

Spanish eyes: new kid on the TV drama block

I Know Who You Are - BBC4



Long ago, there was a time when the British comfortably basked in the assumption that their television drama was the best in the world and that the European small screen was dominated by silly quiz shows and people playing apparently incomprehensible practical jokes on each other. But that was before 2011 and the arrival on our screens of the first series of *The Killing*, the Danish noir drama of murder, corruption and politics. Its huge success opened the door to dozens of similar thrillers of dark political machinations and maverick police-people set in Sweden, Iceland and France. Who knew that *Borgen* would make Danish coalition politics so gripping?

The latest continental arrival is *I Know Who You Are*, a Spanish thriller set against the background of the legal and judicial system. The first two episodes aired back to back last Saturday (15 July) and so far, though it doesn't have the relentless dark plotting of *The Killing* (or, so far, its complex and plausible characters), it is shaping up well – though the usual degree of disbelief suspension will be required of the viewer. I don't know much about how the Spanish legal system works but it still seems doubtful that a trial would go ahead when quite so many of the prosecution and defence lawyers, to say nothing of the defendant, were or had been sleeping with each other. But then what legal drama doesn't spice up the courtroom with a little sex across the aisles?

I Know Who You Are opened with a well-dressed man staggering down a road with his head bleeding. Taken to hospital, he turned out to be a senior lawyer, Juan Elias, who claimed to be suffering from post-traumatic amnesia. When his terrifyingly hatchet-faced wife (a judge, though so far she doesn't seem to do much judging) arrived to pick him up, she revealed that their niece Ana was in the car with him, that her blood and phone have been found on the backseat and that she is missing, presumed murdered.

The crux of the plot was whether we the viewer (or anyone else in the drama) believe that Elias really has amnesia (a defence he has used to acquit his own clients 13 times in the past) or whether it is a cunning ruse to cover up the fact he has, for reasons so far obscure, murdered his niece. The meaningful talk of a campaign to get Elias elected as vice-chancellor of the university in place of his brother-in-law, Ana's father, just didn't cut the mustard with me.

The motive couldn't possibly be so boring could it? It's got to be about sex. When the office door of the prosecution lawyer is opened by a fellow lawyer clad in black underwear, we could settle back, knowing exactly what to look forward to – and I Know Who You Are delivered the package as ordered.

Lucy Lethbridge - The Tablet