

The DAILY NEWS TRANSCRIPT

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Kickham is 'At The Bar'

Norwood lawyer hosts monthly TV show

By Sarah MacDonald
NEWS STAFF WRITER

NORWOOD - Bill Kickham wants to be a star.

Almost every week for eight years, he has made the drive to the Comcast cable studio in Norwood to tape his very own talk show based on the legal system. He hopes to use the experience as a stepping stone.

"I'd like to take it to a broader stage, maybe as a national legal commentator," said Kickham, 44.

For now, he concentrates on his local access show, which began in 1995, when Kickham moved to West-

wood.

"When I moved here I noticed that there wasn't really any legal programming, so I developed a show. When they asked me what I wanted to

**Hey,
Neighbor**

call it, I remember not even thinking about it that much. I just said 'How about 'At

The Bar?'" Kickham said.

The name stuck.

In this week's episode, Kickham hosts Bain Testa, news editor for the trade newspaper Massachusetts Lawyer's Weekly. The pair discuss a few recent decisions that could affect

Massachusetts residents including child support rulings and medical malpractice.

The idea is to help the average person understand aspects of the law which could affect them, said Kickham, who runs a Westwood law firm.

"Most people know that if they are in an accident they're entitled to some damages, but what they don't know is how much and from whom. The technical, procedural steps that are involved are what people don't understand," he said.

That is what he aims to provide, he said.

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Lawyer dishes advice on TV

KICKHAM, *From A1*

"The vast majority of legal problems people have are because they're being reactive. I think they should be more proactive about it. People would be better off if they knew what to do and what not to do in a general sense," Kickham said.

He said the show also dispels myths and clarifies misconceptions people have about the law. With the popularity of television series like 'Law & Order,' clients expect cases to be resolved quickly and smoothly, Kickham said.

"That's not the way it works," he said. "Ninety percent of civil cases never go to trial because they're settled out of court. Of the 10 percent that do make it to

trial, the trial lasts on average three to five days. But before that there's 15 to 18 months of paper work, pleadings, motions, depositions, arguments, forms that go back and forth."

Kickham grew up in Brookline and his father was a lawyer. Kickham said he always knew he would follow that path.

"Everyone always told me I should be a lawyer because I spoke well and I liked to argue," he said.

He went to Boston College and then to Suffolk University Law School, but didn't go right into practicing law. Instead, Kickham got a job as a media spokesman for a state bar association. A few years later, he took a position as spokesman for an insurance organization. It was in those positions that he was bitten by the television

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bug.

"I enjoyed it. I didn't get nervous like some people do. My

wife, Debbi, said I was born to be on TV," he said.

While Comcast does not have the capacity to measure how many viewers watch one particular show, a station producer said the provider has about 11,000 subscribers, all of which get "At The Bar."

Kickham knows there are people watching because sometimes they recognize him around town. "It's like 20 cc's of ego," he said, smiling.

"At The Bar" airs Mondays at 6:30 p.m. and Tuesdays at 2:30 p.m. on Channel 8 on Norwood and Westwood Comcast cable.

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