

Featured on The Nerd League

By Katie Knecht

While 2016 was not the world's best year (hello Zika, creepy clowns, and Donald Trump), a lot of good television was made. Due to the wide selection we were presented with when we opened Netflix, Amazon Video, Hulu, HBO Go, etc., it was easy to miss something (especially if you are a human adult with a full-time job). We at The Nerd League want to make sure you saw the best of last year's television, starting with *The Night Of*.

This eight-part HBO original series, nominated for three [Golden Globes](#) and two SAG awards, follows Nasir "Naz" Khan (Riz Ahmed) as he is charged with a murder the viewer is not sure if he committed. Here are the top 10 reasons you should choose *The Night Of* as your next binge.

1. Maybe the best first episode of a show, ever

Naz is charged with murder after spending the night with a girl he doesn't know and waking up to find her stabbed to death. (Don't worry, I'm not giving much away—this all happens in the first episode.) The viewer stays with Naz, at least while he's conscious, throughout the evening and into the night, observing each decision he makes to end up where he does.

2. [Riz Ahmed](#) as Nasir Khan

The doe-eyed son of a Pakistani taxi driver from Queens murdering a cute Manhattanite girl the night he meets her? Très impossible! Or is it? Ahmed does an incredible job of making you cross your fingers for his safe return to civility while secretly wondering if you can trust him. Also, I didn't know this until I was researching the show for TNL, but he is British AF and has a perfect American accent! Kudos. PS – Ahmed's [cameo](#) in [The OA](#) is much better after seeing him in *The Night Of*, IMO.

3. John Turturro as John Stone

This guy can turn any role into a masterpiece. As a lawyer whose clientele typically ranges from prostitutes to drunk drivers, when he took on Naz's murder case, I was both rooting for Stone and terrified that he would fail. Turturro and Ahmed worked in tandem to elevate this show. Their on-screen relationship is full of tugs, tensions, and tenderness. Turturro's courtroom statements are wonderfully written and beautifully spoken—once you get to it, you'll know what I'm talking about. I have to mention Stone's extreme case of eczema, which nearly becomes a character itself, and warn you that it is not for the faint of heart.

4. John Stone's cat

Naught else to say.

5. Michael K. Williams as Freddy Knight

I hardly need to expand if you've seen *The Wire* or *Boardwalk Empire*. In case you haven't, Michael K. Williams' acting prowess is in full force as an important prisoner at Rikers Island,

complete with a drug ring and allusions to “The Call of the Wild”.

6. A look into the faults of America’s criminal justice system

More relevant than ever in 2017, *The Night Of* takes on racism in our judicial system full force, exposing the biases Naz faces as the son of Pakistani immigrants. Simultaneously, we see how easily evidence can be skewed and presented in court to achieve a desired outcome.

7. The accused goes on the stand

If you’ve ever watched any criminal justice shows or listened to [true crime podcasts](#), you know that someone accused of murder rarely goes on the stand—it’s considered far too high risk. Ahmed does just that during his trial and O-M-G, you gotta see it.

8. Duane Reade

There is legitimately a character named Duane Reade. LOL.

9. Only eight episodes

This show is totally bingeable. I remember back in the summer of 2016 when I had to wait an entire week for the next episode...you lucky kids!

10. The origin is British

The Night Of is based on *Criminal Justice*, a British true crime show. They know what they’re doing across the pond when it comes to crime shows (*Sherlock*, *Luther*, *The Fall*). Wait—is this why Riz Ahmed was cast?! Looks like we have a new mystery to solve.