

Talking with MICHELE GREENE

Entertainment

STAR SPEAK



FRANK SANELLO

acter is such a patriarch and has such a tremendous amount of authority. Once in a while, I'll be at a lawyer's function — they like to bring us in for color now and then — and some lawyer will ask me a question only a lawyer would understand. I just give him a blank stare.

Q. What do you think of attorneys in real life?
A. I respect them. I didn't use to. I

Michele Greene has gotten tough. During the first two years on NBC-TV's "L.A. Law," her character, Abby Perkins, was harassed by a drunken husband — and denied a partnership by the members of the law firm where she worked.

Last season, Perkins began to evolve into a forceful character. She ended up shooting to death a client who attacked her. A 27-year-old actress, Greene grew up in Los Angeles, where she was raised by her widowed mother. The woman supported Greene and her brother, now a Harvard poetry professor, by selling real estate.

Greene is a graduate of the University of Southern California, where she studied at John Houseman's Conservatory Theatre. She was cast as a baseball player's wife in the short-lived 1983 TV series "Bay City Blues."

When that show's creator, Steven Bochco, wrote the pilot for "L.A. Law," he remembered Greene and cast her without an audition.

Q. Your character on "L.A. Law" has undergone a dramatic evolution over the past few years, hasn't she?
A. She went from being this mouseburger to a powerhouse attorney who doesn't take guff from anybody.

Q. A recent magazine article claimed you went into the producer's office and demanded that Abby Perkins not be such a wimp.
A. That article sounded like I've spent years storming into Steven Bochco's office, saying, "I want this, and I want that," which is not what happened. I just don't have that kind of clout.

Q. Your co-star Richard Dysart once told me that real lawyers come up to him and start discussing very technical/legal points. Has that happened to you?
A. Once in a while, but mostly it happens to Richard, because his char-

'I respect attorneys. I didn't use to. But I've come to realize it's a terrifically difficult job.'

— Michele Greene

used to think they were sleaze bags who spent a tremendous amount of time arguing about money. But I've come to realize it's a terrifically difficult job.



Michele Greene

Q. This season Abby Perkins returned to the "L.A. Law" firm after working for a year as an independent attorney. Does this new situation work better for you dramatically?
A. Once in a while, but mostly it happens to Richard, because his char-

A. I think so. I really loved having my character leave the firm. It gave me the opportunity to handle gritty cases that wouldn't come walking through the door of a ritzy law firm like the one on "L.A. Law."

But it was hard to keep coming up with story lines for someone who wasn't at the firm. They couldn't tie me into scenes with the other characters, because there was no dramatic reason for me to be there.

Q. As part of your evolution, you've become more glamorous and now have a "power" hair style.
A. I looked at clips from the first season and ended up laughing on the floor at how horrible I looked. I couldn't believe it. It was real "bow-wow" time.

Q. What would you like to see happen to your character this season?
A. I'd like to begin to deal with her family life. She has a young son we haven't seen for quite some time.

I just talked about this to the writers a couple of weeks ago. Abby's situation is very real. She's a single mother who can't spend much time with her 8-year-old son. I feel guilty if I work 15 hours a day and haven't spent time with my dogs! What am I going to do when I have kids?

Q. Why did you decide, a few years ago, to go and dig toilets for poor people in Mexico?
A. This is the last time I talk about it — my brother said me s so sick of reading about my building those damn latrines in Mexico!

Six months before "L.A. Law," I got possessed of this notion to work for an organization called Amigos de las Americas. It's sort of like the Peace Corps. Most people wouldn't think digging latrines was fun, but it was.

You sleep on a dirt floor. There's no running water. Life is reduced to its lowest common denominator. It was the most calm, peaceful environment.

You realize how little you need to get along — to be happy.
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Is Park Overall really a Southerner?

ASK DICK KLEINER



DICK KLEINER

by the singing and acting ability of Shirley Jones. Was she ever on the stage? What other films did she do? — R.S.K., Camarillo, Calif.

A. Shirley Jones is quite a talent. Actually, she started on stage, with the Pittsburgh Light Opera Company. She had a small role in "South Pacific," then a bigger role in "Me and Juliet," which led to her film debut in "Oklahoma." She has been in many movies — she won an Oscar for "Elmer Gantry" and she was in "Carousel," to name a couple. She starred in the TV series "The Partridge Family" and in "Shirley." She is married

Q. My mother and I were just discussing Park Overall of "Empty Nest." Is she really from Arkansas. Her thick accent makes that hard to believe. — D.D.C., Newnata, Ark.

A. Park Overall is from Tennessee — Greenville, to be precise. The accent is real, but she puts it on a little thicker for TV.

Q. Please settle a \$5 bet between my sister Karol and me. I swear that I recall that Judy Carne and the late Pete Duel of "Alias Smith and Jones" were sister and brother. She thinks I'm nuts. Who wins? — K.W., Edinboro, Pa.

A. Pay up. Untrue. That shows you shouldn't swear.

Q. In the '60s or early '70s, there was a movie with, I believe, Doris Day and Richard Widmark. It was about a married couple unable to have children. It was very funny. What was its name? — B.S., Mackay, Idaho.

A. That was "The Tunnel of Love" but it was earlier than you remember — it came out in 1958.

Q. I would like to know when "Lost In Space" first came on TV. Was it before "Star Trek"? — S.P., Hot Springs, Ark.

A. "Lost In Space" premiered on TV on Sept. 15, 1965, almost exactly a year before "Star Trek," which made its debut on Sept. 8, 1966.

Q. Having recently purchased and watched videotapes of "Oklahoma" and "The Music Man," I have once again been enthralled and astounded



Park Overall Shirley Jones

to Marty Ingels, and still does occasional roles.

Q. What else has Kabir Bedi done besides an episode of "Molly Dodd"? Wasn't he in some TV film about 10 years ago? — A.C., Burlington, Wash.

A. He's been in quite a few movies, but all were on the big screen — "Swashbuckler," "Ashanti," "The Thief of Bagdad" and "Octopussy," to name a few. Last year, he was in a flop called "The Beast."

Q. Is Karen Farentino of "Hooperman" the daughter of James Farentino and Michele Lee? — D.P., Nacogdoches, Texas.

A. Hardly. Her name is Debra Farentino, not Karen; and she was James Farentino's wife (as was Lee), not his daughter. Go to your room.

OUR LANGUAGE

by Jeffrey McQuain

Mentation refers to thought or mental activity. This noun starts like mental, which may help your mentation about mentation.

In sewing, seam joins two pieces of cloth with a line of stitches. Sew up this word by pronouncing seam like seem.

Q. Can you help me with a strange word I just saw: "quidnunc"?
A. Quidnunc comes from the Latin quid nunc, which translates into English as "What now?" A quidnunc is any person who asks that type of question frequently, especially a gossip or a busybody. Pronounce this noun "KWID-nunk," but be careful whom you call a quidnunc.

Nary means "not any" or "not one." If you're wary about spelling this adjective, change the w of wary to n for nary.

Something biocidal destroys life or proves deadly. To be on the right side of this adjective, pronounce biocidal "by-oh-SIDE-al."

OUR LANGUAGE AD-VICE: The sign at a delicatessen takes today's Ad-Vice Award for this pricing guide: "Each costs a quarter apiece." Avoid redundancy by not using each and apiece together. "Each costs a quarter" would indicate the individual price, as would "These items cost a quarter apiece." Watch each word you use, and your writing will be of a piece.

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