

Lawyers In Your Living Room! Law on Television

Edited by Michael Asimow (American Bar Association 2009)

Lawyer shows have been a fixture on television for more than 50 years, and they're still going strong today. This book includes chapters on most of these shows.. It's the perfect gift for your friends and family who love TV shows about law and lawyers. It has chapters on golden oldies like *Perry Mason*, *The Defenders*, *Matlock*, *LA Law*, and *Picket Fences*, as well as newer programs like *Law & Order*, *The Practice*, *Boston Legal*, and *Ally McBeal*. The book includes celebrity forwards by Sam Waterston (who played Jack McCoy on *Law & Order*) and James Woods (who played the lead on *Shark*). The book also covers British shows like *Rumpole of the Bailey* and daytime judge shows like *Judge Judy*. It even has chapters about writing for legal television and about the lawyers on *The Simpsons*, *Seinfeld*, and *The West Wing*. Use this book to pick out the old TV series that you saw long ago, or never saw at all, and order the DVDs or stream the programs now. (The classic show from the 1960s *The Defenders* is now available on DVD!)

Praise for *Lawyers in Your Living Room!*

This is an entertaining and informative book that allows for a certain amount of outside-the-box thinking...It is, of course, entertaining to read about the particular legal shows, especially those that may have less familiarity to American audiences. Most lawyers are probably familiar with *Rumpole*; less may know *Kavanagh*, *QC*, played by John Thaw (of Inspector Morse fame)... This is an intriguing book with insightful commentary across the universe of shows considered... The book provides enough so that it can be read as part of the literature of popular culture, but also provides some insights for lawyers. Does life imitate art? On a variety of levels, the book is one that should find a useful and informative place on the lawyer's bookshelf.

--Steven M. Richman (New Jersey Lawyer)

Since the 1960s, programs featuring legal themes and lawyers have been a staple of American television. This genre of programming has garnered millions of fans, including this reviewer, and these popular shows have shaped public expectations of the legal system and of the role of lawyers in our society. In *Lawyers in Your Living Room! Law on Television*, Michael Asimow...has assembled a collection of thought-provoking, original essays that examine the portrayal of lawyers and the judicial system on the small screen...

In his preface, Asimow discusses legal television as popular culture and explores how the genre can provide clues about viewing audiences' perceptions of lawyers and the law. He concludes that legal television as "pop culture serves as a powerful teacher" But, is this a good thing?...

The book's introduction examines the importance of television as the "primary form of socialization and education" in post-World-War-II America. It provides a history of law on television, covering everything from the earliest shows in the 1960s to the most recent series, and reflects on how trends in legal programs mirror political events and the country's changing moods. Other preliminary essays discuss television writing, legal advisers and consultants, media effects, and professional ethics, considering each topic in relation to the special issues and problems presented by television shows about the law...

Just select the show you are interested in and read its chapter. You do not need to read the chapters in sequential order, as each can stand on its own. Each essay is thoroughly researched and provides citations to a wealth of resources for additional reading. ... *Lawyers in Your Living Room! Law on Television* achieves the goal set by Asimow in the preface, namely to "convey a sense of the richness and vigor of legal television, past and present, foreign and domestic." This book is highly recommended.

--Ruth J. Hill, Law Library Journal

This anthology is well written and covers nearly all of the TV lawyer shows until about 2010. I enjoyed remembering the highpoints of why I did or did not like each show. As a retired lawyer, I admit that I tried to avoid most TV shows about lawyers, but I couldn't help but watch Perry Mason growing up, LA Law, and the original Law and Order. The book covers those and more. Liberal or conservative viewpoint? Plot or character emphasized? It's all in this fine book.

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