Opinion
Culture



From left: Megan (Andrea Anders), Zach (Cary Christopher), Greg (Hayes MacArthur) and Hannah (Catherine Last), the family in the streaming comedy on Vudu, "Mr. Mom" (Facebook/MrMomTV)



by Rose Pacatte

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Creating a new consumer market for the internet streaming audience is no easy thing, yet this is what Walmart's Vudu hopes to do with its first family comedy web series, "Mr. Mom." Based on the classic characters created by famed writer/director John Hughes (1950-2009), this 11-part series, each episode running at about 11 minutes in length, begins airing on Sept. 12. The short episodes are designed for busy parents and perhaps shorter attention spans.

Megan (Andrea Anders) and Greg (Hayes MacArthur) Anderson live outside the city and have two lovely children, Hannah (Catherine Last), about 4, and Zach (Cary Christopher), who is not yet potty-trained (cue the diaper blowout). Greg is ready for a career change from selling television ads and Megan unexpectedly gets called in for a job interview. Greg generously offers to stay home so that Megan can return to the creative work she gave up to care for her family.

I spoke to Anders — executive producer for the series and a mom to a young daughter and stepmom to two more — about her hopes for the series.

"As human beings, we all do things from time to time we aren't so good at or are not comfortable doing. We avoid them because they are uncomfortable," she said. "Then life throws you something unexpected and you have to adapt to a new position or situation. 'Mr. Mom' is a show like that. Human to human, I hope we can look at 'Mr. Mom' and say, 'I get that. Both parents are stumbling, and they keep on trying.' "

When I asked Anders about how audiences might respond to 11-minute episodes, she said, "I imagine people at the airport, sitting in the gate area getting ready to board their flights. Eleven minutes is just the right length to take in an episode of a family-friendly show before taking off because you can finish it."

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Anders said that her favorite is Episode 6, "Date Night" because Megan and Greg go on a date but never leave the driveway. She said now that she has kids, she never wants to go out at night either.

I thought the funniest is Episode 9, "Crickets." Megan's older globetrotting superachiever brother shows up and bests Greg at just about everything. Both try to catch the cricket that is keeping everyone up at night but it takes more than brawn to catch a cricket.

I hope "Mr. Mom" gets a green light for a second season so that director LP and writers Mike Culbert, Mike Pelletieri and Leslie Rathe will get a chance to hone their comedic craft even more to let Greg iron a grilled cheese sandwich or get hooked on some kind of technology that made the original 1983 film so laugh-out-loud funny. There's a lot of potential here.

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