

Recycling Old TV Shows for Lawyers

By Lawrence Savell

RECENT unpublished study by the Home Appliance Institute indicated that videocassette recorders are the most common appliances found in the homes of attorneys (82.6 percent), edging out document-shredders (78.5 percent), lint vacuums (76.9 percent), and foot-soaking machines (72.1 percent). The study also noted that lawyers use their VCRs differently than other people do. While most folks use a VCR to tape programs that are on after they go to bed, lawyers tend to tape programs that are on before they come home from work. Of course, these are the same programs.

Commercial television has successfully tapped both audiences with shows such as "L.A. Law," which provides nonlawyers deluged with unrealistic fantasy programs a glimpse of life in a law firm, and provides lawyers deluged with life in a law firm an unrealistic fantasy program. Shrewd network programming executives reportedly are attempting to capitalize on the success of law-related shows as "L.A. Law," "The People's Court," and "Night Court" by subtly reworking legal themes into a number of older or lower-rated offerings. The results of these efforts include the following proposed mid-season replacements:

The Sheperdizer: Edward Woodward stars as the mysterious grey-haired former ALR operative who rescues from impending doom first-year associates who neglect to investigate the subsequent history of cases they cite in office memoranda.

Della Street Blues: After 30 years as Perry Mason's "confidential secretary," Della finally confronts her boss, demanding a raise, her own desk, and permission to change her hairdo. Mason, flabbergasted, summons an aging Paul Drake to investigate why his chair has shrunk.

I Love Lucite: A divorced former bandleader changes careers in mid-life and joins a Wall Street law firm as a corporate partner specializing in public offerings.

Candid in Camera: Allen Funt strikes again, capturing

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involved an issue of the effect of a forum non conveniens motion on a later but similar motion made to another judge. In *Zipfel*, the original

unsuspecting participants during proceedings inside court chambers. This week: exploding gavels, briefs typed with invisible ink, and ringing telephones with cemented-down receivers.

Puttin' on the Torts: Luminaries from local organized-bar groups around the country compete for valuable prizes by acting out the facts of selected court opinions from Prosser's "Casebook on Torts."

Retraining: Romance and mystery abound as Maddie and David, operators of a professional proofreading agency, attempt to detect hidden differences between documents.

My Three Cons: Fred MacMurray returns to television as the jovial, yet fatherly, parole officer for a trio of young recidivist felons. This week: "A Chip off the Old Cellblock."

The Slip and Fall Guy: Lee Majors stars as Trip Seekers, a stuntman who moonlights as a rainmaker for an unscrupulous personal injury lawyer.

The Tax of Life: Three female law school roommates struggle with boyfriends, changing fashions, growing up away from home, and the intricacies of the Internal Revenue Code.

Leave It All to Beaver: Eddie Haskell, having graduated from Mayfield Law School, persuades a gullible Ward Cleaver to execute a new will bequeathing his entire estate to his youngest son who, as a result of a loss in a marbles game earlier that afternoon, owes Haskell whatever money he gets for a month. [First of a two-part episode; next week: "Ward and Eddie Vacation in Beirut."]

Bar/BERI Jones: Buddy Ebsen stars as a private investigator who specializes in determining why his clients failed the bar exam.

The Liddy Gator Show: Shortly after cartoon character Wally Gator is killed in an accident at the zoo, his attorney sister, Lydia, arrives on the scene and institutes a wrongful-death action against the city, the zookeeper, and the manufacturers of "Taste-Good Alligator Food."

Eight Years Is Enough: Fed up with practice in a big-city law firm, a senior associate resigns to pursue his lifelong dream of watching the six o'clock news.

Letters

To the Editor

So, What's New?

To the Editor:

I wish to call attention to an article which appeared in the April 11, 1987 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*. The article was entitled "Medicine's Legal Nightmare" and I quote from a portion of it.

"Only a nuisance 30 years ago, malpractice suits against doctors and hospitals today cost almost \$50,000,000 a year. Result: embittered doctors cry foul, patients pay higher bills."

"To a number of American doctors, the greatest menace to medicine in this country is 51-year-old San Francisco attorney Melvin M. Belli."

"So far as the records show, Belli has never taken sides on socialized medicine, compulsory health insurance, closed-panel practices or similar touchy topics in medical economics."

Nevertheless, both in private and public, doctors have strongly urged that he be disbarred, poached in boiling oil and afflicted with kidney stones, gallstones and ivy poisoning, preferably all at the same time."

"Hanging is much too good for him," said a recent president of the local county medical society. "He should be made to suffer as we have suffered."

"I can't understand that attitude," Belli reported. "Some of my best friends are doctors."

So what's new?

New York, N.Y.
Herman B. Glaser

Injury Lawyers Get Lowdown

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