UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Producing Reality Stardom:

Constructing, Programming, and Branding Celebrity on Reality Television

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

Requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Film and Television

by

Lindsay Nicole Giggey

2017

© Copyright by

Lindsay Nicole Giggey

2017

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Producing Reality Stardom:

Constructing, Programming, and Branding Celebrity on Reality Television

by

Lindsay Nicole Giggey

Doctor of Philosophy in Film and Television

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor John T. Caldwell, Chair

The popular preoccupation with celebrity in American culture in the past decade has been bolstered by a corresponding increase in the amount of reality programming across cable and broadcast networks that centers either on established celebrities or on celebrities in the making. This dissertation examines the questions: How is celebrity constructed, scheduled, and branded by networks, production companies, and individual participants, and how do the constructions and mechanisms of celebrity in reality programming change over time and because of time? I focus on the vocational and cultural work entailed in celebrity, the temporality of its production, and the notion of branding celebrity in reality television. Dissertation chapters will each focus on the kinds of work that characterize reality television production cultures at the network, production company, and individual level, with specific attention paid to programming focused

on celebrity making and/or remaking. Celebrity is a cultural construct that tends to hide the complex labor processes that make it possible. This dissertation unpacks how celebrity status is the product of a great deal of seldom recognized work and calls attention to the hidden infrastructures that support the production, maintenance, and promotion of celebrity on reality television. Given particular forms of temporality involved in both television programming cycles and celebrity itself, this dissertation details how the management of time serves as a defining aspect of contemporary media branding.

The dissertation of Lindsay Nicole Giggey is approved.

Denise R. Mann

Chon A. Noriega

Jennifer Holt

John T. Caldwell, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2017

For my parents, who encouraged me to dream,

and gave me the tools to pursue the world.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES ..... **viii**

LIST OF TABLES ..... **xi**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... **xii**

VITA ..... **xviii**

INTRODUCTION **1**

Labor and Work in Reality Television 3
Television and Time 6
Celebrity and Time 9
Managing Time: Branding 12
The Evolution of Television Stardom 14
History 14
Labor Conditions 17
Television Personality Skillset 20
History of Reality Television and Precedents for Celebrity 23
Theorizing Television Celebrity 26
Theorizing Celebrity Labor 29
Methodology 31
Chapter Breakdown 34

CHAPTER ONE: "WATCH WHAT HAPPENS": INSTITUTIONALIZING REALITY CELEBRITY IN BRAVO'S NETWORK BRAND **39**

Introduction 39
Bravo's Early Years: 1980-1989 45
Creating a Brand through Programming: 1990-2002 51
Bravo Under NBC: 2002-Present 56
"Affluencers": Redefining Bravo's Programming 58
Bravo-lebrities: Reality Personalities as Brand Strategy 63
Andy Cohen: The Ultimate Network Manufactured Celebrity 66

CHAPTER TWO: AMERICA'S NEXT TOP BRAND: THE PRECARIOUS PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN REALITY SHOW PRODUCTION COMPANIES AND CONTESTANTS **76**

Introduction 76
Systemic Star Promotion 83
Reality TV's Micro Star-System: The 7-Week No Option Contract 84

Casting: Cultivating Authenticity 84
Shooting and Post-Production: Crafting Celebrity 93
Social Media 98
Bankable Productions: *ANTM*'s Bottom Line 109

CHAPTER THREE: MOM-AGER KNOWS BEST: INDIVIDUAL OWNERSHIP OF REALITY STARDOM 121

Introduction 121
Kris Jenner, Kim Kardashian, and the Origins of *KUWtK* 126
Mom-Ager Knows Best: Normalizing Celebrity through TV Tropes 134
Tabloids, Social Media, and Celebrity Maintenance 142
Kompiling K-Stardom: Interactive Celebrity Branding in Kim Kardashian: Hollywood 147
Konclusion: Kendall, Kylie, and Third Generation Celebrity 157

CONCLUSION: THE CELEBRITY AP-PRESIDENT: PUBLIC PERSONAE AND THE DUBIOUS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICS AND REALITY TV 161

APPENDIX I: SUPPLEMENTAL BRAVO TABLES AND FIGURES 170

APPENDIX II: SUPPLEMENTAL *AMERICA'S NEXT TOP MODEL* TABLES AND FIGURES 175

APPENDIX III: KOLLECTION OF KARDASHIANS 178

BIBLIOGRAPHY 199

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: BRAVO ORGANIZATIONAL CHART – 1980 171

FIGURE 2: CABLEVISION AND RAINBOW HOLDINGS IN THE 1990s 173

FIGURE 3: NBCUNIVERAL HOLDINGS AS OF 2017 174

FIGURE 4: ANISA PRODUCTIONS COMPANY ORRANIGATIONAL CHART: 2012-2013 176

FIGURE 5: ANISA PRODUCTIONS CASTING DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART: 2012-2013 177

FIGURE 6: KRIS JENNER (NEE HOUGHTON, FORMERLY KARDASHIAN) 178

FIGURE 7: ROBERT KARDASHIAN, SR. 179

FIGURE 8: CAITLIN JENNER (FORMERLY BRUCE), AUGUST 11, 2013 180

FIGURE 9: CAITLIN JENNER (FORMERLY BRUCE), APRIL 30, 2017 181

FIGURE 10: KOURTNEY KARDASHIAN; 1ST DAUGHTER OF ROBERT KARDASHIAN AND KRIS JENNER 182

FIGURE 11: KIM KARDASHIAN-WEST; 2ND DAUGHTER OF ROBERT KARDASHIAN AND KRIS JENNER 183

FIGURE 12: KHLOÉ KARDASHIAN (FORMERLY KHLOE KARDASHIAN-ODOM); 3RD DAUGHTER OF ROBERT KARDASHIAN AND KRIS JENNER 184

FIGURE 13: ROBERT "ROB" KARDASHIAN; SON OF ROBERT KARDASHIAN AND KRIS JENNER 185

FIGURE 14: KENDALL JENNER; 1ST DAUGHTER OF CAITLIN AND KRIS JENNER..... 186

FIGURE 15: KYLIE JENNER; 2ND DAUGHTER OF CAITLIN AND KRIS JENNER..... 187

FIGURE 16: KARDASHIAN/JENNER FAMILY TREE PART 1: KRIS JENNER'S CHILDREN..... 188

FIGURE 17: KARDASHIAN/JENNER FAMILY TREE PART 2: KARDASHIAN KIDS..... 189

FIGURE 18: KARDASHIAN/JENNER FAMILY TREE PART 3: JENNER DAUGHTERS' MAJOR RELATIONSHIPS..... 190

FIGURE 19: STILL FROM *KIM KARDASHIAN: HOLLYWOOD*..... 191

FIGURE 20: KIM KARDASHIAN AS NON-PLAYABLE CHARACTER IN *KIM KARDASHIAN: HOLLYWOOD*..... 192

FIGURE 21: PRICE BREAKDOWN FOR BUYING K-STARS IN *KIM KARDASHIAN: HOLLYWOOD*..... 193

FIGURE 22: *KIM KARDASHIAN: HOLLYWOOD* INCORPORATES TWITTER AND HAS ITS OWN TWITTER..... 194

FIGURE 23: *KIM KARDASHIAN: HOLLYWOOD* FREQUENTLY INCORPORATES REAL LIFE EVENTS INTO THE GAME..... 195

FIGURE 24: *KIM KARDASHIAN: HOLLYWOOD* FREQUENTLY INCORPORATES REAL LIFE LOOKS INTO THE GAME..... 196

FIGURE 25: NYC DASH STORE INTERIOR AND ITS RENDERING IN *KIM KARDASHIAN: HOLLYWOOD*..... 197

FIGURE 26: *KENDALL AND KYLIE* REPLICATES AESTHETICS FROM *KIM KARDASHIAN: HOLLYWOOD,* BUT ROTATES THE VISUAL ALIGNMENT TO REFLECT THE VERTICAL DESIGN OF MOBILE PHONES ARE HELD..... 198

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: TYPES OF TELEVISION CHANNELS 170

TABLE 2: BRAVO LEADERSHIP: 1980-2017..... 172

TABLE 3: PRODUCATION COMPANIES ASSOCIATED WITH *AMERICA'S NEXT TOP MODEL* 175

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This is as much a thank you to my community at UCLA and in Los Angeles because you have all allowed me into your homes and hearts in a way that gave me the strength and security to know that I could write these words. Although the work is solitary, the process is most definitely not. In many ways, part of what pushed me to finish when it felt insurmountable was the ability to write this section and pay tribute to those who have contributed to this chapter of my life.

First and foremost, this project would not have been possible without the continued support and encouragement of my rock-star committee: Denise Mann (who has championed my work from the beginning), Chon Noriega, Jennifer Holt, and especially of my chair, John Caldwell. Every time I walked into your office with crippling doubt, I left feeling anything was possible. I aspire to be the dedicated scholar and compassionate professor that you are and am forever privileged to have had your guidance. I must also thank the faculty and staff members of the Cinema and Media Studies department for the many ways in which they have supported me over the years, namely Janet Bergstrom, Brian Clark, Barbara Dube, Allyson Field (whose generous spirit encouraged me to stay when I most wanted to leave), Diana King, Steve Mamber, Kathleen McHugh, and Vivian Sobchack (whose tough love pushes me to be better than I can imagine).

I am greatly indebted to the kind, hard-working staff of Anisa Productions, home to *America's Next Top Model*, where I spent eight months learning how reality television is made from casting through post-production. My time in the office and on set has been instrumental to my work. Indeed, without this experience, there would be no Chapter Two. Thank you to Tyra Banks, Ken Mok, Dana Gabrion, Angela Chiu, Allison Chase, Jaimie Glasson, Carrie Mebane,

Tatiana Burton, Andrew Joustra, and Jennifer Goodsell Cross. A special thank you to Lauren Suarez for helping me set up interviews even after my internship ended. I am honored to be America's Last Top Intern.

I extend my gratitude to my PhD cohort: Heather Collette-Vanderaa and Ben Sampson. Without you, this project would never have gotten off the ground, especially as quickly as it needed to. The shared dedication we to each other helped me find the foundation for this project, and both of you pushed to make it and me better. Through shared tacos and tears, I am so thankful to call you siblings in arms. To Jenni Fong Govea and Katherine Simon, for having the strength to choose your yourselves first and the courage to say stop.

I am fortunate to have been adopted into a cohort with Karrmen Crey, Andrew deWaard, and Bryan Wuest. Thank you, Andrew, for pushing me to defend my stances and making me articulate why I feel passionate about everything – even when you just baiting me, I fall for it every time. To Bryan, for all the links, and more importantly, in-depth conversations about baking. And especially to Karrmen. I am so thankful for your presence in my life and on the other side of my wall. Thank you for being a constant sounding board for everything from fashion to family to the best Lifetime Movie/wine pairings. You've pushed me to think more holistically about my scholarship, my teaching, and my skin care routines. Our apartment has seen so much, but you're the reason it's home.

UCLA's Cinema and Media Studies department is filled with brilliant and compassionate people I'm honored to call colleagues and friends. The ways in which we look out for one another makes me proud to be part of this community, and it is one that I will take with me wherever I go. Thank you for your intellectual and emotional support: Jaimie Baron, Heather Birdsall, Chris Carloy, Jonathan Cohn, Alexandra DeMello, Aruna Ekanayake, Jim Fleury,

Dawn Fratini, Jason Gendler, Andrew Hall, Bryan Hartzheim, Erin Hill, Clifford Hilo, Kimberly Jobe, Garrett Jones, Maja Manojlovic, Caitlin McCann, Ross Melnick, Jen Moorman, Kristy Norindr, Paula Perez, Jen Porst, Michael Potterton, Arminder Randhawa, Alice Royer, Maya Smuckler, Daniel Steinhart, Leah Steuer, Saundarya Thapa, Phil Wagner, Julia Mitsuko Wright, and Mila Zuo. Ben Sher, who cared for my heart, my mental health, and was always willing to delve into the intricacies of text messages over sushi and Yogurtland. A special thank you to Harrison Gish and David O'Grady, who are truly unicorns among men. My time at UCLA and in Los Angeles is so defined by the time I've spent with you and the constant support and love you've given me. There's a reason why all of my stories seem to involve you.

Beyond UCLA, I'm incredibly fortunate to have found academic mentors, colleagues, and friends who are brilliant, kind, and generous with their time: Courtney Brannon Donoghue, Jennifer Gillan, Kristen Hatch, Josh Jackson, Danny Kimball, Allison Perlman, Erin Copple Smith, Matt Siekienwicz, Louisa Stein, and Joe Wlodarz. To my fellow SCMS Executive Board members who exemplify the importance of service and have been instrumental to my professional development: Mary Beltran, Jim Castonguay, Steve Cohan, Corey Creekmur, Mary Desjardins, Aviva Dove-Viebahn, Sean Griffin, Chris Holmlund, Kara Keeling, Amanda Klein, Barbara Klinger, Neepa Majumdar, Joanna Rapf, Vicki Sturtevant, Haidee Wasson, and Pam Wojick. Lucas Hilderbrand provided counsel and much needed perspective about both the writing and graduate school process from the time I was choosing between Masters programs and is an amazing dinner companion.

Allison McCracken saw me before I could see myself. You showed me that I could make a career out of loving television and movies and then made sure I saw all of the most important

things from *Buffy* to *Broadcast News* and all of the Holocaust documentaries in between. You helped me find my voice and gave me the most important piece of advice: never to lose it.

Lindsay Hogan and Darcey Morris, one of the hardest transitions was realizing that my academic community was not necessarily the one in front of me. I've been blessed to find a sisterhood with the two of you, and your constant humor, support, and love were always a text message, phone call, or plane ride away. May we write all our future SCMS proposals together on Tish's couch while watching Aunt Becky solve mysteries.

To my soul sister Katy Peplin, who always has the words to get me out of my head and the heart to feel all the feelings with me. You crawled with me through the final months of this project constantly encouraging me to push a little harder until it was done. As you once wrote to me, love as big as space.

To Dalal Alfares, Meaghan Fowlie, Kate Schlosser, Mike Stajura, and Debbie Weiser, who took care of my wellbeing by empathetically listening and offering sage suggestions. Aaron Kaufman, Elana Lev, and especially Melissa Magaro have been much needed outlets who held the worst of my fears and helped me make space to grieve, heal, and grow.

In my "real life," I have the most fiercely loyal friends who always welcome me with open arms. Whenever and wherever we are together, I am home: Marsha Abrahams, Jessica Beverly, Sean Beverly, Claire Durwood, Frank Conte, Lisa Davidson, Erika Lindley, Kristian Lopez, Rebecca Lopez, Nicole Mills, Cory Ouellette, Christiana Schafer, Brian Soest, and Nicole Sapienza Szlaga. To my greater Los Angeles community of friends that have become family: Noa Bolozky, Nick DeMello, John Fedorowicz, Annie Ryan Hilo, Margaux Knee, Shira Roman, Akilesh Sridharan, Terra Stuart, Kendra Tart, and Michelle Thatcher. Thank you all for keeping me balanced, restoring my soul, and reminding me that there is life outside of graduate school.

Thank you to my family for continued encouragement even though I didn't make a movie, am not on television, and did not met George Clooney: Glenn Geffe, David Geffe, Amanda Geffe, Jackie Geffe, Meagan Geffe, Peter Kloch (who stocks up on Polish medicine whenever I come visit) Karen Weikel, Bill Weikel, Matt Weikel, and Jeff Weikel. My grandparents Irene and Walter Geffe have loved me unconditionally and always ask me when I'm moving back even if I'm still not sure. To my nephew and niece, Henry and Elyse Kloch, you make my day when we FaceTime, and I can't wait to see the people that you become. To my second family in Los Angeles who immediately adopted me as one of their own: Amy Allison, Jolene Gutierrez, Jessie Gutierrez, Alexis Gutierrez, and Xochitl Pereira.

To my amazing siblings Janelle Kloch and Andrew Giggey who broadened my reality TV knowledge by their enthusiasm for, amongst other things, *House Hunters, The Bachelor*, *Border Security* (America, obvs), and *Highway Thru Hell* (Go get 'em, Jamie Davis!). You've both pushed me to work, but more importantly, when to stop. Janelle, thank you for keeping me grounded and inspiring me to try to have it all by choosing what that means. Our text chains filled with countless inside jokes are my favorites. Also the constant baby pictures. Andrew, thank you for always doing the late night airport pickups, and being the in-person coach I needed to keep working at the kitchen table during the final push. Your political insights complicated my thinking about Trump and offered important perspectives to thinking about his candidacy and eventual election. I am in awe of your integrity and so proud of the man you've become. And now you must always refer to me as "doctor" for eternity.

I owe the largest debt of gratitude to my parents. Mom: I know that this pursuit has been hardest on you because I had to go so far to do it. However, please know that your greatest gifts to me have been to support me without fully understanding what I'm doing or why I needed to

do it. And the reason I could is because of how you showed me to be a strong independent woman. Dad: You nurtured my mind and had the patience to sit through endless questions. My love of TV and movies is rooted in spending time with you perusing the video store shelves. Thank you for making the space for me to leave and fiercely defending that until the end; telling me that I shouldn't come home no matter how bad it got. You saw the possibility before I ever could and made sure that I went for it. One of the greatest tragedies is that this journey is so defined by you and that I can't share it with you. I know that you would have been most proud. I so wish the Trump chapter could be better refined because of long talks over Budweisers in the garage. You pushed me to go forward and that I've reached this point is largely a way to honor you, the potential you saw in me, and the love you gave to me.

Finally, I must thank my endlessly supportive partner, Paul Bielma. You jumped into my crazy world filled with stress, movies you've never heard of, and endless questions about season 2 of *The Wire*. In many ways, my life in Los Angeles and my life overall didn't start until you invited me to tell you more over pizza and wine. Thank you for loving me in ways I didn't know were possible.

VITA

EDUCATION

2012 C. Phil, Cinema and Media Studies
Department of Film, Television, and Digital Media
University of California, Los Angeles

2010 M.A., Cinema and Media Studies
Department of Film, Television, and Digital Media
University of California, Los Angeles

2005 B.A., American Studies
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
DePaul University

PUBLICATIONS

Book Chapters

2016 "You Too Can Make Your Own Lifetime Movie:" Branded Labor Via Lifetime's Movie-Mash-Ups." In *The Lifetime Network: Essays on "Television for Women" in the 21st Century*, edited by Emily L. Newman and Emily Witsell. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2016.

Online Publications

2014 "Kollecting Kim K. Skills: Kardashianized Celebrity in *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood*," in *Antenna: Responses to Media and Culture*, July 25, 2014. http://blog.commarts.wisc.edu/2014/07/25/kollecting-kim-k-skills-kardashianized-celebrity-in-kim-kardashian-hollywood/

2013 "On Wearing Two Badges: Indifference and Discomfort of a Scholar Fan," in Antenna: Responses to Media and Culture, July 31, 2013. http://blog.commarts.wisc.edu/2013/07/31/on-wearing-two-badges-indifference-and-discomfort-of-a-scholar-fan-leakycon-portland/

2012 "Mr. Seaborn Goes to Pawnee," *In Media Res*, June 8, 2012. http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/imr/2012/06/08/mr-seaborn-goes-pawnee

2012 Review of *Television and New Media: Must-Click TV*, by Jennifer Gillan, *Transformative Works and Cultures*, 9 (2012). http://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/index. March 2012.

2011 "Maybe Romance Will Crop Up," *In Media Res*, May 10, 2011. http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/imr/2011/05/10/maybe-romance-will-crop-product-placement-millionaire-matchmaker

INTRODUCTION

"…[B]eing on a reality show is work that anyone can do."

-- Mark Andrejevic, *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched*[1]

A fascination with celebrity and the seemingly low levels of work and high levels of financial and cultural capital that reward it have long been part of American popular culture traditions, but this fascination has grown exponentially over the past fifteen years. Since reality programming now comprises a huge segment of television programming for both cable and broadcast networks in the multichannel market, there has been an entire genre of reality TV programming showcasing the creation, maintenance, and promotion of celebrity. Some of this genre's programs focus on reviving previously established but waning, cultural celebrities—with decaying auras—placing them in situations that (loosely) approximate "real life." Others, however, focus on previously unknown "average Americans," whose rise to celebrity cannot be predicted or maintained in the same way. This distinction between existing celebrities and ordinary people who achieve televisual celebrity also complicates the definition and meanings of celebrity and its creation; a phenomenon happening in and around reality television. Thus, the convergence of reality television and the cult of celebrity raises interesting issues about contemporary American media culture that I will explore in my dissertation. Specifically my study will focus on the work entailed in producing celebrity, the timeframe for its attainment, and the notion of "branding" celebrity in reality television by looking at power structures on three levels of institutional systems: the network, the production company, and the individual.

[1] Mark Andrejevic, *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004), 7.

The path towards fame has changed dramatically over the past fifteen years, as technological, industrial, and social factors have made celebrity both good business for television and more ostensibly obtainable for self-made stars.

Waves of media deregulation beginning in the 1980s led to a proliferation of channels that changed the nature of television. Television programs began to articulate a network's "brand" and the lifestyle associated with it.[2] Indeed, in "Tele-Branding in TV-III," Catherine Johnson argues "the expansion of television networks has made competition for audiences increasingly fierce, [and] it seems that branding has emerged as *the* defining industrial practice."[3] Clear brand identities for networks, programs, and reality performers thus help viewers choose from a wide range of program and network options.[4] Content has increasingly become a means of branding and differentiating networks from one another. Moreover, the continuing growth of multi-channel television markets, as well as television-like programming for new-media content aggregators, like YouTube and Hulu, has created a greater need for content than ever before, as well as for the cheap labor to produce and populate it. As the number of programs needed goes up, the cost per series goes down. Reality programming is now widely seen as a cost-effective way for networks to quickly create and schedule content that will hopefully attract viewers as well as a window within which viewers might become onscreen content.

---

[2] Laurie Ouellette and James Hay, *Better Living Through Reality TV: Television and Post-Welfare Citizenship* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Pub., 2008), 24.

[3] Catherine Johnson, "Tele-Branding in TVIII: The Network as Brand and the Programme as Brand," *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 5, no. 1 (2007): 6. TV-III is a UK term describing the digital age of television in the US.

[4] "Tele-Branding in TVIII: The Network as Brand and the Programme as Brand," 6.

In order to connect with ever-fragmented viewing populations, the cult of personality has become an even more important strategy for programming, allowing viewers to identify or at the very least "engage" with personalities. Of the many sub-genres of reality television, the attraction of programming centered on the use or creation of celebrities taps into cultural fascination with fame and also allows networks to brand themselves based on the kinds of personalities they program.[5] Celebrity-based reality television gives networks signatures and thus tends to operate through quid-pro-quo identity relationships in which participants, content producers, and distributors benefit. These relationships offer participants the promise of fame and exposure while also allowing networks to lower long-term commitments and production costs, and thus to create new franchises that keep pace with rapidly changing cultural trends. Moreover, successful programs offer participants, production companies, and networks the possibility of more "synergies"; that is, to co-brand one another as each attempts to cycle through partnerships to create and maintain positive relationships with audiences over time. Issues of work (creative and bureaucratic) and temporality (the production and management of time) are central to creating and maintaining celebrity through reality television.

Labor and Work in Reality Television

Although reality television suggests that what viewers see represents something "real" (that is, unscripted and situationally spontaneous) the work that goes into creating, producing, and distributing such programming is largely hidden. This process erases: the casting

[5] This trend is very apparent on American cable networks dedicated to spreading a particular lifestyle. For example, on the cable channel Bravo, reality programming focuses on some subset of affluence, teaching its viewers to acquire and wield taste in the process of consumption. For how channel branding based on programming works for broadcast networks, see Jennifer Gillan, *Television and New Media: Must-Click TV* (New York: Routledge, 2011). For more information about how reality programming teaches consumption as the guiding principle for citizenship, see Ouellette and Hay, *Better Living Through Reality TV: Television and Post-Welfare Citizenship*.

departments who assemble groups of personalities, the tape loggers who slog through hundreds of hours of footage and mark it for editing, the producer/editors (or "preditors" as they are called) who assemble cohesive narratives out of hundreds of hours of footage, the marketers who package and sell the shows, and the onscreen participants themselves.[6] Although this labor erasure is not unique across television and media production, the nature of the reality genre's attempts to depict "reality," the work wrapped up in its construction is necessarily minimized in order to protect that illusion. Moreover, many production workers in the "unscripted" world are likewise literally unrecognized as they are not defined within established union or guild protections. As former reality editor Jeff Bartsch explains: "Networks pit production companies against each other and bid production budgets down so low that producers often feel that the added cost of union contracts would cost them, and their employees, their jobs."[7] Quick production schedules, transitory productions, and widely varying job descriptions within individual production companies likewise obfuscates organizing efforts and keeps unions from identifying potential members.[8] Reality producers argue that union involvement would hinder the flexibility they need to deliver programming with smaller budgets and tighter production

[6] Further examples of work exposing hidden aspects of reality television production can be found in Tagi Brother VII, "Confessions of a "Preditor": What Goes on Behind Reality TV's Cutting Room Door?," *Editor's Guild Magazine* 26, no. 2 (2005), http://www.editorsguild.com/v2/magazine/archives/0305/features_article01.htm; Espen Ytreberg, "Premeditations of Performance in Recent Live Television: A Scripting Approach to Media Production Studies," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 9, no. 4 (2006): 421-40; Vicki Mayer, *Below the Line: Producers and Production Studies in the New Television Economy* (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011).

