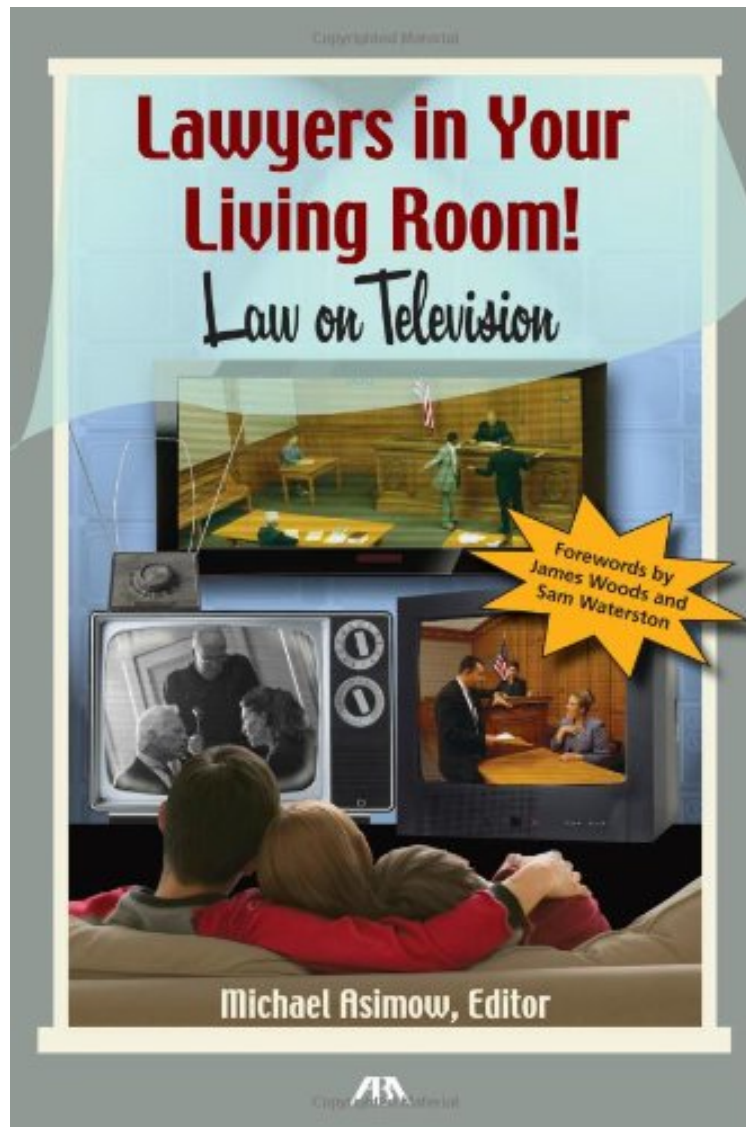


Lawyers in Your Living Room!: Law on Television

From Brand: American Bar Association

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From Brand: American Bar Association : Lawyers in Your Living Room!: Law on Television before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Lawyers in Your Living Room!: Law on Television:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. TV LawyersBy CLCThis 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. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Reviewing Legal Dramas By Acute Observer Lawyers in Your Living Room! Michael Asimov is the editor of this book which analyzes the television shows that feature lawyers. This 2003 book has 432 pages for its 34 chapters (divided into six parts); it has an Index and ten pages About the Authors. The Preface discusses the portrayal of lawyers for entertainment by the producers. Popular culture reflects what people believe, or what they are told to believe. Do people view lawyers as unethical and greedy scoundrels? What about Perry Mason or Matlock? Do people learn about cowboys and private detectives from entertainment or personal experience (p.xxi)? Everything you see on TV is paid for by advertising, and almost everything is performed by paid actors, from those who read the news, who perform in dramas and quiz shows, to the actors on the playing fields. But you knew that? Television shows can have an educational function (p.xxiii). Elayne Rapping discusses the History of Law on Television in the Introduction. Why is there a negative portrayal of defense attorneys in the Corporate Media? Maybe because they defend ordinary people. Who really believes that everyone arrested is guilty? Is it caused by a need to look down on others? One quality of TV is its keeps people isolated, unlike movies or stadiums. And it lets Big Corporations control peoples thinking via popular culture manufactured by the many shows. Fictional programming actually has a much greater influence than the news (p.xxx). [No mention here of the effects of advertising.] The emphasis on police shows suggests a change in policy from earlier decades. [Remember those cowboy shows?] The Forewords discusses the Shark and Law and Order programs by James Woods and Sam Waterston. Both played prosecutors. You will find some of these chapters more interesting than the others. Legal dramas record how the government treats an individual. Law is based on property rights. Defense lawyers were heroes in defending the innocent accused (p.xxxi). This argues against the media reports where an accusation is considered a guilty conviction (as in those police shows). Is there anything wrong here? Arent those tides of change in dominant social values and in peoples thinking just a mirror of the reports in the Corporate Media (p.xxxiv)? Were those Perry Mason shows unrealistic? First, shows on TV are entertainment not documentaries (like House or those police shows). They can be educational in teaching that an accusation isnt a verdict (refer to the OJ Simpson or Robert Blake trials). How many question the motives of the media in how they play the news? Absence of Malice is a movie that does this. Erle Stanley Gardner was hired by the Hearst Press in 1943 to report on the Sir Harry Oakes murder trial. Murders by organized crime are seldom solved by the police unless they blame an innocent man was mentioned in one of his novels. So too finding a bullet on a stretcher is only proof that it was planted there. Nevins doesnt mention the history of Los Angeles in the 1930s. The Combination of DA Buron Fitts, Police Chief Jim Davies, and Mayor Frank Shaw collaborated with local organized crime. Erle Stanley Gardner and Raymond Chandler wrote novels set in this era. Gardner was listed in The Legal 100 and was a founder of the Court of Last Resort which sought to free the innocent convicted. The book Secrets of the Best Selling Author tells about Gardners techniques for writing novels. They used Preliminary Hearings in the TV shows as