



Final Transcript

NEW MEDIA STRATEGIES: *Law & Order: Criminal Intent* Q&A Session

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SPEAKERS

Kathryn Erbe
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PRESENTATION

Moderator Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for standing by. Welcome to the *Law & Order: Criminal Intent* – Vincent D'Onofrio and Kathryn Erbe question-and-answer session. At this time, all participants are in a listen-only mode. Later we will conduct a question-and-answer session. As a reminder, this conference is being recorded. I'd now like to turn the conference over to our host, Ms. Chrissy Fehskens. Please go ahead.

C. Fehskens Good afternoon, everyone, this is Chrissy Fehskens from New Media Strategies and I want to welcome you to the Vincent D'Onofrio and Kathryn Erbe Q&A session, and start things off by thanking Vincent and

Kathryn for being with us today. As you know, Vincent and Kathryn costar as Detectives Goren and Eames on USA Network's *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, which will premiere an all-new season this Sunday, April 19th, at 9:00, 8:00 Central. In a moment we'll begin the Q&A session.

Moderator Thank you. We have a question from Jamie Steinberg with Starry Constellation Magazine. Please go ahead.

J. Steinberg Hello, Vincent and Kathryn, it's a pleasure to speak with you both.

K. Erbe Hello, thanks.

J. Steinberg I was wondering, Kathryn, what about your role continues to challenge you?

K. Erbe Finding ways to – let's see. That's a very good question. I don't know, every day we have new challenges, just in dealing with the new actors that we get to work with. We have new writers on the show, new producers and I feel like it's a challenge just staying involved with the work that we're doing and staying actively involved in finding ways for Eames to

stay important to the stories and to bring a positive – just have a positive effect on what we're doing.

J. Steinberg And Vincent, after so many seasons, how do you all continue to maintain chemistry between each other?

V. D'Onofrio I think it's been eight years now, so I think that anything the audience sees is just whatever has happened naturally in the eight years. I think that both of us kind of just rely on that – the history of the show and the history of the characters – to just somehow translate to the audience in some way.

Moderator We have a question from Troy Rogers with thedeadbolt.com. Please go ahead.

T. Rogers Hello, Vincent and Kathryn. Actually, this is for either one of you: How much more in-depth is the Goren-Wallace frame-up story going to go into during season seven? Or is that just completely done?

K. Erbe Oh, she's dead. Right?

V. D'Onofrio Yes, that's over.

K. Erbe Yes. Unfortunately, sadly, they killed her.

T. Rogers There's no way it's going to come back to haunt you guys later on?

V. D'Onofrio I don't think so, no. That was a certain set of writers that were doing that, and we were enjoying that with them. And then we've had another set of writers since then, so – that's not going to happen again, I don't think.

K. Erbe Yes. It's sad.

Moderator Our next question will come from Jamie Ruby with Media Boulevard.
Please go ahead.

J. Ruby This first question is for Vincent. You've played quite a variety of topics. What kind of role do you enjoy the most, or does like playing maybe evil have a different set of challenges than what you're doing now?

V. D'Onofrio Is the question which I prefer?

J. Ruby Yes, what kind of role; because you play good and evil, so –

V. D'Onofrio I don't know, I think I'm – it's the same as most actors. Anything that's interesting, you know. Like whatever comes my way, like the most interesting parts of those are the ones that I would do. I don't really have like a dream role or anything like that. I just go script by script and see what's interesting, and if not, then I don't do it. You know, it's like that.

Moderator Our next question will come from Zach Oat with televisionwithoutpity.com. Please go ahead.

Z. Oat Yes, Television Without Pity. Vincent, I wanted to ask, with the events of last season's finale, what is your character's mental state at the beginning of the season? Is he resolved about – resigned himself to all of the loose ends being tied up or is he at all – has he broken down at all in the face of everything that's happened to him and his nephew being missing?

