



Time Inc. Network

[Entertainment Television](#)

TV Critics' Poll Names *Fargo* Best Show of 2014

[James Poniewozik](#) [@poniewozik](#) Dec. 8, 2014



Chris Large/FX

In a year with a lot of vote-splitting, the Minnesota saga pleased enough of the people enough of the time to win.

Entertainment site Hitfix today released the results of [its annual TV critics' poll](#), and this time it was *Fargo* that would go far. FX's new series (miniseries? serial miniseries?) finished number one both for best show of the year and best new show, finishing ahead of *The Good Wife* and *Transparent* respectively. (*True Detective*'s Matthew McConaughey won the separate [Best Performance poll](#).)

As always, just because I vote in the polls doesn't mean I agree with all the choices: I've already published [my own top 10 of 2014 list](#), so you can compare these lists with mine if you want. But honestly, I don't need a list like this to confirm my tastes—that's what my own is for. It's much more interesting to me to see how they reflect the averaged-out preferences of a particular group.

This year, it sheds a little light on what a wildly diverse group of top shows 2014 gave us. I don't just mean there was a lot of good TV, but there was no one show dominating most critics' lists as *Breaking Bad* did last year. (Even if I was one of a few dissenters in 2013, putting *Enlightened* #1 and *Breaking Bad* #2.) This year, a casual glance down the individual critics' picks find many different, plausible top picks: *Transparent* (my choice), *The Good Wife*, *The Americans*, *True Detective*, *Game of Thrones*. Hitfix's own Alan Sepinwall picked *The Leftovers* as his #1, and while I thought its season was too uneven, I loved its high points so much I immediately regretted not ranking it higher.

As for *Fargo*, it would not have been my guess for the top spot, and yet in retrospect it seems obvious. The show has had its detractors—The New Yorker's [Emily Nussbaum, for instance](#). But in general it was a show a lot of critics loved or at least liked a lot, without a major backlash, which meant it was high enough on enough lists to rack up a lot of points. It stood up better over time and in memory (compare *True Detective*, which was an obsession for two months last winter but ended up #5 on the Hitfix list), and it didn't run the risk, like *The Good Wife*, of running a fall season that didn't quite measure up to its earlier winter season. Not everyone agreed one single shows was the best in 2014, but enough critics—myself included—believed that *Fargo* was *one* of the best to make it tops overall.

(A key factor here is that critics vote in the poll by ranking their top 10 picks; so even though *Fargo* tied *The Good Wife* and *Transparent* in #1 picks, it got enough close-to-#1 picks to make the difference.)

Agree or not, Hitfix provides enough data to make an [interesting deep dive for TV geeks](#)—not just each critic's individual ranked lists, but how many votes each show got, from whom, and in what place. Go ahead and do some investigating of your own—that's what Molly Solverson would want.