

TV to Die For: A Ranking of TV Shows by Dead Bodies

Is death entertaining? Is our popular culture obsessed with death? How do portrayals of death affect the popularity of entertainment programs? Who is most likely to be drawn to death-oriented programs?

Funeralwise.com seeks to answer these and other questions about the role of death in popular culture. The objective is to create a dialogue contrasting our acceptance of death in the abstract, such as in entertainment programs, vs. how we deal with the reality of our mortality, such as our willingness to make funeral plans in advance.

For purposes of this study, Funeralwise has chosen to focus on television because of its popularity with all age groups. The study will determine the presence of death in TV shows by counting dead bodies appearing in the shows. Forty (40) television series have been selected for analysis. The study will be conducted in the first quarter of 2012 and will analyze the most recent 8 original episodes of each series.

About Funeralwise.com -- Providing "everything you need to know about funerals," Funeralwise.com helps individuals and families navigate end-of-life experiences. Featuring an array of online funeral planning tools, Funeralwise.com is changing the way we deal with funerals in the digital age. The ease and convenience of online funeral planning helps people overcome their reluctance to plan ahead, and the availability of comparison shopping tools enables them to be smarter shoppers of funeral goods and services.

How are we Conducting the Study?

The television series selected for the study are those that regularly include portrayals of death in their story lines. This is a subjective selection by the organizers of the study and may not encompass every series that includes portrayals of death.

Funeralwise will retain the assistance of "watchers" to view the most recent 8 episodes of each television series. If a series is not running original episodes during the first quarter of 2012, then the most recent 8 episodes from 2011 will be included in the study.

Watchers will record the following for each episode viewed:

1. Series Name
2. Season # / Episode #
3. Episode Name
4. Dead Body Count
5. Funeral Count

To ensure accuracy of the counts, each episode will be viewed by 2 watchers and the counts will be compared. When there is a discrepancy in the count, a 3rd watcher will view the show and determine the correct count.

Are you Interested in Participating in the Study?

We are looking for “watchers” to help us view the TV shows and record the body counts. Since some of the episodes have already aired, you’ll need access to the prior original episodes either online or through your television provider. We are paying \$60 per TV series watched (8 episodes @ \$7.50 per episode).

If you would like to participate in the study as a “watcher,” email us at tvbodycounts@funeralwise.com. Let us know your name, age and occupation, and indicate the TV series that you would like to watch from the list below.

We need your commitment to watch the most recent 8 episodes of the series assigned to you. To participate, you must commit to watching all 8 episodes of at least 2 TV series. We will assign a maximum of 5 series to a watcher. Tell us how many series that you will commit to watching (2 to 5) and list them in order of preference. Since your preferred series may already be taken, you should list more than the number that you are committing to watch.

If you think that we have missed a current TV series that should be included in the study, please let us know. Shows that are on hiatus during the first quarter of 2012 are still considered current, provided that they have not been officially cancelled.

TV Series Included in the Study

<u>Broadcast</u>	<u>Cable</u>
Body of Proof (ABC) Castle (ABC) Revenge (ABC)	Breaking Bad (AMC) The Walking Dead (AMC)
Blue Bloods (CBS) Criminal Minds (CBS) CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (CBS) CSI Miami (CBS) CSI New York (CBS) Hawaii Five-O (CBS) NCIS (CBS) NCIS Los Angeles (CBS) Person of Interest (CBS) The Mentalist (CBS) Unforgettable (CBS)	Flashpoint (ION) Justified (FX) Leverage (TNT) Rizzoli & Isles (TNT) Southland (TNT) The Closer (TNT)
Alcatraz (FOX) Bones (FOX) Fringe (FOX)	Burn Notice (USA) Covert Affairs (USA) In Plain Sight (USA) White Collar (USA)
Grimm (NBC) Law & Order: Special Victims Unit (NBC)	<u>Premium Cable</u> Boardwalk Empire (HBO) Game of Thrones (HBO) True Blood (HBO)
Nikita (CW) The Vampire Diaries (CW) Supernatural (CW)	Dexter (Showtime) Homeland (Showtime) Spartacus: Blood and Sand (Starz)

What do we Count?

1. We count the number of dead bodies appearing in the episode. A body is counted only once even if it appears in more than one scene.
2. We separately count the number of “undead” creatures such as vampires, zombies, werewolves, shape-shifters and any formerly living or human-like creatures. If you are not sure, count it and describe what it is.
3. We do not count dead animals.
4. We do not care how the character died and we do not need to see the character die on screen. We are simply counting dead bodies that appear in the episode.
5. We do not need confirmation that a character is dead. If characters appear to be dead and we do not subsequently learn in the episode that they survived, we’ll assume they are dead.
6. If a funeral is held for a dead character, we count it.
7. We do not count dead bodies appearing in the opening recap of prior shows or in previews of the next episode.

How should you Watch each Episode?

You can watch each episode real time if you wish. Typically, that will be 60 minutes of viewing time. However, if you have recorded the episode or are watching online or on demand, you can fast-forward through it to reduce your viewing time. Just fast-forwarding through the commercials will significantly reduce your viewing time.

However, be careful that you do not miss anything. In most cases, the dead bodies are easy to spot and count. But it is not always clear – for example, a scene may show someone being shot and then taken to a hospital. In that case, you would need to find out if the character lived or died which would require watching real time until you find out. Keep in mind that we are not counting violent acts, just dead bodies that appear in the show.

In some instances, you’ll see violent acts but the show doesn’t specifically acknowledge whether or not the victim died. In those cases, you need to make a judgment call. If the victim appeared to be killed, then you should count it as a dead body. When in doubt, make a note of the instance and we will investigate further.

How do you Submit your Counts?

Body counts are submitted electronically using our PDF form. You can access the form at:

<http://www.funeralwise.com/about/tv-body-count-form>

Fill out one form per episode watched and then click the “Submit Form” button in the upper right corner of the PDF. You should then save the form to your computer with a new name such as, CSI_1.pdf. Then you might save the next episode as CSI_2.pdf. That way you will have a copy of each form submitted in case there is a problem with the transmission. This ensures that you will not lose any of the work you have done. You can delete the files after we have confirmed receipt of all of your submissions and paid you for your work.

For more information, contact us at tvbodycounts@funeralwise.com