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# PLAYBACK

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## NIGHT OF JOY

Durham County star Helene Joy celebrates her win for best lead actress in a series at the 23rd Annual Gemini Awards in Toronto. For a recap of the TV industry's big night in pictures and words, see page 6

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MARK BLINCH / REUTERS

Actress Helene Joy poses last night with her Gemini award for her role in the Global drama *Durham County*. The series won three Geminis in a gala Toronto ceremony.

# Global drama cleans up at 23rd Geminis

## DURHAM COUNTY

### Former 90210 star hosts Toronto ceremony

BY MARK MEDLEY

The police drama *Durham County* won three Gemini awards last night, the big winner on an evening when the last of the country's top television honours were finally handed out.

Those struck by a sense of déjà vu are forgiven. This was, in fact, the fourth Gemini ceremony held in the past six weeks. For the 23rd Annual Gemini Awards, the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television chose to carve up the nearly 100 categories and announce the winners over the course of four nights. The first three award ceremonies took place last month.

Fourteen Geminis and one special award were given out

“It has never been cooler to be a Canadian

during last night's gala ceremony, which was held at the Metro Convention Centre in downtown Toronto.

The evening's host was Jason Priestley, the Canadian actor-turned-director probably best known for his role as teen heartthrob Brandon Walsh on *Beverly Hills, 90210* (the old one). The show's opening skit involved Mr. Priestley, a long-time U.S. resident, trying to convince people that he was in fact Canadian. It featured the Trailer Park Boys as customs officers, *Corner Gas*'s Brent Butt and comedian Colin Mochrie as a Tim Hortons' customer being served a maple dip donut and double-double by Mr. Priestley.

“It has never been cooler to be a Canadian in Hollywood. We are white-hot these days,” Mr. Priestley said. “But what tonight's esteemed nominees prove, you don't have to leave this country to do powerful and important work any more.”

*Durham County*, which airs on Global, won Geminis for Best Direction in a Dramatic Series (Holly Dale), Best Performance by an Actor in a Continuing Leading Dramatic Role (Justin Louis) and Best Performance by an Actress in a Continuing Leading Dramatic Role (Helene Joy). The wins bring the number of Geminis won by *Durham County* this year to five.

Heading into last night, the acclaimed drama *The Tudors* and the miniseries *The Englishman's Boy* had won four Geminis each. *The Tudors* failed to add to their total, while *The Englishman's Boy*, based on the novel by Guy Vanderhaeghe, won two awards, including Best Dramatic Mini-Series.

“I think it's important for Canadians to hear our own stories,” said executive producer Kevin DeWalt, though he cautioned, “right now it's never been harder to do historical drama in this country.”

The rock mockumentary *Cock'd Gunns* won two awards: Best Ensemble Performance in a Comedy Program or Series and Best Writing in a Comedy or Variety Program or Series.

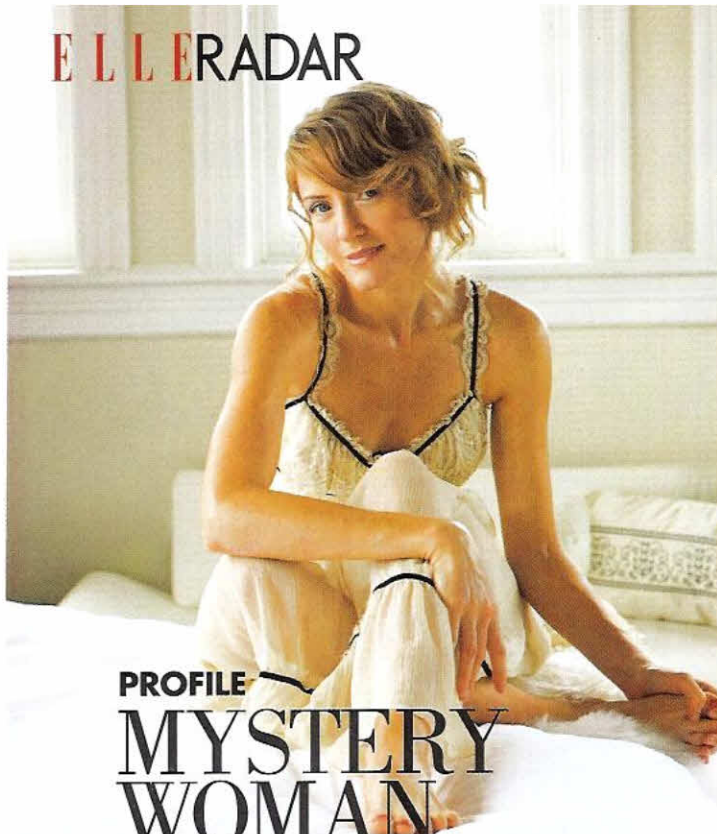
*This Hour Has 22 Minutes* was named Best Comedy Program or Series, while *Intelligence* won the Gemini for Best Dramatic Series.

Veteran anchor Gord Martineau won the Gemini Humanitarian Award, which is sponsored by Global.

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For the complete list of winners from last night's Gemini Awards, visit [nationalpost.com/theampersand](http://nationalpost.com/theampersand)

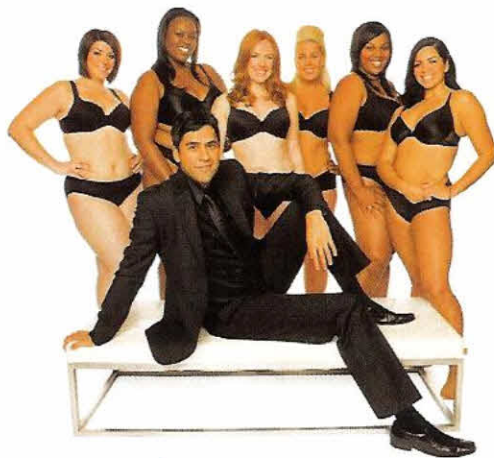


**PROFILE**  
**MYSTERY WOMAN**

In a country without a star system, this actress still shines!