it avoided paying twelve actors to just sit on a jury. I cant comment on many of these series since I didnt watch them (work schedules or changing preferences). Note how many of these police shows end with a confession by the guilty person. This echoes the Perry Mason shows. Few suspects follow Earl Rogers advice (Call us first then keep your mouth shut). Chapter 11 has descriptions about the characters as if they were real persons. A legal drama that runs on and on is like a soap opera where the importance is on the characters and not the story. What if you miss an episode or two? The short-lived Shark show was famous for its many violations of legal ethics. I think it was cancelled because Shark was not a likable character like Matlock (Chapter 14). Isnt the ends justify the means one of the most misquoted phrases in the world (p.165)? Was its purpose to warn people about prosecutorial misconduct after a famous trial in Los Angeles? Chapter 16 discusses some interesting cases in the British TV series Blind Justice. Too controversial? Read Chapter 17. Barristers must practice solely (unlike the USA). Another series tells about the British judicial system (Chapter 18). Chapter 24 tells about lawyers on French television (they use the Civil Law system that goes back to Roman Law). Theyve seen American TV shows (spoken in French). Judges lead the trial (p.276). French lawyers are portrayed as villains in cinema and literature. Avocats et Associs shows the work of lawyers in a firm, they usually deal with civil disputes (p.278). Spanish TV concentrates on divorce cases (Chapter 25). Part VI discusses the so-called reality shows that are not the real world of courtrooms and litigation. There is no chapter on the most popular American TV show where conflicting parties appear before a lawyer (and former politician) in an attempt to settle a problem. The audience gives their opinions. At the end there is a sermonette: take care of yourself. This ringmaster was born in a bomb shelter during the Little Blitz. Chapter 26 judges Judge Judy; her behavior is far from judicious (p.302). [Its entertainment, not reality.] Since 2001 these Judge shows were most popular during daytime (events, not serials). Chapter 27 analyzes these shows. Diversity in judges leads to popularity. Most follow the judge-centered format (p.312). This diversity does not match reality. Chapter 28 tells about the Judge shows in Germany. Judges there are civil servants who pass exams to get their appointed positions. Chapter 29 discusses television shows in Brazil. The popularity of one show is based on human error - the wish to be powerful enough to act on a whim without suffering the consequences. [Listen to an audience on the Jerry Show.] A populist viewpoint is always popular. Lawyers are used for satire on non-legal TV shows (Part VII). Green Acres was a farce; no one raised in a city can become a good

farmer on a whim (Chapter 30). Seinfeld was a comedy of manners that mocked the servants of the rich (Chapter 31). These trendy individuals are shows to be foolish in their decisions so as to let viewers feel superior to them. The Simpsons is a parody of a family situation comedy (Chapter 32). [What about Married With Children?] Does the success of a show depend on foolish fans? Lawyers depend on people for their jobs (p.373). Picket Fences seems like another parody comedy (Chapter 33). One example is on page 378. Chapter 34 discusses the lawyers on The West Wing. Was Bartlet's resignation caused by dropping ratings? [I watched a couple of times and thought its drama seemed unusually false.] This book is worth reading for its viewpoints on shows that you won't find in newspapers.

From Perry Mason and The Defenders in the 1960s to L.A. Law in the 80s, The Practice and Ally McBeal in the 90s, to Boston Legal, Shark and Law Order today, the television industry has generated an endless stream of dramatic series involving law and lawyers. This new guide examines television series from the past and present, domestic and foreign, that are devoted to the law.