

TV Review: Jeff Goldblum Joins Cast of 'Law & Order: Criminal Intent'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 15, 2009 - 5:10pm

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Television Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – The revolving door of casting in the world of "[Law & Order](#) [15]" continues this month when [Jeff Goldblum](#) [6] joins the cast of USA Network's "[Law & Order: Criminal Intent](#) [16]" as the new partner for Detective Megan Wheeler ([Julianne Nicholson](#) [7]). The season kicks off with a well-paced and intriguing episode featuring the old cast on Sunday, April 19th, 2009 and the new member joins the squad a week later.

"Criminal Intent" has always been an intriguing installment of the Dick Wolf franchise, largely due to what I consider the best performance across all three versions including the original "Law & Order" and "[Law & Order: Special Victims Unit](#) [17]" - the work by the great [Vincent D'Onofrio](#) [13]. This versatile and unique actor makes decisions that others wouldn't even consider.



Law and Order: Criminal Intent
Photo credit: *Miranda Penn Turin/NBC*

Just watch D'Onofrio work in the eighth season premiere of "Law & Order: Criminal Intent" as he uncovers something truly sinister after a murder reveals dark family secrets. D'Onofrio is fantastic, but you could sense him getting a little tired of this character and show over the years and it seems right to inject some new life into the most consistently on-the-bubble of cancellation installments of "Law & Order".

A week after D'Onofrio's case (with a great guest turn by Kathy Baker), the focus shifts. It's amazing how quickly the door can spin on a show like "Criminal Intent". One week audiences will follow D'Onofrio and Kathryn Erbe as they have been doing for years and the next week it's Goldblum and Nicholson in the opening credits, ready to solve the case. The only thing that stays the same is that we all know the complex mystery will be solved in about 44 minutes of screen time and the episode will follow that breakneck "L & O" pace that audiences have grown to love.



Law and Order: Criminal Intent
Photo credit: Miranda Penn Turin/NBC

Even in the world of "Law & Order," there are brief introductions. Detective Zach Nichols (Goldblum) meets his new partner, Detective Megan Wheeler (Nicholson), outside a crime scene. It turns out that Nichols has been on leave for seven years and has a history with Captain Danny Ross (Eric Bogosian). He also has his own set of quirky charms. Goldblum never plays anything straight.

Anyone who saw Goldblum's short-lived "Raines" or has followed his movie career over the years knows he's perfect for a part like this one. "Criminal Intent" has always been the most-open to a quirky actor like Goldblum of all the "L & O" versions. The original is more interested in procedure and "Special Victims Unit" is often too dark to not be played seriously, but D'Onofrio's unique presence and the focus on crime more than courtroom gave this version unique personality. Goldblum fits in well on "CI".

And he's not alone. Nicholson ("Ally McBeal," "Conviction") has an engaging personality that makes a nice, stable counterpart for Goldblum, not unlike Erbe does with D'Onofrio. The opening Goldblum/Nicholson episode, airing April 26th, details the death of a struggling musician. The episode itself is merely so-so but Goldblum instantly feels like a perfect fit for a show with a loyal following who are used to changing leads. Once again, the casting wheel has spun for Dick Wolf's legendary franchise and found another star that could carry this show for years to come.

'Law & Order: Criminal Intent,' which airs on USA, stars Jeff Goldblum, Julianne Nicholson, Vincent D'Onofrio, Kathryn Erbe, and Eric Bogosian. The show was created by Dick Wolf. The eighth season premieres on Sunday, April 19th, 2009 at 8PM CST.



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