**Q** uick: Name one Canadian actress who is currently starring in two homegrown TV shows (*Durham County* and *Murdoch Mysteries*). Here's another clue: She won a Gemini Award in 2008 for Best Actress in a Continuing Leading Dramatic Role. Still stumped? H lene Joy

isn't at all surprised. Her career may be on a high—she has been in many Canadian TV dramas and comedies since moving to Vancouver (“for a boy,” from whom she has since separated) from her native Australia in 2000—but her public profile remains noticeably low. “There hasn’t been any trouble finding work for quite some time,” she says. “It’s about finding publicity that helps you build an image, which then helps you get work more easily. That’s the star system, which doesn’t exist in Canada.” But if fans aren’t mobbing her on the streets of Toronto—her home since 2004—it’s probably because the stylish-in-person Joy looks and sounds nothing like her TV characters. In *Murdoch Mysteries* (Citytv), set in late-19th-century Toronto, she plays the corseted Julia Ogden, a “word-heavy” pathologist who helps Inspector Murdoch (Yannick Bisson) solve a grisly crime each week. It’s a departure from the femme-fatale roles she normally played down under. “I was always having sex with men before killing them!” she says, laughing. For her other star turn, in *Durham County* (Global), a gritty drama set in contemporary rural Ontario, Joy portrays Audrey Sweeney, a bewigged cancer survivor who lives in a community that has dark and murderous secrets. With both shows returning for their third seasons this spring, Joy is content with the recognition her peers have showered upon her. “That’s a lovely place to be,” she says. “You feel you’re not entering the room to prove your ability; you’re coming in to give your interpretation.” **KAMAL AL-SOLAYLEE**



The mere mention of “pool party,” “bikini season” or “sex with the lights on” is enough to make most women cringe, whether they’re catwalkers or not. Zain Meghji—the ambassador of nakedness—wants to change that. According to the host of the W Network’s new reality show *How to Look Good Naked Canada*, it doesn’t involve fad diets, crazy workout regimens or costly nips and tucks. It’s about coming face to face with your own reflection and lovin’ what you see. Meghji, who began his career in theatre productions and later became a reporter for CTV’s *eTalk*, believes that his own past body-image issues give him some insight into what contestants are thinking when they strip off their clothes for the show’s famous mirror reveal and lineup. “I always wanted to look like Ryan Reynolds!” says the Vancouver native, laughing. “Growing up, I wasn’t comfortable in my own skin, so I can understand women’s insecurities.” Each episode follows one woman’s journey to naked confidence, from the mirror to the fashion runway to the photo shoot in the buff. Experts—including ELLE Canada’s Rita Silvan—are brought in to offer style and beauty tips because, as Meghji says, the goal is to “accentuate the best and dress the rest.” **ALLISON DEAN**



**NAKED TRUTHS**

*How to Look Good Naked Canada* premiered on January 5. Visit [ellecanada.com/March](http://ellecanada.com/March) to read an exclusive interview with one of the contestants.

www.movieentertainment.ca

# CLICK AND WIN

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ME online provides free access to exclusive online news and features that aren't in the printed magazine. This month, ME chatted with Gemini Award-winning actress and star of Durham County and The Murdoch Mysteries, H el ene Joy.

Log on to [movieentertainment.ca](http://movieentertainment.ca) to read the interview.

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## The Joy of Being Helene

Author: **Jeremy Freed**

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**Helene Joy is in Los Angeles, and she's happy to be there, except for the fact that she can't ride her bike.** Australian by birth, Joy has lived in Canada for over a decade and calls Toronto her home. As with many people in Canada's largest city, Joy is fond of riding her bike around town, so much so that she doesn't own a car. Here in LA, where cyclists are about as common as palm trees in Iqaluit, it's a bit of a culture shock.

"That's the hard part about being in LA," she says between sips of cappuccino, "it's like, my god I have to have a car, I have to drive, I can't stand it. I'm a biker. I love getting around on my bike, and the fact that Toronto's the kind of city you can get around that way." If we were making an argument for the case that Joy is perfectly suited for the life of a Canadian celebrity, this would be Exhibit A.

Joy's day job includes starring roles in TMN's critically acclaimed *Durham County*, as well as Citytv's *Murdoch Mysteries*. With a brief summer lull in the shooting of both series, Joy is in California taking meetings, talking with agents and otherwise getting herself out there. She doesn't see herself moving down to LA anytime soon (see Exhibit A) but she's not one to pass up a good opportunity, either. "I'm just keeping the doors open," she says, "I was invited to come down by an agent who had seen *Durham County* and who loved it, and I ended up meeting about 15 people. It's looking like I might have some people who would be really interested in having me down here for pilot season."

After winning a Best Actress statuette at last year's Gemini Awards (Canada's Emmys), Joy has become considerably more famous in



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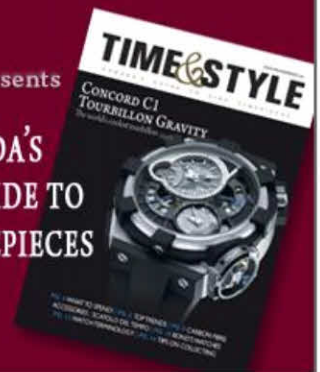


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her adopted homeland. But, she contentedly acknowledges, a Gemini award can only take you so far.

"Things have changed as much as they can in Canada," she says of her fame since winning the award, "There is no star system [here] and the way to become a star in Canada is to leave Canada and do some work outside. It's a sad truth, but it's the truth."

When pressed for her theories as to why this might be, that a country that produces world-class shows like *Flashpoint* and *Durham County* can still not have its own celebrities, Joy is clear and direct. "I think it always comes down to money," she says. "We don't have as much of it to make television and movies, and we also live in the shadow of the biggest entertainment business in the world. The biggest thing they do is promotion. They can make a dog of a film, but they promote it like nobody's business. This is how you create stars."