[7] Todd Cunningham, "Reality TV: The Invisible Front in Hollywood's Labor Wars," http://www.thewrap.com/reality-tv-invisible-front-hollywoods-labor-wars-58026/.

[8] Sharon Waxman, "Union Plans To File Suit For Reality TV Workers," *The New York Times*, June 29, 2005.

schedules; two of the most attractive elements of the genre for networks. Without larger recognition from established labor groups nor the production companies who hire them, there is a large body of easily exploitable freelance creative workers. This opening for exploitation is further exasperated when dealing with participants. On competition shows, producers do not need to pay participants because they are categorized as amateurs competing for a prize.[9] However, those who appear as "talent" work under union protections, which can increase production budgets.[10] Thus, my dissertation will explore the kinds of work that characterize reality television production cultures, with specific attention paid to programming focused on celebrity making and/or remaking. As celebrity is a cultural construct that tends to hide the complex labor processes that make it possible, I'm interested in unpacking how celebrity status is a form of television "production," but one that requires a different kind of creative work. This dissertation calls attention to the distinctive hidden infrastructures that support the production, maintenance, and promotion of celebrity on reality television.

The underlying promise of reality television is that ordinary spectators can become performers, and thus achieve some of the cultural capital allotted to the famous. Reality programming, as well as increasing access to the means of media production via user-friendly tools like digital camcorders and distribution sites like YouTube facilitates the aspiration that anyone can create their own television show with the outside chance of becoming a star. The smart phone compounds the possibilities of creating and sharing content even as social media

[9] Dana Gabrion, interview by Lindsay Giggey, 2013, America's Next Top Model.

[10] Even those competing on reality shows are eligible to become "talent" in the event that they reappear on shows where they were previously contestants. "Interview with Dana Gabrion."; Michelle Tsai, "Are Reality TV Actors Professional?," Slate, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/explainer/2007/08/are_realitytv_actors_professional.html.

platforms are both a place to share with friends as well as cultivate branded digital identities with the hopes of monetizing everyday life. Indeed, following the tropes established by reality programming, a great many individuals have learned the appropriate ways to perform on television, and now have the means to insert themselves into a mediated world. In *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched,* Mark Andrejevic argues that this cultural trend "functions increasingly as a form of productive surveillance allowing for the commodification of the products generated by… the work of being watched."[11] Andrejevic goes on to point to this commodifcation as the hidden work done by participants in reality programming, especially that which centers on celebrity creation or maintenance. Although participants have access to institutional infrastructures to help them promote themselves and separate their personalities from the din, the price for that access is constant self-disclosure, which takes time and work.[12]

Television and Time

Particular kinds of time, in addition to particular kinds of work, play a central part in producing televisual celebrity. One variant of time on television central to this dissertation research involves network programming and scheduling. From its inception, television's core system of measurement has been time. In the 1950s, pioneering NBC president Sylvester "Pat" Weaver, Jr. put forth industrial imperatives to structure and capitalize on the presentation of time on television. In a means of trumpeting television's capacity for liveness as well as to entice local networks to maintain their NBC affiliation, Weaver "sought to maintain a schedule known

[11] Andrejevic, *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched*, 2.

[12] *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched,* 6.

for its live performances."[13] Local stations could negotiate for syndicated filmed programming, so Weaver incentivized NBC affiliation because of its access to talent and its differentiation from film; setting an early precedent for both celebrity and immediacy on television. Weaver also implemented the "magazine concept" in program scheduling, which broke-up programming both in terms of profits and presentation within its timeslot. Whereas single-sponsor programming had been the norm, advertisers controlled programming, and sometimes its place on network schedules, since they paid for its production. "Magazine concept" scheduling redirected program profits and editorial control from advertisers to the network and interrupting programming to include breaks featuring ads purchased by multiple sponsors.[14] The "magazine concept" of participation advertising became the norm for the other major networks, and is foundational to understanding the concept of televisual flow. As theorized by Raymond Williams, televisual flow is the organization of the succession of programs, promotions, advertisements, etc. that endlessly stream through the airwaves on a particular network.[15] Nick Browne advances Williams' argument by suggesting that televisual flow itself is temporal and is subject to organization based on the time of day.[16] The temporal arrangement of television schedules is created with groups of programs linked to "day-parts" so as to maximize viewership in

[13] Vance Kepley, Jr., "From "Frontal Lobes" to the "Bob-and-Bob" Show: NBC Management and Programming Strategies, 1949-65," in *Hollywood in the Age of Television*, ed. Tino Balio (New York: Routledge, 2014), 46.

[14] Evan Elkins, "'The Kind Of Program Service All The People Want': Pat Weaver's Failed Fourth Network," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 35, no. 1 (2015): 177.

[15] Raymond Williams and Ederyn Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, Routledge classics (New York: Routledge, 1974/2003), 84.

[16] Nick Browne, "The Political Economy of the Television (Super) Text," in *Television: The Critical View*, ed. Horace Newcomb (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 588-89.

competition with other networks' scheduling. Indeed, in the past, the success or failure of a show was often attributed to its temporal placement on the schedule and thus the number of viewers it can deliver to advertisers.

Although these ideas have been instrumental in understanding television history, they have become outdated in the contemporary era as there are now more choices, distractions, and ways to watch what used to be content exclusively available only on television. Williams and Browne's views only address television viewing on television contrasted with the multiple ways people now engage with television content on multiple platforms. Increased multi-channel services, recording devices like the DVR, the smart phone, and most broadly the Internet have revolutionized viewing practices, through time and place shifting, which in turn necessitates complicating historical notions of televisual flow.[17] In "Second-Shift Media Aesthetics: Programming, Interactivity, and User Flows," John Caldwell argues that scholars and practioners alike must develop new units for temporal-user management that measure and account for active user engagement across multiple platforms as linear sequential viewing on one platform like television is no longer the dominant viewing practice.[18] In the current era of media convergence, Caldwell also argues that branding is the bridging mechanism that both creates "psychological and empathetic relationships with consumers" and drives user traffic through different media

[17] Contemporary televisual flow is further complicated through commonplace practice of imposing information and moving graphics advertising future programming over currently airing programming. Other networks like E! also periodically incorporate an entertainment news crawl over its currently airing programming. These techniques draw attention away from programming in order to entice viewers to consume the network's other program offerings.

[18] John Thornton Caldwell, "Second-Shift Media Aesthetics: Programming, Interactivity, and User Flows," in *New Media: Theories and Practices of Digitextuality*, ed. Anna Everett and John Thornton Caldwell (New York: Routledge, 2003), 134-35.

platforms.[19] As such, the concept of televisual flow needs to be expanded to recognize and measure different media consumption behaviors. In this regard, reality television specifically exemplifies the concept of time in relation to differentiated viewing practices and branding. Programs that are personality-based can be easily branded and extended over multiple platforms, giving audiences multiple immediate identification points for engagement in hope of driving traffic back to televised airings of programs. The celebrity "signature" gives all of these multimedia fragments a continuity they wouldn't otherwise have. On a smaller scale, individuals package themseles as content over various digital spaces in hopes of accumulating followers they can use as currency to entice producers, production companies, and eventually networks, to broaden their reach.

Celebrity and Time

The other key temporal concept addresses the time of celebrity itself. At this juncture, it is important to realize the differences in how time works on reality programs as contrasted with traditionally scripted programs. George Lipsitz argues that "[a]s an artistic medium, television's capacity for simultanaeity conveys a sense of living in an infinitely renewable present."[20] Although Lipsitz argued this notion of an infinitely renewable present in relation to scripted television in the 1950s, I believe this description is even better suited to a consideration of reality television. If everything broadcast on television creates and reflects the moment in which it is aired, then reality television, which differentiates itself from scripted television through its dependence on depictions of "real-ness" and "live-ness" makes it the ultimate example of the

[19] "Second-Shift Media Aesthetics: Programming, Interactivity, and User Flows," 138.

[20] George Lipsitz, "The Meaning of Memory: Family, Class, and Ethnicity in Early Network Television Programs," in *Private Screenings: Television and the Female Consumer*, ed. Lynn Spigel and Denise Mann (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 72.

ever renewable present. This renewablility is further complicated by the ubiquitous presence of celebrity accessible through the refresh button on Internet browsers. The growth of celebrity journalism in print and online elongates reality plotlines as gossip outlets utilize the expanded celebrity sphere for content that drives their own profit margins. Even if reality programs are not currently airing episodes, gossip journalism builds on reality show narratives and serve as an outlet to "watch" the show in the off season. These can be viewed as celebrity-driven textual extensions. Reality television is well-suited for viewer engagement on different platforms, because its immediacy encourages consumption on any platform or device that allows access to the shared "cultural moment," which is often more important than the actual program itself.

For example, reality programming, especially tentpole franchises airing on broadcast networks like the singing competition *American Idol* (Fox, 2002-2016), underscore how reality television programming and branding are, in some aspects, very time specific and bound to their present. Shows like *American Idol* are amongst the few consistent ratings earners for broadcast television as its liveness elevates its "present-ness," making it event television.[21] In such cases, the program's "present-ness" intensifies the viewing experience precisely because of its ephemeral nature.[22] When a season of *American Idol* ends as a winner is chosen, the specific events of every episode leading up to that point are largely forgotten. Although each audition and elimination is paramount to the full enjoyment the program in the moment, the specifics fade

[21] *American Idol*'s ability to drive ratings as event television is so strong, that although Fox cancelled it in 2016, there are already talks of reviving it on NBC. Daniel Holloway, "NBC in Talks to Revive *American Idol*," *Variety*, February 9, 2017.

[22] Reality television's intensity due to its "present-ness" is also apparent in the lack of home video sales for and rebroadcasts of reality programming. Whereas some reality programs do have DVD releases, the number of these releases is quite small. Moreover, shows including *American Idol* are repackaged as compilations of highlights, further suggesting the importance of the show and its format in the moment as opposed to longer spans of time.

away as the larger *Idol* brand is rearticulated and reinforced to be rearticulated once again in the next season. As such, creating format-based templates that are easily replicated, and hopefully internationally exported, has become the driving force in reality television production. Instead of developing and renewing people, the format becomes the ultimate franchisable commoditiy as the labor behind them is disposable and detracts from overall profits. Reality programs have temporal shelf lives as their narratives and characters lose momentum and/or cultural relevance. Timeliness is reflected in programming trends. While there are several examples of successful reality franchises like *Survivor* (CBS, 2000-Present) and *American Idol*, many programs do not last beyond one season. When networks have a successful program, they and other networks attempt to replicate the formula before the moment passes and the program's themes or topics lose cultural appeal, which suggests that reality television's temporal specificity is in turn directly tied to commercial needs and trends.

The very "present-ness" which intensifies reality programming's importance in the moment factors directly into its temporality and has significant parallels with the temporal nature of celebrity. Based on its immediacy, reality television programming is deemed by some as akin to television junk food, which can be easy and fun to consume, but usually doesn't stay with viewers for long (or provide a source of "nutrition"). Likewise, the nature of celebrity has a temporal element. Celebrities come into public consciousness, have their moment in the spotlight, and then fade away. Networks, producers, and participants have short windows of time in which to appeal to and capitalize on viewer interest as cultural trends are also constantly shifting. Despite the temporal risks involved, however, in order to connect with and maintain increasingly fragmented viewing populations, the cult of celebrity has become an ever more important factor for producers of reality programming. Producers hope to capture a significant

segment of the viewing audience vis-à-vis celebrity appeal over a profitable period of time for both the networks and the shows' participants.

Managing Time: Branding

Given particular forms of temporality involved in both television cycles and celebrity itself, what most concerns me in relation to celebrity reality programming in this dissertation is how the management of time serves as a defining aspect of contemporary media branding. Branding is central to our current understanding of consumer culture, as it is the mechanism that allows ideas and/or products to stand out in consumers' minds over time. Celebrity-based reality programming allows producers and networks to maximize the intensity of the live experience and reality television's "present-ness," as they attempt to establish brands strong enough to last over lengthy periods of time. Time is the key mechanism in branding campaigns and the main currency in which networks deal. In this regard, Celia Lury argues that brands are "more than simply a set of relations between products… [they are] *a set of relations between products in time*."[23] In the manufacturing of celebrity, brand recognition serves as a sort of currency through which to measure success, especially in a now overcrowded celebrity marketplace.

On the network level—traditionally understood—television scheduling is an exercise in time management that ranges from deciding how long a program should be, the number of commercials that will air during and surrounding the program, to when in the schedule a program should air. Likewise, the amount of money networks can charge for commercials is based on time—on what day and time a program airs as well as on the popularity of the program. As viewers cultivate relationships with onscreen personalities, a program's value increases for

[23] Celia Lury, *Brands: The Logos of the Global Economy*, International library of sociology (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 2.

networks both in terms of ad sales and brand recognition. Production companies attempt to find timely subjects or formats on which to base programming in hopes of garnering enough interest for renewal. Similarly, the longer a program is on, the more power production companies have in negotiating larger budgets as well as social and financial capital for developing future projects. As producers prove that they can deliver hit shows, the more they prove their timeliness and can command greater control and financial stakes in developing future projects. Individuals have the most flexibility, but perhaps the least amount of power in creating their own timeliness. Whereas networks and production companies work together to deliver timely subjects over set durations of time, measured in episodes and seasons, individual celebrities-in-production need to be mindful of creating their own measurable time. Whether it be through social media posts or YouTube videos, individuals need to generate more content because the moments they have to connect with potential fans are shorter. If individuals garner enough attention, they may enter temporary relationships with production companies and networks, which can expand their reach. However, these relationships often come with compromise over image control and residual payments, and for those participating in competition based reality, no payments at all. As individuals have become savvier about the economic realities of television celebrity, the reality show is increasingly seen as a launching point and commercial for offscreen ventures. Through television recognition, individuals hope to extend and control their celebrity value, which is often problematic for those without preexisting financial or cultural capital in which to buy extra time in the limelight.

Applying Lipsitz's concept of the "infinitely renewable present" to reality television is also useful in considering reality programming's temporal approach to authenticity and intensity, because its stories are showcased as immediate and current. Moreover, Lipsitz helps link issues

of work and time in celebrity reality television, especially when considering extratextual material surrounding programming. For example, after *Jersey Shore*'s (MTV, 2009-2012) meteoric rise, seasons two and three were shot almost immediately after season one aired, and accounted for northeastern winters by relocating cast members to South Beach, Florida and then back to the Jersey shore in order to capitalize on viewer interest.[24] Cast members received consistent press attention between seasons, which reinforced their place in the cultural zeitgeist. This production schedule in itself suggests the differences between reality and scripted television, as scripted television requires longer periods of time to manufacture its stories. Although viewer interest drives press coverage of the show, which in turn helps create brand associations, reality producers are put in a position where they must work faster in order to deliver in-demand content before the show's cultural significance dissipates.

The Evolution of Television Stardom

History

In understanding the current reality TV mediascape and its reliance on celebrity, it is necessary to trace the development of the changing nature of stardom as well as television's development, with explicit consideration of television specific genres that feature celebrities and/or ordinary people as themselves. Media stardom itself is just one of the many constructed within a larger institutionalized economic system spanning decades and multiple media. Television has depended on celebrity from its onset, and continues to depend on personality to engage viewers, a tradition that began in legitimate theater and trickled down into vaudeville,

[24] Lynette Rice, "*Jersey Shore* Back for a Second Season on MTV," *Entertainment Weekly* (2010), http://insidetv.ew.com/2010/01/30/jersey-shore-back-for-a-second-season-on-mtv/; MTV News Staff, "*Jersey Shore* Cast Returning for Season Three," http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1644117/jersey-shore-cast-returning-season-three.jhtml.

radio, and film. Although media forms have evolved, the practice of differentiating and celebrating some specific human labor over others as a marketing tactic has remained consistent. Contemporary stardom, the systems propelling it, and the need to adapt older practices to new economic moments can be traced back to nineteenth century American theater companies, who filled their ranks with stock actors to perform various roles across productions. As companies began touring, managers and booking agents shifted their tactics, and thus casting practices, to highlight individual actors playing specific roles in single plays.[25]

Early cinema developed its own star system as the medium itself evolved from what Tom Gunning calls a "cinema of attractions," where exhibition intrigued audiences, to voyeuristic narrative-driven films that privileged individual spectatorship.[26] As film technologies and exhibition developed, so did the audience's relationships with onscreen talent as performers evolved from uncredited roles to becoming a key marketing focus.[27] However, as a consequence of their anonymity, actors had limited bargaining potential when negotiating appearances since they could not capitalize on recognition of their past work. As film's popularity increased, distributors and exhibitors discovered that promoting prominent popular personalities could help them differentiate their product amongst a sea of choices. Marketers circulated information about the main performers as a means of distinguishing their films, thus beginning a tradition of co-

[25] Paul McDonald, *The Star System: Hollywood's Production of Popular Identities*, Short Cuts (London: Wallflower, 2000), 19.

[26] *The Star System*, 23.

[27] In a trend that repeats itself with the advent of television, actors hesitant about working in the new film medium could benefit from anonymous performances, as film had not legitimized itself as a prestigious acting platform. *The Star System*, 25.

branding studio, genre, and individual that continues to drive popular entertainment in the present day.

As studios consolidated their power, they likewise systematized production, distribution, and exhibition to maximize their profits. The Classical Hollywood studio system localized all aspects of production as filmmaking became more efficiently planned, contained, and executed in controlled studio spaces. Studios developed ranks of contracted actors to populate their films by signing talent to seven-year contracts. The studios established a practice of oversight and control to mitigate potential risk, leaving actors dependent on them for any potential notoriety. The studios developed their images, decided their roles, and terminated their contracts if actors did not connect with audiences nor fit their needs. Studios primed audiences to both recognize stars and the performances to expect from them when deciding which films to see. Publicity departments further bridged gaps between onscreen performances and off-screen personalities by promoting both concurrently. Joshua Gamson argues that celebrity has mutated from a top-down institutional promotional strategy to a partnership with the audience, who realized that they have power to accept or reject the images presented to them.[28]

Creating audience expectations via repetition and connecting actors with performances is central to the intertextuality inherent in understanding star personae. Developing star images across multiple types of texts affirms Richard Dyer's seminal argument that stars are discursive constructions.[29] Richard deCordova argues that a star's personality is constructed through their body of work as well as the publicity around their performances and personal lives "existed as an

[28] Joshua Gamson, *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 34-5.

[29] Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 3; Richard Dyer and Paul McDonald, *Stars*, New ed. (London: BFI Publishing, 1998), 1.

effect of … the representation of character across a number of films."[30] When the popularity of actors' performances transcended their onscreen roles, studio publicity machines stepped in to help facilitate audience interest by expanding to narrativize actors' off-screen lives. In addition to curated filmographies, studios crafted public images for their stars to satisfy audience desire for more contact with their favorite onscreen personalities through avenues like fan magazines. Likewise, Gamson argues that celebrity publicity took a turn towards "ordinariness" to better connect with fans: "By embracing the notion that celebrity images were artificial products and inviting readers to visit the real self behind those images…."[31] These shifts can be seen in fan magazine profiles of stars at home, etc. This idea is especially important in considering the eventual move to television, and especially reality television, which itself thrives on ordinary personalities.

Labor Conditions

As useful as Dyer and de Cordova are in laying the groundwork for theoretical conceptions of star texts, their work overlooks the industrial components and mechanisms that drive and shape them. Paul McDonald helps bridge this gap as he argues that stars are integral to larger entertainment economic systems, which not only encompass films, but promoting products in ancillary markets.[32] However, part of the auras cultivated around stars erases the roles they play in larger economic systems. Studying television, which is commercial in its very nature, helps draw attention back to how stars are an integral part of the entertainment economic system.

---

[30] Richard DeCordova, *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 86.

[31] Gamson, *Claims to Fame*, 38.

[32] McDonald, *The Star System*, 56.

Since television is distinctly different from theater, film, radio, etc., its notion of celebrity needs to be studied as a result of the needs of the specific medium. In addition to television's hybrid aesthetics, which William Boddy describes television as "a unique synthesis of the immediacy of the live theatrical performance, the space-conquering powers of radio, and the visual strategies of the motion picture," television similarly culled talent from various institutionalized systems to populate its airwaves.[33] By the time television enters American homes in the late 1940s, the Hollywood studio and star systems faced significant disruption via the 1948 Paramount Decree, which required that studios divest their exhibition interests, leaving them in charge of only production and distribution. The film industry faced further threats from plummeting ticket sales as new forms of leisure activities (including television) became popular in the post-WWII era. As a result, the studios could not maintain their previous high-levels of production and thus dismantled the star system as they could no longer support such top-heavy overhead. Studio quickly contracted their facilities out for independent film and television production. Enabled by television's exponentially growing programming needs as well as network decisions to relocate production from New York City to Los Angeles, the studios became leading content producers for television networks. These early ties between television and film (and thus the stars working in both media) have intensified as media conglomeration further diversifies modes of distribution, which often strengthens the brands of media franchises, star personalities, and the ability to cultivate and propagate each.

As television networks took advantage of the crumbling studio system for its production facilities, they likewise capitalized on the dismantled star system. No longer beholden to long-

[33] William Boddy, *Fifties Television: The Industry and Its Critics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 80.

term studio contracts, actors became freelance workers hired for specific projects. Although stars now seemingly had more agency regarding their careers, the end of the Classical Hollywood era benefited elite stars who now had more power to negotiate for higher salaries while many featured players and character actors' careers stalled. However, all was not lost for actors abandoned by some of the security offered by long-term contracts. Television producers relentlessly poached from established, legitimized media with film chief among them. This created work opportunities for struggling actors who were lured by relatively high fees.[34] However, many actors were hesitant to move over to the emerging medium. Many film stars considered the new medium a step down from film (a belief still propagated in contemporary cultural thought and taste) due to television's commercial nature.

Television created another avenue for star appearances, which could diversify and complicate their star texts. Looking to the transitions radio, vaudeville, and film stars made in moving to television work in the 1950s, one can see how this mutable period allowed for experimentation with form as well as personality type.[35] In moving from film to television, Christine Becker suggests that film stars could capitalize on their familiarity, but they "were neither solely film stars nor only television personalities. They were intermediary figures of celebrity, a new kind of star for a new medium still in flux."[36]

---

[34] Susan Murray, *Hitch Your Antenna to the Stars: Early Television and Broadcast Stardom* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 103.

[35] For more information about changing nature of stardom during this time, see Christine Becker, *It's the Pictures That Got Small: Hollywood Film Stars on 1950s Television* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2009); Murray, *Hitch Your Antenna to the Stars*.
[36] Becker, *It's the Pictures That Got Small*, 7-8.

Television Personality Skillset

As television developed its own conventions, it also developed a type of star who reflected the needs and strengths of the medium. Celebrity scholarship has followed suit, led by John Langer who proposed a paradigm shift in setting up television stardom (or television personalities) as distinct from film stardom explaining:

> the personality system is cultivated almost exclusively as 'part of life,' whereas the star system always has the ability to place distance between itself and its audiences through its insistence on 'the exceptional,' the personality system works directly to construct and foreground intimacy and immediacy; whereas contact with stars is unrelentingly sporadic and uncertain, contact with television personalities has regularity and predictability; whereas stars are always playing 'parts' emphasizing their identity as 'stars' as much – perhaps even more than – the characters they play, television personalities 'play' themselves, whereas stars emanate as idealizations or archetypal expressions, to be contemplated, revered, desired and even blatantly imitated, stubbornly standing outside the realms of the familiar and the routinized, personalities are distinguished for their representativeness, their typicality, their 'will to ordinariness,' to be accepted, normalized, experienced as *familiar*.[37]

James Bennett expands this idea and argues that television "personalities must appear to be 'just-as-they-are.' To be ordinary, authentic, and to come intimately into the viewer's home without the appearance of performance."[38] The extraordinary becomes more ordinary on television as a result of smaller screen size, screen location (as televisions were positioned in private space of the home), genre, and ties to overtly commercial ends.[39] Though the star aura may have been

---

[37] John Langer, "Television's "Personality System"," *Media, Culture, and Society* 3 (1981): 355.

