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| |  | | --- | |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | [Christine Corcos](http://docs.google.com/bios.htm#corcos)     |  | | --- | | **Read other reviews:**  [Official site](http://www.cbs.com/primetime/queens_supreme/)  [Michael Asimow](http://docs.google.com/queens_asimow.htm)  [Libby A. White](http://docs.google.com/queens_white.htm) |   It's somewhat disturbing to consider that the drama in the first two episodes centers on whether one of the major characters is going to spray a courtroom with bullets, especially when he is supposed to represent the rule of law. | |  | | --- | | ***QUEENS SUPREME***  by Christine Corcos  CBS has launched yet another legal drama, *Queens Supreme*, set in New York City's trial court system. The title derives from the borough (Queens) and the name of the court involved (in New York State trial courts are called "supreme" courts.) Like the short lived *First Monday* and *The Court*, *Queens Supreme* revolves around the lives and work of judges-unlike the two former series, which simply could not make interesting drama out of the talking heads that populate Appellate Court Land, this new show presents us with trial judges and trial courts, that offer much more in the way of legal conflict likely to seem relevant to the average television viewer.  Is *Queens Supreme* more successful in its presentation of the law and its effects? So far, I give the show a qualified yes. The acting is very, very good. The ensemble cast keeps the sparks flying. As liberal, quirky, off the wall Jack Moran, Oliver Platt (*Married to the Mob, Flatliners, Working Girl*) presents us with a convincing picture of a power-obsessed, principle-obsessed jurist. Kristen Johnson (*3d Rock from the Sun*) made a striking guest appearance in the premiere episode as his estranged wife, prowling the corridors looking for him, or rather his signature, on divorce papers. L. Scott Caldwell is efficient and cranky as Judge Rose Barnea, concerned about her colleagues' problems but more about their likely effect on the trial docket. Robert Loggia, a veteran film actor, is on hand as Judge Thomas O'Neill. Carmen Hui and James Madio as judicial clerks suggest the combination of loyalty and dissatisfaction that afflicts capable but overworked and underappreciated aides. The first episode features a stressed-out juror tired of the deadlock over a verdict and desperate for a smoke who takes over the courtroom until his fellow jurors and the judge give him 1) a cigarette and 2) a verdict. Does his admittedly extreme reaction represent the unhappiness that jurors may feel over the seemingly endless dance that the legal system engages in? Yes. Is it realistic? No, but who watches television for realism?  Well, to some extent, I do, and here I part company with the show's writers. *Queens Supreme* serves up a number of unappetizing stereotypes that reflect but also exaggerate reality. Both Moran and Barnea are overbearing and bossy folks whose intense interest in their own positions suggests that justice takes a back seat to ego. The clerks are so incredibly competent that we don't understand why they haven't moved on to better paying, higher status positions in the legal world (maybe the writers will let us know as the series goes on). And the second episode, which was actually the show's pilot, and introducing Annabella Sciorra as new judge Kim Vicidomini (whose name no one can pronounce) also introduces that age-old cat fight scenario between women lawyers, in this case Vicidomini and Barnea. Vicidomini seems to have gotten her position through political connections; Barnea resents this and says so, both behind Vicidomini's back and to her face. Realistic? Possibly, although I find it difficult to believe that sitting judges would welcome a new colleague by telling her they consider her incompetent. Barnea makes clear that no sisterhood exists, particularly since Vicidomini is (gasp) a Republican. But Moran, the left winger, immediately takes to Vicidomini, setting up, we assume, more drama to come. In addition, Vicidomini seems to be far more politically savvy than most of the young lawyers I know-but maybe that's why she got her appointment.  Further, in both of the first two episodes, Moran's penchant for "packing heat" is a major part of the plot. This liberal carries a gun into his courtroom, although he doesn't use it until the second show. He does, however, show it to the angry juror in the first episode, a relevation that one would have expected would lead to a resolution of the standoff long before police finally storm the courtroom. It's somewhat disturbing to consider that the drama in the first two episodes centers on whether one of the major characters is going to spray a courtroom with bullets, especially when he is supposed to represent the rule of law.  Another recurring plot dynamic is the use of the "judges' bathroom" in which the judges can spy on their juries. Ever since the unisex room in *Ally McBeal*, bathroom humor has achieved new status. Clips from the new comedy [*A.U.S.A*](http://tv.zap2it.com/shows/video/insidetv/insidetv_ausa.html). also demonstrate "bathroom humor": apparently in one episode a young lawyer accidentally gets water on a certain part of his trousers and is caught by a judge as he tries to dry his garment using one of those handy blow dryers. Another preview clip shows the new attorneys learning about weaponry. Are bathrooms and guns now to be permanent fixtures in lawyer dramas?  Most of the judges I know refuse to watch any of the "judge shows" on television, on the grounds that such shows are necessarily unrepresentative of what jurists actually do. It's quite understandable.  Whether or not *Queens Supreme* lasts the rest of the season, and I doubt it will make it much past the third or fourth episode, lawyer shows will not be in short supply. In fact, NBC plans to launch a new comedy, also set in New York, *A. U. S. A.*, (for *Assistant United States Attorneys*) in February. Hope, and lawyers, spring eternal.  Posted February 7, 2003 |   **Would you like to comment on this article? 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