While anyone could be forgiven for getting frustrated with the limitations of the film industry, Joy is happy to be doing what she's doing, and feels like she gets a good deal of recognition for her accomplishments. "I have a great time in Canada," she admits, "I have a lot of work, and within the business I am very much recognized for my work and my contribution." Joy plans on staying in Toronto, where she owns a couple of properties in her aspiring second career as "a real-estate mogul."

"I love Toronto, and I love Montreal," she says, "Besides the weather, it feels just like being at home. The cultures are very similar. It's a similar sense of humour. Sydney and Melbourne are really amazing cities and I miss them sometimes, but in my line of work there's really no choice."

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*Durham County's* much anticipated second season begins on Monday, after what must have felt like an eternity for those who watched the cliffhanger finale of season one.

"The last few scenes were pretty gripping and the fallout is what we're left with," says Joy. Of the surprises to be revealed in season two, Joy is tight-lipped. "When you think that it's over, it's never really over," she says. "There is some resolution, but it's not what we expect."

Until shooting for *Durham County's* third season and a new season of *Murdoch Mysteries* begins in the fall, Joy's schedule will be full of biking around the city, remodeling a loft she recently purchased and learning the guitar. "And falling in love," she adds, "I'm always down for that."

**Season two of *Durham County* premieres Monday, July 13, at 8 p.m. PT on Movie Central and 9 p.m. ET on The Movie Network.**

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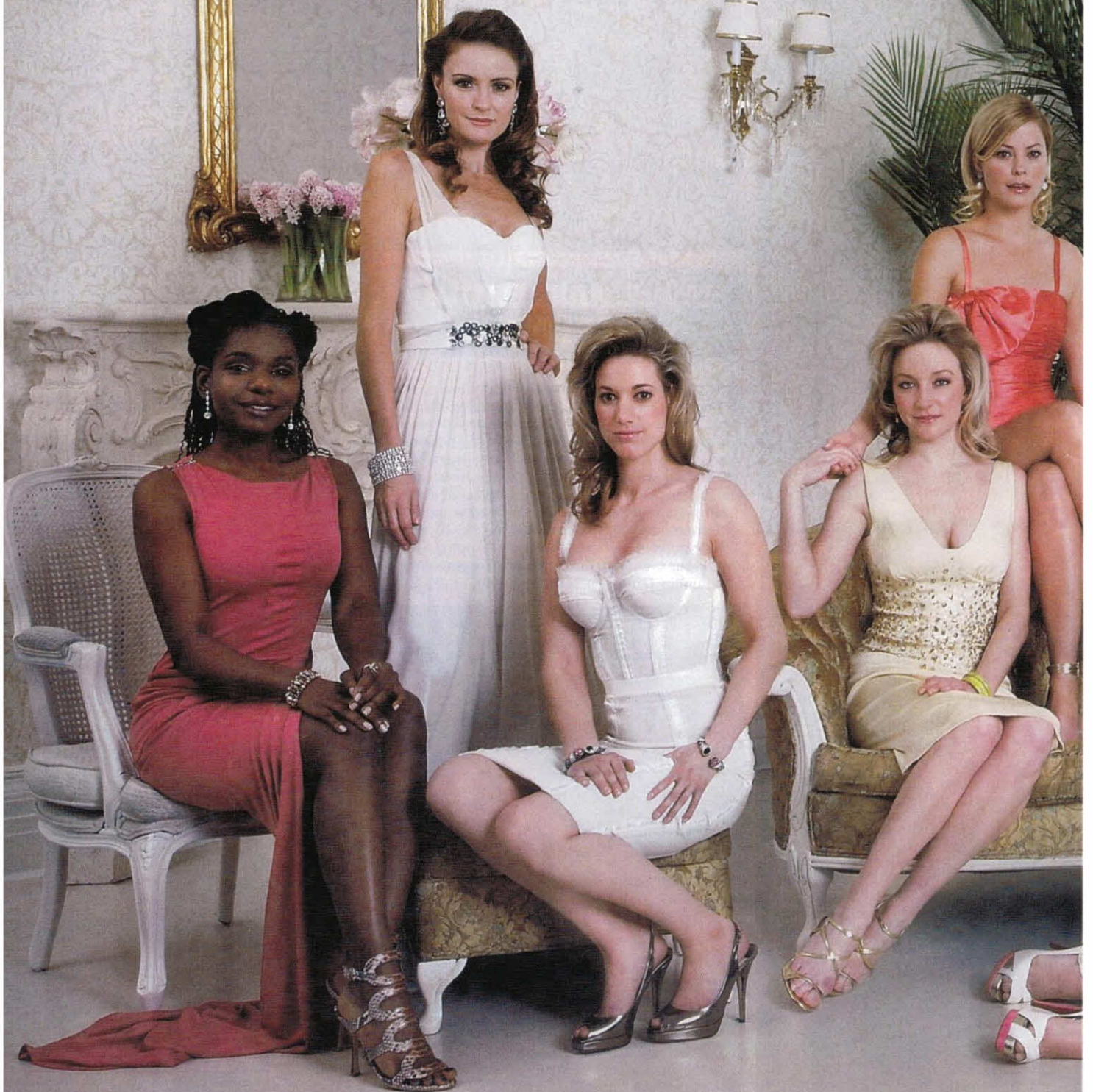
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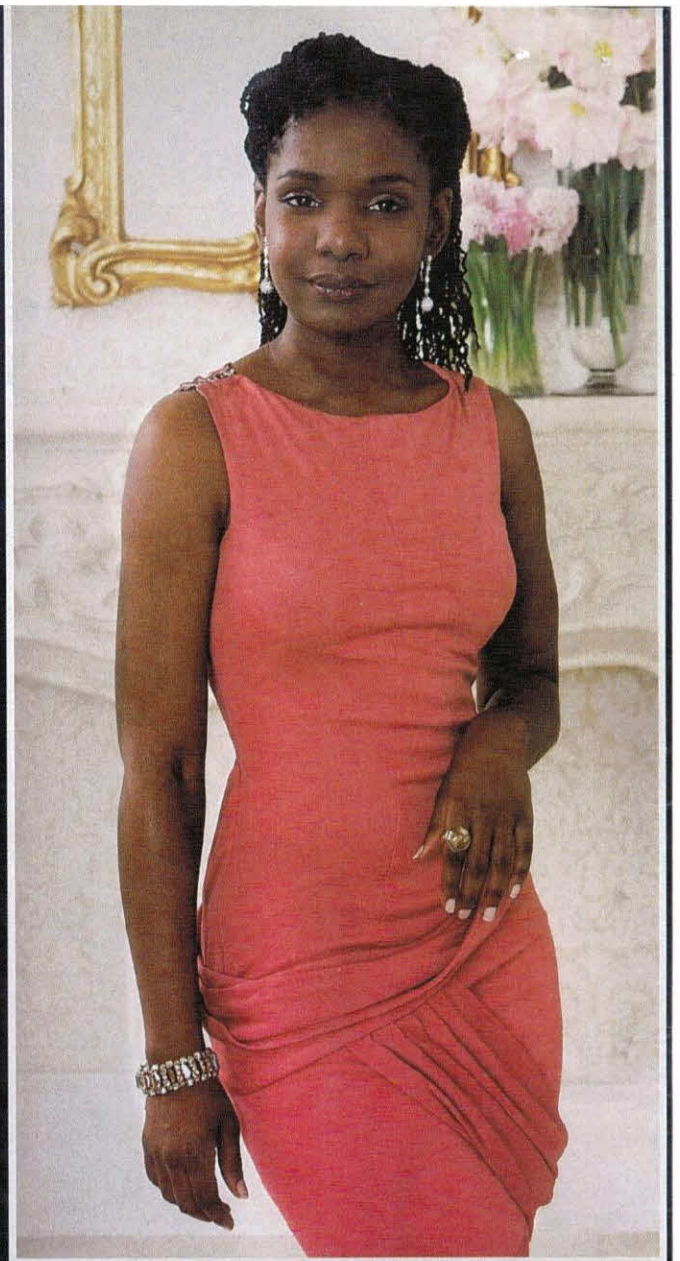