[38] James Bennett, *Television Personalities: Stardom and the Small Screen* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 1.

[39] Throughout her study, Christine Becker points to several instances, especially among female performers, where there was discord between a glamorous image and needs of typical housewives. Likewise, Denise Mann discusses the issues Martha Raye had in not being glamorous enough to sell beauty products. See Becker, *It's the Pictures That Got Small*, 7; Denise Mann, "The Spectacularization of Everyday Life," in *Private Screenings: Television and the Female Consumer*, ed. Lynn Spigel and Denise Mann (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 41-69.

tarnished, individuals could find a different type of fame as a regular presence in American homes.

As film stars migrated to television, initially in guest star roles, it soon became apparent that success on television necessitated a different skill set. Name recognition alone could not sustain long-term television careers because television's needs and demands differ significantly from film's. The live nature of early television programming helped define it as a medium and created a sense of authenticity amongst its personalities. Liveness demanded actors to be able to deliver lines in single takes, especially since programming could not be edited. As James Bennett explains:

> …liveness played a key role in the emergence of both televisual fame and televisual skill. Liveness is therefore integral to the creation of intimacy and, in turn, the display of an authentic self: it offers both the promise of access to the unmediated self 'when things go wrong', and paradoxically may also affirm their televisual skill in performance.[40]

Although television moved away from its reliance on live programming in favor of filmed programming, this authenticity tied to the feeling of liveness reemerges as a central tenet in the construction and presentation of reality television.

Early television implemented ordinariness, immediacy, and authenticity into its live programming which has remained crucial to understanding television's medium specificity, but by the beginning of the 1960s, scripted and recorded shows became the dominant programming trend. Television programming trends remained largely static due to the larger industrial stagnation. The big three networks cranked out programming for decades without any real challenge to their dominance or production methods. However, beginning in the 1980s, deregulation and the proliferation of cable and satellite offerings that increased the number of

[40] Bennett, *Television Personalities*, 34.

available channels, the rise of the Internet and broadband access provided a new threat to television in terms of choices people had to fill their entertainment needs/wants. This crisis point forced broadcast and cable networks alike to reconsider their programming offerings. In this uncertain period, programmers returned to trends that celebrated the medium's strengths including movements back to celebrating feelings of liveness and an increasing reliance on celebrity in order to draw in viewers. James Bennett explains how this is an economical choice:

> In economic terms, much like the use of stars in films, television personalities have functioned to reduce the risk associated with the production of programming since the inception of television broadcasting.[41]

However, instead of drawing exclusively from a well of transitioning Hollywood stars, contemporary programmers use the tools of serialized narrative storytelling to either reinvent fledgling celebrities who have had brushes with fame or discover and create new celebrities of their own. Moreover, as a systemized process, television production companies likewise offer a structure to the creation, exposure, and maintenance of celebrity within the production cycle. As Su Holmes argues "…if 'ordinariness' and familiarity are seen to structure televisual fame, Reality TV offers a literalization of this rhetoric in its focus on rhetoric in its focus on 'ordinary' people who come to be seen regularly in a familiar context."[42] Reality television is in a unique position as a television personality creator and celebrity creator because of the short-term intensity of both production and eventual airing.

---

[41] *Television Personalities*, 98.

[42] Su Holmes, ""All you've got to worry about is the task, having a cup of tea, and doing a bit of sunbathing": Approaching Celebrity in *Big Brother*," in *Understanding Reality Television*, ed. Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn (New York: Routledge, 2004), 116.

History of Reality Television and Precedents for Celebrity

Authenticity and "present-ness" are inscribed in and reinforced stylistically through reality programs' formal construction, which borrows heavily from the conventions of documentary and the apparent spontaneity (or "liveness") of cinema verité to create, maintain, and promote the contemporary cultural imagination of celebrity. Nonetheless, this apparent spontaneity also has a role in temporal demise, since it contributes to both programming and reality television personalities' faster cultural expiration dates. Certainly, early television programming celebrated its "liveness," and featured both "real" (ordinary) people and celebrities not only in the news but also on variety/talk shows and game shows. In 1973, PBS' *An American Family*, a documentary series following the "everyday life" of the Louds, a Santa Barbara family, utilized cinema-verité style footage as the material for a multi-episode series. The series was extremely successful and drew in 10 million weekly viewers over its twelve-week run, making it one of the most watched programs in PBS history.[43] As a result, the Louds became celebrities and subsequently appeared on magazine covers and talk shows to speak about the status of American families, and specifically, the effects of this kind of reality television on their family.[44] Although the Louds' personal celebrity did not last long, the reality series left a lasting impression on American popular media culture.

However, the program that best established the current wave of reality programming was MTV's *The Real World* (MTV, 1992-Present). It combines the use of hidden cameras and

---

[43] PBS, "An American Family: Anniversary Edition," http://www.pbs.org/programs/american-family/.

[44] Jeffrey Ruoff, "Can a Documentary Be Made of Real Life?: The Reception of *An American Family*," in *The Construction of the Viewer: Media Ethnography and the Anthropology of Audiences*, ed. Peter Ian Crawford and Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinsson (Aarhus, Denmark: Intervention Press, 1996), 270.

confessional style interviews to formulate its narratives following a group of twenty-something strangers living together over the course of a season. Confessional-style talking head interviews have now become a mainstay of reality programming and are incorporated into (if to different degrees) its various reality TV sub-genres. These regular, abrupt interview segments act as a narrative device to give characters dimension, interiority, and the opportunity to directly address audiences. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, cinema-verité footage also became a more prominent part of broadcast schedules through programs like *America's Funniest Home Videos* (ABC, 1989-Present), which were completely comprised of user-submitted videos, then combined through editing and unified through the on-camera host's commentary. Indeed, the desire of "ordinary" people to publicly share their embarrassing moments in exchange for televisual exposure and, in many cases, the possibility of a cash prize significantly fueled the current symbiosis of contemporary reality television programming and celebrity.

As suggested, with the increase in interest in celebrity in the public sphere, especially in the past decade, there has been a corresponding increase in the amount of reality programming across cable and broadcast networks centering either on established celebrities or on celebrities in the making. Both the well (or better) known and the unknown personalities are incorporated into what might be termed situational docudramas, which feature regular "characters" and occasionally multi-episode narrative arcs. Such character interactions over time allows for viewer identification with the reality participants and this often enables some of the previously unknown to achieve a "surplus" level of celebrity that extends beyond the screen. Here, as with *The Real World*, MTV is again a leader as can be seen through the success of *The Osbournes* (MTV, 2002-2005). Combining the family drama of *An American Family* with the cinema verité aesthetics of *The Real World*, *The Osbournes* centers on aging rocker Ozzy Osbourne, well

known for extreme drug-fueled antics, and the previously little known members of his family. Through the evocation of traditional sitcom family roles, *The Osbournes* serves as an opportunity not only to rebrand Ozzy Osbourne, but to brand his family members as well.[45] As viewers engaged with the celebrity family through the formal techniques and behavioral viewing practices associated with television, the Osbournes became a familiar and regular presence in their lives. Furthermore, because of this familiarity and identification, both Osbourne's wife and daughter developed their own "portable celebrity skillset" and became celebrities in their own right. Daughter Kelly pursued a singing career and became a red carpet staple whereas wife Sharon capitalized on her firecracker personality to serve as judge on several reality competition shows including *America's Got Talent* (NBC, 2006-present) and as a daytime talk show personality on shows like *The Talk* (CBS, 2010-Present).

As a result of the genre hybridity prevalent in reality programming, many competition-based shows also incorporate the narratives and characters central to docudrama. In these shows, contestant personality often plays an important part, especially in programs that include audience voting such as *American Idol*, *So You Think You Can Dance* (Fox, 2005-Present) and *The Voice* (NBC, 2011-Present). In others there are potential markets for contestants after the show ends like *Project Runway* (Bravo, 2004-2008; Lifetime 2009-Present) and *Top Chef* (Bravo, 2006-Present). In similar ways, personality can also constitute a central quality for a reality show's brand representatives as seen with trainer Jillian Michael's fitness products co-branded with *The Biggest Loser* (NBC, 2004-Present), or the Kardashian sisters' clothing line at Sears, subscription-based lifestyle websites, and cosmetic lines capitalizing on their fame from *Keeping*

[45] Jennifer Gillan, "From Ozzie Nelson to Ozzy Osbourne: The Genesis and Development of the Reality (Star) Sitcom," in *Understanding Reality Television*, ed. Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn (New York: Routledge, 2004), 57.

Up With the Kardashians (E!, 2007-Present). In this regard, competition-based reality shows, which have a single "winner" at the end of the season, still reward prizes to fan favorites, further suggesting the importance of personality in connecting with viewers outside the textual boundaries of the show. Furthermore, as reality franchises based on high concept ideas spawn successive seasons and accumulate backlogs of previous contestants, producers and networks can utilize these backlogs to build special "all-star" seasons, in which former contestants have the opportunity to re-play the game against other former contestants. The all-star season taps directly into viewer pleasure associated not only with the competition's mechanics, but also with prior familiarity with, and attachment to, former contestants. All-star versions of these shows thus allow networks to use interest in personality and the fame it can bring as key selling points through which to further extend the shelf life of the program.

Theorizing Television Celebrity

At this point, it may be helpful to survey how television celebrity is theorized by scholars in cinema and media studies, within which the relevant concept has been "stardom." Richard Dyer in his seminal texts *Stars* (1979/1998) and *Heavenly Bodies* (1986) argues that stars are discursive.[46] Star images are intertextual and embedded with cultural meaning, which is then read and interpreted by audiences.[47] "Star texts" are never equal to the "real" person behind them, but represent a carefully crafted image of success and ordinariness that elevates the individual. Following this logic, all stars are celebrities although all celebrities are not

[46] Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, 3; Dyer and McDonald, *Stars*, 1.

[47] These ideas are further reflected in the chain of scholars following Dyer, including Gamson, *Claims to Fame*; McDonald, *The Star System*; Graeme Turner, *Understanding Celebrity* (London: Sage, 2004).

necessarily stars. In this regard, Dyer's work focuses exclusively on film stars, but the notion of intertextuality that he posits as central to understanding star texts is also easily applied to television celebrities. Like star texts of the classical Hollywood era, which combined onscreen roles with offscreen "real life" biographical events publicized through popular presses, fan clubs, and the like lends itself nicely to the contemporary era. And, in the time since, media outlets have grown exponentially, creating more sites of textual discourse from multi-platform content generated by producers to online fan communitites to official Twitter accounts putting celebrities directly in touch with their fan bases.

Many academics theorizing television stardom address reality programming as a site rich with various kinds of personalities. However, as James Bennett and Su Holmes point out in their polemic article "The "Place" of Television in Celebrity Studies," television celebrity has often been defined in opposition to film stardom.[48] Their argument is that television thrives on intimacy and familiarity, which undermines the "specialness" its personalities need in order to achieve the "aura" of distance that film stars have. Given this difference, scholars like John Ellis and John Langer specifically designate television stars as "celebrities" or "personalities" as opposed to "stars" in order to differentiate and organize them hierachically in relation to film stars.[49] Television stars, then, are better termed "celebrities" or "personalities" because their fame and success reflects not their uniqueness or "specialness," but rather the values of familiarity and regularity that are tied historically to domestic viewing habits associated with

[48] James Bennett and Su Holmes, "The "Place" of Television in Celebrity Studies," *Celebrity Studies* 1, no. 1 (2010): 66.

[49] Arguments focused on film stars also implicitly reinforce academic hierarchies that privilege film over television. For more on the argument that television personalities cannot achieve stardom, see Langer, "Television's "Personality System"," 351-66; John Ellis, *Visible Fictions: Cinema, Television, Video* (London: Routledge, 1992).

commerical broadcast television. James Bennett builds on this when asserting that television fame needs to address the medium specificity of what television can do that other media cannot. With this in mind, he purports that the most sucessful television "…personalities must appear to be 'just-as-they-are'. To be ordinary, authentic, and to come intimately into the viewer's home without the appearance of performance," an idea which is further compounded as the success of reality programs hinges on the personalities cast.[50]

Although popular media, especially the popular press, uses the word "star" to describe reality personalities who attain major standing in the popular zeitgeist, like Snooki from *Jersey Shore* or the Kardashian sisters from *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*, there is still the understanding that these "stars" are distinct from stars in other media, specifically those working in film. Bennett and Holmes call for a distinction between "stars" and "personalities," the latter designated the descriptive terminology for those who achieve fame in television. However, the distinctions that Bennett and Holmes call for are not only between television stars and film stars, but also used to distinguish between types of television fame. Thus, they argue that the term "stars" should be used for the main actors in fictional programming and "personalities" for those participating in non-scripted shows.[51] Their terminological distinctions provide a way to conceptualize and create hierarchies for the various levels of celebrity with which I will be working in relation to reality programming.

[50] Bennett, *Television Personalities*, 1.

[51] Bennett and Holmes, "The "Place" of Television in Celebrity Studies," 68.

Theorizing Celebrity Labor

Terminology aside, the field of celebrity studies with regards to television also engages, if more tangentially, the issues of work and temporality that I argue are central to creating and maintaining celebrity through reality television. Discussions of work appear in several different major schools of thought regarding stars and celebrities. The cultural significance and value of the term celebrity itself becomes contested in the argument put forward by star theorist P. David Marshall in *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*. Drawing on Dyer's theorization of stars as semiotic and discursive systems,[52] Marshall argues, "The sign of the celebrity is ridiculed and derided because it represents the center of *false value*. The success expressed in the celebrity posture is seen as success without the requisite association with *work*."[53] However, in this regard, Marshall overlooks the hard work produced by celebrities, public relations people, networks, etc., which I argue, is central to creating and maintaining celebrity over time. In fact, in *Heavenly Bodies*, Dyer argues that stars do not produce themselves alone, but "are both the labor and the thing that labor produces."[54] Celebrity is the commodification of fame, and approaching the intersection of celebrity with reality television from an industrial point-of-view offers us an opportunity to consider the labor and economic models for both on and off-air workers in reality programming. Celebrity is the result of the aggregate bureaucratic and promotional labor of a network of temporarily affiliated fleets of workers who partner to fabricate, manage, and police a famous individual.

---

[52] See Dyer and McDonald, *Stars*, 87.

[53] P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), xi.

[54] Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, 5.

Dyer's evocation of capitalism as a means of explaining the phenomenon of celebrity also naturally lends itself to a discussion of the industrial economy of television, and of reality television in particular. The primary goal and marker for programming success is a network's ability to deliver audiences to advertisers, who are in turn dependent on capitalist consumption to ensure their success. Moreover, branding is likewise a key component of capitalism; it helps consumers make choices based on imaginary relationships with products, or, in this case, celebrity reality television personalities. With this in mind, Christine Becker considers "stars not just as images but also as labor and capital operating within particular industries and historical contexts."[55] Becker combines and animates Dyer's theory, which she sees as purely theoretical, with analysis of the industrial and historical circumstances in which film stars began to to appear in early television programming, thus complicating the star's image and the image of a "star." Although Dyer provides a strong theoretical background from which to consider stardom and how it functions in capitalist societies, his work mainly theorizes existing materials rather than examining any of the institutions, processes, or people that create them. Indeed, most star theorists overlook the work performed by others in tandem with the star in order to co-produce his or her stardom. Thus, drawing on intertextual star texts as Dyer does, I will expand on his model, picking up where Becker leaves off. Whereas Becker looks to the industrial and cultural convergence of film and television, this dissertation examines the industrial and historical circumstances when TV reality stars began to appear on cable and network TV at the same time as new forms of online celebrity were emerging on social media via YouTube, Vine, Instagram, etc. My case studies chapters will consider the systems and processes that create and circulate reality television texts by featuring a range of stars, celebrities, and personalities as well as

[55] Becker, *It's the Pictures That Got Small*, 4.

institutional sites of power wielded by networks, production companies, and individuals. Also, this expanded method will explore how celebrity is constructed, programmed, and branded by television networks, production companies and related personnel, as well as on the on-screen personalities themselves.

Methodology

Building on Becker's approach, my methodology will also incorporate a mode of analysis that scrutinizes the political economy of celebrity in its specific relation to reality television as exemplified by Mark Andrejevic in *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched.* Andrejevic's approach is helpful in that it focuses on economic factors and related aspects of political, social, and cultural life. He suggests the cooperative nature between participants and producers in creating cultural significance, and points also to the power inequities between industrial forces and individuals. Although the tone of his work tends to emphasize television's exploitation of reality participants' because of their willingness to subject themselves to constant surveillance to the benefit of entertainment institutions, his work significantly points to the political economy of the labor in which reality show participants are involved as they are being watched. He argues that as consumers become participants in the entertainment machine, "they sell access to their lives in a way not dissimilar to that in which they sell their labor power."[56] For Andrejevic, industrial forces and labor are ultimately the most powerful in crafting onscreen personae, and his underlying belief that everything viewers see on screen is the result of purposeful work is foundational to this project, which considers the various kinds of industrial labor and agency involved at different levels of celebrity creation. The "work" of being a reality TV celebrity expanded exponentially when reality TV celebrities were expected to amass a dedicated

[56] Andrejevic, *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched*, 6.

following of engaged users via social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.). Likewise, the needs of the online economy collapse the distinctions between work and leisure as well as those between public and private so that "domestic activities that didn't used to generate value can be captured, recorded, and commodified, thanks to the extended reach of the monitoring gaze facilitated by the digital enclosure. As this work becomes more integrated into our domestic lives, domesticity becomes increasingly productive."[57] Celebrity becomes more attainable with one's willingness to use one's life as a site of production and as fans, likes, and followers are frequently used as currency to demonstrate proof of cultural reach. As such, these digital relationships are currency individuals use to expand their reach through partnerships with capital, whether that be through direct product endorsements or to entice fans to literally follow a celebrity to a new venture. This is further reinforced with how algorithmic culture (encompassing social media, casual gaming, shopping trends, news items, etc.) works. Software algorithms like the Google search and the Twitter hashtag mechanize curation in a way that prioritizes celebrity posts; in other words, these algorithmic systems are "gamed" to promote celebrity as one more means to keep users inside these digital ecosystems. In this paradigm, the celebrity is the access point to harness, analyze, and sell consumer data.

A major part of my methodology will be performing textual analysis on case study series and the discourses surrounding them, including the industrial trades and popular press. The type of celebrity-based reality shows focused on within this dissertation develop character and/or narrative arcs throughout seasons (as opposed to narratives/characters that are limited to single episodes), thus allowing analysis not only of docudramas but also of certain competition-based programs (both of which ae sub-genres of reality television). The shows here explicitly feature a

[57] *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched*, 81.

self-reflexive understanding of the mechanics of both reality television and celebrity by and through comments and reference of the personalities on the shows and their activities within them.

I will consider discursive material, both in print and online, about my selected case study series and the personalities involved with them will further help me identify the infrastructural systems in place that report on, promote, and maintain the program and celebrities' statuses. From trade press materials, I will draw conclusions about administrative decisions concerning how particular programs and personalities represent network brands and larger programming trends. In looking at these industrial discourses, I consider not only explicit information regarding trends in reality programming, network scheduling, branding, and celebrity, but also to follow the line of inquiry suggested by John Caldwell in *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television* (2008), where promotional material put out by the industry and creative individuals also implicitly expresses how workers understand themselves as part of the larger institutions in which they are involved.[58] Moreover, I will consider popular press publications, particularly tabloids, as these are additional sites where reality personalities are regularly promoted and circulated – often on the covers.

However, as my project also includes an emphasis on the time and branding of reality programming and celebrity, it is also important that I consider an expanded notion of "televisual flow" as well. Traditional flow practices still have much to tell us about the reality program's intended audiences, the network's brand, and the core values of the program itself. For example, the strategic importance of programming flow is evident during airings of *America's Next Top*

[58] John Thornton Caldwell, *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television*, Console-ing passions (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008), 2.

Model (UPN, 2003-2006; The CW, 2006-2015; VH1, 2016-Present). The prize for winning this modeling competition show includes a spokesperson contract with Cover Girl cosmetics. Cover Girl is regularly promoted within the show as well as in the commercial breaks – each of which is also further branded with the placement of interstitial network self-promotions. Although flow is not as integral to television viewing as it once was given platforms servicing streaming video on demand and devices like the smart phone and the DVR, it is nonetheless still influential in the structure and temporality of scheduling decisions. Thus, here I again intend to complicate historic notion of flow by looking at the increasing incorporation of multi-platform televisual extensions to attempt to wrangle and ride-out contemporary audience viewing practices, which tend to be fragmented over several screens. Promoting reality television consumption on several platforms simultaneously has greatly diversified the television experience as, for example, when NBC's singing competition *The Voice* (NBC, 2011-Present) features its contestants tweeting about their experiences in real time from backstage or allows the home viewing audience to vote online for their favorite contestants or via iTunes to purchase their favorite songs. Moreover, as participants increasingly try to use reality appearances to launch their own fame, social media becomes the most important space for individual agency. Looking to these sites provides insight into the negotiations between networks, production companies, and individuals as well as the limits of institutional support for the creation and duration of celebrity.

Chapter Breakdown

With these negotiations in mind, the chapters in this dissertation will each focus on a different locus of sites of production for reality television celebrity. Time-work is a central component of branding, and is necessary for the development of psychological relationships with people and products—or people as products. Thus, the management of time becomes critical to

network success, and programming is scheduled based on how networks think they can reach the most viewers. The first chapter, "Watch What Happens": Institutionalizing Reality Celebrity in Bravo's Network Brand, traces the development of the Bravo network to show how reality programming, and celebrity-focused reality programming specifically, has become the basis for channel branding through its scheduling practices. Bravo's programming slate illuminates how personality-based reality programming can be scheduled across days and hours, and used not only to brand products and people but also to brand a network. Focusing on various aspects of affluent lifestyles, Bravo has created its own slate not only of shows but also of celebrities, which they market as "Bravo-lebrities." Moreover, Bravo's Executive President of Development and Talent, Andy Cohen has been instrumental to developing Bravo's current programming slate, and thus its successful brand image. Indeed, in 2009, he stepped in front of the screen himself to host *Watch What Happens: Live*, a nightly talk show that regularly features "Bravo-lebrities" and is focused on celebrity and pop culture. Considering Bravo allows me to do a close analysis of how flow operates in the service of larger branding goals in reality programming and across media platforms and across conglomerate properties.

I will supplement my industrial analysis of trade discourse with interviews and site visits. In *Below the Line: Producers and Production Studies in the New Television Economy*, Vicki Mayer lays out the other central guide to my methodological approach. Her goal throughout is to call attention to the invisible work of television through an expanded definition of "television producers," among whom she includes television factory workers in Brazil, freelance soft-core pornography videographers, and reality television casters. Each of these professions extends outside Hollywood, both geographically and institutionally, which is a central factor in their invisible labor. Like Caldwell, Mayer engages in ethnographic encounters with production

workers and further describes her own experiences in her fieldnotes at unlikely television production sites.[59] The second chapter, America's Next Top Brand: The Precarious Partnership Between Reality Show Production Companies and Contestants, will narrow the scope by considering the levels of control a single show and production company have in celebrity labor as representative of larger industrial practices across the talent-based competition reality sub-genre. This chapter will consider Anisa Productions, the self-contained production company responsible for producing *America's Next Top Model* (UPN, 2003-2006; The CW, 2006-2015; VH1 2016-Present). As a staff intern, I temporarily acted as a reality television worker and conducted several in-depth interviews with key producers who entail the systems in place for constructing celebrity on the show level. Considering *America's Next Top Model*'s off screen practices demonstrates the dual nature in which contestants attempt to use the reality show platform and its institutionalized structures to gain notoriety to turn themselves into viable commodities while the production company uses contestants to reify the show format as the central commodity.

