

PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT

TELEVISION



A FAMILY MATTER
FOURTH FROM LEFT, LAWYER PETER KRAUSE, WITH HIS CLIENTS, THE DARLINGS: DONALD SUTHERLAND, JILL CLAYBURGH, SAMAIRE ARMSTRONG, AND WILLIAM BALDWIN.

We love to watch rich people misbehave and we love to watch Peter Krause suffer, and in the new series **Dirty Sexy Money** (ABC) we can do both. The Darlings are the nastiest, richest, bold-facest family in New York, and they have been torturing Nick George all his life. His father, Devlin, was their lawyer; when Devlin crashes his single-engine plane into the Atlantic, Nick inherits the job of keeping them out of trouble. Peter Krause's Nick has a groomed post-gym glow that can't disguise his resentment or his permanent skepticism. He would rather be representing

sheer money

Joan Juliet Buck is awed by three new shows about the inner workings of powerful clans, dynasties, and a group of crime-fighting women.

worthy causes than the Darlings. His father's funeral is such a celebrity riot that cops assume he's a crasher until Patrick Darling IV (William Baldwin), apparently the sanest of the Darlings and also the state attorney general, says, "Officer, he's with us."

The show is full of those condescending touches that reveal

the way the rich 'n' famous annihilate everyone around them. Nick's mother committed suicide because of them; Nick's wife wants him to keep well out of their reach. The patriarch, Patrick "Tripp" Darling III, played as a breathy, sinister bon vivant by Donald Sutherland, luxuriating in every pause and sigh, lures Nick

in with the promise of \$5 million a year, on top of his salary, for his "good works." "You've got a more-all center," he murmurs, sounding like the Devil. Nick asks for ten million, and, soul sold, has his secretary program the family's numbers into his cell; the secretary thinks she's in a sitcom and gives each one their own ringtone: "Oh, Pretty Woman" for edgy, disappointed Karen (Natalie Zea), who announces to her future fourth husband at the prenup meeting that "Nick deflowered me." "Hallelujah" for the vindictive priest Brian Darling (Glenn Fitzgerald), who wants to get his illegitimate son into a grand prep school. "Born to Be Wild" for Jeremy (Seth Gabel), the young son who calls Nick from a toilet in the middle of the night to say he's just won a yacht in a poker game at Ethan Hawke's, and what does he do about the title? Then there's the Paris factor, daughter Juliet (Samaire Armstrong), a monument to fatuous entitlement whose insult to a reporter is "You're poor!" Juliet shows some aesthetic sense: She overdoses on pills when she's told she can't act. Patrick, the attorney general, has a wife and kids and, despite his apparent sanity, enlists Nick in trying to shed his loud and possessive transgender mistress.

Mother to all these charmers is Letitia, Jill Clayburgh in palsied mode, who thinks nothing of smashing a vase to get her family's attention, and screaming at the servants, which might explain all of the above. If story doesn't get in the way of caricature, *Dirty Sexy Money* may turn out to be the *Nip/Tuck* of network TV. □ *pata* >316

SUGAR AND SPICE

down in Florida, the sun is hot, the cane grows high, and the Duque family makes rum. In **CANE** (CBS), Jimmy Smits stars as Alex Vega, the adopted son of Pancho Duque (Hector Elizondo), rum patriarch. Rita Moreno is Pancho's fiery wife, Amalia, mother to Frank (Nestor Carbonell), Henry (Eddie Matos), and Isabel (Paola Turbay), who is married to Alex. The Duques are from Cuba. The nasty Samuels family, who ride horses and sweat in the sun but are Anglos, want the Duques' cane fields. Polly Walker reprises her heaving-sex-fiend turn from Rome, this time as Ellis Samuels, who will stop at nothing horizontal to get what she wants. There are flashing eyes and stolen embraces and large parties where people

dance, and an ominous back story to do with a kidnapping.

Then there's **WOMEN'S MURDER CLUB** (ABC), based on the James Patterson thrillers. While men in other shows are busy tripping one another up, this one celebrates female cooperation. Angie Harmon is Lindsay Boxer, a tall, dark San Francisco police detective with chiseled features and the wistfulness of the newly divorced. Online fans of the book are already pissed that she's not blonde. Lindsay's vital allies in her fight against crime are Claire, a medical examiner (Paula Newsome); Jill, an assistant district attorney (Laura Harris, stiff hair and stiff raincoat); and Cindy, a reporter (Aubrey Dollar). The basic procedural information is processed through gossip and personal asides. And there are the inevitable chick-series meals: four at a table, sharing wine and secrets.—*J.L.B.*