

A political animal

Nicholas Campbell changes gears with the return of Da Vinci's inquest

By Allison Dunfield



The future beckons: Nicholas Campbell's Da Vinci character wonders about this season's new challenges

Change is good. For six seasons Nicholas Campbell has enjoyed an acclaimed run as crusading coroner Dominic Da Vinci on Da Vinci's Inquest. It was a dirty job, but somebody had to do it.

As the venerable crime drama opens its seventh season, though, Da Vinci is going through changes. It's a move that parallels the path of the character's real-life inspiration, Vancouver coroner-turned-mayor Larry Campbell. This time, Da Vinci is evolving into a true political animal.

"I know we're going to end up in the mayor's office, says Campbell, speaking long distance from the Vancouver set. "I'm just not sure how he gets there. At this stage, I don't think it's even in his mind."

Last season's finale saw Da Vinci going for the position of police chief, and in the season premiere, he finds out whether he got the new job. Campbell says his character's political ambitions grow even further this season - along with an insidious paranoia

that begins to affect almost everyone in the show.

It's part of a strategy by the show's creator Chris Haddock to shift the series from police drama to political thriller.

In the season premiere, Da Vinci also investigates a hit and run involving the mayor - a plot line Campbell says will lead the characters to examine the growing corruption in city hall.

Meanwhile, homicide detectives Angela Kosmo (Venus Terzo) and Mick Leary (Ian Tracey) investigate a case of what appears to be a cop beating a drug dealer to death - a plot idea that, like many in the show, comes from what's going on in Canadian news.

"It's not like Law & Order, where they rip the story and try to bend it around. It just evolves the way it has evolved in the [Canadian] news," Campbell says.

He gives the impression that his character on Da Vinci's Inquest has become like a good friend. A friend who sometimes

Da Vinci's Inquest
Tuesdays 9 pm CBC

annoys him, whose actions he doesn't always agree with, but a friend nonetheless.

It's not surprising, considering the changes his character has undergone.

"I think over the years he's been kind of freaked out a little bit. His own haughtiness, his self-assuredness has kind of been rattled. He's pretty sure some calls that he made were pretty good and then it turns out that some calls weren't so good. I like the opportunity to play a guy that can look in the mirror and go, 'Oh, yeah, I was wrong there' and start again"

Campbell will spend time this season with Mayor Campbell to observe what might be the toughest job in the city. Along with research for Da Vinci's new direction, Campbell is working on an NFB documentary on the challenges faced by Canada's cities that will likely air some time next year.

But Campbell still feels that Da Vinci's potential is "unlimited"

"We're really looking to see the show evolve into sort of a look at how a big oily runs. But I don't think it's going to change a whole lot about what people are used to about it".



Da Vinci is making his move to the political arena

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