Although the network and production company provide examples of systemized star-making, that does not mean individuals have no agency of their own. The final chapter, Mom-ager Knows Best: Individual Ownership of Reality Stardom, will consider the Kardashians have created, promoted, and maintained their celebrity both through reality television and by using their televised presence as a platform to drive fans to their other ventures. Even sister Khloé Kardashian considers her family's reality show, *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* (E!; 2007-Present), as essentially "30-minute commercials" for the sisters' boutiques, fashion lines, and

[59] Mayer, *Below the Line: Producers and Production Studies in the New Television Economy*, 26.

other branded endeavors.[60] This chapter will highlight the work that the show's participants do in order to cultivate and propagate their onscreen personae. The Kardashian family is largely famous for being famous; especially as middle daughter Kim gained her notoriety by appearing in a widely circulated sex tape. Although audiences understand the Kardashians are rich and already have attained some level of celebrity (especially since *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* airs on E!, a network dedicated to Hollywood, celebrity, and celebrity gossip), one of the underlying themes of their show is labor. However, in *Keeping Up With The Kardashians*, *their labor is the work of being famous*, and they are able to maintain control of their images through the managerial work of Kris Jenner, which in itself partially a narrative tactic that obscures the work done by stylists, make-up artists, and personal trainers who work directly for the Kardashian-Jenners as well as the work of those who produce and promote the show itself. Although the type of celebrity embodied by the Kardashians may seem hollow, they nonetheless show how there is real economic value to the work they do and the products they create from and around themselves and their celebrity. The Kardashian-Jenners' life and work are so intricately intertwined that their work is constantly maintaining their celebrity, which is completely dependent on their relationships with one another. *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* focuses on Kris and her progeny as their lives and work are integrated; providing a unique business model for celebrity maintenance in the digital, multiplatform era.

The concluding chapter, The Celebrity Ap-president, The Dubious Relationship Between Politics and Reality TV, will consider the confluence of individual, production company, and network power in conjunction with larger industrial deregulation trends that converge in the

[60] Judith Newman and Leslie Bruce, "How the Kardashians Made $65 Million Last Year," *The Hollywood Reporter*, February 16, 2011.

successful candidacy and election of 45th President, Donald J. Trump. Trump's ascension from seemingly joke candidate to Republican nominee to 45th President reflects larger trends in the importance of celebrity, especially on television, where the cult of personality becomes a means of identification. Using Trump as an example, I will elaborate and reflect on how the issues of work and time brought up throughout the dissertation are central to how celebrity is constructed and maintained on reality television, and the implications that has on larger cultural and political levels. Celebrity and fame are indispensable to understanding the contemporary American cultural moment, and celebrities' frequent integration into reality television makes them a natural subject of investigation. Reality programming creates an opportunity for individuals who seek fame and for the networks that create, maintain, and promote it in a mutually beneficial relationship as it offers the former the possibility of achieving celebrity while allowing the latter the opportunity to cheaply develop and expand the lifespan of their own branded identities. However, the actual labor involved in creating and maintaining the infrastructure for reality programming that is provided by network representatives and production workers is usually hidden so as to protect cultural notions that "anyone" can attain celebrity status through luck and perseverance. Individual labor is, nonetheless, often built into the programs' diegeses, but here attached to narrative conventions and personalities. Reality programming centered on character narratives (whether in docudramas or competition-based shows) thus often play with notions of both work and time and offer individual participants the opportunity to "break out" and capitalize on their moment of fame within a limited window of exposure. Thus, celebrity is constructed and maintained not only in the windows of time created by production companies and delivered to networks for scheduling, but also extended by the individuals themselves off-screen both during and after a program's airing.

CHAPTER ONE:

"Watch What Happens": Institutionalizing Reality Celebrity in Bravo's Network Brand

> *"Whether Bravo execs have their hands on the pulse of the American TV viewer is a moot question. They have their hands on the pulse of the people who watch their air, and for now, that's enough."*
>
> –Brian Steinberg, "Bravo Bolsters Its Affluence Appeal" [1]

> *"Content ownership and packaging will continue to be attracted to good content and because branded packaging will remain the best way to organize content."*
>
> –Timothy M. Todreas, *Value Creation and Branding in Television's Digital Age*[2]

In the post-network era, one of the essential tasks is to evolve with changing audience needs, especially in light of rapidly changing technologies that threaten television's very existence. However, though television and surrounding communications technologies have evolved, the core mechanisms of television are still intact. Central to these is the importance of the network and the program schedule. Since, as Celia Lury argues, brands are "more than simply a set of relations between products… [they are] *a set of relations between products in time*," the schedule becomes a way to articulate and *reiterate* network values and rationale.[3] Likewise, as networks compete to solidify their audiences and their livelihoods, presenting a cohesive set of values fosters long-term, dependable relationships between network and a more loyal viewer. Although broadcast networks are moving into cultivating stronger branded identities, cable networks have long implemented aspects of branding in order to differentiate

[1] Brian Steinberg, "Bravo Bolsters Its Affluence Appeal," *Variety*, April 9 2013, 16.

[2] Timothy M. Todreas, *Value Creation and Branding in Television's Digital Age* (Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 1999), 9; *Value Creation and Branding in Television's Digital Age*; *Value Creation and Branding in Television's Digital Age*.

[3] Lury, *Brands: The Logos of the Global Economy*, 2.

themselves, and those strategies have adapted to evolve both with an increase in channel and program offerings as well as distribution platforms, where "television" is widely being consumed off television. As more and more content is available to users off the air via streaming services, the network brand becomes even more important as a way to mark and organize scattered and seemingly differentiated content. Just as programming similar themed or conceptual programs on television can reaffirm past viewing choices and set expectations for future offerings, the fleeting set of relations between programs are even more important as networks become organizational markers within larger content aggregates.

Considering larger institutional reactions to changing audience and technological demands illustrates the importance of branding and the ways in which networks strive to remain viable in transitional eras. Bravo represents institutional logics and mechanisms that position celebrity-based reality television as a means of solidifying and adjusting brand identities. The widely-viewed genius of Bravo since its 2002 acquisition by NBC has been that the network has understood, whether accidentally or purposefully, how to seamlessly integrate corporate practices with onscreen and textual practices. The network consistently performs its strong brand and constantly rearticulates it onscreen, through cross-promotion, and over multiple platforms. Moreover, with an understanding of its core audiences and greater resources provided by its conglomerate parent, Bravo has used celebrity-based reality programming to deftly make micro-adjustments to its identity and strengthen it over the past fifteen years. This chapter features an extensive case study of the Bravo network as representative of larger trends in order to trace television's development with the implementation of the cable system, especially as it has weathered substantial changes over its 30+-year history. Moreover, Bravo's changes are indicative of larger programming trends that readily incorporate celebrity and reality television

formats as central to its programming strategy. Likewise, Bravo's position within a larger entertainment conglomerate gives its programming, personalities, and bottom line larger exposure and greater reach. Celebrity/personality-based reality programming has been a smart decision for the network because the benefits of the programming align with larger network goals for expansion and proliferation. Reality programming is cheaper to produce and program, so networks' development budgets can be stretched further. Programs that do not succeed can be swapped out easily, and those that do succeed can help tweak the format and thus fine-tune standards for new programming. Bravo's ability to cultivate its own celebrities, rather than featuring those who have found fame elsewhere, gives the network additional control in articulating its self-serving brand. Cultivating and featuring personalities on the network, personality-based reality programming can shift the burden of branding to those onscreen in the programs. Although celebrity forays into television have always been connected to gaining larger exposure, the modern era dictates that in order to be successful, personalities must be mobile, that is, viable across several platforms, of which television is simply one. Working within a conglomerate structure can facilitate such exposure given institutional strategies that spread brands across platforms and divisions. The cross-platform showcasing increasingly positions individuals as harbingers of larger branded concepts to the point where the individual can come to embody the networks where they appear. As such, Bravo, as part of a larger conglomerate, has the institutional structure to facilitate its own celebrity system.

In looking at the periods Amanda Lotz describes as the multi-channel transition (the period spanning from the mid-1980s through the mid-2000s) and the post-network era (beginning in the mid 2000s) as transitional times for network development, there is a parallel development in industrial rationale for a seeming inevitable move towards not just reality

programming, but celebrity-based reality programming.[4] These changes in television align with increasing conglomeration and branding for diversification within the marketplace. Focusing on Bravo's development as indicative of larger television changes and trends is useful. As one of the first cable networks, it represents resilience in the light of larger historical changes as it transformed from a premium subscription network upon its origin in 1980 before becoming the niche basic cable channel it is currently. Moreover, Bravo has had massive success in not only defining its core audience, but also in consistently reinventing itself in order to evolve with its audiences' needs. Looking at Bravo over time provides a focal point to examine how industrial, economic, and cultural shifts created fertile grounds for the type of celebrity-based reality programming (whether based on existing or created celebrities) that dominates schedules across broadcast and cable networks. This particular genre has been so successful for Bravo that it has built its entire programming slate on its personality-based reality programming, claiming credit for the strategy and going as far as deeming its stars "Bravo-lebrities." Its programming strategy replicates core characters, lifestyles, and aesthetics in order to unify those programs with one another under the Bravo moniker. Each show represents a subsection of and serves a need for Bravo's core affluent audience, so by extension, the stars and series when considered together creates a cohesive view of the Bravo brand.[5] Even if viewers do not consume all the series, there

[4] Amanda D. Lotz, *The Television Will be Revolutionized* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 7.

[5] Erin Copple Smith clarifies Bravo's working definition of affluence as such: "Audience members who embody a combination of purchase power (by being in one of the upper-tier psychographic groups as defined by institutional metrics) with a high degree of "lifetime value" (defined by the longevity of the consumer-brand relationship) operate as the ideal for television channels such as Bravo, who in turn sell these valuable audiences to the advertisers." Erin Copple Smith, ""Affluencers" by Bravo: Defining an Audience Through Cross-Promotion," *Popular Communication* 10, no. 4 (2012): 291.

is enough similarity between tone, personality type, and aesthetics that one series can represent the whole. Critically examining the Bravo network over time helps us understand larger cultural and industrial changes that have moved American popular culture towards a seeming obsession with celebrity. Bravo is an extremely interesting and apropos case study because its longevity and success provides insight into regulatory, programming, and cultural changes that coincide with larger shifts in television history that result in the current onslaught of celebrity based reality programming.

Over time, Bravo deftly evolved its brand story in order to keep its desired affluent subscriber base engaged through an increasing focus on the individual since, as Erin Copple Smith argues, television "[a]s a dual-product marketplace…must necessarily produce both content to appeal to audiences and audiences to sell to advertisers."[6] As such, throughout its thirty-year history, Bravo has successfully defined its desired audience, and then programmed its schedule in order to cultivate viewers it could in turn sell to advertisers. As time progressed, Bravo further defined, narrowed, and "niche-ified" its core audience; thereby moving them through larger cultural changes without losing them. Moreover, the type of audience that Bravo hoped to attract aligned with and sought loyalty from the most valuable viewers for advertisers: affluent, educated, urbanites interested in culture. Bravo has maintained its position in the cable landscape despite increasing competition from the proliferation of other cable networks or encroachments from the Internet because it has more specifically defined the subset of affluent viewer the network wants, but never abandoning an interest in culture. Bravo has consistently attempted to cultivate network loyalty and live viewership, and has created a branded network of programs in order to keep them returning to the channel. Bravo wants viewers who are not only

[6] "'Affluencers" by Bravo," 290.

highly engaged, but who are engaged in their own cultural elitism. After initially engaging with upscale viewers through high arts cultural programming, Bravo shifted its definition of "culture" in order to broaden its base from cultural economic elites to those with (or aspiring to have) economic capital and interest in trending popular culture. In carefully "curated" movements from programming live arts events to art cinema to an increasing focus on affluence and popular culture through its interconnected reality programs, Bravo redefined its brand narrative without abandoning its initial audience or overspending on expensive original scripted programming. Over time, Bravo defined and organized the elite segment it wanted, and then the network actively sought programming for them to in turn sell to advertisers.

Key to Bravo's expansion and rebranding from an arts network to a popular culture focus was the network's acquisition by NBC in 2002. Falling under NBC's banner allowed the network greater reach both on the airwaves as well as over the Internet. As Bravo solidified its on air-presence, it now had greater resources to further reinforce its brand in online spaces. In making the move to digital content, Bravo uniquely unified branding work by having development executive and "Bravo super fan" Andy Cohen represent the ideal Bravo fan offscreen via his blog, and then onscreen through his presence on *Real Housewives* reunion episodes and eventually his nightly late-night program *Watch What Happens: LIVE*. In blogging about network and pop culture events, Cohen's voice is featured as original content on the Bravo website, and knowledge of him and his blog comes to serve as cultural cache for those in the Bravo community. Cohen helps monitor, manage, and articulate the tight presentation of Bravo's brand and its dependence on celebrity-based reality programming as he steps out from behind the executive desk and into the branded blogosphere. Eventually, he became an increasing visible persona in front of the camera personifying the network's point-of-view and the network's brand.

Cohen himself becomes part of Bravo's larger onscreen branded identity, a celebrity in his own right, and the lynchpin that holds everything together. Bravo is widely viewed in the trades as a leader in network branding and emblematic of larger network tendencies to present unified programming to keep the network as a viable source of content delivery in an ever-fragmented mediascape. By spending decades cultivating its ideal audience and shifting in programming to keep their loyalty, considering Bravo at some length provides interesting lesson in how both celebrity based programming and reality programming came to be not just viable programming and branding mechanisms, but a way of structuring and considering an entire cable outlet both on and off screen.

Bravo's Early Years: 1980-1989

Bravo has known and remained consistent in attempting to reach its desired audience from its launch in late 1980, when it pitched itself to engage with an affluent culturally elite audience.[7] Airing high art programming (orchestral performances, dance, opera, etc.) in 1-3 hour blocks on Sunday and Monday evenings, the premium cable network positioned itself as an alternative to "low brow fare" offered on broadcast airwaves.[8] Obtaining the network required viewers to purchase a cable subscription. Because of this prerequisite, Bravo was able to self-select its audience based on approximating who could afford the added expense, and might want to articulate their cultural cache through purchasing the channel. Moreover, cable offered a new way of considering programming. As Amanda Lotz explains:

[7] Although reality television itself is a denigrated genre at the bottom of industrial television hierarchies where "serious" "intellectual" dramas and comedies are at the top, Bravo is attempting to engage high culture ideas in a low culture format. When combined with high production values, Bravo hopes to position itself as attractive to "prestigious" audiences.

[8] Ken Terry, "Performing Arts Cable Service Preparing To Go On Satellite; Programs Will Be In Stereo," *Variety (Archive: 1905-2000)*, October 8, 1980.

> The emergence of so many new networks and channels changed the competitive dynamics of the industry and the type of programming likely to be least objectionable to the entire family, broadcast networks – and particularly cable channels – increasingly developed programming that might be most satisfying to specific audience members.[9]

Though cable itself was new at the time, early reviews of Bravo and its programming suggest the important role branding network identity would come to be in defining the television landscape. Though Bravo's brand identity became tighter and more defined over its tenure, the network took careful steps to cultivate its self-identity and branding it even in its earliest days.

Despite engaging with a relatively highbrow elitist audience, it is interesting to consider that for its first two years (1980-1982), Bravo shared its airwaves with movie channel Escapade, the channel eventually became the Playboy Channel[10], which presented soft-core pornography on the remaining five nights a week.[11] Embracing both the untested frontier of the medium and addressing issues of providing content, the networks' operator Cablevision used the odd pairing as a branding opportunity. In addressing concerns about the odd juxtaposition between Bravo and Escapade, Cablevision founder and president Charles Dolan said, "'We're just trying to give subscribers what they want…Our surveys showed that adult entertainment and cultural programs were the two things people felt were most lacking on cable.'"[12]

---

[9] Lotz, *The Television Will be Revolutionized*, 14.

[10] By 1982, Bravo and Escapade have become their own channels.

[11] "Grossman unfazed by new cultural TV competition," *Broadcasting (Archive: 1957-1993)*, 1981 Jan 19 1981.

[12] Tony Schwartz, "Cable TV Pioneer Still Takes Risks," *New York Times (1923-Current file)*, 1981 Aug 03 1981. Pieces like these use the executives in order to both articulate and stand in as components of the network's brand, which is a tactic Bravo utilizes throughout its tenure.

In creating an elite cultural space in the low-culture medium of TV, Bravo wanted an audience valuable enough to encourage corporate underwriting of its programming. Likewise, early network ventures sought to solidify its "must-have" status with upscale urbanites, which remains the core economic group in which Bravo is interested. Setting an early precedent in attracting affluent and influential viewers, in announcing Bravo's premiere, president Marc Lustgarten announced that all its programming would be presented in stereo sound, a feature not yet standard on television.[13] Tying together affluence with technology and consumption solidified Bravo's intended audience as relatively wealthy, educated, and interested in cutting edge consumption.

Despite the promise of Bravo as a cable arts channel, the network spent its early days distinguishing itself from PBS as the two networks fought for the same audience of viewers with elite tastes and accompanying incomes. This demographic would be familiar with high art performances, and crave them enough to pay for more. The economic cache associated with cable subscription and accessing Bravo's exclusive content could thus be directly translated into cultural cache since subscribers were investing in elite cultural programming. Emulating PBS also had another less tangible consequence for Bravo (and thus early cable in general)—*legitimacy*. PBS' programming offered an alternative to broadcast networks' dedication to least objectionable programming meant to cut across audience demographics due to its regular focus on quality arts, children's, and local interest programming. Although PBS was not an economic threat to the broadcast networks, it provided a cultural legitimacy that was largely antithetical to

[13] Terry, "Performing Arts Cable Service Preparing To Go On Satellite; Programs Will Be In Stereo."

broadcast television.[14] Early cable likewise needed cultural currency to gain legitimacy and drive subscription services. In establishing the network and cable itself, Bravo emulated PBS and used cultural programming as shorthand for cultural legitimacy. Bravo utilized its subscriptions in order to create an ad-free network. This likewise added a layer of legitimacy since programming was presented without the influence of commercial advertisers.

In developing a network's niche, and ultimately its brand, the network schedule represents how channels see themselves and how they articulate their identities to their viewers. Celia Lury argues that "the brand is not itself fixed in time or space in terms of presence or absence, it is platform for the patterning of activity, a mode of organizing activities in time and space."[15] One of the key aspects of the television is the way in which it organizes space and time via the schedule. Television scheduling is an exercise in time management that ranges from deciding how long a program should be, the number of commercials that will air during and surrounding the program, to when in the schedule a program should air. Programming becomes a means of marking time on television, and in the age of niche programming, becomes a mode of communicating who is and is not the network's desired group based on who populates said programs. Likewise, by presenting a cohesive programming slate, networks intend to develop long-term relationships with their viewers so that although the programming may change, viewers' trust in the network and its programming will continuously bring them back to network. The schedule and sequence of series themselves become representative of branding and network identification. Scholars have long considered the schedule as part of comprising flow, and part of

[14] Derek Kompare, *Rerun Nation: How Repeats Invented American Television* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 111.

[15] Lury, *Brands: The Logos of the Global Economy*, 1.

interpreting flow on a macro level is to consider all the components (programming, advertisements, bumpers, promos) also articulate an intentional instruction of how to consider the network.[16] Jennifer Gillan explains that:

> Successful scheduling does more than calculate how to attract and maintain audiences... Scheduling reveals network assumptions about the viewing habits of its perceived audiences. Embedded within a schedule is a channel's desired brand identity and the cultural expressions through which it intends to convey the brand and attract national audiences.[17]

Throughout its tenure, Bravo has had several distinct periods of brand strategy which have been articulated by its schedule. As the 1980s progressed, the number of cable stations increased, so defining oneself against the competition becomes more important. Cable offered cheaper alternative way to reach audiences, and reaching affluent urbane viewers became a goal of several early networks and competitors.

Scheduling and programming practices represent careful balancing acts between original and acquired programming in order to articulate an identity as well as to remain a viable network. Bravo managed to successfully weather early competition by making conservative programming choices. After Bravo's initial launch, several broadcasters attempted to expand into the cable space via their own highbrow arts channels to capture elite niche. ARTS was a joint venture between ABC Video Enterprises and Warner Amex Satellite Entertainment Co., and CBS Cable was an attempt made by CBS.[18] However, ARTS imploded soon after its launch

---

[16] For more about how the schedule acts to define networks, see John Ellis, "Scheduling: The Last Creative Act in Television?," *Media, Culture, and Society* 22 (2000); Jennifer Gillan, *Television Brandcasting: The Return of the Content-Promotion Hybrid* (New York: Routledge, 2015); Johnson, "Tele-Branding in TVIII: The Network as Brand and the Programme as Brand."

[17] Gillan, *Television Brandcasting*, 96.

[18] "ABC Unveils TV Cultural Cable Channel On April 12," *Billboard (Archive: 1963-2000)*, 1981 Mar 21 1981.

showing how risky a programming model based on cultural programming alone could be. Similarly, CBS Cable's lofty goal to launch its own arts network failed when it could not support the high production costs of its original programming.[19] Bravo escaped this same fate because it "avoided building an identity around lavish *original* productions," and conservatively programmed events that it could *acquire*, since once the network expanded its airtime, producing enough new content would likely have bankrupted the channel.[20]

As Bravo gained traction in the 1980s, it expanded its schedule both in the number of program offerings and available hours to air them. By 1982, Bravo and Escapade became their own channels, and by 1985, Bravo broadcasts 12 hours each day.[21] Within five years, Bravo's original magazine style schedule, which alternated between short and long segments comprised of "interviews, commentary and news [that were] organized around [taped live] performances"[22] was replaced with nearly 70 percent American independent and international films.[23] Bravo shrewdly invested in securing rights for independent and world film since buying syndication

---

[19] Megan Gwynne Mullen, *The Rise of Cable Programming in the United States: Revolution or Evolution?* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 2003), 157-8.

[20] *The Rise of Cable Programming*, 158.

[21] Steve Schneider, "Bravo Thrives on Culture," *New York Times*, December 15, 1985.

[22] Terry, "Performing Arts Cable Service Preparing To Go On Satellite; Programs Will Be In Stereo."

[23] Schneider, "Bravo Thrives on Culture." Bravo also established its difference from broadcasters through the freedom it had to play with its scheduling decisions. Not beholden to advertising schedules or traditional timetables, cable offered the opportunity for a different conception of television flow. However, just as it had in the 1950s, this magazine scheduling broke down as Bravo slowly expanded its on-air hours from its initial twice-weekly 3 hours to daily 24/7 programming

rights from studio film libraries is expensive.[24] Movies take up a significant portion of broadcast time, and can be rebroadcast easily. This allowed the network to maintain its brand focused on cultural programming not offered anywhere else, and efficiently fill hours on its broadcast schedule. Trade discourse about Bravo further reinforced the network's desire to be thought of as quality. For example, in 1985, Bravo's general manager Robert Weisburg puts the network in the same league as HBO, Showtime, and The Movie Channel due to its extensive film programming and the fact that Bravo was still a premium subscription service.[25]

Creating a Brand through Programming: 1990-2002

As Bravo moved into the 1990s, it had established its identity enough to shift its programming towards more "traditional" television shows in attempts to maintain its niche audience. Likewise, during the 1980s and 1990s, deregulation across multiple industries elevated branding as an "attempt both to manage the relationship between products and consumers and to structure and stabilize global markets."[26] Between an increased interest in branding and an expansion to 24 hour programming in 1994, Bravo underwent significant structural changes "as cable operators express[ed] greater interest in networks with brand recognition."[27] At this point, the network still did not have commercials, but depended on series with corporate underwriting.[28] Upon going to 24 hours, General Manager at the time Kathleen Dore explained

[24] "Bravo Thrives on Culture."

[25] "Movies of the the Mainstream Find a Home on Bravo," *New York Times*, October 27, 1985.

[26] Paul Grainge, *Brand Hollywood: Selling Entertainment in a Global Media Age* (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), 6.

[27] Christopher Stern, "Bravo beefs up schedule; going 24 hours next year," *Broadcasting & Cable (Archive: 1993-2000)*, August 2, 1993.

