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1. *The Wire*

HBO, 2002-08

The most sustained narrative in television history, *The Wire* used the drug trade in Baltimore, heavily researched by creator David Simon, to tell tales of race and class with unprecedented complexity. (Perhaps that's why the show never won a much-deserved Emmy for Outstanding Drama Series and earned only two nominations for writing.) Politics, the war on drugs, labor unions, public education, the media — these were among the big themes, all examined through exquisitely drawn characters, such as the brilliant yet broken detective Jimmy McNulty (Dominic West) and the great avenging thug Omar Little (Michael K. Williams), who will live on in legend.

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By EW Staff | Jun 27, 2013

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