## HELENE JOY MURDOCH MYSTERIES

**H**élène Joy defies expectations. For starters, she's Australian – the French name was her mother's whim – and the quirky blond, 33, says she's neither as tormented as Audrey, her Gemini-winning rôle on *Durham County*, nor as comfortable with blood as Dr. Julia Ogden, the pathologist she plays on Citytv's

*Murdoch Mysteries*. "I can't look when someone gets a paper cut," she says. After appearing on a string of Aussie TV shows, Hé-lène followed a boyfriend to Canada five years ago; the romance fizzled, but her career caught fire. Now, all she needs is the perfect guy. "If he's a Capricorn with nice hands, I'm a goner."



**'Happiness is my beauty secret. I spend most of my time doing what I love'**

## NGOZI PAUL DA KINK IN MY HAIR

**N**gozi Paul describes herself as a "hopeless optimist" – a valuable trait in an up-and-down business like television, and one that helps account for her triple-threat status (co-creator, executive producer and co-star) on the Global sitcom *Da Kink in My Hair*. "I've been playing dress-up and putting on shows since I was

three," says the Brampton, Ont.-born Ngozi, who plays wide-eyed hairdresser Starr. "I try not to pay much attention to fears." The theatre veteran admits she recently learned to swim and now plans to dive straight into surfing. What's her top beauty secret? "Happiness. I spend most of my time doing what I love."

STORE GAZING

# Talent for power tools, power roles

Aussie actor moves to T.O., takes on vintage clothes, home renos, three different shows

**RITA ZEKAS**  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Queen St. E. between Boulton and Broadview is hardware-ville. You got your high-end Hardware decor and distressed furniture store at 760 Queen St. E. and your utilitarian Regal Hardware nuts 'n' bolts and widgets store at 800 Queen St. E.

Actor Hélène Joy, très chic in a summer frock and knock-your-socks-off vintage mauve suede boots, is a Hardware virgin but knows her way around Regal, which has been in business since 1909.

She co-stars in the drama series *Durham County*; is the femme lead in *Murdoch Mysteries*; has a recurring role as the team's doctor in *MVP*, just picked up by SOAPnet in the U.S., and does voice work on the animated series *Pearlie*.

But she is also Reno Girl.

"I spend a lot of time in hardware stores — Rona, Home Depot... I'd be at Canadian Tire at 6 a.m. waiting for them to open," Joy says, browsing through the aisles nostal-



genuity.

Regal has everything from patterned plastic reminiscent of the oilcloth on granny's kitchen table to seeds and toilet paper. No tires and garden gnomes, though.

"I bought a house within three months of moving to Toronto four years ago and I became reno queen. I did the kitchen, bathroom and flooring. I did all the donkey work: painting, backyard, frontyard. I got fake stick-on tin like they used on tin ceilings and used it as backsplash. It cost \$120 in total and I stuck it on myself.

"I paid Ikea to put in my kitchen. I need a man with big muscles! I'm up for a dream house as opposed to a flipper. I bought a loft I'm renting out, and a condo that will probably take three years (to build) but it will need nothing done. I'm staying with a friend who is renovating."

