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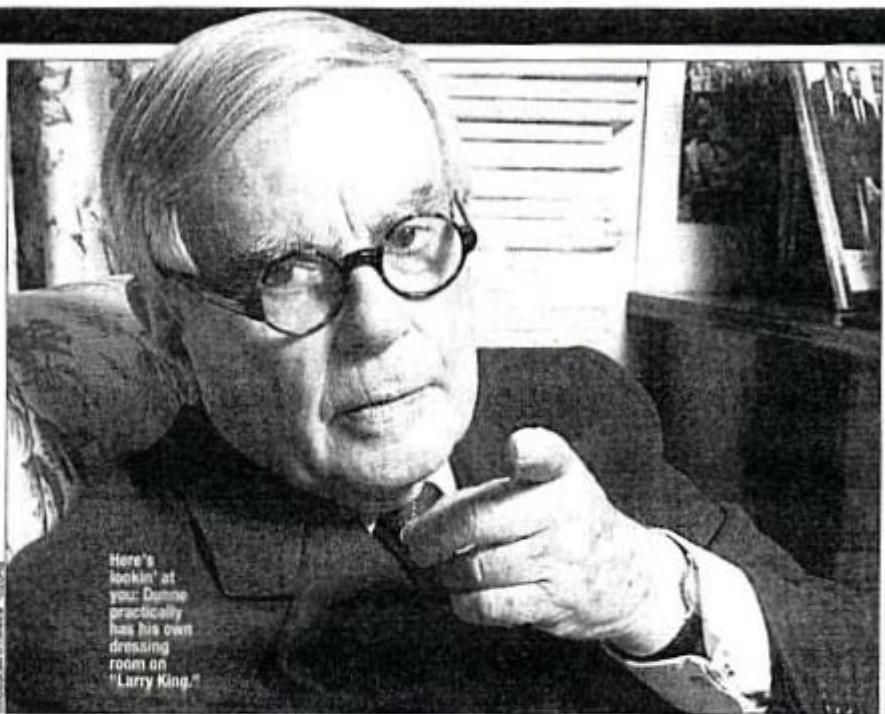
TV Sunday

We need to talk
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If they're rich and powerful and in a spot of bother, Dominick Dunne's got them nailed on Court TV

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY LAWRENCE

Here's lookin' at you: Dunne practically has his own dressing room on "Larry King."



WHO DUNNE IT?

By MICHAEL GILTZ

SURELY best-selling author Dominick Dunne is the final person connected to the O.J. Simpson trial to get his own TV show. "Oh dear," laughs the 76-year-old chronicler of the upper crust. "They've all had such bad luck, haven't they?"

His luck appears to be holding up much better.

A show called "**Dominick Dunne's Power, Privilege and Justice!**" premieres Wednesday night on Court TV.

It might as well be titled "Crimes of the Rich & Famous" — an heiress who killed the Argentine polo player she'd been stabbing for pleasure; a Boston social climber who allegedly killed his Atlanta socialite wife when their mixed marriage held him back from conquering Palm Beach society.

It's right up the alley of the author who made his name writing blue-blooded roman à clef like "The Two Mrs. Grenvilles." Dunne graduated from jicky society tattlers to serious crime reporting for *Vanity Fair* the writes a monthly column) and became an outspoken defender of victim's rights after his daughter was murdered and the killer spent a mere two-and-a-half years in jail.

"That's always just driven me exple-

tive crazy," says Dunne in a quiet but intense voice. "Just crazy."

He wasn't looking for a TV show. Dunne practically has his own dressing room on "Larry King" anyway.

But it has proven enjoyable, he says, and he certainly hopes to do better than most of the other people thrust into the spotlight by O.J.

Did he ever watch Jonnie Cochran's

that matter.

"I saw it as little as possible," says Dunne. "The fact is she lost the case and got a \$4-million book deal."

Then there's Greta Van Susteren, who Dunne famously grew furious with the day the O.J. verdict was announced.

"I got so angry, because I was all emotional anyway that he had been acquitted. I had like a mini-nervous breakdown, if you want to know the truth," laughs Dunne.

Van Susteren, who labeled him an anarchist on the air, called the next day to apologize, but it didn't take.

"Then the civil trial came and we had a mutual friend and she brought us together at lunch one day and Greta said, 'Let's get over it.' And I said, 'Okay,' and we shook hands.

"I'm very fond of Greta. I like her a lot now. I was on her show the other night."

Dunne's own obsession with getting the travails of the very famous began in 1943 when he was a boy at Canterbury, the upper-crust Connecticut boarding school.

He became entranced with the scandal of the day: the killing of society girl Patricia Burton by her gigolo husband

Wayne Lonergan, who'd apparently also dallied with her father. The killing was sensational enough, but Lonergan's alibi — he was sleeping with a soldier on leave at the time — made it instantly infamous.

"During sports — I was always a [expletive] athlete; it used to be the shame of my father that I was so terrible — at the risk daily of getting kicked out of this strict school, I would go to the little town of New Milford to buy the *New York Daily Mirror* and the *New York Journal-American*. They used to have great crime coverage."

Dunne compares the Burton case to the Skakel trial, where descriptions of killer Michael Skakel masturbating in a tree didn't even raise an eyebrow.

Dunne brought the long-dormant case back to life with his thinly veiled fictional account "A Season in Purgatory" and by providing crucial information to former Detective Mark Fuhrman about the case.

Now Dunne is taking off the summer adamantly refusing to attend anymore high-profile trials — until he finishes his latest novel. It's called "A Solo Act" and brings back to life his alter ego, Gus Bailey.

"I killed off Gus Bailey to rid myself of my obsession with O.J. Simpson," says Dunne. "And it didn't work. So anyway, he's back."

'The fact is, Marcia Clark lost the O.J. case and got a \$4-million book deal'

show, also on Court TV?

"No," he says. "I just couldn't look at Joannie Cochran. I was at Le Cirque one night [recently] and he was there and I wasn't aware of it. Well if I'd known, I would have gone over and spoken to him now. Enough years have passed."

"But at that time when Court TV gave him that show, it was still too much of a wound."

Marcia Clark's attempt at a syndicated show called "Lady Law" didn't fare much better with Dunne — or anyone else, for