[28] "Mercedes-Benz drives Bravo deal," *Variety (Archive: 1905-2000)*, September 7, 1992.

that Bravo "will aim for a programming mix of films, music and Broadway theatrical programming in addition to series."[29] Around the same time, Bravo's parent company Rainbow Media (itself a subsidiary of cable distribution giant Cablevision Systems) launched the Independent Film Channel, which took over airing independent and world cinema.[30] Whereas Bravo's expansion to 12 hours of daily programming in 1985 necessitated a move towards acquiring distribution rights for film in order to most efficiently fill its increase in programmable hours, IFC later followed a tangential trajectory. Launching IFC allowed Rainbow to extend its film rights to sustain an entirely new network and build on the branded ideals it built for Bravo. As such, Bravo needed to overhaul the types of programming it offered, and it began an earnest shift forward in its brand development through the rebroadcast of *Twin Peaks* in summer 1993.[31] As the network needed more content, it resorted to what has become standard practice in launching and growing new networks: it began airing syndicated content. Networks actively use their syndication choices to create their brands, and as Derek Kompare argues, "…in presenting familiar programming, cable networks do not merely run it; they strip it, promote it, repackage it, and recombine it."[32] Networks make repurposed content their own by presenting it in a new way. In this case, shows like *Peaks* served to transition the network and its core audience from its

---

[29] "Bravo beefs up schedule; going 24 hours next year."

[30] Larry Leventhal, "Rainbow - No Identity Crisis at Bravo or AMC," *Variety (Archive: 1905-2000)*, December 11, 1995.

[31] Rb, "Bravo to Run Complete 'Twin Peaks'," *Broadcasting (Archive: 1957-1993)*, January 18, 1993.

[32] Kompare, *Rerun Nation*, 171.

reliance on high cultural programming to the pop culture-filled reality fare the network becomes known for in 2000s and beyond.

Airing as part of its *TV Too Good for TV* showcase, Bravo utilized *Twin Peaks* in order to refine its larger identity as a destination for "quality" programming.[33] *Twin Peaks* marks an important shift within the overall network branded identity. Although Bravo is still highly invested in reaching a quality, upper middle class urban elite demographic, *Twin Peaks* reflects a Bravo's evolving thinking about what that audience may want. To this point, Bravo focused on live-to-tape cultural events and international and independent films. Now acquired television programs themselves could be the markers of cultural distinction the network strove to present and associate with their brand.[34] Moreover, since *Twin Peaks* was a project of director-auteur David Lynch, the property naturally fit into Bravo's pre-existing identity as home for cutting edge, non-mainstream film.

Both changes within Bravo's scheduling and shifts across the cablescape in general, represent larger institutional and industrial changes: most notably conglomeration and deregulation. As Bravo expanded its programming offerings, its parent companies, Rainbow Media and Cablevision, were concurrently increasing their market share. Though Bravo began as a subscription based cable channel, it eventually became bundled as part of "basic cable" offerings. In 1988, Cablevision purchased a significant part of Viacom cable systems (including

[33] This campaign is similar to one HBO would adopt in 1996 where they proclaimed "It's Not TV. It's HBO" as a means of asserting the high quality of their original series and specials to distance themselves from their competitors. Gary R. Edgerton, "Introduction: A Brief History of HBO," in *The Essential HBO Reader*, ed. Gary R. Edgerton and Jeffrey P. Jones (Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 2008), 9.

[34] Likewise, the network acquired the short-lived postmodern drama *Max Headroom* (1987-1988) and aired it concurrently with *Twin Peaks*.

Viacom's distribution rights in Long Island NY), in a deal that also gave it a 5% interest in Showtime/The Movie Channel.[35] This takeover expanded Cablevision's channel portfolio, which already included IFC, AMC, Bravo, and SportsChannel America, and provided Cablevision additional leveraging power when packaging subscriptions.[36] Bravo was also slow to grow despite its early entry into the cablesphere. Trade reports suggest that Bravo's slow growth could be due to the fact that its parent companies "Cablevision and Rainbow have lacked a good relationship with the rest of the industry," as well as "antagonistic negotiation styles" and micromanagement from the top.[37]

Within Cablevision's management scheme, Bravo specifically fell under Rainbow Media, the umbrella corporation overseeing Cablevision's channel portfolios. By the early 1990s, branding was a vital component to cable success.[38] Rather than branching out and creating new networks, Rainbow dedicated its resources to refining its niche channels and making them "competitor proof."[39] Within Rainbow's channel portfolio, the value of the Bravo brand increased exponentially as the brand became more important than any of the specific programs the network featured (though that programming worked to articulate the brand). Whereas networks like AMC, whose schedule consisted of rerunning classic studio films, were easier to define and relatively cheaper to run, Bravo's niche concept engaged a smaller, more targeted

---

[35] "Cablevision, Viacom strike $575-million deal," *Broadcasting (Archive: 1957-1993)*, 1988 Aug 22 1988.

[36] "Cablevision, Viacom strike $575-million deal."

[37] SDM, "New Times for Cablevision," *Broadcasting (Archive: 1957-1993)*, August 12, 1991.

[38] Leventhal, "Rainbow - No Identity Crisis at Bravo or AMC."

[39] SDM, "New Times for Cablevision."

audience, and likewise was more expensive.[40] However, the targeted audience was highly sought out by advertisers, justifying its costs. With art cinema now diverted to IFC, Bravo executives at the time redefined the network as capturing "what it means to be creative."[41] After depending on syndicated programming to redefine itself, Bravo gained enough traction to begin introducing and supporting original programming that likewise embodied its identity.[42] Indeed, upon expanding to 24 hours and needing to fill that additional time with "off-network programming," General Manager Kathleen Dore likewise articulated that despite these scheduling choices, Bravo would "not become another rerun network."[43] One of the ways in which they did so was through the launch of its original program *Inside the Actor's Studio* (1994-Present).

Other projects in the Cablevision portfolio included partial ownership of the network that would become Court TV and an agreement with NBC to launch and manage CNBC before the latter was released back to NBC under a mutual agreement.[44] From this early point in 1991, the partnership over CNBC foreshadows NBC's eventual purchase of the network. Although industry insiders suspected that this partnership formed out of necessity since neither company could find other partnerships, NBC gave Cablevision important capital in order to continue operations.[45] By 1997, Rainbow Media was 75% owned by Cablevision and 25% by NBC, but

[40] "New Times for Cablevision."

[41] Leventhal, "Rainbow - No Identity Crisis at Bravo or AMC."

[42] Kompare, *Rerun Nation*, 190.

[43] Stern, "Bravo beefs up schedule; going 24 hours next year."

[44] SDM, "New Times for Cablevision."

[45] "New Times for Cablevision."

Cablevision was looking for willing investors in its channel portfolio to offset its growing debt.[46] The relationship between the NBC and Cablevision remained strained until 2002 when NBC acquired Bravo outright for $1.25 billion. In the acquisition, NBC gained an already cultivated upscale audience, and a cable network to use as part of a larger horizontal integration strategy "as an outlet for new programs, to experiment with different formats, to rerun NBC shows and to explore the use of NBC news and entertainment content for various programs."[47] Although the audience base was strong financially, it was also older, with median viewers in their mid-50s.[48] Industry analysts considered Bravo a "fixer-upper in need of help" as the network was in the bottom third of the Nielsen ratings at the time of its acquisition by NBC.[49] However, in buying the network, NBC bought what it considered "a platform, a distribution business and a programming business,"[50] Likewise, Bravo fit into a larger programming schema where shows not appropriate for NBC, especially the onslaught of reality show pitches NBC received, could fit, or be dumped, on Bravo.[51]

Bravo Under NBC: 2002-Present

From its initial purchase, NBC planned Bravo as an arm to feature reality and documentary programming as opposed to scripted fare. At the time, as reality programming

---

[46] Colin Brown, "US TV warms to foreign film," *Screen international (Archive: 1976-2000)*, September 12, 1997.

[47] Andrew Ross Sorkin and Bill Carter, "NBC Is Said to Be Close to Acquiring Bravo," *New York Times (1923-Current file)*, November 4, 2002.

[48] Allison Romano, "Bravo! NBC has a cable net," *Broadcasting & Cable* 132, no. 46 (2002).

[49] "The NBC You Don't See," *Broadcasting & Cable* 132, no. 49 (2002).

[50] "The NBC You Don't See."

[51] "The NBC You Don't See."

became an increasingly programmed genre, an NBC executive vice president commented on how the new genre might fit into the larger NBC universe: "As I've been getting reality pitches in the last few months, I've been thinking, `It's not right for the network but could be right for Bravo.'"[52] From its acquisition, NBC presented Bravo as part of its larger stable of offerings, where the cable network could service a particular portion of a much larger audience engaging in NBC-owned programming suggesting the larger consolidation of television through conglomerate ownership. Bravo represented a cog in the larger NBC machine, and its value to the larger network came from its previously established brand and ability to deliver new, concentrated audiences to the parent company. Both networks could likewise utilize the other to refine their brands and take advantage of larger institutionalized partnerships. In a maneuver symbolic of movement between conglomerate holdings, "NBC could pass off programming costs by repurposing shows or buying syndication rights for Bravo. And it could test on Bravo programs that could move on to NBC."[53]

Over the same period in which the cable industry grew due to large-scale media deregulation, there was a concurrent wave of deregulation across multiple industries. As a result of fewer restrictions, consumers needed to take it upon themselves to navigate the freer marketplace. In response to this, Paul Grainge explains:

> Across retail, service, manufacturing and media industries in the 1980s and 1990s, branding assumed new currency in the attempt both to manage the relationship between products and consumers and to structure and stabilize global markets.[54]

[52] "Bravo! NBC has a cable net."

[53] "Bravo! NBC has a cable net."

[54] Grainge, *Brand Hollywood*, 6.

Branding became a key component of corporate communication and likewise became the currency of synergy, where companies would "integrate and disseminate their products through a variety of media and consumer channels, enabling 'brands' to travel through an integrated corporate structure."[55] Within media worlds, branding became a means of extending an experience across multiple platforms, and especially in the case of television, across multiple programs.

Affluencers: Redefining Bravo's Programming

Bravo took almost a decade to solidify its new brand as part of a larger conglomerate structure. In a strategy seemingly similar to Bravo's initial co-launch with Escapade, the network utilized racy fare, including programming about the lifestyles of porn stars, in order to draw ratings and advertisers.[56] By 2000, although Bravo featured more than 100 hours of original programming, the network failed to have a breakthrough hit.[57] By the early 2000s, Bravo's affluent subscriber is not only one with disposable income, but someone hip enough to drive larger cultural tastes. This consumer is so well defined for Bravo, that president at the time Lauren Zalaznick coined the term "affluencer" to describe them. The concept of the consumer adapted. Moving from just attracting well-to-do consumers, niche channels strove to strike a balance between serving a core constituency and broadening their offerings in order to attract more ad revenues. Bravo continued to keep its focus on high earners, who in turn made up a luxe portfolio of viewers the network could sell to advertisers. In the process of defining its desired

[55] *Brand Hollywood*, 10.

[56] Harry Berkowitz, "Bravo Uses Edgier Fare to Attract Viewers," *Los Angeles Times*, Febraury 1, 2000.

[57] "Bravo Uses Edgier Fare to Attract Viewers."

consumer as one with money as well as cultural capital to drive cultural currency (and use their currency to promote trends), Bravo shifted its programming offerings from high arts and independent films towards personality based reality programming hinging on popular culture and affluence.

As Bravo made moves to expand its airtime, it likewise refined its core demographic to target specifically women and gay men. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, there was a concurrent legitimacy both of gay and lesbian people on television as well as reality programming as a televisual form. Katherine Sender explains that gay and lesbian consumers both evolved into a desirable marketing niche and transformed television programming during this period because of their size as well as their assumed affluence. She further argues that:

> …the construction of the ideal gay consumer as not only wealthy but trend-setting was so successful that advertisers wanted to associated with the gay market in order to appeal to *heterosexual* consumers. By including gay and lesbian characters in shows, programmers and advertisers could reach two distinct audiences: gays and lesbians in search of people who look (sort of) like them and heterosexuals attracted to the hip cachet of gay taste. Television executives hoped to attract a sizable audience apparently primed for advertisers' messages."[58]

As such, more gay and lesbian people were integrated into television programming. NBC's stated interest in using Bravo for unscripted fare coincided with the introduction of the latest generation of "reality television," which in itself provided platforms of visibility for previously marginalized or unseen groups. Since Bravo represented an opportunity for NBC to diversify its audience share and programming formats, the role of the cable network as subsidiary to larger, broader network facilitated a logical business decision. Building on the history of niche programming on cable, NBC could use Bravo as a means of engagement with a more

[58] Katherine Sender, "Dualcasting: Bravo's Gay Programming and the Quest for Women Audiences," in *Cable Visions: Television Beyond Broadcasting*, ed. Sarah Banet-Weiser, Cynthia Chris, and Anthony Freitas (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 305.

concentrated audience. These circumstances created a unique opportunity for Bravo to innovate the type of programming it offered, and reinvigorate its core audience. Bravo was in a unique position to situate itself as highly sophisticated in form and content by taking advantage of both a cutting-edge programming format as well as the cultural cache associated with upscale gay male taste. Perceived perceptions of gay men as having great taste and an assumed disposable income are key to these shifts as Bravo could transform aspects of these economic traits into program personalities. Moreover, with reality relegated largely to cable networks in the late 1990s-early 2000s, all the institutional building blocks for the current version of Bravo were in place. Bravo was especially well-positioned to use them in order to redefine its brand because, as Katherine Sender further argues:

> because reality television is cheap to produce, uses non-actors, and tends to be preoccupied with domestic and feminized concerns, reality shows risk bringing a lowbrow reputation to the channel. Using gays, with their upscale associations, helps deflect the trashy shadow of reality television.[59]

Sender builds a strong case for dualcasting for women and gay men as Bravo's programming prerogative while engaging with affluence remained a key part of Bravo's strategy. This institutional change towards affluence, popular culture, and reality television gelled in Bravo's first bona fide hit after its purchase by NBC – *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* (2003-07).

Queer Eye represented a fundamental shift for the network's programming strategies. In an explicit move from elite culture to popular culture, *Queer Eye* was meant to shift the network towards a younger, edgier demographic, and away from Bravo's highbrow roots.[60] At the 2012 Cable and Telecommunications Marketing Association for Marketing (CATM) Summit, former

[59] "Dualcasting," 313.

[60] "Dualcasting," 307.

president Frances Berwick (who was general manager at the time) discussed how *Queer Eye* was a culmination of decades of audience cultivation as well as a response to contemporary industrial needs for both Bravo and NBC:

> The big change for us…is what looked from the outside like a huge brand digression, which was *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. For us, internally, it felt like a bit of a no brainer, which is sort of the inside scoop, in that we knew we had a large gay audience. Every time we ran the Nielsen, we had a huge spike in the gay community; we spiked huge numbers with no margin whatsoever. And we really started to do more specifically gay audience targeted shows, so this felt like it combined lots of the pop cultural visual arts with fashion and style and home design and cooking into one show that would also directly target that educated and [inaudible] audience. What we didn't anticipate was because of the integration to NBC, they got so completely behind it that they then aired some episodes and that really put us on the map. So we went from averaging, I think, a 0.2 and suddenly this show is doing 3.6 million viewers. We couldn't believe it. It was like the lottery. But for us internally, we knew it was going to be big. All of the testing had done well, but it also felt like it was targeting the audience we had then.[61]

Joshua Gamson argues that although shows like *Queer Eye* paved the way for greater GLBT representation on television, the type of gay people who "have become visible as style mavens and cheerleaders for consumption, as 'gay best friends' to women, or as status symbols for the rich and famous."[62] Although Gamson critiques the larger social implications of programming decisions that Bravo especially spear-headed, the network's interest in celebrating affluence and consumption dovetails easily with advertiser interests and Bravo's ability to attract higher quality brands to invest in it. Dubbed "affluencers,"

[61] Frances Berwick, Bob DeBitetto, and Charlie Collier, interview by Mike Schneider (TV Guide Magazine), November 7, 2012, Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort.

[62] Joshua Gamson, ""It's Been a While Since I've Seen, Like Straight People": Queer Visibility in the Age of Postnetwork Reality Television," in *A Companion to Reality Television*, ed. Laurie Ouellette (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 229.

Bravo envisions its audience not only as well to do, but as those with influence over dictating pop culture trends.

> Following the success of *Queer Eye*'s popularity, Frances Berwick explains that the show became basically the tenet of how we program and market the network. We focus on these five, what we call, passion points: food, fashion beauty, design, and pop culture.[63]

Moreover, Bravo's focus on cultural passion points is through by promoting personalities who embody these concepts. Highlighting various aspects of affluent lifestyles and popular culture, Bravo has created its own slate not only of shows but also of celebrities, which they market as "Bravo-lebrities." If as Celia Lury explains, "brands are a set of relations between products and services" as well as "a set of relations between products in time," then how are those bonds strengthened when the relationship is not just between an inanimate set of concepts, but embodied by an actual person?[64] In order to connect with ever-fragmented viewing populations, the cult of personality becomes more important as it allows viewers to engage with personalities. Of the many sub-genres of reality television, the attraction of programming centered on the use or creation of celebrities taps into cultural fascination with fame and also allows networks to brand themselves based on the kinds of personalities they program. Bravo has perfected this model as it has redefined as a destination for witty, urbane takes on popular culture through almost exclusively scheduling personality-based reality programming.

Consisting of its ever-growing stable of reality personalities, Bravo's current branded identity uses affluent people to represent and personify a subset of popular culture in order to connect with its historically affluent audience. When considered together, the individual

---

[63] Berwick, DeBitetto, and Collier, "Brand Builders Unite."

[64] Lury, *Brands: The Logos of the Global Economy*, 1-2.

personalities and programming defines the complete worldview of the network's desired audiences. The Bravo-lebrity is meant to encapsulate viewer interest while performing an idealized version of self. This implied connection between audience and Bravo-lebrity is designed to draw audiences in so that they further relate their own identities to that of the network. The Bravo-lebrity is an important aspect of defining the brand, but further institutional strategies are in place to both cement the relation between individual and brand that ultimately serve Bravo's identity and bottom-line.

Bravo-lebrities: Reality Personalities as Brand Strategy

One of the means in which Bravo sells both its personalities and identity is through the schedule itself. Bravo's programming slate perfectly illuminates how personality-based reality programming can be scheduled across days and hours, and used not only to brand products and people but also to brand a network. Although Bravo did not maintain its unique vision of flow promised at its onset, the cable network has utilized what has now become a standard scheduling technique in order to promote its programming and personalities as well as to define the network's larger brand – the program marathon. Each day is dedicated to a different currently airing Bravo show that coincides with the newest episode to be aired in primetime. These allow viewers the opportunity to catch-up and reacquaint themselves with previous plot threads and immerse themselves in the Bravo-lebrity's world.

Moreover, in the interstitial spaces between programming, Bravo continues its branding work and attempts to move its audiences across the schedule. During marathon blocks, Bravo frequently promotes its other similarly personality-driven shows. Erin Copple Smith argues that Bravo utilizes cross-promotion strategies as a means of defining, attracting, and moving audience

across the schedule in order to cultivate loyal viewers.[65] Building on the relationships audiences cultivate with program personalities, Bravo positions several of its stars together in commercials that promote and reinforce the network. Copple Smith further argues that:

> Bravo not only maximizes promotional potential while minimizing costs, but also aims to define and develop loyalty among its audience, reinforcing a brand identity the channel can then sell to advertisers.[66]

Cross-promotion and "character" appearances on shows that are not their own reaffirms and perpetuates the idea of the "Bravo-lebrity" and establishes a community of characters as well as for viewers who are familiar with them.

Bravo not only populates its airwaves with personalities, but staffs itself with them as well. As a result, the network's personality and brand image is intricately tied with the individual personality components both on and off-screen. Throughout its history, Bravo executives have served to embody the brand in order to connect behind the scenes decision-making with onscreen material. Establishing a precedent that would come to define Bravo in late 1990s and beyond, trade magazine public relations campaigns associated network executives' personalities with those of the network itself. Bravo has gone through several incantations over its three decades, and each has been tied via larger trade discourse to whomever is currently running the network. Likewise, the figureheads also align with shifts in the network's ownership and programming choices as the channel developed from airing arts programming to foreign and art house cinema to reality programming highlighting different aspects of affluence.

Trade articles like 1981's "Cable TV Pioneer Still Takes Risks" not only speak to network strategies of splitting the channel's airtime between Bravo and Escalade, but position

---

[65] Copple Smith, ""Affluencers" by Bravo," 287.

[66] ""Affluencers" by Bravo," 286.

Cablevision owner Charles Dolan himself as cutting edge enough to package it in a way that implicitly taps into larger psychological ideas. Descriptors including aggressive, "brash, risky, inventive and perhaps a bit ahead of its time" are applied to both the network roll-out strategy as well as Dolan himself.[67] Rhetorically, this slippage connects the two and allows Dolan to come to embody the networks since he sprung the process into being. This ownership over the network and its strategies, as well as the trade discourse about the actions, positions Dolan as the embodied version of the network; a pattern that continues with future president and brand innovator Lauren Zalaznick when Bravo is eventually bought out by NBCUniversal in 2002, and most strongly with Bravo-executive-turned-late night-host Andy Cohen. Zalaznick regularly speaks about Bravo's strong brand as one of its essential successes, and uses aspects of the network's success as an example for establishing networks. In addition to creating cohesive schedules, Zalaznick advises that offscreen executives need to likewise embody the networks for which they work in order to be successful. In a *Broadcasting and Cable* piece discussing how to rebrand a network, Zalaznick advises the following:

> My message is always about authenticity. Be your brand….It's like people describe Bravo: It's like being invited to the best party you never got invited to, but now incredibly welcome at a high-end exclusive event.[68]

During her tenure, Zalaznick not only embodied the Bravo brand behind-the-scenes and as a public ambassador for it, but took the concept a step further by instating her head of development and original content, Andy Cohen, as branded network content. Cohen's move from behind the desk to onscreen talent thus marks network brand embodiment an institutionalized programming practice. Through Cohen, underlying values placed on popular culture and wealth are connected

[67] Schwartz, "Cable TV Pioneer Still Takes Risks."

[68] Melissa Grego, "How to Rebuild a Cable Network," *Broadcasting & Cable*, March 29, 2010.

within the network across programming, but also on a larger scale between network properties and larger popular culture trends, people, and events. Cohen serves to concretize abstractions and provide a model for the ideal Bravo fan, who in turn is a cultural affluencer in her own right. Cohen both exemplifies and personifies the ideal Bravo fan. He cedes some of his perceived power in order to reposition himself as equal to the viewers, but maintains the ability to determine the very programming he gushes about. Considering Cohen's branded persona within Bravo's likewise illustrates larger television and conglomerate strategies in utilizing technology, social media, and celebrity itself as tools for individual and network branding.

Andy Cohen: The Ultimate Network Manufactured Celebrity

With its acquisition by NBC in 2002, Bravo could now capitalize on the additional resources of the entertainment conglomerate; Bravo was on the cutting edge of expanding network content onto the digital platform. Not only did the website feature basic information about programming, but Bravo was amongst the first networks to create original digital content through a blog written by Cohen. NBC appropriated Bravo's past identity and its highly coveted and established audience who have historically been not only wealthy and sophisticated, but early technology adopters as well. Moreover, NBC employed its conglomerate resources in order to create more seamless connections between each television and digital spaces. Under the NBC banner, Bravo became a network that utilized the online space in order to add additional content in order to drive traffic between the web and the couch. In this expansion, Andy Cohen was instrumental in developing programming creating the voice of the network and acts as an agent of conglomeration in his own right. According to popular lore replicated through the mainstream press and Cohen's first autobiography *Most Talkative*, Lauren Zalaznick loved the gossip-filled emails Cohen sent her from show sets, so decided to make versions of them public via Bravo's

website.[69] Launching in 2006, his blog was amongst the network-branded content made especially for the web that bridged the gaps between show airings. In addition to writing specifically about programming on the network, he also offered his take on celebrity happenings giving an additional level of authenticity to his blog. Rather than just shilling for the network, Cohen presented himself as a Bravo super-fan able to converse with other likeminded fans and asserted connections between Bravo programming and pop culture at large. Moreover, he could grant them additional access and behind-the-scenes information through his insider status, thus increasing the relationship between viewer, network, and content. For example, *Project Runway* (2004-2008) was an oft-blogged about topic as the show was the next breakout hit following *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, and Cohen would perform weekly interviews with cut designers and short recaps of the episodes themselves.

