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Entertainment Weekly

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- ▶ TV Home
- ▶ Tonight's Best TV
- ▶ TV Watch
- ▶ Ratings Chart
- ▶ Ask the TV Critic
- ▶ Remind Me: Best TV

Special Coverage

- ▶ Summer TV
- ▶ American Idol

IT crimefighters

vincent D'ONOFRIO

courtney b. VANCE



AGES D'Onofrio (right), 42; Vance, 42

WHY THEM? In a TV landscape where there seems to be a "Law & Order" for every class of crime and kink, these two thoroughbreds in Dick Wolfe's stable have turned "Criminal Intent" into the best-acted "L&O" of the bunch. Since the perp's revealed from the get-go, each episode's suspense comes not from the who but the how -- made riveting by the one-two punch of gangly, in-your-face D'Onofrio (Det. Robert Goren) and the contained fire of Courtney Vance (Asst. DA Ronald Carver).

CAREER LOW Vance: "I wanted to do 'Just Cause' with Sean Connery... [long silence]...but they went with Blair Underwood." D'Onofrio: "A casting agent told me I'd never make it in film because of the size of my nose -- that I didn't have an actor's nose. I'd never even noticed my nose!"

DREAM COLLABORATOR Vance: His wife, Angela Bassett.

BEST ADVICE D'Onofrio: "In a film, 'Being real is one thing, being interesting is better.' Stanley Kubrick said that to me on 'Full Metal Jacket.'"

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Vincent D'Onofrio

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IF THEY WEREN'T ACTING, THEY'D BE... Vance: "A pastor or working in the National Park Service." D'Onofrio: "I'd probably be doing magic on the streets."

NEXT Vance: "The show, rest, and being a father." D'Onofrio: "'The Dangerous Lives of Altar Boys' and 'Chelsea Walls' -- wait, did that come out already?"

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