V. D'Onofrio We never really tie anything up when it comes to Kate and my characters, because it's – they always want to leave it open. You know, we tie up criminals, but – we'll end those stories, but not – they'll never really shut any kind of storyline down completely, so it's kind of open as to what's going to happen with my character, I don't know. I think that this eighth

season, I just – you know, I just played it differently than last season, but last season was very, very extreme. So this season, it's like he's just trying to be a cop, trying to do the best you can kind of a thing.

Moderator We have a question from Ashley Aikens; please go ahead.

A. Aikens My question here is for Vincent and I'd like to know, what is it like to be developing a character over several TV seasons as opposed to having to develop a character in a two-hour film?

V. D'Onofrio Yes, it's completely different. When I first started the TV show, I kind of thought it's ostensibly about the character, and did a lot of planning and stuff. Most of the planning went out the window, and then I just kind of tried my best after that. With a film, it's much more – it's really planned out scene by scene and there's a real solid arc hopefully most of the time. The structure of the film is in three acts, you know it's going to end – it's easier to plan out a role like that. It's just as interesting but it's a completely different thing.

With the show, it's just wide open. We just keep doing it, and there's different crimes, different little stories to tell. So it's two different things.

I think I just always will prefer films. I just think that's my favorite thing to do. But Goren's a great character, so it's good to do.

Moderator We have a question from Kristyn Clarke with popculturemadness.com.
Please go ahead.

K. Clarke What do you feel it is about a show like *Law & Order* that resonates well with viewers?

V. D'Onofrio I think in our show I think it's the characters, and I think we investigate weird crimes and I think it's a popular thing on TV, these kind of crime shows and – just like people were not – and still are – into like crime novels and short stories. That's what we're doing, but we're doing like a TV version of that, so – you know, it takes off and people like it.

K. Clarke Do you have a favorite type of case to tackle on the show?

V. D'Onofrio Yes, I like simpler stories. Like we just finished one like a spree killer type story about one guy doing bad things, and Kate and I had to like, you know, catch him. It was more direct, not complicated, and it had heart, and I like that kind of thing.

Moderator We have a question from Jay Jacobs with popentertainment.com Please go ahead.

J. Jacobs I just was wondering, I know that Jeff Goldblum is new to the show and I know you guys aren't working directly with him, but have you seen any of his work and how is he fitting in with the show?

V. D'Onofrio To me it looks like he's psyched. Kate, do you want to – go ahead.

K. Erbe That's okay. We only really got to see him in the beginning when he was waiting for his scripts to be ready. He came and hung out with us extensively and learned all the names of everybody on the crew and just asked us a lot of questions. It seems like the crew is really happy with him and the producers and like he's having a good time.

V. D'Onofrio Yes. He seems really enthusiastic. And I haven't seen any of his episodes, so I can't comment on that.

K. Erbe Yes.

- J. Jacobs Okay. Have you worked with any particularly interesting guest stars or bad guys for the new season?
- K. Erbe We have a lot. We have Lynn Redgrave, we have Scott Cohen and Kathy Baker are in the episode Sunday night. We had a great time with them. Who else, Vince?
- V. D'Onofrio We've also worked with some really good unknown actors, like young people that were really good. We're very lucky in that way, that most times we get really good actors, whether they're known actors or not.
- K. Erbe Yes.
- V. D'Onofrio That's one of the pros of working on this show.
- K. Erbe Yes.
- Moderator We have a question from Christine Nyholm with examiner.com. Please go ahead.
- C. Nyholm I've been a longtime fan of the show, I think since it started.

K. Erbe Oh, great.

C. Nyholm Yes, I really enjoy it. My first question is for Vincent: Your character goes into some very dark places, and we've seen a lot of changes in him since the beginning in the last season, and I was wondering what kind of toll that takes on you as a person, what effect that has on you, if any, in your real life.

V. D'Onofrio Well, it takes a lot of time. It used to take a lot more time before we started sharing the episodes with another detective. But – you know, it's – how do I answer this? The first four years, or maybe the first three years of the show, when we were trying to make the show a show, you know, just make it distinct from the other Law & Orders and just a plain old good show that people would watch, that was – that was hard. It was like a 24-hour job and it was with me all the time.