Due to Cohen's digital popularity and his simultaneous work as the network executive responsible for watching all cuts of original programming, Cohen extended his tangential digital onto the network he commented on when he started hosting the reunion shows for *The Real Housewives* on Bravo television. Cohen is still a web presence on the Bravo site and has spread his persona over several social media platforms in hopes of driving traffic back to Bravo television. Cohen extended his television presence in 2009 with the launch of *Watch What Happens, Live!*. The weekly late-night talk show featured host Cohen interacting with Bravo-lebrities and "cocktails, pop quizzes for guests, questions from viewers," putting a definitive

[69] Andy Cohen, *Most Talkative: Stories from the Front Lines of Pop Culture* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2012), 166; Choire Sicha, "Bravo's Andy Cohen, multiplied," *Los Angeles Times*, June 21, 2009.

Bravo spin on the established genre.[70] *Watch What Happens, Live!* was so popular that it expanded from airing once weekly to airing nightly from Sunday through Thursday.[71] Moreover, in addition to speaking to Bravo-lebrities, the show expanded to likewise include actual celebrities, who were and are often asked to comment on Bravo programming. *Watch What Happens, Live!* Is by its nature is a physical extension of the brand, and Bravo again utilizes Cohen to give the brand an actual voice. In the process, Cohen becomes a known personality and "Bravo-lerbity" in his own right, on par with Bravo's other stars and often serves as the glue unifying aspects of all original programming. Cohen's celebrity is the result of programming trends to highlight network-made reality celebrities to encapsulate the network's brand while simultaneously being in a position to create the very thing he has become. The series acts as the ultimate platform for network promotion as Cohen simultaneously plays the role of television personality and network executive as he indeed lives the brand. *Watch What Happens, Live!* allows Cohen to interact frequently with Bravo's stars or make Bravo programming the topic of conversation with non-Bravo celebrity guests, consistently making Bravo and its brand itself central to the series. Cohen differentiates the series from other similar late night talk shows by rarely asking guests "normal" questions. Rather, as Erin Copple Smith points out, Cohen regularly expects guests to engage with him about Bravo properties (especially when they are not Bravo-lebrities themselves.). The lines between promotions and entertainment have become so blurred that they pass as one in the same. In his role as host, Cohen, until very recently, has also

[70] Brian Stelter, "Cable Executive Gets a Taste of Reality TV," *New York Times*, September 6 2009.

[71] Sicha, "Bravo's Andy Cohen, multiplied."; Bill Carter, "Popular Talk Show on Bravo Will Expand to 5 Nights," *New York Times*, November 22 2011.

embodied the role of network executive, so naturally what he says and how he presents himself speaks directly of and to the Bravo brand.

Despite not being a reality star on par with the other Bravo-lebrities who populate the network, Cohen falls into James Bennett's working definition of a television personality, a moniker that is easily extended to include reality stars. According to Bennett, "the construction of a television personality's fame involves both labor and achievement, often taking the form of promotion, publicity, and performance."[72] The connection to promotion and publicity is further underscored in Cohen's case because not only is he promoted and publicized, but is an agent of that work as an executive. Within his definition of performance, Bennett includes those whose television personality is based on individuals playing themselves, much like Cohen does. He seemingly erases distinctions between his public and private selves in order to come across as more authentic in that what is seen onscreen is the bulk of his larger personality and identity.

Throughout, Cohen is a branded entity of the Bravo network who has, as a result, become a brand himself. Erin Copple Smith rightly argues that whether or not Cohen is actually the Bravo fan he portrays does not matter since his construction as such in public discourse has been so carefully constructed.[73] Cohen's status as network executive gives him more power in crafting that persona because he is privy to corporate network decisions and intimately knows the workings and needs of the larger network brand. Cohen further collapses this gap between his public and professional selves in his autobiography, *Most Talkative*, where he presents his personal narrative in ways that make his status as Bravo super fan and executive appear to be self-evident and a self-fulfilling prophecy. In his narrative, where readers most likely know him

[72] Bennett, *Television Personalities*, 18

[73] Copple Smith, "'Affluencers" by Bravo," 296.

from his nightly Bravo show and affiliation with Bravo-lebrities, most specifically the *Real Housewives,* Cohen depicts how he went from loud-mouthed inquisitive kid to aspiring journalist to network news producer, and eventually, a high-level job in development at Bravo, which led him to his career as a television personality. In fact, Bennett's definition of television personality may apply more easily to a personality like Cohen who hosts his own nightly talk show than the reality stars who are his frequent guests.

Cohen's autobiography likewise collapses any distinction between his private life and his public one as the stories within it tie directly to his "becoming" Andy Cohen. Throughout, there is a large focus on his experiences with stardom, celebrity, journalism, and eventually Bravo. All the anecdotes within build towards this in a tone that recreates Cohen's public one—celebrity obsessed and effervescent. There are ties throughout about how past experiences allowed him to become the "person" he is now. Absent throughout are any signs of real personal or professional struggle that likewise reinforce his affable Bravo persona. This is not to say that Cohen hasn't had difficulties, but their presence would complicate his persona. Moreover, the book's assumed audience is a Bravo fan who would be most interested in backstories about some of their favorite Bravo-lebrities (there is, in fact, an entire chapter dedicated to FAQs about Cohen and Bravo specifically.) Cohen's position in this book is further complicated because he simultaneously continues his calculated public Bravo persona while also filtering his written experiences to comply with his status as a Bravo executive. Most of the stories within his autobiography are largely structured around work. This both establishes him as an insider, but one who is "just like us". The work stories also allow Cohen to stick to more surface level topics and avoid giving too much personal information about himself. As a result, he creates a more layered professional

narrative for himself, which gives readers the feeling of intimacy without actually having to expose too many intimate details.

Cohen takes on a slightly different tone in his second book, *The Andy Cohen Diaries*, which is partially designed to differentiate himself from his close connection with Bravo in order to establish his individual star persona, especially as he leaves his executive position at the network. Featuring daily entries covering Fall 2013-Summer 2014, the book covers the crucial period where Cohen relinquishes his position as a network executive in November 2013 and signed a talent-only contract with Bravo, which completes his transition from behind the desk to in front of the camera. Whereas *Most Talkative*'s tone is inline with Cohen's television persona, *The Andy Cohen Diaries* is far more vapid and self-involved suggesting perhaps what Cohen believes is necessary for his persona to thrive as both a Bravo personality, but one no longer a mouthpiece for the network. For example, Cohen constantly details his relationships with celebrities.

This extended excerpt gives an idea of the balance Cohen is trying to strike between professional and professional personality:

> **Thursday, January 9, 2014 – NYC-Los Angeles**
>
> Who greeted me as I waked on board my flight to LA this morning but #BabyJaneFlightAttendant. "*Well, there you are again!* Can I help you get *settled*?!" What is it with this woman help me get *settled*? And what does she think that entails? I figured out that the more words you give her, the more she comes back with, so I became a robot for five hours. For instance, when she said, "The beef is *so good today*!!! *And I am not a meat eater*! So then, is that what you want, the beef???" I replied, "No." I drowned my sorrows with four episodes of [*Real Housewives of Beverly Hills* spin-off] *Vanderpump Rules* on the plane in preparation for the reunion. It's so good it's criminal. And I don't condone violence but [main cast member] Jax had that punch coming! I no longer find him attractive after his ability to feel remorse for sleeping with the girlfriend of his best friend *of ten years*! I stopped into Bravo and then went to the Tower and for ninety minutes say and contemplated going to the gym, and ultimately decided to take a bath instead. With my phone. (My phone loves a hot bath.) I had dinner at

> this Moroccan restaurant, Acabar, with Bryan, Bruce, Hamilton, and Kevin Huvane. At the table next to us was the one Moroccan person on the planet who I have had sex with I guess now I know where to find him. After dinner, I had ice-cream sundaes at the Tower with Allison, Rickey, John Mayer, and B.J. Novak, who I had never met but who seemed nice. Man, those sundaes would've gone down a whole lot better with some whiskey. I am still sobes, though—or *not drinking*, as Bruce keeps pointing out. Dave began his month of sobriety today and we're going to be sober buddies. (Well, *not-drinking* buddies, I guess.) Dmitri, who remains *not* the most discreet maître d' in Hollywood, was trying to bring over a relative of Camilla Parker Bowles to meet John. The truth is that I barely want to meet Camilla Parker Bowles herself, so the idea of meeting her *relative* was a nonstarter and I surmised I couldn't have been that appealing to John or anybody else. I shut that down.[74]

This piece is indicative of the larger diary, which combines professional enterprises (flying to LA for the *Housewives Reunion* and prepping on the plane); social interactions often involving close friends and famous people (singer John Mayer, television writer/star B.J. Novak); and personal activities (working out, seeing a former lover). All events are presented together representing a slice-of-life in Cohen's newer more "authentic" tone.

Although Cohen is no longer a Bravo executive, he is still highly involved with the network. They house his new production company (named Most Talkative after his first book), and he remains in his onscreen roles on the *Housewives* reunions and *Watch What Happens, Live!*.[75] James Bennett likewise asserts how television personalities can come to help define networks. He says:

> Traditionally the economic import of a television personality has been recognized in the form of 'golden handcuff' deals that tie a personality exclusively to one channel. Such deals are indicative of how broadcasters have traditionally used

[74] Andy Cohen, *The Andy Cohen Diaries: A Deep Look at a Shallow Year* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2014), 117.

[75] *The Andy Cohen Diaries*, 141.

> personalities not simply as presenters of programs, but figureheads for channels and, more recently, formats.[76]

In Cohen's case, he was not only a figurehead as personality, but came to be that way through his power of being an actual figurehead within the corporate network structure.

Andy Cohen and *Watch What Happens, Live!* exemplifies how networks and corporate practices utilize celebrity and reality television, which likewise present a crossroads of both work AND time. The show engages with time because it regularly marks events happening on the network as well as those happening. These episodes are rarely re-aired outside of the week in which they originally air, so further reinforce the importance of timeliness via the constant conversations happening on-air and online. Likewise, scheduling and consistent tweaks to the schedule represents the network's constant attention to the creation of its image. Moreover, Cohen's public professional persona as carefully cultivated through *Watch What Happens, Live!* is likewise also about work because the work of promotion is so integral to the show itself. Cohen represents the network, and increasingly, himself as host of the show. *Watch What Happens, Live!*'s Clubhouse set integrates Cohen's personality, which in turn, stands in for both the network and the fan as Cohen simultaneously embodies both. As a self-proclaimed super fan, Cohen concurrently creates network content as an onscreen personality as well as an off-screen developer. Onscreen, he serves as a relatable proxy to Bravo content while also enacting Bravo content himself.

Although Cohen himself is not a reality star, his celebrated status within the network paradigm is worth noting. In rising to his own stardom, Cohen interacted with "Bravo-lebrities", themselves the personalities that Bravo used to define itself in its current era. From his blog,

[76] Bennett, *Television Personalities*, 99.

Cohen moved onscreen first by hosting *Real Housewife* reunion specials, which provided a literal link between network programming and network personalities both in front of and behind the screen. Though he himself is not a reality star, his proximity to them as well as how his own fame is somewhat tied to their success is important. He functions as a cross between a super-fan, and proxy between "ordinary" people and celebrities, as well as the physical embodiment of network practices regarding scheduling, programming, and branding. If branding is about creating a consistent personality, Bravo succeeds by making a real company person its core personality.

Cohen embodies the network brand he helped to define, and became so successful at it that he has completely moved from behind the desk to in front of the camera. Cohen has been successful over time because he cultivated an authentic voice in service of Bravo's aims and programming. By embodying the network's key demographics, he has come to define and unify the entire network. Moreover, he represents the culmination of three decades of network branding and rebranding. Realizing that audience needs are constantly shifting, Bravo has deftly adapted to the changing needs of its consumer while still maintaining its ability to attract advertisers. Part of the way Bravo has done this has been through conservative, yet innovative, programming and scheduling decisions, moving from inexpensive arts programming, to acquiring cheaper independent and international film distribution rights, to creating a schedule organized almost exclusively around reality programming. Using strong personalities and situations to represent the network's core values of affluence and popular culture, Bravo has become a new organizer of stars and star labor with its Bravo-lebrities—a modern, but looser version of the institutionalized star system of the classical Hollywood age. Like that system before it, Bravo has the marketing, publicity, and distribution, and exhibition arms from its

conglomerate parent to push personalities forward. However now, the network uses its celebrities in a more tightly organized fashion to create and represent a more cohesive, niche brand. Personality becomes increasingly important, and shows are developed, edited, and marketed to represent the larger identity of the network, which is based on the labor and being of the stars who populate its airwaves.

CHAPTER TWO:

America's Next Top Brand: The Precarious Partnership Between Reality Show Production Companies and Contestants

> "Some people can do it. But some, just absolutely don't. But there's some that do it, and that's just their own personality shining through. Because literally, we love great characters. If someone wants to be interesting, we will eat it up and we will use them in the show because they are great storytellers, and they cause the audience to emote with them, so it's like, they just catapult themselves. They can catapult themselves. It's up to them. Some people just never want to open up, or they're not interesting, or they think "Oh, if I tell the truth, they're going to manipulate me" So they are guarded. These are all mistakes. These are pitfalls, and these people will not catapult anywhere because they're hiding."[1]
>
> – Allison Chase, Supervising Producer, *America's Next Top Model*

> "You guys are all-stars because people liked you guys and stood out. But how do we take the 15 minutes that you had and make it a career and a lifetime?"
>
> – Tyra Banks (ANTM Cycle 17, Episode 2) -- needs citation

> "'It was very hard. You have these 15 minutes of fame but you can't capitalize on them.'"[2]
>
> – Angelea Preston, *America's Next Top Model* Cycle 14 & 17 Contestant

---

Introduction

Although popular media discourses often use the terms "star" and "actor" interchangeably, reality television reminds us that to be a television star, one does not necessarily need to be an actor nor are all television actors stars. Television can confer fame through

[1] Allison Chase and Angela Chiu, interview by Lindsay Giggey, 2013, America's Next Top Model.

[2] Laura Collins, "EXCLUSIVE: "It was like Top Model prison." Dethroned *ANTM* All-Stars winner breaks silence claiming Tyra Banks "EXPLOITS" women, keeps them on 'ice,' not allowed to drink, eat, or talk while filming for up to 20 hours and casts them aside," DailyMail.com, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3186136/It-like-Model-prison-Dethroned-ANTM-Stars-winner-breaks-silence-claiming-Tyra-Banks-EXPLOITS-women-keeps-ice-not-allowed-drink-eat-talk-filming-20-hours-casts-aside.html.

consistent exposure, but stars are the result of a larger system of labor performed both by individuals and interconnected structures of media outlets. Star images are purposely created, intertextual, and embedded with cultural meaning, which are then read and interpreted by audiences.[3] "Star texts" never equate to the "real" people behind them, but represent carefully crafted images of success that elevates the individual.

Graeme Turner argues that broadcast and cable television have been particularly adept at "produc[ing] celebrity from nothing – without any need to establish the individual's ability, skill, or extraordinariness as the precondition for public attention."[4] Reality television has proven to be one of the most fertile grounds for celebrity creation and because of the sheer number of "human pseudo events"[5] it creates and reminds us that "celebrity is not only a discursive effect" but "also a commodity: produced, traded and marketed by the media and publicity industries."[6] One of the ways in which contemporary stardom is both seen and constructed is on competition based reality programs, especially those that center on discovering and developing talent. Ranging from singing and talent-based programs (*American Idol* (2002-2016), *The X Factor* (2011-2013), *The Voice* (2011-Present, *America's Got Talent* (2006-Present), etc.) to skill-based series (*Project Runway* (Bravo, 2004-2008; Lifetime, 2009-Present), *Top Chef* (2006-Present) *The Apprentice*

[3] These ideas are further reflected in the chain of scholars following Richard Dyer, including Gamson, *Claims to Fame*; McDonald, *The Star System*; Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*.

[4] *Understanding Celebrity*, 9.

[5] Human pseudo event derives from the work of Daniel Boorstin, who argues that celebrity personifies an event purposely created as spectacle which becomes significant because of the scale of coverage as opposed to actual importance. See Daniel J. Boorstin, "From Hero to Celebrity: The Human Pseudo-Event," in *The Celebrity Culture Reader*, ed. P. David Marshall (New York: Routledge, 2006), 79.

[6] Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*, 9.

(2004-Present), etc.), these programs depend on season long narrative arcs while eliminating contestants on a weekly basis in order to discover and subsequently nurture raw talent with the seeming intent to cultivate creative professionals or workers.[7] When considering the format-driven competition subset of reality programs, this genre is the most accessible to the greatest number of people and often includes aspects of democratic meritocracy. Highly talented people competing to "be the best" reinforces both a larger economic structure based on "meritocracy" as well as the need for hierarchies central to the concept of celebrity.

However, talent and skill-focused competition reality programs are still opportunities for ordinary people to become celebrities because those who make it to the competition itself are integrated into series' larger formats and networks or companies and industries. Skill-based formats are based on needs of production: to cast engaging and talented personalities; put them in exaggerated situations representative of situations they may incur as professionals; edit footage to create characters who will resonate with audiences, on whose engagement everyone's professional lives (both onscreen and behind the scenes) depend. Individual programs likewise operate within a larger matrix of support that creates, promotes, and maintains them. These opportunistic synergies trickle down to at least temporarily support individual contestants. I have examined network structures that solidify relationships between content, brand and audience in Chapter 1, but it is also important to consider how individual series also have their own systems of celebrity creation, promotion, and maintenance built into them. In this case, a program's

[7] Within reality television, there is a wide range of competition-based reality programs. Those I am most concerned with here focus on skills associated with creative work and the possibility of subsequent entry into the creative labor force. Although celebrity may be an offshoot of winning a game-based competition like *Survivor* (CBS, 2000-present), *The Bachelor* (ABC, 2002-Present) or *The Amazing Race* (CBS, 2001-Present), the pathway to celebrity is clearer and often incorporated into the show itself as a means of establishing a branded identity that contestants can use to differentiate themselves within the creative industries.

format and behind-the-scenes production practices create smaller networked precarious relationships between individual series (and the production companies behind them) and contestants as each attempt to exploit the other for short and potentially long-term gain.

The central case study for this chapter will scrutinize the off-screen systems of *indentured star-creation* on *America's Next Top Model* (UPN, 2003-2006; The CW, 2006-2015; VH1 2016-Present) and as symbolic of larger practices across the talent-based competition reality sub-genre. Formulated by the eight months I spent as a staff intern in 2012-2013 at Anisa Productions[8], where all aspects of the series' production are housed, I conducted extensive interviews with key producers who detail how fame is created through reality television on a smaller, let no less systematic, level. Considering *America's Next Top Model*'s off screen practices demonstrates the dual nature in which contestants attempt to use the reality show platform and its institutionalized structures to gain notoriety to turn themselves into viable commodities while the production company uses contestants to reify the program format as the central commodity.

Individuals have agency in choosing to audition for and participate in reality programming, and despite the opportunity for stardom, contestants are beholden to larger systems (production companies, networks, etc.) for their ultimate success. The way in which reality programming is structured both inside and outside the production company limit the ways in which individuals can access these larger systems for their own gain. Changing economic factors and production conditions that have made reality television a successful genre from a producer's perspective are the same factors that encourage labor exploitation. The flexibility

[8] Co-Creator Ken Mok's 10x10 Productions and Tyra Banks' Bankable Productions are both also represented physically within the suite for Anisa Productions, where the entirety of the show from pre-production to post-production are housed.

necessary in order to keep up with grueling production schedules creates precarious situations, at best, for below-the-line workers and essentially complete and precipitous disposability of on-camera participants. Rather than create potentially costly programming centered on personalities (who may even come out of their programming), producers are far more interested in developing reality television formats because they are far more profitable when syndicated, or more likely, franchised and retrofitted when exported to international markets.

This chapter will examine industrial strategies for cultivating personalities on individual reality programming that aim to create relationships with television audiences lasting long enough to maintain enough audience interest in the show than any individual contestant could provide. Behind-the-scenes systems that produce stars are not new, but the ways in which reality programs utilize them highlights how celebrity ultimately serves larger entertainment institutions as opposed to individuals themselves. To entice viewers over time, competition-based skill shows infuse their formats with narrative serialization surrounding the contestants over the season. As Laurie Ouellette argues, game-based reality programs offer a space to connect learning societal rules as well as practices the group governance of them.[9] This type of program format acts as a career primer for aspirants to internalize the skills, tools, and advice they need to make it both in the creative industries and in the neoliberal economy where the self has become "a flexible commodity to be molded, packaged, managed, reinvented, and sold."[10] Likewise, mimicking the larger neoliberal economy, institutional structures (in this case, the production

[9] Ouellette and Hay, *Better Living Through Reality TV: Television and Post-Welfare Citizenship*, 4.

[10] *Better Living Through Reality TV: Television and Post-Welfare Citizenship*, 7.

companies behind reality competition programming) are ultimately closed systems that serve themselves while repositioning the responsibility and means for success onto the individual.

As an early series from the surge of reality television in the early 2000s, *ANTM* helped pioneer current formats. This status is underscored by the sheer number of series that followed it which institute weekly challenges, have contestants live together in a house, and subsequently eliminate them over the season. *America's Next Top Model*'s 22 cycles followed the same formulaic premise; the 13-episode maturation of inexperienced young women who evolve into professional models.[11] Viewers watch as the series guides contestants through the vocational skills they need in order to become models by bringing them behind the photographs and exposing them to the attention and work that goes into executing precise hair, makeup, outfit/costume, and accessories before a model steps in front of the camera. Each episode culminates with the contestants facing a panel of judges made up of host and supermodel Tyra Banks and other fashion insiders including photographers, other former models, magazine editors, who determine, without any clear guidelines, who has what it takes to move forward in the competition. Those who cannot keep up are eliminated until ultimately only one girl remains to claim the cycle win.

Examining *ANTM* and Anisa Productions, also uncovers how the systems of reality television celebrity creation, promotion, and maintenance function on the industrial production level. As Mark Andrejevic argues:

> Indeed, one of the results of the reality TV boom has been to focus attention on the *apparatus* of celebrity production rather than the intrinsic quality of the star. The aura of

[11]*America's Next Top Model* refers to its 13-16 episode seasons as "cycles." I will do the same throughout this chapter. Cycles 20-22 incorporated male models into the mix.

> the individual talent is undermined by the ostensibly demystifying effort to foreground strategies of promotion and manipulation.[12]

Ephemeral and disposable celebrities created by talent-based reality competition programming are symbolic of the specific need for willing participants on reality television. Keeping the labor force consistently flexible gives greater power to those in control, both on and off screen. *America's Next Top Model* is a *celebrity-making* and *celebrity-breaking* apparatus, which replicates the efficiencies put in place by celebrity publicity machines of the Hollywood studio era. Within the confines of the series, ordinary people can enter the machine with hopes of becoming "America's next top model" if they follow the rules and conform to roles set in place for them. If contestants don't succeed, it's not the fault of the program, its producers, nor distributors, but theirs. The systematic celebrity mechanisms within the series are simultaneously visible and invisible in the episodes themselves, suggesting a paradigm where the reality television program (and production company behind it) can compensate what Andrejevic calls "the work of being watched" with the promise of access to celebrity.[13] Audience attention is directed towards aspects of what it takes to become and stay famous, but once the series ends, so do all the support systems as individuals are sent out into the world to succeed or more likely fall into obscurity because they no longer have access to the mechanisms that put them in the public eye to begin with.

---

[12] Andrejevic, *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched*, 5.

[13] According to Andrejevic, reality TV offers the promise of the democratization of entertainment through low barriers to entry. Although viewers are seduced to participate as another means of greater participation in the media they already consume, they subject themselves to constant surveillance, which he terms "the work of being watched." The possibility of becoming part of the entertainment industry is the compensation for allowing surveillance. The promise of stardom through exposure, also, the more one discloses and shares, the more likely that they are giving the kind of material that reality producers are looking for – high emotion, openness, vulnerability. *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched*, 6.

Systemic Star Promotion:

America's Next Top Model is part of a long lineage of systemized star making, promotion, and maintenance. Each cycle is predicated, as co-creator Ken Mok explains, as "a school where aspiring models come in and basically … learn every aspect of modeling from walking, talking, shoots. And by the end of the series, they're ready to tackle the modeling world."[14] Each episode highlights a particular skill, and the entire process is repeated in every subsequent cycle, creating a formula which producers tweak only with new photoshoot and challenge concepts. This predictable formula with slight regular variations makes for efficient and economic television, but also replicates the Hollywood Studio Era star system, which signed potential actors to long-term contracts, trained them to develop any raw talent or skills, and put them in films to see whether audiences responded to them. The star creation genre of competition reality series like *America's Next Top Model* represent a modern-day celebrity system, which, although not as structured as the historical studio star system, is nonetheless an interdependent system of relationships between individuals and media outlets meant to produce and promote personalities. Both the classical Hollywood star system and contemporary celebrity-making reality programs highlight how stars are concurrently paid for their labor (though monetary "payment" on reality programming is minimal or non-existent on reality programs), but are also property and financial assets that are created for profit.[15]

Stardom and celebrity have been integral to propagating commercial film and, later, television economic models. As an emerging medium, television solidified itself concurrently with the dismantling of the Classical Hollywood studio system, which had created a surplus of

[14] Ken Mok, interview by Lindsay Giggey, 2013, America's Next Top Model.

