

'Criminal Intent' Likely Last Series for Star

While consistently one of the Top 20 shows each week, NBC's "[Law & Order: Criminal Intent](#)" isn't the media darling that other shows are, and it's not even because it's not considered worth being written about. Rather, the "[Law & Order](#)" franchise is such an institution at this point it's almost taken for granted that it will remain a permanent part of the TV landscape.

That all sounds fine to the sophomore show's star Vincent D'Onofrio.

"I've never understood why people like what I do," the actor says, insisting that he generally gets more than enough attention.

Having made a splash with Stanley Kubrick's film "**Full Metal Jacket**" in 1987, D'Onofrio has racked up an impressive list of film and theater credits, making it a bit surprising that he would suddenly sign on for a series. After all, a broadcast network isn't going to let one explore the same territory that movies like "**The Cell**" and "**The Salton Sea**" does.

"I think I was doing too many films," D'Onofrio says, explaining that his status as "character actor" does not translate into movie star size pay checks, but three or four films a year does equate burn out and overexposure. However, having a regular weekly gig gives him a venue to do good work, make a living and still have time to do a film during hiatus.

"A regular series was something I had never done before -- and when this is over I'll probably never do again -- but it's really nice, actually."

It's also hard work. Logically, it would seem like playing the same character day after day would be easier than a film shoot that's over in a matter of a couple of months. Yet, in the acting hierarchy, just as soap actors often pull the short straw when it comes to appreciation, carrying a television show isn't a snap either.



Vincent D'Onofrio

"There is no time. You have to be really on your toes; you have to make choices that night. I try to stay at least four or five scenes ahead of myself as to how I'm going to play them, which is probably a half-a-day to a day ahead. That's not a lot of time," D'Onofrio says. "In film you have lots of time to make choices and then bring them to work, and then once at work I've always had lots of time to fine tune the choices I made and come up with stuff spontaneously. Television is a completely different world."



Vincent D'Onofrio

Whereas the other "**Law & Order's**" rely heavily on their ensemble casts, "**Criminal Intent**" hangs on D'Onofrio's portrayal of Detective Robert Goren, a larger-than-life figure with a scary brilliance and intense interrogation style. Or, as the actor puts it, "You wouldn't want to live with the guy, although you might want to go have a drink with him sometime."

Goren also makes doing crossovers with "[Law & Order](#)" or "[Law & Order: Special Victims Unit](#)" difficult. Since he's such a fictional character, it would be difficult to make him mesh in the realistic worlds the other series have created. Besides, having him always be the smartest person in the room on two or three shows would be boring.

Still, there's plenty of ground to cover on "**Criminal Intent**," including clues as to what makes Goren tick -- like a schizophrenic mother.

"I'm here for five or six seasons," D'Onofrio promises. "So it's only going to get stranger."

["Law & Order: Criminal Intent"](#) airs Sundays at 9 p.m. ET on NBC.

[Click here to close window and return to article](#)