

# THE PRINCE GEORGE CITIZEN

## Back in Blackstone

Frank PEEBLES / Prince George Citizen  
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Televisions are once again the frame around Prince George actor Steven Cree Molison.

The local thespian has been a regular cast member of the cult-popular cable show Blackstone. The program has been likened to Breaking Bad and Weeds for its raw, authentic edginess as it depicts life behind the scenes on a Canadian Indian reserve. Written and directed by aboriginal filmmaker Ron E. Scott, it is woven with humour and heart, but it tackles dirty politics and violence.

In the middle of it all is strip bar owner Daryl Fraser, portrayed by Molison. The mohawk-headed muscle man has been one of the most popular dramatic characters on Canadian television for the past five years (a "free Daryl" campaign went viral as fans spent the off-season lobbying for the testy barkeep to get out of a jam in jail), and the new season of Blackstone has just begun.



Steven Cree Molison, left, plays bar owner Daryl Fraser, in a scene from Blackstone. Molison is also busy with several other projects these days, including one with Anthony Hopkins and Ray Liotta.

"They wrote me in a new girlfriend. She's really hot. So I've been having to work out like crazy and get really fit, because that's what my character's been doing," said Molison during a recent trip back to Prince George to visit family and friends.

He's needed the fitness to keep up with his agent, too. Molison has five other projects on the go, all small but juicy parts on some projects with screen appeal. He has a part in 50 Shades Of Grey, for instance, and this past week he was in Vernon working alongside Sir Anthony Hopkins and Ray Liotta on their new vehicle Go With Me. Also in that film is well-known B.C. actor Lochlyn Munro, who works again with Molison in the upcoming film Driven Underground (working title) filmed in Maple Ridge.

Molison also got a more substantial role in the CBC series Strange Empire and another in the psycho-thriller On Savage Ground.

These are all projects yet to be seen, meaning the impact of Molison's work is yet to be truly felt.

"I don't know how to feel about how it's all coming together," he said. "On one hand, I love construction and I enjoy working alongside my son building houses on reserves, that's what we like to do, but on the other hand I've had these little highlight moments because of my acting career, like doing a scene with Sir Anthony Hopkins, or getting to have an on-screen fight with Heath Ledger [in Brokeback Mountain], or getting interviewed in the red chair by George Stroumboulopoulos. So it's a great ride to be on."

He is pleased to see so much script attention paid to Daryl Fraser this season on Blackstone. The work done on Blackstone is fulfilling as an actor, he said, but also strong social material he hopes more Canadians will tune in to watch and think about.

"This year we're touching more on addiction, there's drugs and there's gambling, and it brings those topics to the forefront," Molison said. "It is a lot of stuff that affects our aboriginal community but affects all communities. The show is a great window into life on the rez, and sometimes aboriginal people don't want us to shine a light on that stuff, but what it leads to is an understanding that this is a side of our culture, but a side of all culture. It's about everybody."

The cast is estimated to be upwards of 80 people this year. Another Prince George talent - actor and musician Tommy J. Mueller - has been a regular on the show over the years but his character faded from the storylines. It remains to be seen if he reemerges this year.

Molison said he doesn't keep up on a lot of the cast discussions because he is deliberately aloof on set.

"My character said eff the rez and moved off. That's the kind of guy he is. So I don't eat with anybody else on-set, I try to stay apart from them. My character sees Jumbo from time to time so I make sure I see Bernard [Starlight, Jumbo's actor] sometimes. That's just during shooting. We are all friends off-camera, and I really like everybody in the cast, we have a great crew, but during shooting I try to live as close to Daryl's personality as I can."

It's a method that has worked for Molison, who has picked up his share of hardware for his acting skills, including the coveted Leo Award for Best Lead Performance By A Male In A Dramatic Series. With so many projects in the can and ready for public viewing, the methods of Molison may soon be reaping more rewards.

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