[15] Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, 5.

studio cultivated talent. Television needed content, and utilized a flexible labor economy populated with familiar faces and experienced film actors to create it. Although the era of movie stars appearing on television largely faded in the early 1960s as both the film and television industries stabilized themselves, the reality television explosion in the early 2000s when conditions again destabilized as the internet asserted itself as a competing medium. Although celebrity forays into television have always been connected to larger exposure, success in the modern era dictates that personalities need to become viable branding mechanisms across several platforms, of which television is one. Reality television democratizes the process as it seemingly opens access to participate in celebrity to ordinary people, but it also allows producers to tap into an easily exploitable labor force.

Reality TV's Micro Star-System: The 7-Week No Option Contract

Casting: Cultivating Authenticity

> **19.** The Producers are looking for a dynamic group of individuals who are articulate, interesting and exhibit enthusiasm for the Series as well as a willingness to share their most private thoughts in an open forum of strangers. This group of individuals, while meeting the technical requirements of the Series, must also have sufficient physical, psychological, and mental capacity to endure approximately two months in a monitored house under extraordinary conditions.[16]
>
> – *ANTM* Cycle 21 eligibility requirements

> "Looks will get you in the door. Personality will get you on the show."[17]
>
> – Chase, *ANTM* Casting associate

The Classical Hollywood star system could cultivate and test potential actors and actresses within a relatively closed system which ultimately benefited the studios by keeping talent costs low and constantly plentiful. Depending on larger audience trends, studios could

[16] America's Next Top Model, "Cycle 21 Eligibility Requirements," (2013).

[17] *ANTM* Casting Department, interview by Lindsay Giggey, 2013, America's Next Top Model.

easily populate bit parts with its contracted actors and move those with exceptional talent or audience appeal into larger roles. Once talent became bankable, the terms of the contract protected the studio from having to pay runaway wages determined by a larger market where talent could have a larger voice in articulating on collecting on their worth. Similarly, *ANTM* and other similar talent-based competition reality television programs systematize celebrity creation through star-making systems that ultimately benefits themselves. Whereas studio era actors and actresses could sign seven-year contracts in which to develop their skills with the hope of breaking through, reality production companies scout and cast amateur talent, though they narrativize their training as basis for their programs. For series like *ANTM*, budgets, production schedules, and overall program formats necessitate shorter time frames in which to formulate celebrities. Unlike the Classical Hollywood studio system, reality production companies for talent-based competition programs focus mostly on celebrity creation as they feature the aspirational rise to stardom, and as such, do not have to spend resources on the harder task of star maintenance.

Because casting is one of the last things reality producers have control over, they dedicate substantial time to finding personalities. As *The Real World* creator Jon Murray explains: "We don't have a lot of control during the production process, what we have is the control to make choices during the editing"[18] Applicants are completely at the behest of the program, which, as Graeme Turner argues, aligns with how reality television production companies establish a

[18] Misha Kavka, *Reality TV*, TV Genres (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 80.

paradigm where the series' format is the major financial investment which is kept afloat by "a reliable supply of interchangeable celebrities for the television audience."[19]

The casting department is the gatekeeper of potential stardom on reality television because they do the grunt work of creating and then narrowing the applicant pool from thousands of submissions. Due to its longevity, *America's Next Top Model* has an established rhythm on collecting its personalities. In addition to considering age, height, and weight, casting has the additional job of looking for people who will make good television. As is typical in reality television, casters are in a predicament in that they need to populate their series based on its needs as well as connect with audiences. As Jon Kraszewski argues:

> Casting for authenticity permits producers to increase the reality effect of the program, while casting for character consistency lays the groundwork for narrative and characterization to be strengthened in post-production.[20] (qtd. In Kavka, 81)

Throughout the entire casting process, the contestants are disposable, and their labor is done completely without payment. *ANTM* protects itself from the very beginning by promoting and expanding calls for contestants as widely as possible to give themselves the most choice in determining who it wants to cast.

Casting is the first layer of invisible labor as well as the first step in the show's system of celebrity. Although competition-based talent programs suggest that they expose undiscovered talent, casting departments do some level of pre-screening to assemble the best fit cast for its season. Casting is not only considering individuals, but how individuals can create a larger group

[19] Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*, 38.

[20] Jon Kraszewski, "Country Hicks and Urban Cliques: Mediating Race, Reality, and Liberalism on MTV's *The Real World*," in *Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture*, ed. Susan Murray and Laurie Ouellette (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 210. Quoted in Kavka, *Reality TV*, 81.

where any one type of look, personality, or back story does not monopolize the cast. As *ANTM* co-creator Ken Mok explains, the series simultaneously considers model potential as well as personality, which blends *ANTM*'s goals and larger television storytelling needs:

> The first filter that the cast member goes through is "Do you believe? Do believe if this person won, they could go out there and do it [be a model]?" If they don't pass that test, you don't consider them. So they all have to go through that funnel, and when they come out of the funnel, all of them have the potential to be a model. Then at that point, you look at personality, and you have to have a good mix of personalities on the show. You can't have all alpha females, you can't have all shy girls. You have to have a good mix."[21]

Suggesting the strong need for authenticity as a key component of the reality celebrity, personality is repeatedly mentioned as the most important attribute applicants, and eventually contestants, have.[22] Likewise, in considering how ordinariness factors into being a strong television personality, and potentially a television celebrity, Mok further explains how the series likewise diversifies the "types" of people *ANTM* wants to cast in order to maximize its audience by ensuring that there is someone with whom the audience can identify:

> So the girls who consider themselves ugly ducklings, or unusual looking, or freaks, or whatever. Those are often the people who end up being in the modeling world, and those are the people that make the cast. So if you're an audience member at home, and you're an ordinary girl, and you look at this girl, and she looks really strange, or she looks really odd, you can identify with that girl. "I could be that girl, I could be that person, I could be on that show." So I think there's a real easily, you know, cast identification from a viewer so they can relate to them. And then when you look at the dynamics of a group, it's all about are you on the inside or are you on the outside? Are you ostracized? Are you alone? And I think that no matter who you are, whether you the, in high school, you're

[21] Mok, "Interview with Ken Mok."

[22] In the casting process, *ANTM* is looking for people who can contribute story and emotion in hopes of becoming relatable to viewers. For instance, in addition to needing to be 18 to sign waivers (eliminating the need for additional costs and supports that accompany hiring children), casters are hesitant to cast younger people because they don't have enough life story to contribute to potential characterization on the show. Likewise, older applicants are the lowest priority because casting considers how old they will be when the show airs. This serves a double purpose both in protecting the show as a microcosm of youth and catering towards the show's teen demographic. *ANTM* Casting Department, "Interview with *America's Next Top Model* Casting Department."

> the popular girl, the unpopular girl, or anything in between, I think everybody has the feeling of being an outsider. So when you see the girl on the show who is an outsider, who's being ostracized, you identify with that person. So, the show is very relatable in that way.[23]

Although casting this way also creates the greatest potential for personality clash, which is essential to manufacturing narrative drama within each episode, Mok identifies the multivariate purposes contestants need to serve. They need to be ordinary and relatable in order to captivate audiences, but the relatability also fuels future such ordinary people to then apply themselves for future cycles. In cultivating relatable personalities for a cycle, *ANTM* is simultaneously working to encourage audience members to themselves apply for the chance to participate because they can so envision themselves as one of the personalities they see on screen.

In order to both generate the largest applicant pool as well as isolating strong applicants, *ANTM*'s eight-person casting bullpen not only process applications sent to the production offices, but proactively solicit applications. In addition to approaching people at bars and clubs, they also scour social media, including Instagram (looking especially for current Abercrombie and Fitch models who appear in their catalogs or retail associates who are paid to model within local stores) and the dating app Tinder (where a male associate "liked" everyone within range in hopes that some of them would apply).[24] *ANTM* also subscribes to a service called Model Mayhem, which is essentially a LinkedIn-style professional social network connecting aspiring

[23] Mok, "Interview with Ken Mok."

[24] To further underscore the interpersonal work that casting associates do as the first line of contact for the show, several casting associates who allowed me to sit in on Skype interviews they conducted compared that experience to being on a first date. *ANTM* Casting Department, "Interview with *America's Next Top Model* Casting Department."

models with photographers and casting opportunities. Some applications come to *ANTM* on behalf of agents, others on referrals from host Tyra Banks, producers, and former contestants.[25]

After depending solely on applicant submitted videos for the first three years, *ANTM* now utilizes a multi-step process that also incorporates photos and interviews. Casting associates are encouraging through each step of the process, not because they care about any particular contestant, but to ensure that they can cultivate as many potential contestants as possible. If there is something striking about an applicant's look, casting begins an email relationship and asks for a completed questionnaire, more photos, and to schedule a phone and potential Skype interview. While conducting phone interviews, casting is listening for energy and personality. When scheduling Skype interviews, casting associates encourage applicants to be open and not feel the need to censor themselves in order to highlight their personalities; almost directly imposing what John Langer and James Bennett have advocated as television's need for strong personalities embodying intimacy and authenticity.[26] Casting instructs applicants to present themselves; they ask that the interviews take place in quiet, well-lit spaces, which increases the audio-visual quality of the connection and serves as an early lesson in self-presentational know-how.

---

[25] Within the casting process, there is an additional level of stratification. Producers and executives who have found/referred talent have the casting department prioritize following up with those people, which happens most frequently with talent Banks identifies. The stratification is echoed within the structure of the office itself (which in turn reflects the larger overall structure of the office and stratification between levels of power within one's job). The casting department is housed within a large office in the larger office suite. *America's Next Top Model* is completely housed within one large office suite in a building in the Little Osaka neighborhood of Los Angeles, CA. Everything from casting to postproduction is within the office, and in a sense, the office layout flows that way. When one walks into the office suite, they pass the casting office, and office of the production manager (who is essentially the office manager), and then goes around the perimeter, where producer's offices are located along the outside (with windows) and their assistants sit at desks in cubicles on the inside directly across from their boss' offices.

[26] See Langer, "Television's "Personality System"."; Bennett, *Television Personalities*.

The Skype interview has completely changed the casting process because casting associates can now see how potential contestants appear and perform on camera, harkening back to Classical Hollywood screen tests as a means of "pre-testing" potential stars. Within the interview, applicants are asked to rephrase questions in their answers so that the labor of the casting person becomes invisible as the Skype interviews can be sent to editing to cut internal casting portfolios and/or external incorporation into *ANTM* itself. Even at this early stage, *ANTM* is collecting potential material it can later use. Each interviewee is asked to describe who they are within their group of friends, and to pretend they are in dialog with Banks specifically and to tell her why they should not only be on the show, but why they should be America's Next Top Model. Although Banks logically cannot conduct all the Skype interviews that casting does, asking contestants to pretend they are talking to her erases casting's labor in service of consolidating the image of the series around Banks' persona. After the Skype interview, casting gives advice regarding how to create and submit their self-made 3-minute videos capturing their "real" selves.

Of the Skype interviews I observed, all the applicants indicated that they viewed modeling (and, essentially, appearing on *ANTM* itself) as a stepping stone to gain notoriety for future ventures in acting, singing, and or launching branded products (like fragrances). Applicants come into the reality TV casting process with knowledge of how reality television is not a be-all, end-all solution to fame, and are already considering how to translate the limited recognition that they may receive from their participation on the show into something else. This further accentuates not only how participants understand the structures of power they are entering, but that they must be flexible in the types of work they do in order to access fame. Although programs like *ANTM* have structures in place to help create their celebrity, the cultural

knowledge and disdain for reality personalities likewise informs participants of the need to advocate for themselves as they attempt to take advantage of the program's star-making apparatus.

Despite the ways in which participants attempt to exploit reality show appearances for their own gain—to "go rogue," as it were—it is ultimately very difficult for them to maintain relationships that are "not managed by the production company."[27] In terms of personality management, applicants are further limited by the series in terms of how they can advocate for themselves. Emblematic of the larger anti-union economy, which is especially rampant on reality TV, applicants need to absolve themselves of outside protections. Although *ANTM* focuses on modeling skill, the producers prefer applicants have no experience, and definitely no current representation.[28] One stipulation to participating is that contestants must terminate any other modeling contracts. The production company's rationale is multifold: it exerts greater and tighter control over contestants making them more dependent; allows the production company to utilize the contestants as bargaining tools; helps production companies keep production costs low which can make their renewal more attractive to networks, and allow quicker production turnaround since labor conditions do not need to be negotiated at the onset of every cycle.[29] Having other representation contends with *ANTM*'s prize package, which includes a modeling contract with an

[27] Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*, 38.

[28] *ANTM* Casting Department, "Interview with *America's Next Top Model* Casting Department."

[29] With a production cycle lasting approximately six months, including about 6-8 weeks of shooting, and *ANTM*'s popularity prompting the network to order 2 cycles per television season, Anisa frequently works on two cycles simultaneously as they do everything from casting through post-production in-house. They have greater flexibility and speed in production, which made them highly attractive to the CW, who needed programming to fill its schedule. Moreover, as one of the marque shows of the UPN/WB merger, *ANTM* was also a key component of the CW's emerging brand identity.

affiliated agency. When negotiating with modeling agencies, Anisa Productions leverages access to talent in middle America (where agency scouts do not go) as the agencies join casting on open calls. Moreover, the modeling agencies have until fourteen days after a contestant's elimination episode airs to decide to sign the contestant, further extending the period of time in which contestants are beholden to the needs of the production company.[30] As Dana Gabrion explains:

> "…they have to guarantee our girl like $100,000 worth of work, so what they want is access to scouting. They've only got a certain amount of scouts that can go, and their scouts don't get to go throughout middle of America, and we get those girls. So they get, so they'll sit there during casting early on, and they're like "If you don't cast her on the show, we want her." And we'll put them in touch often, and say "OK, we ended up not using them, you can have them." So they get free casting through us basically."[31]

However, forcing models to forego existing representation ensures that the production staff do not need to deal with agents when casting the series; a precondition that puts applicants in a more precarious situation.[32] If a contestant refuses to give up the stability of a contract they already have, they can easily be replaced by someone who has no such ties or by someone more willing to prioritize *America's Next Top Model*'s needs over their own.

Once casting has cultivated applicants and collected their materials, casting assembles edits of their videos and Skype interviews, creates pitch cards with each applicants' photos and measurements in order to present to the casting director, who in turn prepares them to present to executive producers Ken Mok, Laura Fuest Silva, and Tyra Banks. Although Banks, Mok, and Fuest Silva have the greatest influence over who is eventually cast, other producers including former-model-turned-producer Jaimie Glasson (who acts as Tyra's eyes and ears throughout the

[30] Gabrion, "Interview with Dana Gabrion."

[31] "Interview with Dana Gabrion."

[32] "Interview with Dana Gabrion."

entire production), co-executive producer Dana Gabrion, and supervising story producers Angela Chiu and Allison Chase (who conduct all the confessional interviews with the eventual cast members) assist in determining the final cast. Each has something different to contribute, so one round of casting is done by committee. For instance, Banks (and Glasson) are attuned to what might make a good model, whereas Chase and Chiu identify good characters. Once the producers narrow down the initial pool of applicants to 30-35 people, co-creators Ken Mok and Tyra Banks, casting producer with Carrie Mebane, and casting director Michelle Mock, begin the real negotiations for who will eventually be on the show begin. The final group is presented to the network, who has the ultimate decision in who is cast, though they generally go along with the decisions made by production.

Shooting and Post-Production: Crafting Celebrity

> "So the original casting of the reality show before you even production is just like an assembly of this cross-section of America that's going to be relatable to different viewers, and they're all going to maybe clash, or bond or fall in love, or whatever. But something's going to happen. they're not just going to be like completely unrelatable and boring, so that's the story that we're tracking. How they are clashing, and how they are falling in love and how they are butting against each other because they are so different."[33]
>
> – Allison Chase, *America's Next Top Model* Supervising Producer

Although casting focuses on individuals, participants ultimately "are of interest to viewers (and producers) because of how they *interact* with others under conditions of *intimacy*."[34] Once shooting begins, reality producers begin developing aspirants into television personalities. Each episode is shot over 2-3 days which includes: a challenge or teach highlighting a particular vocational skill (which can be assembling an outfit or learning to walk and then participating in a runway show); the photoshoot; judging (where the photos, and

[33] Chase and Chiu, "Interview with Allison Chase and Angela Chiu."

[34] Kavka, *Reality TV*, 83.

tangentially, the week's progress, are evaluated); and what the producers call "reality" where models travel from place to place, wait on sets, and interact with one another in the house they all live in together. Because most of the series' drama comes from the interpersonal interactions that the models have with one another, supervising producers Angela Chiu and Allison Chase are essential to shaping the participants' narratives within each episode as shooting is ongoing.

Once the cast is chosen, Chase and Chiu begin researching contestants' backgrounds for potential story material, and are the contestants' most frequent contacts as they actively track emotional responses to develop narrative arcs for particular episodes as well as the cycle itself. Diligently paying attention on set and watching dailies provide further insight into potential issues that may be bubbling under the surface. Though they can anticipate some reactions because of *ANTM*'s constructed high pressure situations and little opportunities for privacy, the more they know about the individuals, the more they can anticipate how to capture inevitable breakdowns to develop and create story arcs during the editing process. Chase and Chiu use this information to guide their almost daily interviews they conduct with each of the contestants.[35] Their jobs are key, because, as Misha Kavka asserts, "Unlike fictional programs that rely on a script, the narrative arcs [and] act structure are created through producers' choices of what to film and how to edit the footage."[36] Both Chiu and Chase describe the interviews as one of the most important things they because provide narrative context as well as the footage for

[35] While shooting, one production day immediately before elimination is set aside for Chiu and Chase to conduct interviews with the contestants. Each cast member spends 45-90 minutes with either Chase or Chiu, who cover everything from the previous three shooting days. They also do on-the-fly interviews with cast members in instances where something potentially major occurs (someone falls, cries, etc.). Chase and Chiu, "Interview with Allison Chase and Angela Chiu."

[36] Kavka, *Reality TV*, 80.

interstitial confessionals.[37] Docudramas, or any reality programming with any level of character development ranging from single episodes to season long narrative arcs (like *America's Next Top Model*), utilize the confessional as a narrative device to provide dimension and interiority to the participants by creating a strong sense of intimacy through the opportunity to address audiences directly. Even though these interviews occur after events have occurred, they are later intercut "with the footage of participants' day-to-day lives," giving viewers the appearance of immediacy, which in turn creates a sense of live-ness as well as "creating two layers of intimacy: intimacy between participants and viewers, produced by having participants 'confess' directly, as it were, to viewers themselves."[38]

Moreover, the confessional establishes power dynamics between confessors and confessees, putting the contestants in a position of inferiority where they seek acceptance and affirmation from the production. As explained by Michel Foucault,

> The confession is a ritual of discourse in which the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement; it is also a ritual that unfolds within a power relationship, for one does not confess without the presence (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile…[39]

In reality television, confessional pieces simultaneously embarrass participants and serve as opportunities for them to reestablish normalcy in heightened situations. Participants are rewarded for putting themselves in inferior positions with access to fame as well as financial, physical, or

[37] Chase and Chiu, "Interview with Allison Chase and Angela Chiu."

[38] Kavka, *Reality TV*, 83-4.

[39] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 61-2.

emotional rewards. When episodes eventually air, the erasure of production labor translates the position of power to the audience as the recipient of the confession.

Because of the reliance on emotion as the source of episodes' dramatic material, the interview is an integral part in production planning. This is manifested physically as two interview rooms and a video diary confessional space are set aside within the cast house. These rooms are not shown in any "reality" footage, which erases the presence of the production crew, who would detract from the "authenticity" *ANTM* wants to present. Calling attention to the interviews in any way exposes the machinations that go into creating episodes and the people who populate them, but also diminishes the power of the contestants' reactions to it. Erasing the production staff and crew when interviewing the contestants creates intimacy because it appears as though the contestants are talking directly to the viewer. It also erases the levels of production and the unnaturalness of the entire situation; rather than reminding viewers that the house, the challenges, being chosen to participate at all, are all artificially created in order to generate emotion. Instead, isolating contestants prioritizes the emotion itself and positions viewer focus onto the contestant and her situation. This focus crucially works to facilitate personality/celebrity creation. *ANTM* manufactures extreme situations in order to provoke emotion, which is ultimately what it needs to create good television programming and good television personalities.

Another way in which personality cultivation is built into reality production can be seen in *ANTM*'s practice of scheduling an entire day prior to shooting the elimination in order to conduct extended interview sessions with contestants. Dedicating time thusly facilitates an intimate situation where contestants can more easily open up. Constructing the feeling of emotional instantaneity does not happen instantaneously, but results from creating opportunities

for reflection, however limited.[40] The interview space allows contestants to take a break and let off some steam, going even as far as comparing Chiu and Chase to therapists.[41] However, unlike therapeutic sessions, these sessions are recorded, and potentially broadcast to millions, and are orchestrated specifically for that exploitative purpose. Throughout production, *ANTM* has stripped them of other outlets for privacy or interactions with trusted friends and family. Thus, the producers become the only people they feel they can talk to, as they cannot be completely open with their fellow cast members because they are in direct competition with them. After contestants finish their interviews, they can go into the video confessional space and vent further by themselves directly to an unmanned camera. Although contestants are not forced to go into this space, Chiu and Chase tell them that they are and encourage them to record a video diary every night to generate as many sound bytes as possible.[42]

In crafting each episode, Chiu and Chase watch the footage with an editor and assemble an episode outline reiterating the importance of episode structure in determining which personalities are highlighted in service of the larger format. Rather than follow any specific character(s), the episodic format determines how footage is assembled. Post-production compilation work backwards; where producers and editors begin with the elimination results to determine the larger arc of the episode. In a typical episode, the person eliminated and the other

[40] The feeling of liveness and instantaneity is further constructed within the interviews themselves. During interviewing, Chase and Chiu guide the participants to rephrase and describe what happened and how they were feeling over the three-day shoot. They encourage the use of present tense "so when you cut it, you feel more in the moment." Over time, the contestants get better that the interviews and learn to speak in the present tense and in full sentences, which are then used as the building blocks for editors crafting the eventual episode. Chase and Chiu, "Interview with Allison Chase and Angela Chiu."

[41] "Interview with Allison Chase and Angela Chiu."

[42] "Interview with Allison Chase and Angela Chiu."

person in the bottom two will tend to be the central narrative as their struggles are utilized to create momentum resulting in one of their exits from the competition. Likewise, prioritizing each act as the determination for advancing the competition positions the format as primary and personality as a building block servicing the larger narrative. However, personality is still a determining factor. If there is a key moment during shooting for a particular episode (like a fight), that becomes an event to hang the episode on, so the story is generated around it. In the case where the person leaving is someone who is "boring," she may become a "D" story in their own exit episode if the other personalities are more interesting because the boring person exit story still needs to be serviced.[43] Once the editors pull together a rough cut of an episode, Chase and Chiu help finesse it before presenting it to executive producers (who give their input for the next cut), before a cut goes to the network (who may have suggestions of their own).

Social Media

One of the major changes to both television and celebrity has been the rise of the Internet and subsequent audience demand for interactivity, and reality television has taken advantage this to quickly establish audience engagement. Industrial and technological changes have complicated the current media landscape and as such, increased multi-channel services, recording devices like the DVR, the smart phone, and most broadly the Internet have revolutionized viewing practices. Sharon Ross argues that the internet has become important for both television production and reception as "a site at which the industry and its needs intermingles with the viewers and their needs more thoroughly than before."[180] As the internet

[43] "Interview with Allison Chase and Angela Chiu."

