

Commenter Ronald Caterisano teased me a bit after my review of last week's episode that I was complaining about there being so much Flash in a show called The Flash—which is a solid point, Ron. Well played. But my response is there's a difference between spotlighting a star and foisting him into everyone else's spotlight. For a plot in which it's really Wells, Caitlin, and Cisco who have an emotional stake, Barry just seemed to be in there a lot when he didn't have much to contribute. That interrupted some potentially interesting development among his supporting players, and it made his real plotline—the love triangle nonsense with Linda and Iris—more jumbled and superficial than it already was. This episode is an example of placing Barry on the secondary burner done right. This is definitely in part because he has reason to be totally invested in the revelation that he was present, as an adult, during his mother's murder. While Joe and Cisco (and Wells) are mostly focused on the scientific trippiness of it all, Barry brings us back to Earth by realizing that he essentially failed to save his mother from death. Time-travel has hit him with a double-whammy: the devastation of the discovery itself and the despair of not being able to stop it. Since this is Barry, though, he has plans to defy the closest thing to fate that physics has laid on him. No need to worry whether that'll work out; it probably won't. All it means is he'll be training even harder to beat the Reverse-Flash, which means relying on Wells even more, which means even more tension as Joe and Wells continue to strive against the other and Barry tries to keep the peace. Anyway, the real point is all this material keeps Barry well occupied so Wells, Caitlin, Cisco, Ronnie, and Stein can operate in peace and, more importantly, on their own. It's just nice to see that the show remembers these folks have history from before Barry ever came into their lives, whether it's Cisco commenting on the awkwardness of walking in on Ronnie and Caitlin's makeout sessions again or Wells thanking Ronnie for saving his life. These may be little things, but they break the show of its monotony. There are bigger benefits to pushing Barry towards the background, like fleshing out Ronnie and Stein into characters you'd care to see again. I don't know if there's any truth to the rumors about a Firestorm show, but this episode functions well as a backdoor pilot to such a show without hijacking the Flash feeling. While the nature of their powers and relationship stabilize, their personalities get a good bit of exploration at the same time. Interestingly, Stein gets the better share of defining scenes (his excitement over the topic of time travel, to the point of self-violence, is pretty darn fun), while Ronnie's are mostly framed by his relationship with Caitlin. I suppose this makes up for the fact that we'll be seeing Ronnie more often anyway, since his body is Firestorm's default. Iris especially profits from the separation from Barry, who too often reduces her to a romantic idea or obstacle instead of a person. The show seems to have finally landed on a juicy, long-term plotline for her by tasking her with looking closer into the particle accelerator explosion. This extra scrutiny on S.T.A.R. will invite conflict on a lot of fronts: first, with Wells as she pursues the theory that he caused the explosion on purpose; second, with Barry and the others as she gets uncomfortably close to their secret activities. The only character who gets short shrift is General Eiling, who never evolves beyond your archetypical military hawk in the tradition of General Lane. As an antagonist, he has—well, had—a lot of potential, with his takes-no-crap and knows-it-all attitude and the pretty amazing anti-metahuman devices he's packing. Unfortunately, the episode seems to dispose of him quite unglamorously, though I suspect we haven't seen the last of him, not until we've learned more about his history with Wells—and Grodd. Some Musings:- It's always kind of fun see Wells enthused over certain nerd movies. As to Back to the Future, Wells critical review: "Tremendous picture." Agreed.- Mason suspects Wells. I assume that means he'll be dead soon.- So... Joe and Cisco just left their 3D projection machine in Sherry's house?- More Caitlin imitating Cisco,

please. The post The Flash: Fallout appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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