A.D.C. setting usually doesn't mean a D.C. set for TV series

By Gary Levin, USA TODAY
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It looks like Jefferson Memorial is in the background of this 'Covert Affairs' scene with Oded Fehr and Piper Perabo, but the show isn't actually filmed anywhere near the nation's capital.

By David Giesbrecht, USA Network

The nation's capital is a new favorite subject for TV shows. But almost none of them are actually filmed there.

Showtime's Homeland, which is nominated for nine Emmys this year, is shot in Charlotte. USA's Political Animals, about a Hillary Clinton-esque secretary of State (season finale Sunday, 10 ET/PT), is produced in a Philadelphia warehouse.

HBO's Veep and Netflix's upcoming Kevin Spacey series House of Cards call Baltimore their primary home, though both have shot occasional scenes in the real capital. And other series, from CBS' NCIS to ABC's Scandal and USA's Covert Affairs, are shot in far-flung Los Angeles and Toronto.

Why is Washington so beloved as a TV subject yet so out of reach as an actual filming location? As with politics, the answer comes down to money and access.

Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Maryland, among other states, offer 25% tax rebates to film and TV producers, shaving costs from shows that cost $3 million or more an episode to produce.

"Charlotte is all about the tax breaks," says Homeland.
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