

Intelligence provides proof that crime pays

By Sean Minogue

Publish Date: September 20, 2007

Ian Tracey returns to the small screen in one of the fall TV season's most highly anticipated dramas, and he thinks cops and crooks sometimes look at life the same way. "Adversaries can sometimes relate a lot to the same problems," the star of CBC's Vancouver-based adult drama, *Intelligence*, tells the *Georgia Straight*. Tracey, who will be resuming his role in Season 2 as a drug smuggler-turned-informant, thinks his Jimmy "The Weed King" Reardon and his Canadian Security Intelligence Services counterpart, Mary Spalding (Klea Scott), "share some things in common with their turbulent personal lives and feeling a little set apart from their colleagues".

Now airing in more than 80 countries and with 11 Gemini award nominations, including best actor and best actress in a dramatic series (for Tracey and Scott), and best direction, best writing, and best dramatic series (for Chris Haddock), *Intelligence* is currently one of Vancouver's best homegrown TV series. The series's initial spark, and its subsequent critical blaze, came early on when Jimmy and Mary agreed to act as each other's covert intelligence source. "He is a connection to the street for Mary," Scott explains, "and she legitimizes his efforts to go straight.... They need each other, and I think they probably both hate that." Season 1 explored that conflict, showing how hard it is for these characters to trust anyone in a world of spies, liars, and thieves.

Tracey explains that because of this relationship, *Intelligence* is like no other crime drama on television. "There's an underlying empathy for each other's predicaments.... It's not all cops and robbers." That's been the signature style of writer, creator, and executive producer Chris Haddock, whose ability to walk the grey line between good guys and bad guys gives the series its unmistakable flavour.

In this elaborate world of interwoven relationships, the Reardon-Spalding bond is at the core. Scott says this is unique because "you've got a male and a female lead that are not romantically involved and sometimes not even in a scene together in an episode. They're a set of equals in positions of power in their own personal kingdoms."

When CBC ordered a second season, the *Intelligence* team had to solve a common television dilemma: how do you keep the original fans happy while also drawing in new viewers? Haddock finds the answer by increasing the pressure on the odd relationship by thrusting each of them deeper into their respective worlds of crime and law. "Reardon pursues his goal of obtaining a piece of an offshore bank," Haddock says, "and that becomes a huge interest to the CSIS people." Spalding, now the head of CSIS's Asian-

Pacific operations, "starts battling for investigation into attacks on Canadian sovereignty".

Season 2 picks up where Season 1 left off. Reardon escapes a deadly DEA sting in Seattle and, with help from his crime family, tries to get back on Canadian soil. Spalding, reeling from a CSIS rival's mysterious death, tries to protect one of her informants from homicide detectives while piecing together who's behind it all.

Confessing that she doesn't like "the repetition of crap" she usually sees on TV, Scott sets Intelligence apart from other series. "You've got these two worlds, and you've got a man and a woman running them. One's law and one's crime. I don't know anything else that's doing that."

Intelligence airs Mondays at 9 p.m. on CBC, starting October 1.