found amusing, only because of my attachment to these characters, but I can imagine some people waiting for some of the harder answers to this season's mysteries will be frustrated about the long focus on this behavior.

But hey, it's hilarious. Daisy and Simmons strengthen their bond, in some strange way, and make a lot of callbacks to the show's past. I wish these scenes had gotten a little deeper, perhaps revealing some new information or character traits in their incapacitated states. And in addition to these two, supporting characters Davis and Piper get a significant amount of screentime too, carrying their own scenes for the first time. It was a little less fun to see Davis in this state, considering we know significantly less about him for any contrasts to register as funny.



We don't get back to the Coulson doppelganger "Sarge" until the end tag, in a brief and confusing scene that has nothing to do with the rest of the episode; it's the only scene set on Earth. It'll probably make more sense later on in the season, but I didn't care much for it. But while I complained about last week's episode laying breadcrumbs and not really revealing too much yet, I really don't mind this episode sidestepping that entire plot.

It just goes to show you the strength of the writing behind some of these characters that nearly an hour of silly space antics from them makes for fun television. But perhaps it was just the combination of these characters—would I have as much fun if it were Mack, May, and Yo-Yo, three comparatively stoic characters, in their own self-contained episode? Honestly, probably not.

I've always championed *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* for doing something new every season, and it's cool that the show is being experimental even just for one episode within a season. Was it ridiculous? Absolutely. But damn if I didn't have a good time. It's pretty much just like that Terry Gilliam movie—but with the added benefit of not having Johnny Depp.



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Sam Raimi might be directing the Doctor Strange sequel

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There was some concern when the news broke earlier this year that Scott Derrickson, director of the first *Doctor Strange* film, was **parting with** upcoming sequel. *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness* was said to lean heavily

into horror stylings, and some speculated that Derrickson's "creative differences" departure might have pushed the horror envelope a little too far for comfort over at Marvel. Today's news would seem to push that envelope all the way through the door.

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