

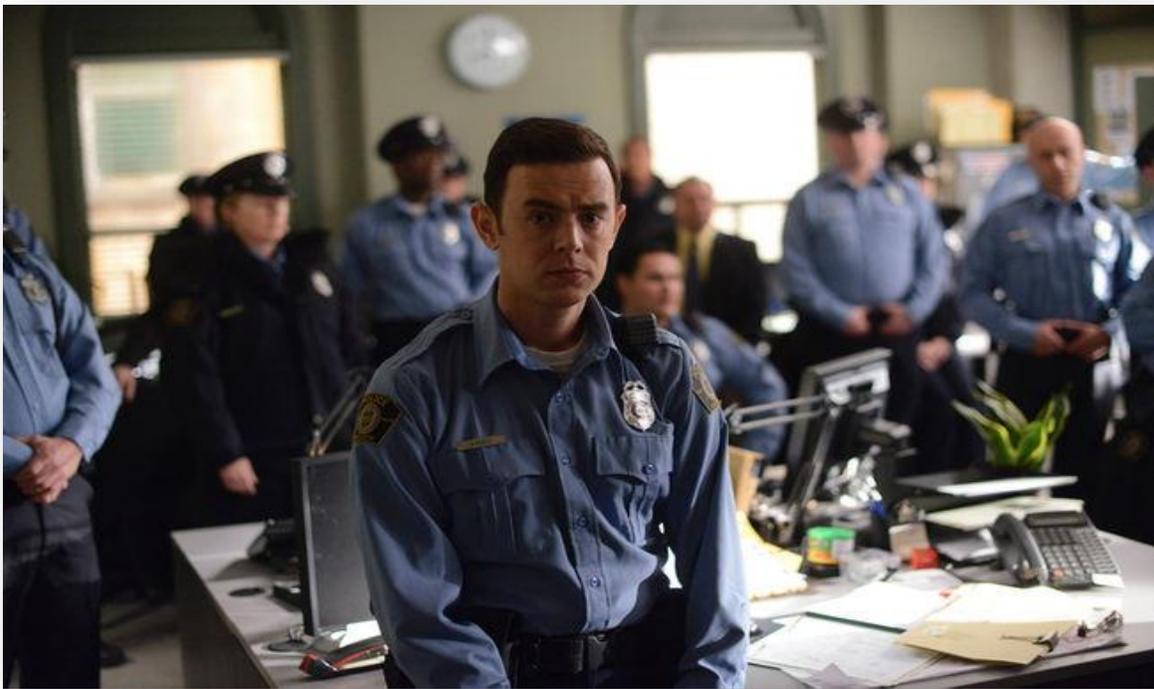


Calgary weather plays key role in Fargo

By [Bill Kaufmann](#), *Calgary Sun*

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FXX Network's miniseries 'Fargo'



FARGO - Pictured: Colin Hanks as Gus Grimly. CR: Chris Large/FX

A blizzard of fake snow whipped by huge overhead fans obscured what had been a brutally frigid winter for filming.

Billy Bob Thornton, the lead star of the Coen brothers-inspired Fargo TV series stood chatting and watching the action between scenes, his shoulders sprinkled with the cotton batten-like snowflakes.

Minutes later in a small auditorium warmed by the Mid-March 14C warmth outside, Thornton said he missed the Calgary cold, to a point.

"It's almost disturbing -- we've been doing this all the time in the freezing cold," said Thornton, who plays the mysterious, murderous stranger Lorne Malvo.

"Today, it's hard having to wear five layers of junk."

Winter's a constant theme in FXX Network's miniseries Fargo, set in snow-bound small town and rural North Dakota and Calgary's climate has more than played along, say the show's star-studded cast.

"People in LA last week said 'I understand the weather's been a character in the show' and in this case it's really true -- you have to deal with the cold," said Thornton, lapsing into the story he's helping bring alive.

"If you look at the reality of it, those people do have to deal with it everyday and if you have to deal with it, it can only make your performance better."

Fellow Fargo thespian Keith Carradine said the Arctic-like freeze only shut down one day of shooting -- in December -- and has performed well as a prop.

"The climate is obviously key...this winter's been a cold one and it's worked really well for the production," said Carradine, noting the Great Plains setting of Fargo.

"The geography works as long as we don't get close to the mountains."

Carradine was last in Calgary more than a decade ago filming the western movie Monte Walsh and compares Calgary to another Rocky Mountain metropolis.

"I was happy to come back here, it's unique, it's kind of the Denver of the Canadian Rockies," said the actor who plays ex-cop Lou Solverson in Fargo.

In yet another reference to Calgary's severe climate, Carradine said his stay downtown has him well-acquainted with its warmer spaces.

"I'm familiar with the Plus-15s -- from my hotel I can walk all around the city without going outdoors," he said.

Los Angeles resident Bob Odenkirk of Breaking Bad fame was less diplomatic about Calgary's winter, saying it's hard to fathom why people endure months of numbing chill.

"It is a shock -- you're reminded people choose to live in these places, how come everyone in the world doesn't live in LA?" he said.

But Odenkirk said Calgary's excellent restaurant scene helps to compensate, adding he couldn't resist doing some open-mike standup at two city nightspots -- Broken City and the Oak Tree Tavern.

He discusses Kensington eateries with reporters.

His acting colleagues agreed on Calgary's culinary charms.

"It's an easy city to be a permanent resident in, there's amazing restaurants," said Allison Tolman, who plays central character, small town cop Molly Solverson.

Thornton, who has a reputation for a volatile temper, expressed a soft spot for Calgary and its environs.

"People in Calgary have been so good to us -- Calgary's a big town with a small town feel," he said.

"Canada's a beautiful country, it's made for postcards."

But Thornton, a drummer in another entertainment life said he hasn't been to Banff during this stay, preferring to prowl Calgary record stores.

"I like to read liner notes even if I've read them hundreds of times," he said.

Fargo debuts on FXX April 15.

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