But that's a long time ago now, and we all know how to do the show, and we know what the show is. And so it's not that exhausting anymore. The hours are long sometimes, and when we are working we don't see our families as much as we want. But that's part of our job, so we have to do

it. And as far as Goren, bringing Goren home, that just doesn't happen anymore. I've been playing him too long, and it's – it's not something that stays with me.

Moderator You have a question from Ian Dawson with www.stuffwelike.com. Please go ahead.

I. Dawson I wanted to know ... all the *Law & Orders* deal with heavy subject matter and I was wondering what you guys do during downtime on the set.

V. D'Onofrio What do we do?

K. Erbe How do we deal with heavy subject matter and what do we do in our downtime?

I. Dawson Yes. What do you do like on breaks from filming?

K. Erbe Lots of different things. Eat, read, I walk my dog. What do you do, Vin?

V. D'Onofrio We run our families, over the phone. We try to participate in our lives out of our dressing rooms. Mostly that's what I do.

K. Erbe Yes, exactly.

V. D'Onofrio And then if we can, if we have a moment of relaxation, like Kate said, we read or Kate walks her dog or something like that, exactly.

Moderator We have a question from Troy Rogers with thedeadbolt.com. Please go ahead.

T. Rogers When you guys first took on these roles, did you go into it knowing full well that this might become like a lifelong fulltime job ... *Law & Order* franchise –

V. D'Onofrio Lifelong, huh?

K. Erbe I don't think either of us thought that we were going to be doing it for eight years.

V. D'Onofrio No way.

K. Erbe No. They never would have gotten you to agree to that.

V. D'Onofrio No way. And the first – what did we do, we did 13 at first, Kate?

K. Erbe Right, yes.

V. D'Onofrio The first 13 was such a blur that I don't think either of us was even thinking about – I don't think it was – I don't know, it wasn't weighing heavy on me what was going to happen. Was it weighing heavy on you, Kate?

K. Erbe No. We had no idea. It was just getting through each day, really, trying to make it to the end.

V. D'Onofrio The first 13 scripts were really, really good scripts and maybe there was like one clunker out of the 13, but they were really good scripts and very tough to figure out how to pull the show off while we were doing them. The last thing on my mind was like – it was just a blur. I wasn't thinking about whether the show was going to run, honestly. That's the honest truth. And I think we knew earlier than most people do with a – when you shoot 3, right? I think we knew pretty early that it was going to go.

K. Erbe Yes.

Moderator We have a question from Amy Steele with Entertainment Realm. Please go ahead.

(Audio quality compromised)

A. Steele Vincent, ... one of my favorite films. But I wanted to ask both of you what you like best ... character.

K. Erbe I didn't understand that question, I couldn't hear it.

V. D'Onofrio What do you like best about your character?

K. Erbe What do I like best about my character? What I like best about my character is she usually has the right thing to say. She knows what to say; she's fairly straightforward and doesn't seem to have difficulty making choices. Nothing like myself in real life. I rarely know the right thing to say and she seems to almost have infinite courage and she's sort of like my fantasy of what it would be like to be like that – strong all the time and know what to do all the time and have a clear idea of what the right thing

is to do and that sort of thing. So I like that about her. I like that she's a strong woman in a tough job and a scary job. I think they're both courageous. I think most of NYPD is very courageous. So that's what I like about her.

Moderator We have a question from Christine Zimmer with All Things *Law & Order*. Please go ahead.

C. Zimmer I have one question for both of you regarding your roles outside of Criminal Intent. Out of all the work that you've done in movies, stage or whatever, what roles do you want to be remembered for, and which roles would you like to just kind of forget?

