

## Lynda Hirsch on Soaps: Gossip

by Lynda\_Hirsch

Lots of ins and outs to report this week. "One Life to Live" is sending one of its most down-to-earth and popular couples off into the soap sunset. Marcie (Kathy Brier) and Michael (Chris Stack) exit the show later this month. There had been rumors they would be the latest victims of the serial killer. Now rumor has it they will get a happy sendoff. The character of Talia is a victim of the killer. Actually, Talia became a victim when her on-screen lover, Antonio (Kamar de los Reyes), decided to leave the show. I guess Talia was one of those female soap characters that was nothing without a man.

"General Hospital's" Megan Ward (Kate) and Rick Hearst (Ric) have been downsized from contract to recurring. Recurring means "don't call us, we will call you if we need you." Sort of a soap opera "I'll call you in the morning." But don't hold your breath or wait too long by that phone. Recurring saves a show lots of money â€” no nasty contract to pay, just a few bucks when the character needs to make a Seinfeld-like "pop in."

Max won't even be recurring on "Days of Our Lives." He joins the list (Kayla, Patch, John and Marlena) of "Days" players who are leaving Salem.

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For months I have given "GH" the benefit of the doubt. Now there is no doubt this show is on a ratings and writing skid. The dialogue is still beautiful, as is the acting. It is the story lines that have turned ugly. They are recycling stories until watching the show a year ago is almost as good as watching an episode that airs this week. New sets and going high-definition will only lure viewers for a few days. For years, local newscasts would build a new set to get viewers to watch. Newspapers would write stories about the set; the ratings would spike for a nanosecond and then if the reporting was poor, the ratings slid back down. What really lures a viewer for the long haul is exciting story lines. By exciting story lines we do not mean the biotoxin disaster (both on the show and for viewers to watch). When "GH" did the Metro Court story, it was compelling. Ditto the train wreck. Since then, these "you gotta watch the story line we cooked up for this sweeps season" have been dreadful. How many times is Kate going to be shot? Whoops, not too many more times since she is headed to that great recurring purgatory. How many times is Jason (Steve Burton) going to go running back to be Sonny's gopher? Burton is a superb actor saddled with the same old story line. Jason and Liz getting together was popular with fans. So what does "GH" do? Truncate the story line. No, they cannot let viewers dictate plots, but when one is working, why not go with it? Kudos are deserved for the postpartum depression Robin (Kimberly McCullough) is experiencing. Her reluctance to take antidepressants is an interesting and true-to-life story line. Other than that, not so good.

It seemed that "GH" was ready to bring on a secret son for Sonny. The character of Dante was set up. Names of actors set for the role â€” Tom Pelphrey (ex-Jonathan, "Guiding Light") and David Lago (Raul, "Young and Restless") were in the running and then the race stopped. Now it has switched to Luke seeming to have an illegitimate son by Holly (Emma Samms). Please do not let this be true. With any luck, Tracy is

wrong as usual.

The reason we did not put "ex-Raul" after Lago's name is that he is set to return to "Y&R" next month. No word on how long the stay will be. Hopefully, it will be permanent. A Daytime Emmy award-winning actor, Lago has the looks, talents and character with a back-story that keeps "Y&R" in the top ratings spot year after year.

Sarah Michelle Gellar ("All My Children's" first Kendall, and Buffy the Vampire Slayer) and husband Freddie Prinze Jr. are expecting their first child. Years ago, Prinze and "GH's" Kimberly McCullough were a longtime item.

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