


Kate Hudson in "Running Point," Kristen Bell and Adam Brody in "Nobody Wants This" and Ted Danson in "A Man on the Inside" (Netflix)

PRO

# Netflix Hits Its Stride With Feel-Good Comedies That Finally Lighten Up the Lineup

Comedy head Tracey Pakosta explains why expanding the streamer's slate, including "Nobody Wants This" and "Running Point," is good for business



Loree Seitz April 2, 2025 @ 6:00 AM

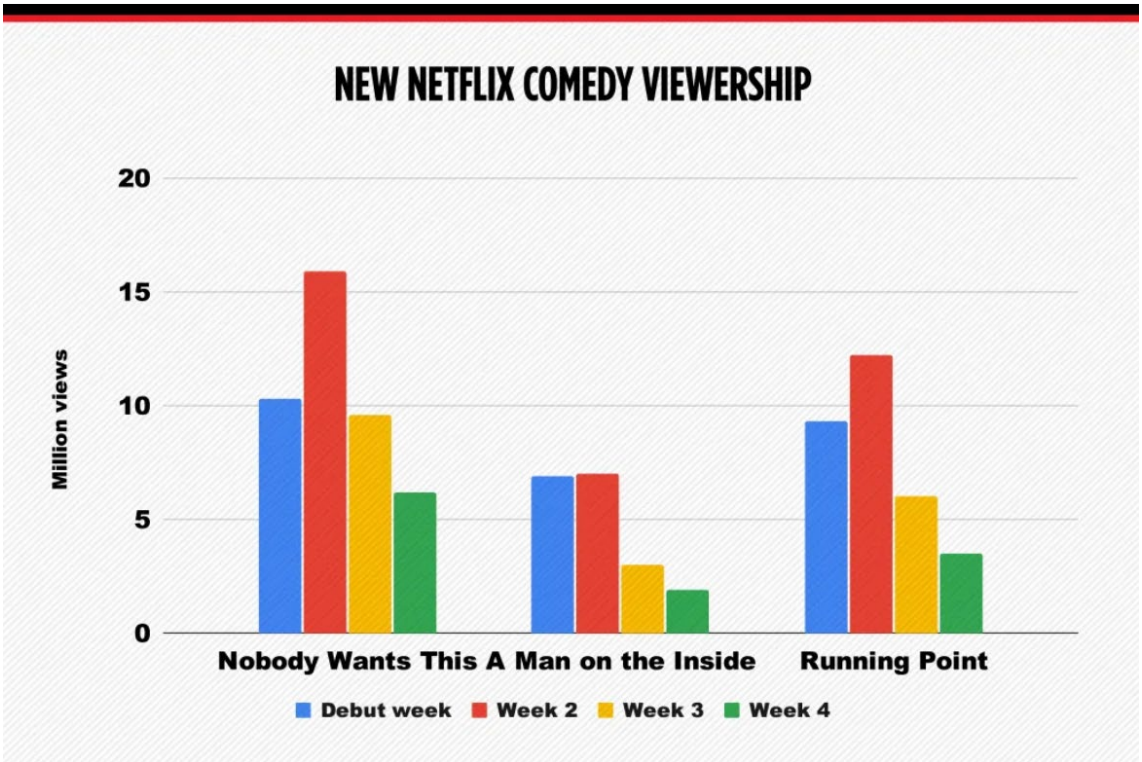
Netflix spent its first decade as a TV producer establishing itself as something different from what was on linear networks and cable. The service gained acclaim with prestige, star-studded shows like "House of Cards" and "The Crown," and when it came to comedy, even the streamer's "lighter fare," like "Orange Is the New Black," had an air of prestige — hourlong, unfiltered and wildly emotional.

Now, having asserted its dominance in not just the streaming space but TV as a whole, Netflix is finally hitting its stride with something else entirely: feel-good comedies.

"Nobody Wants This," "A Man on the Inside" and "Running Point" mark a trio of comedy hits for the streamer that marry what subscribers expect — big stars, high production value — with a feel-good vibe that made linear comedies like "The Office" and "Parks and Recreation" such beloved hits, both on TV and as licensed titles on streamers like Netflix. It's a run that didn't happen by accident, and reflects a focus on elevating creators, streamlining production to hit a yearly release cadence and combining heart with laughs to create comedies that not only hit with subscribers, but keep them engaged for multiple seasons.

"It really is about the characters … telling universal stories with a comedic point of view," Netflix head of comedy Tracey Pakosta told TheWrap. "They are about something at [their] center, but they're really funny. And audiences, I think, right now are looking for something a little lighter to watch."

With Netflix continuing to dominate the streaming wars, the lighter comedies promise to strengthen the streamer's reach through accessible and relatable storylines that don't require too much mental and emotional energy from viewers. "Nobody Wants This" debuted as the No. 2 most-watched TV show with 10.3 million views before soaring to the top of the English-language TV list with 15.9 million views in its second week on the streamer. "A Man on the Inside" was the top TV series in its debut week with 6.9 million views, while "Running Point" reached the No. 1 spot in its second week on Netflix with 12.2 million views.