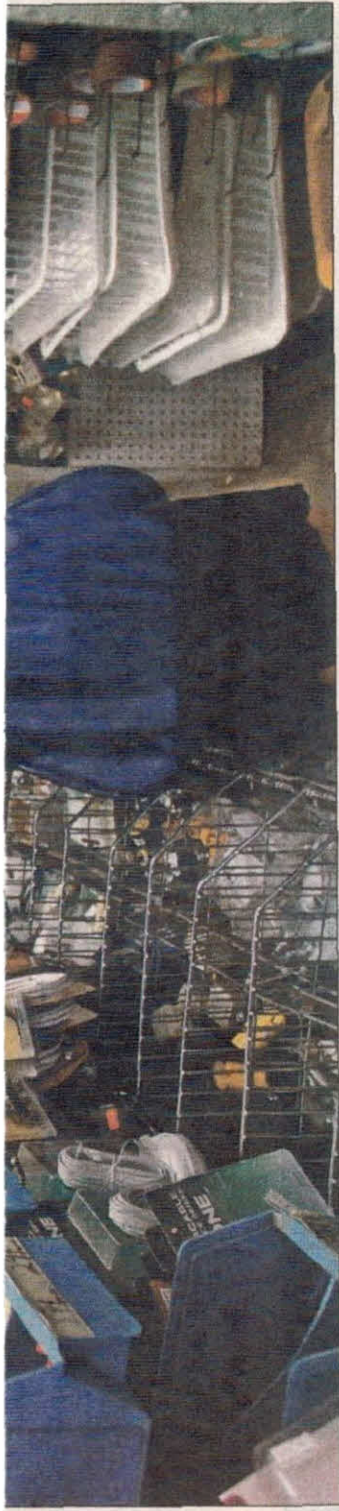
Joy is a native of Perth, Australia. Why is her first name French? "My mom had a girlfriend who was French. I'm learning French. I'd love to act in French."

She trained at Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts and did everything from Ophelia to Juliet in productions on tour and with the Melbourne Theatre Company. She has been acting for a dozen years and in Canada for eight years.

"I did film, TV and theatre, mostly Shakespeare," she recalls. "I long for Shakespeare. I haven't introduced myself to theatre makers (here)."

That said, her professional life doesn't suck. She's never had to play the arm candy.

In *Murdoch*, she plays Dr. Julia Ogden, a pathologist working for the police department.



STEVE RUSSELL / TORONTO STAR

**Hélène Joy is a lover of sweet frocks and power tools that are anything but. This Reno Queen has roles in *Durham County*, *Murdoch* Mysteries and *MVP*.**

"I am happy with the roles I get," Joy says. "I get power roles. I play older than I am (in her early 30s but looks 23 and has incredible porcelain skin). I saw my director at a barbecue and he said, 'You look five years younger off set.' I play women of gravity."

"In *Durham County*, I play the mother of a 17-year-old. They want mothers of 17-year-olds to look 30. There's the double standard."

"I want to play skank hos," she jokes. "They intrigue me. I'm interested in people who are damaged because I have a lot of experience in my life."

She loves her *Murdoch* character. "Nellie McClung existed in the same time, in 1890, that my character did. I am intrigued with women of that time who had more open minds than some women in our time. Look at what's happened today — brainless body-obsessed Pussycat Dolls — and it sickens me. We've come so far and we're going there?"

"I'm in a superficial line of work and I wrestle with that. Women become powerful and don't serve other women. We need to lift them up."

We need to mentor."

Joy isn't doing *Murdoch* for the wardrobe. It's Victorian time. She is buttoned up. "They are trying to loosen up," she says. "They put me in ball gowns which show arms and décolletage. I am unconventional: I wear shirts and leave a button un-

heels," Joy says. "I'm not a pant girl — except for jeans. I spend the most money on jeans. I never used to buy once I got a great pair of (designer) jeans, it's a whole other world. I like Citizens of Humanity and James."

"With vintage, I don't feel wasteful and ruin the lives of children in sweatshops."

She shops at Franny's and Shop Girls in Parkdale.

"I go to The Workroom (1340 Queen St. W.) where you can sew your own clothes. I can go and use those machines and pay by the hour."

"As a teenager in the '80s, I wore crazy clothes. My mother was concerned for me. There was a rule in school that an item of clothing must be worn in the way it was designed but I wore sweaters as skirts. I had a shaved head with a black mohawk. I was half punk, half boy toy. I wore hose I'd taken a fork to."

"You get dulled down over the years but I feel a resurgence now because I became too mainstream."

"When I was a teen, it was essential to buy vintage because I didn't have the money to buy new. It was about need. It was second-

hand then, not vintage.

"As I get older, I can have new things but vintage is more fun. I'm enjoying my clothes as much as when I was a teenager. My mother is an interior decorator, which is why I have an eye to decorate. I used her curtain fabric for clothes."

Joy had only one suitcase with her when she exited Australia.

"I came for a boy," she confesses. "I knew I could be an actor here and I'd guested on every TV show in Australia."

"He said, 'I'm going to L.A.' We got there and hated it. We moved to Vancouver and I got an agent and got work but Vancouver bored me. I came here for work and got another power woman role, on *An American in Canada*."

She and the boy broke up but she became a power woman with power tools.

"I'm not doing any more reno for a long, long time," she vows. "I had to get rid of my power tools and Stanley knife. I gave it to my friend who is renovating. She's the only one I know who rips a wall down with a hammer."

ritazekas@rogers.com

## 6 You get dulled down over the years but I feel a resurgence now

HELENE JOY

done and it's considered outrageous. Last year, I wore a corset with a bustle. When I was working on both *Durham County* and *Murdoch Mysteries* and renovating, they peeled the paint out of my hair and my knees. Now I'm in vintage shops, to hardware shops."

She shops for her dresses at a boutique at College and Ossington.

"It's a hole in the wall but I'm all about the dresses and boots and

# Joy to the world

Sunny Australian Helene Joy talks to **Gayle MacDonald** about her pa

**T**he Australian-born actress Helene Joy is well named. Impossibly upbeat – with an infectious laugh that echoes (often) through the lounge in Toronto's Drake Hotel – it's tough at first to identify this sunny creature with the angst-ridden character she portrays in the brooding drama *Durham County*, to be broadcast starting tonight on Global TV.

