

SNEAK PEEK
NCIS: NEW ORLEANS



SKIP BOLENI, CBS

Mark Harmon, left, and Scott Bakula work to solve the mystery of a colleague's death.

Will 'NCIS' rouser into a new city next year?

Two-parter could be preview of a spinoff

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Top-rated *NCIS* is hoping to expand to the Big Easy.

In a two-part episode (March 25 and April 1, 8 p.m. ET/PT), the CBS drama will visit a New Orleans branch office that could become the focus of a spinoff series next season. Scott Bakula plays local chief Dwayne Pride, who teams with longtime friend and *NCIS* special agent Leroy Jethro

'NCIS' goes Cajun style Hitting all the New Orleans hot spots **4D** Gibbs (Mark Harmon) after the body of a colleague from their early careers is found in the Crescent City.

Pride "is hugely passionate for life, for his city and for the people who live in his city," says Bakula, who spent four days filming in New Orleans with Harmon, an executive producer on *NCIS* and the proposed spinoff.

During the investigation, Gibbs and Ellie Bishop (Emily Wickersham) go to New Orleans, while the rest of his team works the case from Washington. Lucas Black and Zoe McLellan co-star as *NCIS* special agents in New Orleans, and CCH Pounder (*The Shield*) plays the Jefferson Parish medical examiner.

"We think there's great potential here," Harmon says.

NCIS already has one successful offshoot, *NCIS: Los Angeles*.

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SKIP BOLEN, CBS

NCIS special agents Pride (Scott Bakula, center) and Gibbs (Mark Harmon, right) team up on an investigation after a former colleague is found murdered in New Orleans.

Rich cultural gumbo adds local flavor to the mystery

The Crescent City is 'as important as any character' in the story

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NCIS is visiting New Orleans, but the hope is to put down permanent roots there with a spinoff series.

TV's top-rated drama trekked to the Crescent City for a two-part episode (CBS, March 25 and April 1, 8 p.m. ET/PT), emphasizing well-known sites to underline its location, a marked contrast to NCIS, which is set in Washington, D.C., but shot north of Los Angeles.

"The idea was always talked about as New Orleans being every bit as important as any character," says NCIS star and executive producer Mark Harmon, who finished shooting in Louisiana on Monday. "It's a really interesting place to shoot. There's music everywhere. There are sounds

palm trees we want." During their visit, the cast and crew squeezed in a dozen Louisiana locations, including Jackson Square, Café Du Monde, Bourbon Street, Louis Armstrong Park, St. Charles Avenue, famed for streetcars, and bayou-rich Barataria. "It's a love letter to New Orleans in four short days," says

"It's a really interesting place to shoot. There's music everywhere. There are sounds everywhere."

Mark Harmon on filming in New Orleans

Scott Bakula, who plays NCIS special agent Dwayne Pride, the head of the New Orleans office and a longtime friend of Harmon's Leroy Jethro Gibbs. "There was some insanity going on. Mark and I laughed a lot. You've got a double decker bus going by with

screaming, 'Hey, Gibbs!'" If *New Orleans* becomes a weekly series next season, Harmon and Gary Glasberg, who wrote both episodes, would be executive producers; Bakula would star as Harmon returns to the original series. The plan is to film "as much as we can" there, with the remainder filmed in Los Angeles, Glasberg says.

The episodes feature Gibbs and Pride, who were "probie" agents in NCIS forerunner NIS in the early 1990s, teaming up to investigate after one of their former NIS colleagues is found murdered in New Orleans. Glasberg says he was pleased with how Harmon and Bakula worked together.

"The chemistry between the two of them, creating this long-standing friendship and bond between Gibbs and Pride, was something I was counting on," he says. "There's a fantastic scene in an area called Artillery Park that overlooks Jackson Square, where they're just standing beside one another looking out at this iconic