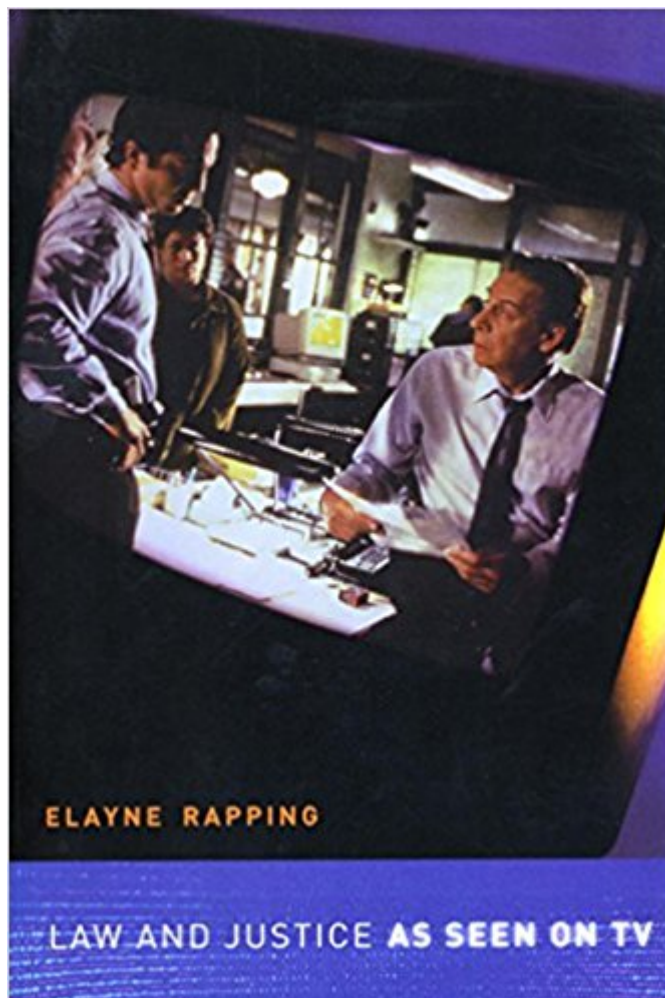




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Law And Justice As Seen On TV



Synopsis

Law and Justice as Seen on TV examines the impact, significance, and social and political problems raised by the enormous onslaught of law-related television programming, both fiction and nonfiction, in the years since the rise of live televised trials as major media events. The book weaves together the various strands—media history and analysis, legal history and policy, and the national turn to the political right in the last decades—which gave birth to this trend and has kept it thriving and growing, by leaps and bounds, to the present day. Beginning with the history of courtroom drama on TV and its various contradictions and shifts, since the late 1940s to the present, the book analyzes the various entertainment series and genres that have so proliferated in recent years, giving special attention to such popular and influential series as "Law and Order" and "Cops." The second section begins by charting the complex and contested history of the coming of cameras to the courtroom and the way in which that legal decision led to televised trials and to the rise of Court TV. It examines as especially interesting and important the major trials—such as those of the Menendez brothers, O.J. Simpson, and Timothy McVeigh—which helped to shape the way television came to frame trials and their social implications for public consumption. From there it examines major social issues—gender violence, youth crime, family dysfunction, victims' rights which, with the rise of the courtroom as a major political and television arena, have come to be viewed largely as legal issues to be discussed and determined in legal terms by Americans in general. Accessible and lucid, Law and Justice as Seen on TV concludes with an examination of the broad implications of this social and cultural trend, closing with some thoughts about its expansion, on television and in the actual legal arena, during the "war on terrorism" in the wake of 9/11.

Book Information

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"In recent years, an expanding wave of law and criminal justice programs has emerged on American television. Elayne Rapping proves a masterful guide in her overview of a wide range of TV narrative fiction series, Court TV, talk shows, news, and other programs that deals with law, order, criminality, and justice, contextualizing TV crime and justice in the context of fierce political battles over these topics in the past decades of American history."-Douglas Kellner,author of Media Culture and Media Spectacle"Law and Justice as Seen on TV provides a comprehensive and sophisticated look at the ways law appears nightly in the living rooms of millions of Americans. Combining valuable insights about the workings of the television industry with an insightful argument about the criminalization of American life, Elayne Rapping has made a distinctive contribution to interdisciplinary legal scholarship. Her work shows how valuable the analysis of popular culture can be in illuminating some of the most important legal and social issues of our time." -Austin Sarat,William Nelson Cromwell Professor of Jurisprudence and Political Science, Amherst College"Law and Justice as Seen on TV is deliberately provocative."-Akron Beacon Journal"Lively and engagingly written, it explores as Rapping writes, "an interplay of aesthetics, politics, and legal history [that] come together in complex and often contradictory ways. Anyone who has watched these shows will appreciate seeing them in a new way. Much of the enjoyment in reading the book comes from Rapping's ability to draw on a wide range of cultural and intellectual interests and present them in down-to-earth language."-Trial"Accessible and lucid." -www.sirreadalot.org

Elayne Rapping is a Professor of Women's Studies and Media Studies at SUNY Buffalo and a nationally known media critic and analyst, whose work has appeared in The Village Voice, Newsday, The Nation, Cineaste, and other publications. Her recent books include Media-tions: Forays into the Culture and Gender Wars and The Culture of Recovery: Making Sense of the Self-Help movement in Women's Lives. She lives in Buffalo and Manhattan.

I found this book to be extremely informative and insightful about the way that today's TV shows focusing on the legal system run surprisingly parallel to the actual ways in which our criminal justice system has shifted from a liberal concern for civil liberties and defendants rights to an increasingly punitive focus on punishment and the presumption of guilt. Rapping has a really clear and readable

writing style unusual for academics. I would recommend this anyone interested media and/or criminal and legal issues

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