In the six-part miniseries, Joy plays Audrey Sweeney, one of the least troubled, relatively uncomplicated characters in this critically lauded program.

"There's no question, the show is pretty grim," says Joy, who was born in Perth and moved to Canada about six years ago with a Canadian boyfriend she'd met in Queensland filming an episode of, of all things, *Flipper*.

"When I read the opening scene of *Durham County*, I wasn't sure I could do this role. But, as I kept on, I thought the script was absolutely brilliant," adds the redhead. "And even more, I was fascinated that something this dark and disturbing was the concoction of a creative team that is basically all women."

*Durham County* is the brainchild of Back Alley Film Production partners Adrienne Mitchell and Janis Lundman. It was written by Laurie Finstad-Knizhnik, and was directed by Holly Dale and Mitchell. It initially aired on the pay channels Movie Network and Movie Central last May. It's getting its second window on conventional television, on Global.

A warning to anyone remotely queasy: In the first five minutes, two teenage girls are murdered, brutally and on-screen, while "an eye" watches through the bushes. The peeping sociopath then has his way with one of the apparently dead girls after the killer leaves a clearing in the woods. "We were all a little nervous about the whole thing," says Joy. "But we thought *Durham County* would excite more people than it would disturb. And it has done that."

The show is anything but the typical cop-versus-killer drama. The story is deliberately ambiguous. The characters are even more so. At the crux is Detective Mike Sweeney (Audrey's husband, played by Hugh Dillon), who moves his family to the suburbs only to become obsessed with hunting



Joy hams it up in a photo booth at Toronto's Drake Hotel: 'I had to tap d

**I was fascinated that something this dark and disturbing was the concoction of a creative team that is basically all women.**

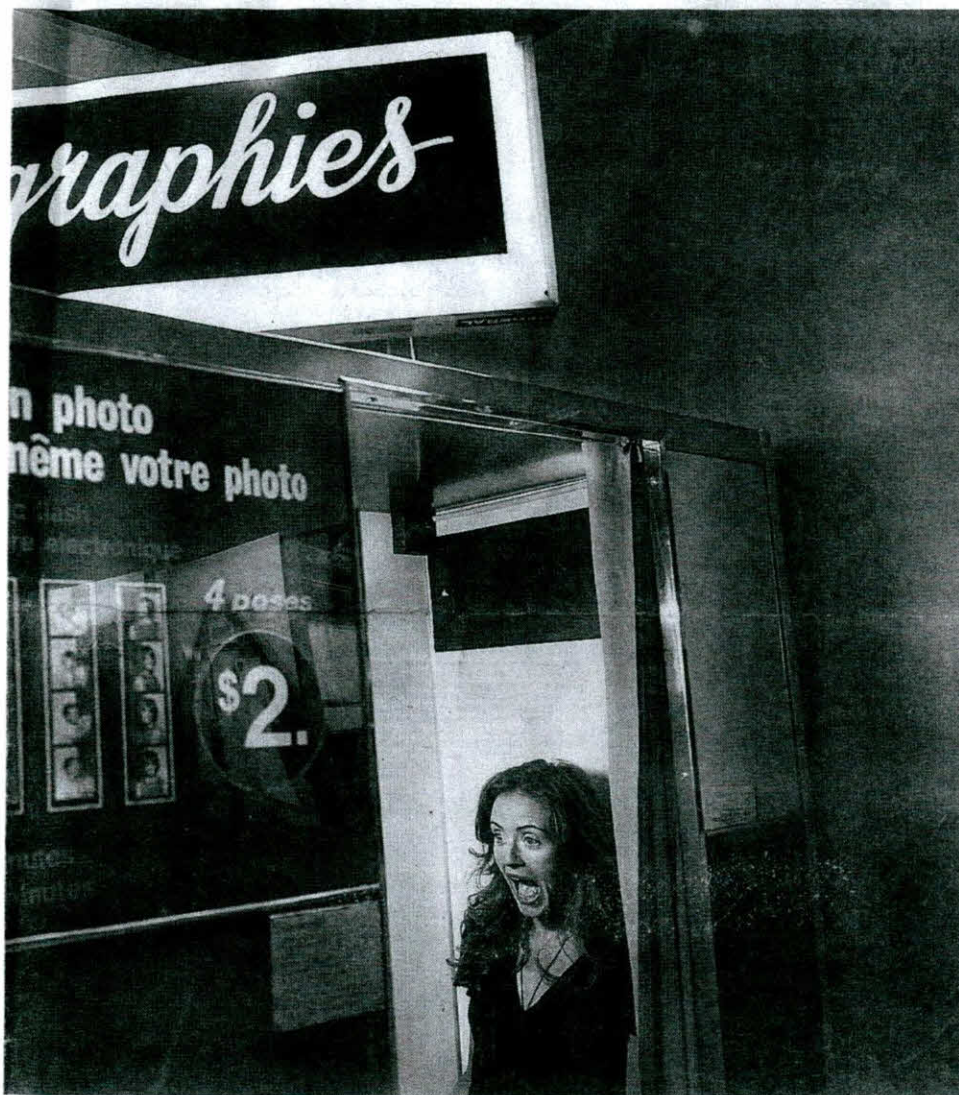
Helene Joy on the script for *Durham County*

a serial killer (turns out there are two) who he is convinced is his neighbour, Ray Prager (Justin Louis).

"My character is one of the relatively stable ones," Joy says, chuckling. "I play a neglected wife who has just survived a harrowing bout of breast cancer, and has lost a breast. In the meantime, my whole family has torn itself apart. My children are dysfunctional and have turned against me because they thought I was going to die. My husband has fallen out of love."

