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Wednesday, May 9
(Los Angeles)

betrayal, terror and torture. Flavor it with beheadings, burnings at the stake, witchcraft, pogroms, evil illaging and plundering, adultery and boiling people in a bubbly mix of oil, tar and turpentine. And there miscellaneous annoyances along the way to fill out the time.

inly the stuff of television -- the stuff of "Secret Files of the Inquisition," running four hours on PBS, two nd two next Wednesday.

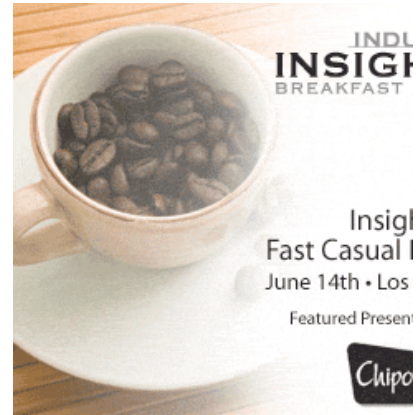
it is a docudrama, and too terribly true. The Inquisition, the Catholic Church's persistent prosecution ecutio to protect its orthodoxy, took 600 years and change. Finally, in 1998, the church opened its hives. This, then, is an extended television with some excruciating re-enactments and actor readings -old-old transcripts and reflections by scholars, including a Vatican priest who didn't seem that happy re on camera.

ot a blood-splattering series from executive-producer-director David Rabinovitch, unusual in an era of nd dicing. In fact, most of the early hours plod -- though, restrained or not, there's a lot of menace here.

ht not appeal to the faithful, who have had faith problems in recent years. This is not the church's ur, or, actually, finest 600 years. In the Vatican, the office for the Inquisition has been long since d. It's now the less-catchy Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. It was run by Cardinal Joseph r from 1981 until two years ago, when he moved up to become Pope Benedict XVI.

iting: NR

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