

# Da Vinci's new season gets off to a thrilling start



## JOHN DOYLE TELEVISION

One recent evening, I was in the TV cranny minding my own business. I was thinking about God, Roy Keane and stuff like that, when the phone rang.

An angry man was calling to ask me why Canadian television programs existed at all. They are, said the man, supported by taxpayer dollars, they're not very good and nobody watches them. He pursued his theme for some minutes. When there was an opening, following another exclamation that Canadian TV programs are inferior, I interjected with a few words — "*Da Vinci's Inquest*."

This halted his gallop. "That's the exception," he said. "It's very good, it's world class." So I said to him, "Well, there you go."

*Da Vinci's Inquest* (CBC, 9 p.m.) is back tonight and this is a doozy of a season for the series. From the start, it's hushed, intense, paranoid and all movement. While it retains its characteristic low-key acting and lyricism, this season has a thriller-like intensity that kicks in right at the beginning. It looks like the intricate system of police and political administration in Vancouver is going to come apart at the seams.

It all opens tonight with a nasty, vindictive cop taking two street hustlers for a ride. One ends up dead. Then coroner Da Vinci (Nicholas Campbell) is called to the case of an elderly woman found dead on the street.

**Dominic Da Vinci (Nicholas Campbell), Angela Kosmo (Venus Terzo) and Mick Leary (Ian Tracey) come across another stiff**

Soon, there's yet another dead body. This time it's a young woman who wanders out of a nightclub onto the street and is hit by a passing car. These three cases are not easily solved, by the cops or the coroner, and a web of connections slowly emerges.

Throw in a suicide by a dodgy character in a lawyer's office, and it looks like something is really malign at the core of the connections.

Last season, Dominic Da Vinci was applying for the job of police chief in Vancouver. He doesn't get it and that's not giving away a core plot twist. What happens this season is more substantial than one plot point. There has been speculation that this is the final season for *Da Vinci's Inquest* as we know it.

In fact, the rumour is that Dominic Da Vinci is on his way to the job held by the real person on which the character is based: He's going to be mayor of Vancouver, and a whole new series will be spun off. If that's the case — bring it on. This season propels an already excellent drama series onto a new level.

Nicholas Campbell continues to do the best work in Canadian TV. Around him, Ian Tracey (as Mick Leary), Donnelly Rhodes (as Leo Shannon) and Venus Terzo (as Angela Kosmo) are equally good. This season sees Alisen Down (outstanding in the CTV TV movie *The Life*) with an expanded role as pathologist Maria Donato. There is a lovely, tricky interplay between Donato and Da Vinci. Of course, Emily Perkins returns as Sue, the vulnerable snitch, and there is also the excellent Stephen J. Miller as the too-enthusiastic Detective Zack McNab.

For ages now, Nicholas Campbell has been popping up on CBC in his Da Vinci persona. He reminds viewers that *Da Vinci's Inquest* has moved to Tuesday at 9 p.m., following that hockey-reality thingamajig, *Making the Cut*. He's become so ubiquitous with these reminders that on *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, Gavin Crawford has been doing a hilarious impersonation. Me, I hope the reminders and Crawford's dead-on spoof have had the required result.