"I had to tap down deep to play this role. They padded me up here," she says, pointing to one breast. "And taped me down here," indicating the other, "to look like I'd had a mastectomy. It was so real, it made me feel ill. I can't imagine what it must be like for these women who are grateful

th to Toronto, and her role in the intensely dark Durham County



own deep to play this role,' she says of her angst-ridden TV character. FRED LUM/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

to be alive but still traumatized by what has happened to their bodies. I had horribly torn feelings."

Joy hopes that Global/TMN/Movie Central will go ahead with a second season of a show that challenges its actors and its viewers equally: "It's looking 90-per-cent positive that *Durham County* will go again. If it does, I couldn't be happier. The acting - by Hugh, and the others - is fabulous."

A green light, however, will also make Joy's already hectic schedule even crazier. "If we start in September, I'll be shooting *Durham County* in Montreal and *The Murdoch Mysteries* in Toronto. Don't get me wrong: I'm not complaining. I love the work, which is far more plentiful here in Canada than it was at home," says Joy.

In CITY-TV's *Murdoch Myste-*

*ries*, she's the female lead, Dr. Julia Ogden. And recently on CBC-TV's short-lived hockey drama, *MVP*, she played the team doctor, a role she loved for one very specific reason. "I got to play most of my scenes with Peter Miller, who's gorgeous. He was half-naked most of the time, which was great fun." *MVP*, recently picked up by Disney's SOAPnet, premieres June 19 in the United States.

Trained at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, Joy says the only thing she doesn't like about Canada - besides the cold weather - is the people who bash Canadian-made television.

"Australians watch their own shows," she says. "And we do that because there are laws in place that require much larger amounts of spending content to be indigenous. Most people

at home still only have five channels, so they know their talent."

The youngest daughter of a single mother (now a successful real-estate agent in Perth), Joy says her spare time is spent biking around Toronto, learning French, the guitar, and sewing things for her friends. For at least six weeks a year, she dons a backpack and heads to warmer climates, often South and Central America.

"I haven't taken a traditional path. That's never been the case with me. But I'm glad I met that nice Canadian boy," Joy says with a smile, referring to her *Flipper* cast-mate who is still a good friend. "It started a whole new tangent of my life that I never expected."

» *Durham County* airs at 10 tonight on Global (Check local listings).

## Canadian pride and Joy

### Australian-born actress proud to make it big here

By BILL HARRIS, Sun Media

One might sum up Helene Joy's recent success as "Joy de vivre."

But of course, the actual term - joie de vivre - is French. And despite the spelling of her given name, actress Helene Joy is Australian by birth, not French Canadian.

"Yeah, it's a very confusing little story," Joy said. "I've been in Canada for seven years and finally I've decided to learn French, and I'm loving it. But everyone thinks I'm French.

"I'd go on some sets and even though I couldn't speak two words of French, everyone would be like, 'Helene, allo!'"

This never was more true than when Joy was in Montreal on the set of Durham County, which makes its network-TV debut Monday on Global. Joy, by the way, also stars in Citytv's Murdoch Mysteries, which has been renewed for a second season, and she had a role in the recently axed CBC series MVP, too.



Helene Joy plays Audrey Sweeney in Durham County, which makes its network-TV debut Monday on Global.

"My mom, you know?" Joy said when quizzed about the origin of her first name. "She was kind of crazy like that.

"She met a French girl around the time she was pregnant with me, and that was it. All my sisters have completely normal names from the 1970s. They're Paula and Jodie. And then there's Helene.

"It wasn't an issue till I came to Canada. But people pronounce it with such a flair here (Elle-enne), as opposed to 'Hell-ine.' That's how they say it in Australia, 'Hell-ine.'"

Well, no matter how you pronounce her name, Joy has made a professional name for herself in North America with roles - both long and short - on numerous series.

"I came to Canada on a whim, a total whim - I came with a boy," Joy recalled. "He was Canadian and we were working on an Australian TV show together, but he always had planned on returning home. He said, 'Come with me,' and I said, 'Yay.' So I came for love. We're still good friends. And in the meantime, I have a career.

"Canada just wasn't on my radar as a child, but I love Canada and I'm a full-blown citizen now."

As for Durham County, Joy is thrilled the series now will be available on the wider stage of network TV. It aired previously across Canada on The Movie Network and Movie Central.

"It is exciting, because I love the show," Joy said. "We all loved it. It's very, very dark, but the writing is magnificent, with great characters, really powerful."

Despite the failure of MVP, Joy still has plenty on the go. Besides the second season of Murdoch Mysteries and the distinct possibility of a second season for Durham County, she just finished a made-for-TV movie with Jacqueline Bisset titled An Old Fashioned Thanksgiving, which will air on the Hallmark Channel in the U.S. later this year. Also, Joy does a lot of voice work on animated series.

It seems the trek to Canada has worked out pretty well, eh?

"Like any new Canadian, I appreciate things here in a way others don't," Joy said. "But I don't appreciate winter. There's just no way I can appreciate that."

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## Take a walk on the macabre side

2008-05-19

By Melissa Hank

Welcome to 'Durham County', where things aren't what they seem



Helene Joy as Audrey Sweeney

*Durham County* operates in shades of gun-metal grey. What we've conditioned to accept as good and bad becomes sullied with aspects of each other until viewers are left shaken and questioning their core beliefs.

And that's just the way its producers like it.

The dark thriller, making its network debut on Global, was a critic's darling when it bowed last year on The Movie Network and Movie Central.

Tracking the life of detective Mike Sweeney (Hugh Dillon, *Hard Core Logo*) as he moves his family to a picture-perfect suburb, the six-episode series quickly delves into the sinister recesses of the mind.

See, the Sweeneys' lives become twisted with that of their new neighbour Ray Prager (Justin Louis, *Dawn of the Dead*) and the crimes of a local serial killer. And a secret history between Mike and Ray threatens to shatter the town's placid façade.