V. D'Onofrio A lot of them I'd like to forget.

K. Erbe The Mighty Ducks 2.

C. Zimmer Vincent, what about you?

V. D'Onofrio Can I just say most of them?

- K. Erbe You would not say that, you're being sarcastic.
- V. D'Onofrio Rather than name them? Because I don't want to like insult the filmmakers.
- C. Zimmer No, that's okay. That's all right.
- K. Erbe Yes, I even feel bad that I even said Mighty Ducks 2, because some people liked that movie.
- C. Zimmer That's okay, I'll delete it from my memory banks. But Kathryn, I do have one more question for you: Goren is always touted as being this unstable genius and the brains of the partnership, and sometimes you're there to be like the dry witness conscience. Are you okay with this role, or do you think Eames deserves more respect?
- K. Erbe Sometimes I get a lot to do, Eames has a lot to do, and sometimes she doesn't. I've fought for the whole time for her to have more of an impact on the work that they're doing, and it's gone up and down. I like being the dry wit. I wish I actually did more of that these days. The humor has kind

of gone out of the character and so I would like to find a way to bring that back.

C. Zimmer I think you guys need some more episodes like Vanishing Act.

K. Erbe Yes –

V. D'Onofrio Which one was that?

K. Erbe Was that the magician one?

V. D'Onofrio Oh, okay.

K. Erbe Was that the magician one? I think it was. I can't Google it because I'm on my phone.

Moderator Our next question will come from Jamie Ruby with Media Boulevard.
Please go ahead.

J. Ruby This is for both of you: What got you started in acting in the first place?

V. D'Onofrio I was introduced to it by my dad at a very young age, because he was always involved in community theater and stuff. So I used to run lights and sound and stuff like that for plays and things. But I really didn't think of acting until I guess I was like 18, and then – I don't know, it just – I just thought I'd try it out. I don't really know why. I think it was just in my life, really. I think it's my dad's fault. So I just thought I would give acting school in New York, in Manhattan, a try, so I did. And then I guess I just caught the bug and went for it.

Moderator We have a question from Zach Oat with televisionwithoutpity.com.
Please go ahead.

Z. Oat I just wanted to follow up on some of the stuff you guys have been saying. Vincent, Kathryn said that if you'd known it was going to be eight seasons, they probably wouldn't have been able to lock you into the character. Why – I guess I have to ask – how have they managed to keep you two on and interested for so long, especially you, Vincent? You've certainly looked for a lot of variety in your film roles. Is it a love of the characters or is it a comfort zone or are they writing you the big checks, or is it a combination of all three?

V. D'Onofrio For me it's a combination of all three.

K. Erbe Yes, for me too.

V. D'Onofrio I have a lot of freedom because of *Law & Order*. I have a lot of creative freedom. I have a lot of creative freedom on the show and I have a lot of creative freedom with my own time to do other films and do anything I want, so – it's a very good situation.

K. Erbe Yes, and it gives us a structure for our lives. I mean, as actors, I never – I was ready to give up acting because I could not handle never knowing when I would have a paycheck or where the job would be, where it would take me; and having a daughter and now my son, I just couldn't – it was just too hard of a life. And this gives us a – when we have time off, we know that it's time off; it's not time out of work, looking for other work.

And it's really such an amazing experience to work with the same people for this length of time. It's challenging and it's so gratifying to know everybody's families and – it's just a very different experience from the sort of crash and burn of going from one job to another and really never knowing – this like gypsy lifestyle, never knowing where you're going to

be when. So it's a very different, much more stable, if it's even possible to say that – a stable environment.

Moderator We have a question from Jay Jacobs with poptertainment.com. Please go ahead.

J. Jacobs You were just mentioning creative freedom. I was wondering, I know it's been a couple of years now, but has moving to cable and the USA Network sort of freed the show up to do different things that they couldn't necessarily do in the – at NBC?

V. D'Onofrio I don't think so. I think it's exactly the same, right?

K. Erbe Yes. Because they show them on NBC too, so –

V. D'Onofrio I think the only change that I know, I think there's like a minute – the episodes are like a minute longer or something like that, something silly like that.

