

Blackstone's Michelle Thrush in running for Leo



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When Canadian actress Michelle Thrush first auditioned for the APTN and Showcase drama *Blackstone*, she had no idea her star turn would put so many trophies on her mantle.

"We're looking at a second season. All these nominations are putting our show on the board," she told *Playback Daily* after *Blackstone*, from indie producer Prairie Dog Film & Television, this week earned five nominations for Leo Awards in British Columbia, including a best female drama role for Thrush.

The Edmonton-made TV drama about an aboriginal community self-destructing already won five Rosies at the Alberta film and TV awards.

And Thrush already won the best supporting actress award at the 33rd American Indian Film Festival in San Francisco for the *Blackstone* pilot, directed by series creator Ron E. Scott.

A second season of the APTN and Showcase drama is in development after *Blackstone* was sold to Maori Television in New Zealand.

Scott is also shopping the series in the US market.

Blackstone, written by Gil Cardinal and Scott, features a slew of flawed heroes and likeable villains typical of dramas such as *Entourage*, *The Wire* and *The Sopranos*.

Dramatic tension in the made-in-Edmonton series stems from a new generation of First Nations leaders, led by band-member Leona Storey (Carmen Moore), looking to end the corruption and mismanagement of former band politicians.

"The writing is brilliant. They've taken a lot of stories that have been directly connected to communities and dramatized them," Thrush said.

As she awaits word on when production on a sophomore season of *Blackstone* starts, Thrush is continuing to tour her one-woman show in rural British Columbia, with an eye to young audiences.

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