Hélène Joy, who plays Mike's wife Audrey, was eager to talk about the homegrown drama, how the series turns violence against women into compelling social comment, and why the writers' strike was a boon for Canadian TV.

**TVGuide.ca: The show is pretty intense and did well on specialty networks – how think it will fare on network TV, with a more mainstream audience?**

Hélène Joy: It's pretty dark. It won't be everybody's fare, but it's an amazing show. Everybody I've met who's watched it was blown away, and it's already won awards. Nothing's been made like it in Canada; I've never seen anything so dark and well-written, and the performances are all fantastic. But it is dark.

**TVG: Were you hesitant to take it on?**

HJ: I was in Australia when I got the script, and I knew immediately that I loved it. But the first scene of the first episode was enough almost for me to say I couldn't do this.

**TVG: Yeah, the scene with the schoolgirls is pretty heavy ...**

HJ: The only thing that kept me in it was that the show was made by women. There are female producers, it's directed by women and written by women. There's a purpose to it; it's not just gratuitous. It's talking about that gratuitousness, the

sexualization of women in society – particularly in television and violence. But like any good show it can upset you; when I read it, I loved it and hated it at the same time.

**TVG: How do you feel it blurs the line between good and evil?**

HJ: The show is about the dark side of the good, and the good side of the dark. It's looking at where the line is and who we think we are. With the two male characters pitted against each other, we're supposed to think one is good and one is bad. And we begin to see them in so many lights. Ray is the bad guy, yet I for one as a character don't see that side of him. I see only the good.

**TVG: How does Audrey's battle with breast cancer come into play?**

HJ: She's lost a breast, and they thought she was going to die but she comes through. She's had this brush with death and she's had a rebirth. She's back in love with her husband after 20 years. She's excited about the future. But bit by bit we see this break down; her family is not recovering the way she is. One daughter is estranged from her and the other is acting out. Her husband has started a secret life.

**TVG: Can you give an example of how this affects her?**

HJ: There's a beautiful scene between Audrey and her daughter where her daughter comes in and sees her playing with this gel form that she's supposed to put into her bra, and she's disgusted with it. There's a great moment where you almost see Audrey crack but she refuses.

Our director for the first four episodes, Holly Dale, lost someone to breast cancer and it was nice to have her there reassuring me that what was going on was so relatable to so many women who have been through this.

**TVG: You've also been on Canadian series such as *ReGenesis*, *This Is Wonderland*, *Murdoch Mysteries* and *MVP*. What do you make of *MVP* being picked up on SoapNet after CBC cancelled it?**

HJ: I'm excited! I'm sad that it didn't go on with CBC, but that could all turn around. I think it's a great show. It's so different from anything I've done before. It's so great that all these Canadian shows are finding a voice across the border and it can only encourage broadcasters here to give them a chance to go again.

**TVG: Likewise, do you think a successful run on Global could lead to *Durham County* producing more episodes?**

HJ: *Durham* is a different because it's so dark. Everyone's been talking about the show – producers, directors, writers – everyone loves it. But in terms of saleability, I don't know if networks in the U.S. can tolerate this darkness. Obviously, it could go on HBO, but this has a very specific audience and a specific network that would have to take it.

**TVG: With *Durham* moving to network TV, and *Murdoch* debuting this past midseason, and being renewed, do you think writer's strike has given Canadian shows a foot in the door that they may not have had otherwise?**

HJ: I hope so. I think U.S. networks were looking here like they've never looked before, and that's great for everyone. There are so many shows that have gone stateside – *The Listeners*, *Flashpoint*, *Sophie*.

It's about building the interest and putting money into the shows. And if we can get help from the States, I think that's fantastic. If the shows go south and it helps create more here, I think that's fantastic too.

*Durham County* debuts on Global on Monday, May 19 at 10 p.m. ET/PT.

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Want to know what's going on with your shows during May Sweeps? Check out our comprehensive guide!





## Call her Lucky Joy

*Murdoch Mysteries* got the most Gemini award nominations this year with 14. *Durham County* got 13. And Helene Joy stars in both shows.

"My friends in Australia call me Lucky Joy — I guess I'm getting what they mean," said Joy, a native of Australia. Joy also received a Gemini nomination for best actress in a drama for her work on *Durham County*.

"Right now I feel totally blessed to be playing two unique roles in two great Canadian TV shows," Joy said. "The shows are drastically different and appeal to such different audiences. The funny thing is, few people even recognize me in *Durham County*, and in *Murdoch Mysteries* the Victorian look is very altering, too. So few people even have made the connection.

"Let's hope that both shows do really well at the Geminis and that they give me a seat at each table so I can celebrate with both."

*Murdoch Mysteries* airs on Citytv, while *Durham County* is seen on The Movie Network and Movie Central.

— **Bill Harris**

## It's official: Brit to appear on MTV Awards

NEW YORK — It's Britney, baby, one more time.

Despite her train-wreck performance at the MTV Video Music Awards last year, the network confirms Spears will kick off the show once again.

But it won't be a performance. Instead, MTV Networks Music Group President Van Toffler said Wednesday, it'll be something "fun and unexpected" on Sunday night's show.

"I'm excited to open the entire show, to say hi to my fans and to be nominated," Spears said.

— **The Associated Press**





### Joy to the world

Helene Joy, who plays Dr. Julia Ogden, feigns surprise as she has her picture snapped. Joy has also appeared in numerous Canadian television fare, including MVP and Durham County.

## Prime Minister Stephen Harper



Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper chats with actress Helene Joy on the set of Shaftesbury Films series, Murdoch Mysteries, in Toronto October 15, 2010. Harper visited the set of the popular television series with his daughter Rachel who is a fan.

REUTERS/Fred Thornhill (CANADA - Tags: ENTERTAINMENT POLITICS)

 **REUTERS**

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