

Winnipeg Sun
by Bill Harris
10.6.07

Acting Like A Dad

D'Onofrio offers daughter some fatherly career advice

If Vincent D'Onofrio's daughter is going to be an actress, he wants her first job to be in movies or on stage, not on TV.

D'Onofrio, of course, makes his living on television. He plays Det. Robert Goren on *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, which starts its seventh season tomorrow on CTV.

Nonetheless, D'Onofrio says the boob tube is no place for a young actress to learn her craft.

"No, I wouldn't want her to be on TV first," D'Onofrio said of his daughter, Leila, who is 15. "I would much prefer her to keep doing the theatre like she's doing, and do a film first.

"As an actor, with the way you have to think and the way you have to study, I would prefer her to learn it the way they do in film and theatre, not the way they do on television."

Ever the protective dad, D'Onofrio doesn't want Leila to go the modelling route, either.

"We've experienced a lot of actors on (*Law & Order: CI*), and luckily we've had a lot of really good ones," D'Onofrio said. "And we've also had actors who have careers because they model their way through their acting careers. And I wouldn't want my daughter to fall into that trap."

Now, some people might consider D'Onofrio to be biting the hand that feeds him. But regardless of what D'Onofrio believes, he is confident that Leila -- whose mother is actress Greta Scacchi -- is smart enough to make her own decisions.

"(Leila) knows how hard (the acting life) is," said the 48-year-old D'Onofrio, whose romantic relationship with Scacchi ended long ago.

"Her mom's an actress, I'm an actor ... some people think I'm an actress, actually. But (Leila) doesn't have to be told. I think my daughter is a very clever girl."

So Leila is clever, is she? Is she clever enough, perhaps, already to have made her acting debut on *Law & Order: CI*, just sneaking around in the background during one of the scenes?

"I don't know, she might have done that already," D'Onofrio said. "I know my dad has."

Reservations about his daughter's acting path notwithstanding, TV has been pretty good to D'Onofrio, obviously. In the U.S., *Law & Order: CI* will air on the USA Network instead of NBC this season, but hey, at least it's still on the air, which is more than can be said for a lot of series.

"It's amazing how many people in law enforcement actually watch the show," D'Onofrio said. "It's always kind of shocking, actually."

"Immigration officers are the ones who grab me a lot and tell me things. When they're interviewing somebody in immigration, if they get something that they want from the person they're interviewing, they call it a hit. And I had one guy in Australia tell me that he gets, you know, hundreds of hits because of watching us on our show, which is hysterical really."

So does D'Onofrio ever get any special treatment from the police?

"I would say they do the best they can do," D'Onofrio said. "But I'm not going to be the actor who says that cops do us favours. There's no way I'm going to say that."