

Coroner Creators Say Season 2 Goes All In On Life's Struggles

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What happens and how do you deal when life starts coming at you from every single angle? That's exactly what Dr. Jenny Cooper (Serinda Swan) will be struggling with when *Coroner* returns to CBC for Season 2 on Monday, January 6 at 9 p.m. ET. Now that Jenny has discovered the truth about what happened to her sister, how will she control her anxiety and the demons that come along with it? To add to her daily struggles, Jenny will be dealing with her father's (Nicholas

Campbell) dementia, son Ross (Ehren Kassam) turning 18, and her live-in boyfriend Liam (Éric Bruneau) being confronted with issues of his own.

Coroner showrunner Morwyn Brebner and executive producer / lead director Adrienne Mitchell sat down with *The TV Junkies* on a recent visit to set to talk all about what Jenny will have to deal with in Season 2. They gave some hints as to how Jenny's anxiety may manifest itself in Season 2, and how it's not just Jenny that will be explored this year. Brebner and Mitchell said that Season 2 allows the *Coroner* team to go deep on exploring other characters such as Liam, Jenny's partner Mac (Roger Cross), and Alison (Tamara Podemski).

The TV Junkies: The dog and what that represented for Jenny was an overarching mystery for Season 1. Will we see anything similar to that in Season 2?

Morwyn Brebner: There is another manifestation of her inner life. The dog was a way of physicalizing what was going on inside her, and what was happening to her, so she was hallucinating this dog. But in Season 2, we can't say what it is, but there is a new window into her inner life and turmoil. It involves her work, but mostly her personal life and background. The dog transmutes into a new kind of manifestation.

Adrienne Mitchell: Without any spoilers, what's different about

this season is that the personal, in a very psychological and emotional way, intertwines with a case that's not necessarily resolved, but moves through in different ways. Serinda goes to a whole new level with her ability as an actor, and it's just spectacular to watch. She's challenged in a way that she hasn't been challenged before. It's a really high stakes season that way.

MB: This season because we know who the characters are, we've tried to drop into them more and allow things to be deeper. We've intertwined things more and there's more serialized stuff. Along with cases of the week, we've tried to let the serialized stuff breathe more and be more deep and personal. Honestly, Serinda's work is just off the charts. You're really seeing what she can do as an actor. She's amazing.

We've also tried to drop in with Donovan and Roger. His work is just on fire. With everyone we try to progress them and feel them. With Alison we have a great thing for her, and we have a great episode for Alison where Tamara Podemski gets to really shine. We really want to take the space to do that because they are feeling really real to the actors and us. We want to let them be the glory of the show.



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TTVJ: That's one of the reasons I always seem to love second seasons. You already know these characters and everything doesn't have to be explained again. So it's understandable that you all feel that way too.

AM: What happens in this season too is that you're seeing a lot of how when the shit hits the fan in your career life, how are you a person in the other life you live in? Just traversing those two lines is really fascinating. We're really getting into 'how do I handle my family? If I have personal stuff happening and I'm having a hard time at work, how do I deal with that?' Those worlds and how they collide and intertwine are really salient this season. There's a relatability there where it's like 'oh I get it. I've been there.' We're not apologetic and we go into it.

MB: We tried to throw a lot of real life stuff at the characters. Jenny has a son, a dad, a boyfriend, what is it like to have all

that different energy and relationships and your problems? What is the intersection of all that? It's a lot. It's really relatable things that she has to deal with. Then there's all the extra heroic things she's dealing with. It's a lot.

AM: What I find interesting about this show is that you can be in a very intense, high stakes mode — personal or a case — and then there's the juxtaposition of the somewhat mundane. But it's not mundane. Maybe it's something regarding a family member or seems matter of course, but it comes at you, and there's something brooding underneath that could become bigger later. It's just so interesting all the places that we go.

TTVJ: What does that mean then for the tone of Season 2?

AM: Tonally, it's a really interesting show because we're not always in one mode. It's just like in life, we're not always in one mode, it can be poignant juxtaposed with the absurd. We go to all sorts of different places that way — tonally. Somehow though it's all cohesive.

MB: We really do try to be in the tone of life, which is all of these things. Nothing is ever one thing. Even in intense moments, we're living through those moments with all of our levels, all of our variables, and all of our faculties. How do you represent that? It's really interesting to try to represent somebody's life.

AM: We're so used to the mainstream television that is very linear. We're so nonlinear and it's such a privilege to work on a show like this. It's a gift and there's not a lot of shows that we do in Canada that go to all the realms we're able to do in this series. It's amazing.



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TTVJ: What does the network think of that nonlinear approach to TV?

MB: CBC has had a lot of trust for it, and a lot of trust for things that when we describe them they are terrified, but then, they have a lot of trust in the execution. They are really willing to allow things to be as they want to be. That faith has allowed us to go to some really interesting places this season.

AM: There's a real sense of trust in what we're doing and of course, success really helps. To see the ratings and that it's connecting with audiences, that all really helps. But even in

the first season, when nobody really knew, they were still very much like 'just do it!'

MB: They really were! It's a great feeling to be able to say 'these are the impulses' and for them to say 'oh yea, that seems good.' We have this incredible cast, writers, and directors so everyone can collude in this endeavor to bring this crazy show to life. It's a good feeling to have.

AM: We have great voices, in terms of the writers, and they are incredible. They're from different parts of the city, different perspectives, and we have a lot of diversity on all levels.



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TTVJ: Can you talk about the new writers and directors on board for Season 2?

MB: We have a new writer, Shannon Masters, and she's an incredibly talented writer. She's worked on *Cardinal*, *Burden of*

Truth, and has a feature background. She's just a phenomenal writer. Charles Officer is a new director who is doing a block on our show. He's also just phenomenal.

AM: I looked at his work on another CBC show, *21 Thunder*, and I really loved his work. I thought 'who are you? Why don't I know you? Why am I not working with you?' Morwyn knew him and we connected and I liked his work a lot. When he read the material he said 'this is the best show!' He's got a huge feature background, but it's just a great match. We don't have a lot of episodes though.

MB: We don't have a lot of new people because we like everyone and try to keep them. We've been lucky to have great writers and directors last year, and now we have great writers and directors this year. We've been working with some super talented people.

Excited for another season of *Coroner*? Sound off with any thoughts of predictions below!

Coroner Season 2 premieres Monday, January 6 at 9 p.m. ET on CBC.

