

## TV Review: ‘NCIS: Los Angeles’ Has Breakout Potential as Hottest New Show

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 22, 2009 - 10:27am

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CHICAGO – Doesn't it feel like there will someday just be a few mystery franchises with several different iterations on the air? We have three versions of “[Law & Order](#) [18]” and “[CSI](#) [6],” and now “[NCIS](#) [12]” has joined in, expanding the franchise of this surprisingly popular show to “[NCIS: Los Angeles](#) [13]” with appealing stars [Chris O'Donnell](#) [19] and [L.L. Cool J](#) [20].



Television Rating: **3.5/5.0**

“NCIS: Los Angeles” is an action/mystery show with theatrical caliber production values and two incredibly charismatic leads. If you were a betting man, I wouldn't bet on this expansion of the “NCIS” franchise being cancelled any time this season, this TV year, or even the next. It's practically a guaranteed hit that's not going to set water coolers or critic's groups on fire but fulfills a very human need for quality escapist television.



Chris O'Donnell, LL Cool J.  
Photo credit: *Cliff Lipson/CBS*

The premiere of “NCIS: Los Angeles” opens with a shoot-out on the infamous Mulholland Drive and the discovery of a body in the back seat. Within a minute, audiences know what to expect - action, mystery, and a sunny location.





Chris O'Donnell, LL Cool J.  
Photo credit: Cliff Lipson/CBS

The first episode details the return of Special Agent "G" Callen (Chris O'Donnell) to the Office of Special Projects, a division of NCIS charged with handling criminals who pose a threat to national security. Through flashback, we learn that Callen was recently caught in the crossfire and may be returning a bit more fragile or unstable than he was before the life-changing incident.

Callen's partner is Special Agent Sam Hanna, a tough-but-cool U.S. Navy SEAL who has seen action in both Afghanistan and Iraq and a surveillance expert. Basically, everyone on "NCIS: Los Angeles" is tougher, smarter, stronger, and faster than your average TV show cop. The series is designed to portray these men and women as the best of the best, the front line between our safety and another terrorist incident.

Other cast members include Peter Cambor, Rocky Carroll, Adam Jamal Craig, Daniela Ruah, and Oscar-winner Linda Hunt as the woman who oversees the support staff and provides the latest high-tech gadgets for the team to fight the war on terror.

I've personally never been a big fan of television that uses real-life international drama as a source for fiction. It walks the fine line between entertainment and exploitation.

Having said that, it's impossible to fault "NCIS: Los Angeles" based on the theory of judging a show on whether or not it deliver what it promises. It's an expertly made, well-acted, briskly paced hour of television that I would be surprised to hear that any fan interested in TV action shows like it wouldn't want to make a regular part of their viewing schedule.

Even with my general aversion to shows like it, I was entertained by O'Donnell and LL Cool J's excellent chemistry, impressed by the well-used setting (the city is a major part of the show), and consistently in awe of the overall production value of the show. Most modern action movies don't look this well-made. It's a 44-minute action film every week with a pair of charming leads. Based on how well I expect this installment to do, location scouts may want to start looking at options for "NCIS: Chicago," "NCIS: Boston," etc.

*'NCIS: Los Angeles,' which airs on CBS, debuts on September 22nd, 2009 at 8PM CST. It stars L.L. Cool J, Chris O'Donnell, Peter Cambor, Rocky Carroll, Adam Jamal Craig, Daniela Ruah, and Linda Hunt.*



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