

POP LIFE
BY ROB SHEFFIELD

Project X

THIS IS THE BEST "PROJECT RUNWAY" SEASON EVER. Where do they find these people? No other show can top this parade of damaged, needy, driven souls who take to the fashion world to express their emotional hemophilia. And center stage: Heidi Klum in full-on *Ilsa: She Wolf of the SS* mode. The punch line is that Heidi is supposed to be the voice of reason, when she's obviously more damaged, needy and driven than any of them. There's nothing like watching Heidi's Teutonic nostrils flare as she barks, "You failed your teammate!" or "He should not stand there and be so snippish!"

Of course, on *Runway* the outfits are just a backdrop to the monsters hunched over their sewing machines. The whole amateur-hour premise is a scam: Virtually all the contestants are already pros. The point is watching Mistress Heidi whip them through degrading tasks, like designing outfits for puppies—it was like a lost scene from *Best in Show*. The only thing missing was Fred Willard as a guest judge ("That is some chic Shih Tzu!").

The real contest is: Who do you hate more—Angela or Keith? Angela's an organic farmer from Ohio, which explains her designs. If someone like Angela complimented you on your outfit, would you ever wear it again? Hell to the no! As for Keith, he blatantly—repeatedly—cheated. You suck, Keith. Good riddance.

I have hopes for Bradley, the L.A. hippie, if only because I suspect he used to be in the *Spin Doctors*. And Vincent, who looks like Ted Danson in rehearsals for *Herman! The Munster Musical!* But I still can't believe Malan got sent home. So what if he made an ugly gown? What about his excellent hair? I love his fake name, his complicated relationship with his mother, his mysterious accent. And in real life, Malan used to be a backup dancer for



No other show can top *Runway's* parade of damaged souls.

Above: Vincent.
Below: Keith, Angela and Bradley (from left).



Paula Abdul, which maybe means he picked the wrong reality show. He's a tortured soul, but then, so is everybody else. That's why they're here, and that's why we're here

TELEVISION

All Gone to Pot

Showtime pushes the envelope with *Weeds* BY M



Parker tends to her business.

LONG THE SECOND FIDDLE TO HBO IN THE premium-cable sweepstakes, Showtime finally has a water-cooler show of its own with *Weeds*—a skewed look at suburban malaise shot through with healthy doses of misogyny... and marijuana. Between the show's sendups of race, religion and drugs, and Mary-Louise Parker's knockout turn as Nancy Botwin, the show's widowed, pot-dealing protagonist, *Weeds* has established itself as one of the best and most daring shows on television.

"There is a very universal appeal in this suburban culture," says Bob Greenblatt, Showtime's president of entertainment. "It's fun to rip the lid off of these communities." He adds, "Or maybe it's just the pot!"

According to the show's creator, Jenji Kohan, the premise came to her in 1996 when the issue of medical marijuana arose in California. At the time, she

was building h stints at *Mad Girls* and *Sex Weeds* was pie to push the en

"We crossed Kohan says. Showtime. Ap lowed to lube

Pot, it turn least contro "Marijuana— bugaboos—is Greenblatt. "I ijuana addicti

Even beyon mor, some fee

A recurring criticism conc American pot source as an on, girl!" caricature. "Some says Kohan, with a surpris "These characters were ba and frankly, that's the way t

Despite friction between ator—Kohan has said that Pa Nancy's undeniably shitty p insists everything's fine and go further next season, cont work aside. "This is why w says. "We traded money for r

Just in case, Kohan craft hanger so complicated that o "We've made a big mess," sh wants to get out of it, they'll

TUNE IN WHAT TO WATCH IN THE WEEKS AHEAD



LAGUNA BEACH

MTV, 10 PM 8/16

In Season Three, the Laguna girls are younger, bitchier and bustier than ever. With evil stares and catty cliques, this next gen of Beach babes make Kristen and I C look like Girl



THE FANTASIA BARRINO STORY

LIFETIME, 9 PM 8/19

Yes, Fantasia can sing, but the girl cannot act, and watching this true story of her struggles will make you cringe. The real *Idol* footage almost



PRISON BREAK

FOX, 8 PM 8/21

Finally: Wentworth Miller and Co. have escaped! But lest you think all's well in Season Two, there's a stash of cash this crew of cons are after, and the FBI is hot



TWO-A-DAYS

MTV, 10:30 PM 8/23

Maybe being a high school football star isn't that great after all. Sure, there are the easy cheerleaders, but don't forget the aloof college scouts and the