*Viewership for "Nobody Wants This," "A Man on the Inside" and "Running Point" (TheWrap)*

With second seasons of “Nobody Wants This,” “A Man on the Inside” and “Running Point” already in the works, Netflix can keep bolstering their comedy pipeline with both seasoned creators and new voices.

## Bolstering the slate and finding the heart

Pakosta joined Netflix in 2020 after serving as NBC’s co-president of scripted programming, where she helped launch half-hour comedies like “Will & Grace,” Mike Schur’s “The Good Place,” “Superstore” and “Brooklyn Nine-Nine.” Over the past four years, Pakosta said she and the team have been honing their comedy strategy.

“The strategy really is variety, and that can come in all shapes and sizes, because comedy is subjective, so what’s funny to one may not be funny to the other,” Pakosta said. “It allows us the opportunity to do a variety of types of shows with incredible talent to fill the members’ needs.”



*Netflix head of comedy Tracey Pakosta (Netflix)*

Pakosta points to Mindy Kaling’s “Never Have I Ever,” which was greenlit before her time at Netflix, as a comedy series that exemplifies a balance between comedy and heart, saying, “It really was a universal story with a wonderful comedic point of view and cast that made that show resonate, not only in the States, but around the world.”

While “Nobody Wants This” introduces a charismatic couple grappling with a religious and cultural divide in Kristen Bell and Adam Brody, “Running Point” and “A Man on the Inside” center on protagonists played by Kate Hudson and Ted Danson, respectively, with Danson’s Charles hoping to solve a mystery in a retirement home while Hudson’s Isla hopes to prove her smarts as the newly appointed president of a Los Angeles basketball team.



*Kristen Bell and Adam Brody in “Nobody Wants This.” (Stefania Rosini/Netflix)*

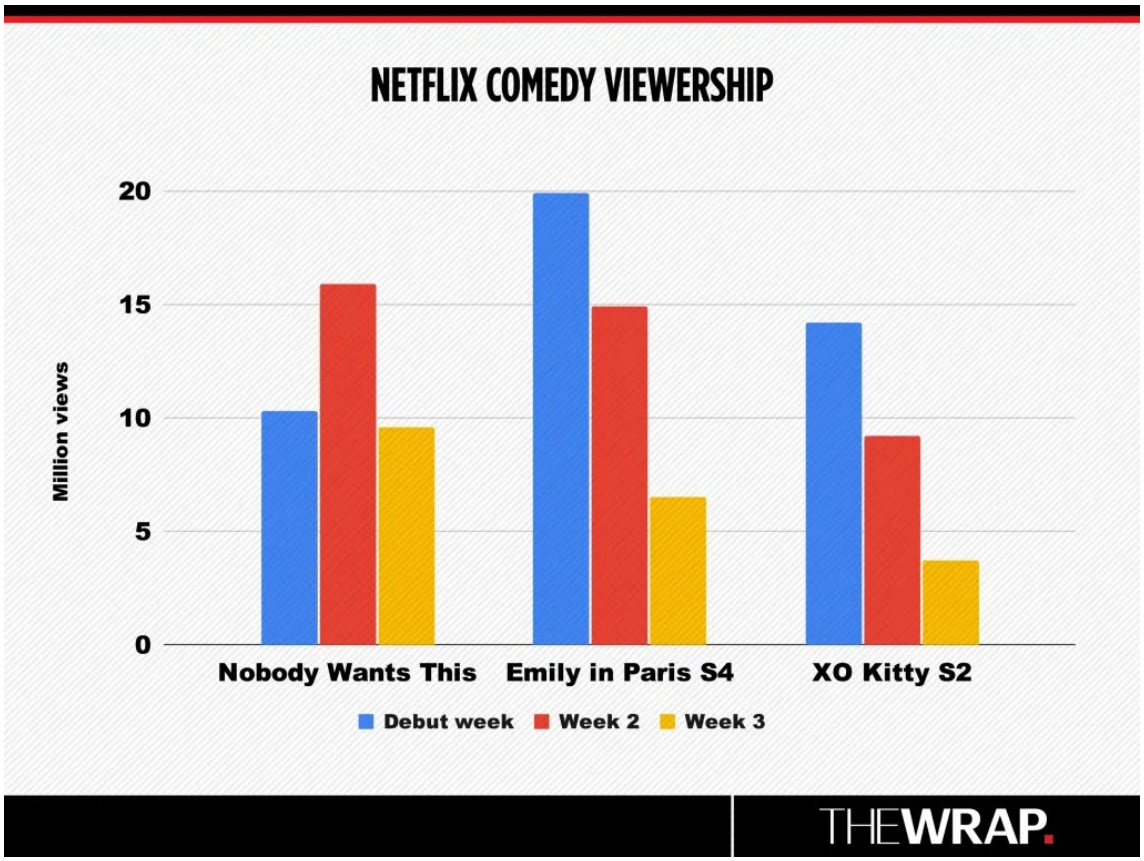
“What’s exciting about shows like ‘Nobody Wants This,’ ‘A Man on the Inside’ and ‘Running Point’ is those … have such great characters at the center and dynamic relationships, but the stories in each one of the shows are very universal, so the audience is investing in those people and having a really fun ride along the way,” Pakosta said.