J. Jacobs All right. And we have an older interview with Eric Bogosian. I'm a big fan of his.

V. D'Onofrio Me, too.

J. Jacobs What's he like to work with and is he going to be doing anything this season?

V. D'Onofrio He's going to – yes, he's doing lots.

K. Erbe Yes. We just got him out in the woods last night in the rain.

V. D'Onofrio We located a girl in the woods with the captain last night.

K. Erbe Yes. He comes out a lot more this season than he ever has, I think. He was wondering really why he wanted to do that, when we were standing out in the middle of the woods in the rain.

Moderator We have a question from Christine Nyholm with examiner.com. Please go ahead.

C. Nyholm I have another question for both of you: What kind of advice would you give to new young actors coming up as far as what kind of education they should get and how they should pursue an acting career.

K. Erbe What would you say, Vin?

V. D'Onofrio I think when I was younger I would have said go to like a private acting school or something like that, but I think that these days, the drama departments and the universities are so great that I think that's the way to go, and unless they want –

K. Erbe Get an education.

V. D'Onofrio Get an education. Go into the drama department, whatever, film department, or just like the arts section of a university and – start there, study there. And then after that, go to the city you want to live in, like L.A. or New York and then try to be – then try to get jobs. Do theater and stuff. But when I was younger I would have said just go straight to the city and take an acting class and try to get jobs. But I think these days – I've been checking out universities and stuff and I know some teachers and some teachers that teach writing, film writing, and I know some drama

teachers and – they're all really good teachers, so – I'm swaying towards that now.

Moderator We have a question from Troy Rogers with thedeadbolt.com. Please go ahead.

T. Rogers Your characters have a pretty complex and interesting relationship. After all they've been through, what would you like to see happen between them during this season?

K. Erbe I personally am very happy because this season we're back on the same page. I, for some reason, really like that, when they're on the same team and they're just on the path together. Although it makes for probably a more interesting show when we're at odds or going in different directions, I personally like that; and this season we were working together.

T. Rogers Vincent?

V. D'Onofrio Yes, I agree with Kate, what she said. I think there's nothing left to argue about, really. I think it depends on what the writers come up with. If they

can come up with another good conflict between us, then most likely it will be cool to do. But I agree with what Kate said.

Moderator We have a question from Kristyn Clarke with popculturemadness.com. Please go ahead.

K. Clarke We're just curious to know if you had a favorite episode or onscreen moment from the coming season so far.

K. Erbe I would have to say that in the episode that is going to be on Sunday night, Kathy Baker and Scott Cohen, their characters, when they were in the interrogation room at the end when she kind of grabbed him and –

V. D'Onofrio Oh, yes.

K. Erbe -- pressed him to her – to her chest and tried to comfort him after screaming at him, they were fantastic. It was very twisted and – I mean, we've had a lot, but that one really sticks out in my mind.

V. D'Onofrio Yes. He turned into this big baby right in front of her eyes. It was awesome.

K. Erbe Oh, such a baby. Yes.

V. D'Onofrio It was really good. So I guess it was somebody else's screen moment that we liked most.

K. Erbe I guess. Can you think of one that was ours?

V. D'Onofrio No, I can't. I think you're exactly right, that was very entertaining.

K. Erbe It was very entertaining.

Moderator We have a question from Jamie Ruby with Media Boulevard. Please go ahead.

J. Ruby Would either of you ever be interested in writing or directing for the show?

V. D'Onofrio No.

K. Erbe I don't think I would, no. Not writing, definitely not writing. And I don't think I would – being a director, I don't know whether I have it in me. Maybe for something else.

J. Ruby Do either of you have any new, I guess, acting projects coming up?

K. Erbe You have lots, right, Vin?

V. D'Onofrio Lots?

K. Erbe You did like 17 films on the last hiatus – directed, starred.

V. D'Onofrio That's good, I'll talk about that. I directed a film over the summer, a kind of new genre that I invented, slasher musical. I just finished it, and we're taking it to L.A. in a week to sell to a distributor, so it'll probably be out sometime, I hope, soon. I have a movie, The Narrows, coming out, and a movie called Staten Island coming out that I acted in – both of those. And that's all.

