

building because you don't like the wallpaper in the bathroom.

Lori isn't the only wife on TV to be the target of fans' flamethrowers. She isn't even the only such wife on her own channel. Google "Skyler White," the wife of *Breaking Bad*'s milquetoast-turned-Machiavelli, and the first suggested search result is "Skyler White hate." Betty Draper (played by **January Jones**) has always been *Mad Men*'s biggest villain—beating out institutionalized racism and liver cirrhosis—but even Don's new wife, Megan (**Jessica Paré**), has met with a heaping helping of derision: First she's a gold digger for accepting a nepotistic job offer from Don, and then she's ungrateful for ultimately rejecting it. Gossipy put-downs and whispered judgments flew up and down the corridors of the Internet as fervently as they did in those of Sterling Cooper Draper Pryce. We love watching men behaving badly (and in the case of *Breaking Bad*, baldly) on our drama series, but we save the lion's share of our scorn for the women in their lives, whose main crime seems to be wanting them home in time for dinner.

Sure, they aren't the most interesting characters on their respective series. Even on these ambitious, critically lauded shows, viewers want to get their rocks off, too, and the home front will always be less of a thrill than the trenches. On Showtime's *Dexter*, **Julie Benz**'s Rita Morgan—the moonlighting serial killer's other significant other—got flak for being a wet blanket even though the fire she was unwittingly putting out was her husband's insatiable lust for murder. When the character was killed off, there was a sense in some fan circles of "good riddance." This is the point at which the perspective starts to get skewed. Skyler may be hampering Walt's pursuit of the American dream, but that's only because for her, it's a nightmare. Last season the double standard was stretched to its breaking point, as Skyler, played brilliantly by **Anna Gunn**, was essentially held hostage in her own home by the sociopath who



Anna Gunn and Bryan Cranston on *Breaking Bad*

had replaced her husband (the incomparable **Bryan Cranston**).

Antiheroes have been de rigueur on TV since Tony Soprano first sauntered into a psych session and made us question our moral identity. If he's the anti-Adam, then **Edie Falco**'s Carmela Soprano is the anti-Eve. Married to the Mob, she was hardly a lily-white innocent and knew full well how ill-gotten her family's gains were. As a character, she was loved by plenty—and Falco earned three Emmys for her work—but even she experienced intense backlash. Despite never once pulling a trigger or ordering a hit, when she forced her mobster husband

to pay \$600,000 for a real estate project in exchange for forgiving his cheating ways, online fans huffily called her a "using bitch" and "worse than Tony." You would think that folks who had spent four seasons watching an HBO show about the Mafia would be used to a little extortion. But somehow, perhaps because viewers had identified with Tony's misdeeds for so long, the threat of lethal force had become less reprehensible than the threat of withheld affection. (Of course, if you really wanted to dig up some roots, you'd bypass Tony for a much older antihero: Macbeth, who may have been a scheming scoundrel, but it was still his wife who ended up being branded as the ultimate conniver.)

Margaret Thompson (played by **Kelly Macdonald** on HBO's *Boardwalk Empire*) and Jessica Brody (**Morena Baccarin** on Showtime's *Homeland*) have been labeled everything from narrative distractions to nagging shrews despite being wed to a crime lord and a domestic terrorist, respectively. Tony, Walt, Dexter, and Don are hardly paragons of virtue, and Rick's lack of leadership and teary-eyed dithering have been as much to blame for *The Walking Dead*'s problems—both on the show and with the show—as anything Lori's done. Yet many seem to take a Henny Youngman view of things, struck with a collective case of "Take my wife...please." ■



January Jones on *Mad Men*

## THE SHAW REPORT

BY JESSICA SHAW

IN Lucy Punch

5 MINUTES AGO Lucy Liu

OUT Lucy Lawless



Apple CEO Tim Cook introduces the iPad Mini, one of many new devices on the market

## Tablets, Tablets Everywhere!

### TECH CHECK

WE'RE USED TO fall meaning new TV shows and Oscar-bait movies, but this year tablet enthusiasts are getting their own special bounty. The past two weeks saw new devices from **Apple** and **Microsoft** join fellow newbies like **Google**'s Nexus 7 (starting at \$199), which debuted this past summer, and **Amazon**'s Kindle Fire HD (starting at \$199), which bowed in September. Apple's fourth-generation iPad (starting at \$499) features key upgrades, including a faster processor. And the new 7.9-inch iPad Mini (starting at \$329) boasts stripped-down but still powerful specs in a 0.68-pound package. For its part, Microsoft is finally entering the tablet ring with Surface (starting at \$499), which sports a detachable keyboard, multiple ports, and a new Windows operating system. "It's a pretty important product built around the idea that a PC and a tablet can be an integrated experience and not necessarily two discrete experiences," says Michael Gartenberg, research director of the technology research firm Gartner. The last addition to the season's tablet glut will be Amazon's larger 8.9-inch Kindle Fire HD (starting at \$299), which hits Nov. 20.

Of course, Apple continues to be the alpha dog in the tablet pack—the iPad captured 57 percent of the market in the third quarter. But all these new releases offer alternatives to consumers whose needs may vary. Devoted to the seamless Apple ecosystem? The iPad Mini might be your guy. Looking for a tablet to replace your laptop? Give the Surface a whirl. Or do you just want to watch movies and read books at a low cost? Try the Kindle Fire HD or Nexus 7. "The good news is that as a consumer, you can really pick and choose the thing that's most right for you," says Gartenberg. Also good news: Shopping for the tech fiend in your life just got a lot easier. —Stephan Lee



➔ **Duke University botanists name new ferns after Lady Gaga** They took her at her word when she said: "You name it, I'll wear it!"

➔ **SpikeTV offers \$10 million for proof of Bigfoot's existence with new reality series 10 Million Dollar Bigfoot Bounty** And the network is offering an additional \$10 million to anyone who can stop Donald Trump from making another \$5 million offer.

➔ **Friends creators reveal that they considered not having Ross and Rachel end up together in the series finale** The last scene ended with a heartbroken Ross finding out that not only did Rachel's plane crash, they were already all dead.

➔ **Taylor Swift and Conor Kennedy reportedly split** Asked how bad the breakup was, Taylor said: "Probably two songs, but depending on his Facebook activity in the next few weeks, could be an EP."

➔ **Tom Cruise slaps tabloid with \$50 million lawsuit for claiming he abandoned Suri** Every tabloid story has a seed of truth, and in this case, it's probably that Cruise stopped using Siri on his iPhone.

➔ **Bravo developing drama about Coke/Pepsi rivalry in the '80s** No word yet on how this impacts TLC's planned series about the storied RC Cola vs. My-mom-buys-this-cola-syrup-at-Kmart-that-you-mix-with-seltzer-and-it-kind-of-tastes-like-sour-Diet-Coke rivalry.

➔ **Meat Loaf endorses Mitt Romney, mangles "America the Beautiful" at rally for candidate** When Meat Loaf asked Romney several times if he wanted him to appear on stage on election night, Romney kept saying diplomatically, "Let me sleep on it."

➔ **Lindsay Lohan's publicist quits** The one person in Hollywood who truly knows the definition of exhaustion.