“We figured out a way to create a show … that’s got some heart, but it’s really, really funny,” Ike Barinholtz, who created “Running Point” alongside Kaling and David Stassen, told TheWrap.

The heart with the laughs, of course, is what made comedies like “The Office” and “Parks and Rec” such beloved shows, and this “soft” approach to the material permeates Netflix’s latest comedy hits.

## Balancing established and new talent

For this trio of lighter-fare comedies, Netflix leaned on its relationship with established creators Kaling and Schur, both of whom had previously worked with both Netflix and Pakosta. Netflix’s 2025 comedy slate also includes collaborations with Tina Fey, who stars in and writes the upcoming “Four Seasons” TV adaptation; Chuck Lorre, who partners with Leanne Morgan on a new multicam show titled “Leanne;” and Tyler Perry, who will launch his new series, “She the People.”




Viewership for “Nobody Wants This,” “Emily in Paris” Season 4 and “XO, Kitty” Season 2 (TheWrap)

At the same time, Netflix greenlit “Nobody Wants This” from Erin Foster, who only had writing credits on the TV movie “Daddy Issues” and TV series “The New Normal” before creating the rom-com series. Foster isn’t the only relatively new face Netflix has trusted, with Michelle Buteau’s “Survival of the Thickest” launching its second season last month while Shane Gillis’ “Tires” debuts its sophomore installment in June. Netflix has also grown its relationship with Morgan, Buteau and Gillis, all of whom have had stand-up specials at the streamer.

“We love the fact that we’re in business with more established creators, but the goal is also to be involved with new creators to develop and launch their first thing or their favorite thing,” Pakosta said. “Hopefully, with the talent that we’re in business with, there is a balance … great stories can come from anywhere, and we want to make sure that we are telling those stories so they can be loved by everyone.”

## Giving audiences what they want, when they want

While the trio of series might replicate the light-hearted experience of watching a network sitcom, the streamer seems to be less concerned about drawing out romances or waiting to deliver a big reveal. Instead, the goal is to satisfy audiences relatively quickly and queue up new issues to explore next.



*Michelle Buteau in "Survival of the Thickest" (Vanessa Clifton/Netflix)*

In the Season 1 finale of "Nobody Wants This" (spoiler alert), Joanne tells Noah she can't convert to Judaism and ends their relationship. But instead of ending the season there, the first installment concludes with Noah embracing Joanne in a dreamy kiss, leaving them to decide how to move forward — as a couple — in Season 2.

"I really do think this is the kind of show where you want to give the audience what they want," Foster said. "I'm not trying to make some artistic choice that strips the audience of the happy ending that they want. But you also don't want to clean it up too much where there's nowhere to go."

Likewise, in the "Running Point" Season 1 finale, instead of leaving things unsaid between Isla and her "work husband" Jay (Jay Ellis) before he leaves the Los Angeles Waves to be closer to his kids in Boston, Isla and Jay kiss, setting up a more intense love triangle between Isla, Jay and Isla's ex-fiancé Lev (Max Greenfield) in Season 2. "We wanted to just really be a real little love triangle where she was being pulled slightly in this other direction," Barinholtz said.

## What's ahead

With the second installments of "Nobody Wants This," "A Man on the Inside" and "Running Point" already in the works, Netflix is on track to have a "nice mix" of returning seasons — including "Survival of the Thickest" and "Tires" — and new series, according to Pakosta. Netflix is hoping to roll out new seasons on a close to annual timeline.

"Having these shows on sort of an annual or a little bit more of a cadence I think is so exciting for our members, because you finish a season and you constantly want more, so to make sure that we have these loved shows for people as soon as we possibly can is something we strive for," Pakosta said.



*Tina Fey, Will Forte and Colman Domingo in "The Four Seasons."(Jon Pack/Netflix)*

"Leanne" also marks another shot at the multicam for Netflix, whose hit series "The Ranch" ran for eight seasons from 2016-2020, but the format has been hit or miss for the streamer — "That '70s Show" spinoff "That '90s Show" was canceled and "The Upshaws" is set to wrap up its run with its upcoming seventh installment.

Pakosta said the streamer is "always open to a great multicam," but isn't seeking them out specifically. "I love multicam shows, and I love when people come in and pitch them, when they love them," Pakosta said. "I don't think, for us, it's about the form or that sort of genre, it's more about the story, and does that story fit into that type of production?"

"Leanne" was greenlit for a 16-episode first season, longer than the typical 8-10 episodes in the first seasons of "Nobody Wants This," "A Man on the Inside" and "Running Point." Pakosta said episode counts are not yet final for the returning shows, but promised the new seasons would feel "satisfying."

"We're really about what the creator wants that story to be in future seasons — it's much more around the creative and what that season arc looks like versus the number of episodes," Pakosta said.

One thing this comedy strategy isn't focused on is reviving canceled shows. Pakosta waved off speculation that Netflix might pick up Kaling's "The Sex Lives of College Girls," which was recently canceled by Max, saying the service's focus is on its other comedies that are in production or ramping up to start.