K. Erbe And I have a movie with Edie Falco and Elias Koteas called Three Backyards.

Moderator We have a question from Christine Nyholm with examiner.com. Please go ahead.

C. Nyholm Vincent, I have a question about the very end of the last season, after Vincent or Goren realized that his nemesis had been killed and it was for his benefit – do you know what I’m talking about? – and he’s sitting with that professor. And you kind of looked at the end, when he said, “I did it to free you,” basically, and you got that look on your face like, you got it. And I was wondering if we’re going to be seeing now in this season a change in you or a kind of a freeing in your character because of this action.

V. D'Onofrio It’s nice that you saw it that way, because that’s the way I wanted you to see it, so it’s – yes. I wanted it to kind of be a freeing thing so that I could treat the next season fresh, so it could be a guy trying to keep his stuff together, do his job; and so what’s interesting about this kind of storytelling is that we always have that – like, the audiences that watch our show, if they’re fans of the show, then they know that that’s part of the learning. So even if we don’t mention it or I just show this kind of earnest cop trying to do his thing throughout the season, the season previous to

that or other things in the previous years, they're still present, because people are fans of the show and they know that that's the guy they're watching that went through all that stuff. So, yes, that's what I did, and that's what I'm doing now.

Moderator We have a question from Loring Judge with Reel Blog. Please go ahead.

L. Judge Thank you for sharing your time with us. The question is, how do you feel about the new writing team this season? Are you pleased with your episodes?

V. D'Onofrio It's tough to – always tough when we switch writers to – it's all – these last eight years have been just experience after experience, learning experience after learning experience, and it's quite a business. To be a performer on a television show, you get a lot of curve balls thrown at you and you have to deal with them, and you know that the show has to be shot so you do your best to contribute and make it the best show you can. But you get thrown curve balls, like a new writing crew, and – who have never written for you and they're trying their hardest to get it right, and they're in a position where they have to get it right fairly quickly, because there are shows to shoot and to air, and so it's tough. It takes a while.

But the great thing about is that they're all talented people and everybody's scripts are getting better and better, and what we've been talking about for the last few minutes is these great things about this season already. So there have been some amazing things already this season. But it's tough. It's tough to get new writers. And they're great people and so we're – this show is – this last show that we did was great, and it's a good season so far, so we're happy.

K. Erbe

Yes.

Moderator

We have a question from Christine Zimmer with All Things *Law & Order*. Please go ahead.

C. Zimmer

One more quick question. The show seems to have completely dropped the law end of it, is that ever coming back? Or has it just kind of gone by the wayside?

K. Erbe

We miss Courtney. But we haven't been in court at all this year, not once. I didn't even think about that.

V. D'Onofrio No, it's been just straight out catch the bad guy, political – we've been involved in politics of big corporations and stuff like that. It's that kind of season. But we haven't been – no, I think we do less of the law part, I think you're right. I mean, as you know, it never really focused on that very much anyway, but – one of the cool things about having an ADA in the show is that you have to actually answer to somebody. Because there's this kind of tension between the captain and the two detectives, but there's a certain kind of tension between the detectives and the assistant district attorney and that's fun to play. So we don't get to do that often anymore.

K. Erbe Yes.

Moderator We have a question from Jamie Ruby with Media Boulevard. Please go ahead.

J. Ruby I just want to ask Vincent, what's the name of your slasher musical, so we can look out for it?

V. D'Onofrio It's called *Don't Go in the Woods*.

J. Ruby Okay, that sounds interesting.

K. Erbe It is. It's very good.

C. Fehskens I'd like to once again thank Vincent and Kathryn for being with us today.

Transcripts of today's call will be distributed within 48 hours, so please
look out for those and remember to tune into the all-new season of Law &
Order: Criminal Intent, this Sunday at 9:00, 8:00 Central, on USA
Network. Have a great day, everyone. Thanks again.