

Bomb Girls is an explosive homegrown TV drama

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I'm not generally a fan of network TV. Mostly because I have a kryptonite strength hate on for the reality television that tends to fill the air these days. However on this occasion, I raise a glass to Global for bankrolling, as well as promoting the heck out of "Bomb Girls," a terrific new dramatic Canadian mini-series about a group of women working at a munitions factory during WWII.

Stylistically, the program is reminiscent of Douglas Sirk's technicolour melodramas of the 1950s, or the colour saturated sets and wardrobes that we've seen in *Mad Men*. There's a particular look to this period, and director Adrienne Mitchell, not wanting to fall back on the sepia tones so frequently used in period dramas, opted to use to a special kind of HD Kodachrome film look so the series would vibrantly pop. In short, *Bomb Girls* looks great.

While Mitchell's choice of the Kodachrome look gives the series an expensive, appealing patina, it also serves to nicely reflect some of the bitter ironies of the time. The women's bold red lipstick is also the same bright colour used on the bomb tips. Everything in *Bomb Girls* is potentially explosive. Most certainly the war that the boys are fighting overseas, but also the sexual battle that takes place in the homes and especially on the floor of the munitions factory.

Things here are red hot. The few men who have been left behind relentlessly harass the women on the assembly line in an appalling manner. Any viewer under 50 will be shocked at what passed as acceptable behaviour not all that long ago. *Bomb Girls* should be required viewing for anyone interested in the battle of the sexes, and particularly young women today who

proudly disavow feminism. Watch this program and you'll see why the feminist revolution needed to be waged.

Then there are the socio-economic battles. Jodi Balfour plays Gladys, a poor little rich girl who defiantly insists on taking a job on the floor so she can see how the other half lives. While Gladys is undeniably slumming, the reaction this prompts from her patriarchal monster father is terrifying. Gladys might live in an ivory castle, but one misstep and Daddy will toss her pampered behind out the door and onto the streets.

Meg Tilly's character, Lorna, runs herd over the girls on the line, acting as the voice of reason and the conduit between the women on the floor and the dismissive bosses who run the factory. She's a tough, middle-aged woman with two sons at war and a bitter paraplegic husband who hates the fact that she provides for the family and he can't.

Lorna fearlessly barks out orders, appearing to be the only woman who can go toe to toe with the men; but secretly Lorna is terrified that a telegram will arrive any day with the news that one of her sons is dead.

The rest of the cast is equally good and for such a large ensemble, their stories are well drawn. I didn't feel cheated or rushed, as is frequently the case when you have so many stories attempting to fill a scant six hours of TV.

There's a young woman who has assumed a fake identity and is on the run from her sadistic preacher father who has taken to whipping her. A lesbian dynamic is hinted at, and of course there is the rich girl/poor boy storyline that feels fresh, even though it's an extremely familiar narrative.

And that's just a taste as to the flavour of the show. If the first episode is any indication as to the quality of the rest of the series, Bomb Girls is bound to be a big Canadian hit.

Bomb Girls was created by Michael MacLennan and Adrienne Mitchell and co-produced by Mitchell and Janis Lundman from Back Alley Pictures and Muse Entertainment. It starts this Wednesday, Jan. 4th at 8 p.m. EST on the Global Television Network. Don't miss it.

Cathi Bond is a writer/broadcaster and a regular contributor to rabble.ca. Listen to her movie review podcasts for rabble.ca [by clicking here](#) [2].

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