

GULF

BLACK LIST COVERAGE

The following quotes are taken word-for-word from numerous Black List evaluations. What makes the following industry response so formidable is the context of the current climate. We are operating in a marketplace defined by severe contraction and risk aversion. Yet, even against these headwinds, seasoned industry readers acknowledge that *GULF* possesses the undeniable, heavy-weight caliber of standout prestige dramas that came before it. The coverage speaks for itself:

"GULF's prospects are limited by the waves of contraction and consolidation that have been shrinking the prestige television landscape in recent years. The project's rich setting and characters, blend of family drama and crime-thriller storytelling, and highly serialized format all feel like they would have fit perfectly into the peak-TV era, specifically the mid-to-late-2010s wave of prestige shows like *OZARK*. The pilot would likely have very strong pickup prospects in that era, as its distinctive visual qualities, strong character writing, and its potential to attract major Cuban talent like Oscar Isaac or Ana de Armas for key roles would have made it worth at least serious consideration from most premium cable and streaming platforms. **However, the project still has real prospects even now.**"

"GULF marries the dysfunctional family dynamics of *BLOODLINE* with the gruesome, gory imagery of *FARGO* to give birth to **the next elevated location-driven psychological thriller. While it can be challenging to innovate in such a wildly popular genre, this pilot shines with its originality, sharp narrative voice, and diverse perspective.** We enter this story with a shocking mental image of Paul Doucet's corpse wrapped in snakes, which foreshadows the visceral violence we can expect from this series. The humid, perilous world of the Louisiana swamplands practically bleeds off the page with its hidden depths and all-consuming nature. When it comes to stand-out, thematically relevant one-liners, there are too many to choose from."

"The Louisiana backdrop, replete with sweaty bayous and frighteningly dangerous wildlife, leaps off the page, becoming in many ways a character in and of itself. Isabel offers the opportunity for a standout female lead, from a talent perspective, while, from Eliseo to Chris to Camille, Sutton, and the rest of the cast, there are a number of diverse and dynamic supporting roles. **It feels as if a series like this one could find a natural home and a devoted fan base, especially on premium cable or streaming platforms like HBO Max, Netflix, and Amazon.**"

"Between the allure of its mysterious landscape & culture and its ample, skilled crews & bountiful tax incentives, there has been no shortage of development built around New Orleans and its surrounding bayous across decades of the peak TV era, but **GULF stands out amongst them for its incredibly distinct voice and perspective that resembles none of the city's typical clichés.** Like the best family dramas, it defines its specificity of setting through its characters first. The Perez's are each introduced with their own relationship to the land and given a unique perspective and aptitude for various, highly specific, uniformly exciting hobbies that establish both their position within the hierarchies of Louisiana society and a terrifically exciting milieu against which it might cast its sordid drama. As a whole, the script's eye for details is terrific, making for an incredibly inviting and intricately designed setting in spite of the many rising red flags signaling the family's looming downfall."

"GULF's basis in an award-winning novel, and its author's proven track record as a storyteller, guarantee a level of development that could make the project worth optioning for further development with this writer. This project has a similar appeal to other series about families and crime, including hit shows like BLOODLINE and OZARK, but **it offers an original spin, with characters we haven't seen intimately featured in these roles before, and evokes a refreshingly specific as well as socially, ethnically, and culturally diverse world** that feels authentic and compelling."

"GULF transports the audience to a very specific time and place, bringing its environs to life with authenticity and specificity; the wetlands, the sugar cane, the hunting, the deeply felt sense of unique history—these well-drawn, immersive details create a firm foundation upon which to craft the series. **The larger ideas being examined here—power, legacy, systems of control—are fascinating and topical, helping the show stand out in a crowded television landscape. In addition, the script's deft blending of multiple genres—family drama, crime thriller, mystery, period piece—provides a little something for everyone,** which can be useful for marketing and for appealing to viewers."

"In its richly drawn setting and cast of colorful characters, GULF bears many of the hallmarks of a successful prestige series, **following up TRUE DETECTIVE's look at Louisiana with one even more entrenched in the swamps and building out a more realistic look at the criminal underworld of the region. It would make a promising prospect for outlets like HBO or Netflix (it also has shades of BLOODLINE in its criminal family drama), or really any of the major prestige outlets.**"

"The setting of GULF is engrossing and well-rendered, both in the actual details of this world and in the gothic mystery tone with which we're introduced to it. Iris's narration sets the scene effectively, serving as a powerful structuring device and creating a series of chapters, sort of, built around these varying definitions of the word "gulf." **Characters are vividly wrought, every one of them getting a noteworthy, memorable introduction and several striking moments throughout the subsequent episode, too. Dialogue is full of charm, with banter and dialect that sounds authentic to the locale** but doesn't lean so hard into that it becomes gimmicky. Characters all boast distinctive voices, most of all Chris himself, as colorful and roguish a figure as you could hope for. It's a complex, compelling world filled with equally complicated people.

"**The palpable atmosphere and energy found in shows like BLOODLINE are elevated in GULF, with the layering and sophistication of BREAKING BAD.** Through the eyes of journalist Isabel,

the script immerses the audience in a world that exudes flavor, color, and texture, from the writhing ball of thick black venomous moccasins that Isabel discovers wrapped around a body, and the lavish family “Xanadu” compound, to the labyrinth of sugarcane where father Chris is brought to hunt coyotes, and the darkness of the underwater void that he obsessively photographs. Each of the characters is infused with a remarkable sense of depth and dimension, from son Eliseo's jaunt behind the wheel of a Porsche, his hands locked in a death grip on the steering wheel after he spins out and chokes down a horrified laugh, to the legendary plundered coin that Isabel begins to surmise may signify something more sinister, and matriarch Camille's family ties to Cuba and the Castro regime. As both Isabel and Eliseo begin to suspect that there may be more going on between Chris and the Herbert clan than meets the eye, the script drops tantalizing hooks and clues that speak to a show with guaranteed drama and gripping turns to come."

"GULF is an intriguing script that combines elements of family drama and crime drama to put a unique spin on multiple genres. **The script also makes truly unsettling use of horror imagery**, and the descriptions of the writhing ball of water moccasins and the skinned coyote skull add a sense of the macabre and supernatural to the story."

"There is a perennial market for murder mysteries and conspiracy dramas, so GULF should have demand. The Louisiana setting is advantageous from a production perspective because of the state's film infrastructure and tax credits, which will help mitigate the sweeping set pieces and large action sequences. This project has shades of BLOODLINE and TRUE DETECTIVE, so approaching auspices behind either of those shows could help attach proven producers to help sell this project. It would fit best at premium cable and streaming outlets because of the violence and serialized plot."