[180] Sharon Marie Ross, *Beyond the Box: Television and the Internet* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Pub., 2008), 18.

became a the primary medium for the young viewers at the core of *ANTM*'s demographic, producers like Gabrion needed to reestablish its vitality as a good investment for The CW. In order to drive viewers back to television broadcasts, *ANTM* incorporated fan presence on the internet into every episode and its celebrity-making practices based on the idea that "the more a narrative invites viewers to feel as if they are a part of the storytelling experience, the higher the resonance with the viewer."[181] Co-executive producer Dana Gabrion elaborates on *ANTM*'s rationale for making necessary changes:

> What we realized was hurting the show was we would see people who said "I watch *ANTM* all the time!" or like "Who's your favorite?" and they give you someone from like 2 seasons ago because they're watching marathons on Oxygen and Bravo and Hulu and Netflix. Our show was everywhere so didn't have to watch the new one that was coming out. So, we had to make a lot of changes quick to differentiate it, and make it stand out different.[182]

ANTM used its shift towards interactivity as part of a larger overhaul. Reflecting rising costs of maintaining long term talent while experiencing diminishing production budgets, *ANTM* fired longtime judges Nigel Barker, Miss J Alexander, and Jay Manuel in Fall 2012. Under the auspices of keeping *ANTM* fresh and reengaging with its 12-34 female demographic, the three men were deemed too old and stale to remain with the show.[183] In their places, *ANTM* instated British model Rob Evans as judge to replace British photographer and former model Nigel Barker, and, more interestingly, Filipino fashion blogger Byranboi supplanted runway coach/judge Miss J Alexander and photoshoot director Jay Manuel as the new queer male fashion expert. However, although Bryanboi replicated a missing formula component, he

[181] *Beyond the Box: Television and the Internet*, 25.

[182] Gabrion, "Interview with Dana Gabrion."

[183] Adrienne Raphel, "America's Next Top Instagram Celebrity," *The Atlantic,* August 5, 2015.

replaced neither Alexander nor Manuel's positions. Instead, he became the mouthpiece for *ANTM*'s newest judge: "Social Media," a compilation of digitally submitted audience comments. And in a move reflecting questionable exploitative labor practices associated with reality TV and *ANTM* in particular, a judge it would never have to pay.[184] Though it also solved a budgetary issue, Gabrion explains how "Social Media" reflected *ANTM*'s greater need for more immediate audience engagement: "the reason that we incorporated the voting element in the show, to get the audience to vote, was really to make it feel more like a live show, and to get people to watch live. We did a lot of things to get them."[185] This change was designed to reward fans within the span of each episode over the entire season and to reinvigorate and recognize a sense of liveness that the instantaneity of the Internet provides.

Likewise, instating "Social Media" as a judge broadened *ANTM*'s modes of celebrity creation. The change activated fans during the production cycle itself as opposed to making them passively watch results unfold when *ANTM* eventually aired. During production, *ANTM*'s social media coordinator uploaded all the photos from the photoshoot onto *ANTM*'s Facebook page where viewers responded to them with written messages or short videos of themselves. The compendium of viewer submissions provided the larger voice of "Social Media," and individual comments were integrated into the judging segments. The opportunity for fans to comment

[184] ANTM's most notable labor dispute was in 2006, when its story editors attempted to unionize under the WGA. As a result, all were fired and their job responsibilities shifted to staff editors. For more, see Potes, "America's Next Top Picket Line," http://www.televisionwithoutpity.com/show/americas_next_top_model/the_djb_interview.php; Jim Benson, "*Top Model* Takes Strikers Off Payroll," *Broadcasting & Cable*, November 7, 2006; *Angelea Preston vs. Tyra Banks, The Tyra Banks Company, Ken Mok, Laura Fuest Silva, Anisa Productions, The CW Network*, Caner, Sherri R; Collins, "Dethroned *ANTM* winner breaks silence".

[185] Gabrion, "Interview with Dana Gabrion."

invigorated interactivity by extended the possibility of momentary fame to fans. However, although *ANTM* posted photos every 2-3 days during production, viewers would not know whether or not their comments were used until the episode airs months later incentivizing viewers to tune in months later.[186]

Featuring "Social Media" as a judge not only reflects a shift in consuming television on multiple platforms, but it actualizes Laurie Ouellette and James Hay's argument about how reality television acts as a site for governing as it institutes "real people" into the position of experts. Competition-based reality programs teach contestants and audiences not only how to assemble and present oneself as a flexible commodity while providing a space for the governed to practice the "rules" as they exercise judgment on the contestants as they succeed or fail. [187] In this case, the audience personifies the key neoliberal practice programs like *ANTM* undertake; appropriating and capitalizing on the contestants' labor. However, as in the case of the contestants, *ANTM* and its production team ultimately control avenues to fame and structurally re-contains the audience despite their visible participation. *ANTM* chooses those comments most aligned with its established modes of critique, but more importantly, chooses those that best conform to the episode's larger narrative. Host Tyra Banks refers to any audience comments as if they originated from a singular entity known as "Social Media" further erasing individual labor and keeping any potential individuality in line as to not overshadow named talent.

---

[186] Throughout production, all contestants' photos are uploaded as all contestants participate in all the photoshoots even if they are eliminated as production moves forward. This helps ensure that secrets about who is eliminated when are not released.

[187] Ouellette and Hay, *Better Living Through Reality TV: Television and Post-Welfare Citizenship*, 7-8.

The work of "Social Media" reflected larger online trends where audiences increasingly looked to the internet for more intimate and direct connections with their favorite stars. Likewise, the implementation of "Social Media" as a judge systematized fan work and pulled fans into *ANTM*'s officially sanctioned star creation matrix. Instead of simply reaching out to contestants or trying to engage with them, facilitating relationships between the two became one of *ANTM*'s key digital marketing tactics. As engagement with television texts overflowed to the Internet, Twitter revitalized live viewing through the practice of live-tweeting; where viewers from all over the world watch and comment simultaneously. Likewise, Dana Gabrion further elaborates on how the internet provided an opportunity to rejuvenate *ANTM*:

> So, how do you bring back the live viewers to the show? And honestly, what's been a lot of that, it's not just the social media part within the show, it's tweeting live during the show. Because people get to interact with the cast, because the cast live tweets, we live tweet, the sponsors live tweet, the guest stars will live tweet. There's a community there and an immediate interaction.[188]

Twitter is mutually beneficial for the contestants and *ANTM* because one can promote the other, bolstering both branded entities. Moreover cultivating social media relationships between the series and its contestants extends the celebrity construction happening on *ANTM* to its audience through the internet.[189]

With the launch of cycle 20, coincidentally, where *ANTM* changed again by incorporating male models, each contestant had their own Twitter account which was promoted on *ANTM*'s

[188] Gabrion, "Interview with Dana Gabrion."

[189] Alice Marwick and danah boyd, "To See and Be Seen: Celebrity Practice on Twitter," *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* 17, no. 2 (2011): 141.

website, and contestants were "encouraged" to live tweet episodes as they aired.[190] For co-creator and executive producer Ken Mok, Twitter and larger social media platforms were so integral to re-engaging the audience, and thus *ANTM*'s vitality, that members of the production team trained the contestants on how to use social media:

> We also ask[ed] them to engage with the public during the show through their own social media platforms, whether it's through Twitter or Facebook, and spreading the word because I think social media more than anything else is really the drive to making a show successful now. It's not on-air promos. Nobody watches on-air promos. Nobody watches commercials. It's all about getting word out through, you know, social media itself.[191]

Reflecting larger industrial changes where, as John Caldwell argues in "Second-Shift Media Aesthetics: Programming, Interactivity, and User Flows," scholars and practioners alike must develop new units for temporal-user management that measure and account for active user engagement across multiple platforms as linear sequential viewing on one platform like television is no longer the dominant viewing practice, incorporating the internet into viewing practices has become increasingly important .[192] Moving user engagement to "Social Media" and social media platforms like Twitter as a means of affecting the program, *ANTM* incorporates an audience metric that is easily deliverable to The CW. Concurrently, *ANTM* utilized several digital marketing firms to handle east-coast tweeting, while co-executive producer Dana Gabrion handled the west coast feed, using her intricate knowledge of *ANTM* to provide a more enhanced

[190] Several past and present *ANTM* contestants have verified Twitter accounts, assuring viewers of their identities. As more reality television programs extend their presence online, more contestants have verified accounts as the program launches.

[191] Mok, "Interview with Ken Mok."

[192] Caldwell, "Second-Shift Media Aesthetics: Programming, Interactivity, and User Flows," 134-35.

authentic experience for fans. This also kept her tuned into how fans discussed *ANTM*, which could be used as data for the production company and as another deliverable for the network.[193]

The internet gave contestants the opportunity to practice the work of celebrity. In the current era of media convergence, Caldwell also argues that branding is the bridging mechanism that both creates "psychological and empathetic relationships with consumers" and drives user traffic through different media platforms.[194] Likewise, in "Tele-Branding in TV-III," Catherine Johnson argues "the expansion of television networks has made competition for audiences increasingly fierce, [and] it seems that branding has emerged as *the* defining industrial practice."[195] In this regard, reality television specifically exemplifies the concept of time in relation to differentiated viewing practices and branding, which in itself has become key to celebrity maintenance. Though Johnson speaks about networks themselves, her argument can easily be applied to contestants within programs, which are themselves the components of networks, and thus larger units of branding. Once recognized media entities The CW and *ANTM* acknowledge the contestants as "famous" through their promotion, this establishes one of the key conditions of celebrity; that there is an asymmetrical status imbalance between fan and audience which both recognize.[196]

Once fundamentally differentiated, contestants reify their celebrity status by engaging in similar techniques established famous people use, which Alice Marwick and dana boyd outline

---

[193] Gabrion, "Interview with Dana Gabrion."

[194] Caldwell, "Second-Shift Media Aesthetics: Programming, Interactivity, and User Flows," 138.

[195] Johnson, "Tele-Branding in TVIII: The Network as Brand and the Programme as Brand," 6. TV-III is a UK term describing the digital age of television in the US.

[196] Marwick and boyd, "To See and Be Seen: Celebrity Practice on Twitter," 144.

as "viewing friends or followers as a fan base; acknowledging popularity as a goal; managing the fan base using a variety of affiliative techniques; and constructing an image of self that can be easily consumed by others."[197] Like successful television personalities as outlined by Langer and Bennett, Marwick and boyd further argue that celebrity maintenance on Twitter is also the result of "performed intimacy," but go further to point to how celebrity is also the result of "affiliation, and public acknowledgement," suggesting that from the get go, quickly creating and establishing celebrities depends on institutionalized systems of labor as well as backed by those with media power. *ANTM* helps with creation because, as Alison Hearn argues, its structured format dually operate as entertainment through "the story of self-branding as the central theme of their narratives and include explicit instruction on how to manage the demands of fame and effectively perform one's own celebrity brand."[198] Using Twitter as a secondary space to consume the episodes expands the on-screen narrative and exposes the need for intertextuality that Richard Dyer describes as the necessary component for stardom.[199] On an immediate level, the matrices of tweets help the series, and by proxy, the contestants, whose presence is a promotional tool for *ANTM*. Gabrion explains the intertwined and interdependent nature of the need for both *ANTM* and the contestants to have Twitter presences:

> And you favorite and retweet, and all of sudden, the loyalty of that fan, now they feel like this with you [crosses fingers]. You really build your loyalty with your fans that way. There's a sense of closeness. It's the new celebrity thing. It used to be this was [only] celebrit[ies who tweeted], but now you have to have, you have to always expose a little bit more. Give something intimate to them, show them something behind the scenes, and

[197] "To See and Be Seen: Celebrity Practice on Twitter," 144.

[198] Alison Hearn, ""Meat, Mask, Burden": Probing the Contours of the Branded "Self"," *Journal of Consumer Culture* 8 (2008): 207.

[199] Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, 7.

> make them feel involved. And make them feel like they're in on your world, not as such an outsider, and that is what Twitter has done for us big time.[200]

Cultivating fan relationships through direct communication allows contestants to use the power differential between famous and not carried by the series' status as television program and association with celebrity to then put themselves in an elevated position in relation to "ordinary" people, thus creating a hierarchy necessary for celebrity systems at all.[201]

However, this important celebrity and maintenance work moves almost entirely onto the contestant, especially when the series ends. The reliance on Twitter and social media give the contestants space to perform their celebrity brand with the backing of *ANTM* for a short period of time before they are expected to sink or swim on their own once the series ends. And because the celebrity cache that reality programs can offer to ordinary people are tenuous at best, many "do not see the returns on their efforts that mainstream famous people do; their dreams of financial success or trappings of wealth are rarely achieved…making power differentials clear."[202] Celebrity studies scholar Chris Rojek argues that "celebrities are carefully mediated through what might be terms chains of attraction. No celebrity now acquires public recognition without the assistance of cultural intermediaries who operate to stage-manage celebrity presence in the eyes of the public."[203] Building on Rojek's assertion, reality television is especially adept at creating interchangeable celebrities, but it is, as Graeme Turner asserts, it is very difficult for those individuals "to develop the level of control required to maintain a relationship with the

---

[200] Gabrion, "Interview with Dana Gabrion."

[201] Marwick and boyd, "To See and Be Seen: Celebrity Practice on Twitter," 140.

[202] "To See and Be Seen: Celebrity Practice on Twitter," 155.

[203] Chris Rojek, *Celebrity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), 10.

audiences that is independent of the program – that is, a relationship that is not managed by the production company or network."[204] The often hidden systemic work managed by the network and/or production company encompass what it is to be a reality celebrity in the neoliberal age. Even though larger cultural values seem to assert that achieving celebrity and fame are placed on the shoulders of the individual, there is a limit to what individuals can accomplish on their own because once the cultural and distribution power attached to the production company or network disappears, so does the affirmation and confirmation of the contestants' celebrity status.

Implementing social media integrates how creating and building a branded identity is essential to the work of celebrity maintenance. This is an idea publicly promoted by host Tyra Banks, whose brand with which, arguably, *ANTM* is ultimately concerned. Although host and former supermodel Tyra Banks had some level of notoriety before *ANTM* premiered, her presence, position within each episode, and longevity of the franchise have coalesced into making her the ultimate star. Her supremacy is embedded into every episode as host and main judge, where she sets the standards used to judge "good" models, and whose advice is most coveted by contestants and viewers alike throughout each cycle. Even when she is not physically onscreen, the house is filled with photos of her, other mentors talk about her. Her power is further consolidated behind the scenes in her role as producer and co-creator gives her power in choosing contestants during casting, photos used at photoshoots, makeovers, stylings, etc.[205] Regardless of whether she actually makes all of these decisions, she is positioned as the person who does within the diegesis. Banks constantly inserts herself into the text as mentor and judge as she leads the judging panel, decides the photos used for elimination, and filters the series

[204] Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*, 38.

[205] Mok, "Interview with Ken Mok."

through her point of view. Audience members are taught to assess beauty and personality through what Banks deems worthy. As a result, the contestants serve as pawns to further Banks' career, sometimes to their detriment.

Though Banks is arguably the center of *ANTM*, her connection to the contestants is as fabricated as the outrageous challenges themselves. Several former contestants have spoken out about the limited interactions they had with Banks during production, let alone after, which further affirms how *ANTM* is more interested in its bottom line than in any actual talent creation.[206] Cycle 11 and 17 contestant Sheena Sakai went as far to say that *ANTM* "will always put you in a box because at the end of the day it's all about one person, you know, and the only star of it is Tyra."[207] However, when *ANTM* overhauled its onscreen talent and format, Ken Mok explained what needed to remain in order to keep the episode formula familiar to *Top Model* fans:

> You want to keep the core of the show intact. It still is a show about modeling, it is a show about people achieving their dream. You still want all the challenges and teaches and everything to be legitimate. What you want to do is change some of the tools that are in the show to reengage the audience.[208]

Rather than point to any specific talent, he highlights specifics of *ANTM*'s episode format as key to continuously engaging viewers. Although one would believe that Banks is an integral piece of that core to the series because of her very public associations with it, in this schema, even she is

---

[206] See Hawaii_Bombay, "CariDee Englsh Speaks Out About Jael Strauss' Meth Addiction," http://ohnotheydidnt.livejournal.com/71938833.html#cutid1; "People who have been on reality TV shows, what's rigged and whats not? (self.AskReddit)," https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/4r7elb/people_who_have_been_on_reality_tv_shows_whats/; PikaPika217, "Sheena Sakai Stops by fourfour and serves up some T!," http://ohnotheydidnt.livejournal.com/63345138.html.

[207] "Sheena Sakai Stops by fourfour and serves up some T!".

[208] Mok, "Interview with Ken Mok."

disposable, which has been further proven with the 2015 relaunch of *ANTM* on VH1, without Banks as the host.

Bankable Productions: *ANTM*'s bottom line

> "*ANTM* exists in its own world—the winner of *ANTM* isn't America's next most booked model, she's *ANTM*'s next top model."
>
> –Adrienne Raphel, "America's Next Top Instagram Celebrity"[209]

> "…I acknowledge and agree that my performance of any obligations under this agreement is intended to benefit the Network and Pottle [Productions]."[210]
>
> – *ANTM* applicant release

As each the cycle finishes, the narrative of who has the most skills closes, inferring that *ANTM* has fulfilled its duties as a training mechanism as opposed to a system invested in perpetuating the talent it has developed. Sue Collins argues that reality celebrities are limited in achieving higher levels of celebrity because they "are not 'real' actors with accumulated intertextual capital. They do not have access to wider circulation by which to accrue sustained symbolic and economic value."[211] The access they do have is completely at the behest of the production company and network, which ends with the cycle. Graeme Turner argues that series like *ANTM* are part of a larger trend of manufacturing celebrity as "a programming initiative to sell to advertisers" where even when "substantial cast prizes are provided, celebrity is the real prize."[212] *ANTM* and The CW create a platform for celebrity through the production of the series

---

[209] Raphel, "America's Next Top Instagram Celebrity."

[210] Pottle Productions holds the trademark for *ANTM*. America's Next Top Model, "Cycle 20 Participant Application," (2012), 12.

[211] Sue Collins, "Making the Most out of 15 Minutes: Reality TV's Dispensable Celebrity," *Television and New Media* 9, no. 12 (2008): 95.

[212] Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*, 54.

and their contributions to verifying, publicizing, and marketing contestants creates a their symbolic value, but when the cycle ends, so does their intertextual value due to their decreased visibility. Sue Collins further argues that the influx of low-level celebrity has significant value as it both "valorizes the star system because it serves as points of lesser comparison with A-list celebrities, while the existence of a star system stimulates the continuing production of aspiring celebrity."[213] In other words, when celebrity creation shows allow the production company to insert themselves in the celebrity sphere by churning out low-level celebrities while simultaneously fueling desire in their own applicant base. However, Collins further argues that reality participants are just as easily dismissed by the industry of which they want to be a part because, especially once the cycle ends, "they are low in intertextual capital, and audiences have, for the most part, exhausted locating their 'authentic' identities in the interstices between their reality texts and celebrity place."[214]

Because *ANTM* creates its contestants' symbolic value, removing its support likewise severely limits how its contestants can capitalize on the opportunity afterwards. Many former contestants have been vocal about the absence of any post-cycle support[215] extending as far back as cycle 1 winner Adrianne Curry, whose long-standing assertion that subsequent seasons of

[213] Collins, "Reality TV's Dispensible Celebrity," 95.

[214] Collins defines "celebrity place" as media spaces devoted to celebrity coverage across the media industries. "Reality TV's Dispensible Celebrity," 104.

[215] For examples, see Sadie Gennis, "*Top Model* Alum Unrecognizable After Meth Addiction; Cycle 7's CariDee Blames the Show," TV Guide, http://www.tvguide.com/news/americas-next-top-model-meth-addiction-jael-caridee-1052969/?obref=obinsite&obref=obinsite; Collins, "Dethroned *ANTM* winner breaks silence"; PikaPika217, "Sheena Sakai Stops by fourfour and serves up some T!".

ANTM have overlooked her "acting as though she never existed."[216] Curry brings up an interesting point in that if *ANTM* were dedicated to developing talent in either the modeling or the reality worlds, there could be a greater interest in past contestants on and off-screen. However, that kind of emotional investment comes with a financial one. To this point, labor laws have largely been written for the scripted world, and the very different production demands of reality television has created a vacuum where standardized regulations have yet to be developed. However, once the contestants have appeared on the program, they become much more expensive because they are no longer amateurs competing for a prize, but are being hired as talent professionals, which requires payment. Throughout the *ANTM*'s history, many former contestants have returned for an episode. When they do, they need to be paid the AFTRA rate, and thus, must be a registered AFTRA member, the fees for which the production company covers.[217] Even though *ANTM* features former contestants, it does so more to create continuity with its larger status as a talent generator, especially since former winners appear for part of a segment in a larger episode over an entire cycle. Likely, this reflects the compromise between wanting to incorporate former contestants while paying as little as possible. Moreover, Mok has a history of choosing developing a format over personalities. Before *ANTM*, Mok was the creator and executive producer of *Making the Band* (ABC, 2000-2001; MTV, 2002-2009), whose first seasons centered on the creation and career of a boy band. However, Mok credits personnel disputes for the series' initial ending:

> … we plucked these kids from obscurity to create O-Town [for *Making the Band*], and they got spoiled very quickly because they had their own TV show. They had gotten

[216] Andy Dehnart, "Adrianne Curry says Tyra Banks, Top Model "act like the first winner of their show never existed"," https://www.realityblurred.com/realitytv/2007/05/top-model-1-adrianne_tyra/.

[217] Lauren Suarez, interview by Lindsay Giggey, 2013, America's Next Top Model.

> signed by Clive Davis to J Records. They had a TV show to support their tour. They had Lou Perlman in their corner. And so when we got to the third season of the show, they were trying to dictate when they would be shot, when they wouldn't be shot, when they would be covered. And we got to a point where we said, "Ok, well, screw you. Bye! We're canceling the show." We canceled the show, and their careers fell apart. Like, you know, they're no place now.[218]

Although *Making the Band* was resurrected on MTV, it's format shifted to center around hip-hop mogul P. Diddy as the main talent, underscoring the dual desire to control power as well as production costs.[219] When asked whether or not the potential rising costs to pay members of O-Town contributed to that decision, Mok answered: "You know, talent is not that expensive when you're putting together a band, because these are unknowns, so you really don't have to do much. They're dying for the change to work with P, you know, Puffy."[220] This previous experience likely determined *ANTM*'s development by immediately curtailing contestant agency as to protect the larger needs of the production company. In addition to being a good financial decision, it further serves the format because the mechanisms of celebrity are what each season replicates as opposed to aspects of any aspect involved with circulating any individual's celebrity presence.

However, the goal of series like *Making the Band* and *ANTM* were never about creating new bands or models, but rather a continual source of revenue for the production companies and the network. As a means of further protecting both their investment as well as their resulting product,

[218] Mok, "Interview with Ken Mok."

[219] "Interview with Ken Mok."

[220] "Interview with Ken Mok."

The terms for the disproportionate relationship between the production company and individual participants are dictated as conditional for any relationship at all. Graeme Turner argues that "any potentially conflicting personal and commercial objectives (that is, those of the celebrities-in-the-making, and those of the producers or networks) are structurally accommodated to each other from the beginning."[221] Even though Turner is considered the power of program formats in this assertion, all potential objectives are structurally accommodated for before filming even begins. As part of the application, *ANTM* requires that applicants sign a release form that essentially vacates their rights to publicity and identity in order to even be considered for casting. Applicants must agree to the following as a contingency for *ANTM* to consider their application materials, and if chosen, their subsequent participation on the series:

> …I hereby consent to the recording, use, and reuse by Producer of my voice (including, without limitation, my speaking and singing voices), actions, likeness, name, appearance and biographical material (i.e., collectively "Likeness") in any and all media now known or hereafter devised, worldwide in perpetuity, in or in connection with the Program and the promotion and exploitation (in any form or media) thereof. I agree that Producer may use all or any part of my Likeness, and may alter or modify it regardless of whether or not I am recognizable.[222]

Although publicity rights are recognized as intellectual property, and celebrities have successfully sued to prohibit using their likenesses to sell products without their permission, Debora Halbert argues in her analysis of *Survivor* contracts that "[r]eality television has created a new group of celebrities who do not own their public image and cannot independently control its

[221] Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*, 59.

[222] America's Next Top Model, "Cycle 20 Participant Application," 11.

use."[223] Signing releases like this are standard for reality television and are simultaneously necessary and problematic. Because production companies, and eventually networks, are filming real people, they need consent in order to use the images the accumulate either through the application or the production processes. However, releases like this also immediately position participants in a subservient position as this "contract signifies the power of the television studio to construct reality on television and control the reality of its products. … Thus, contract controls reality, both the realities portrayed on television and the lived experience of the show's participants."[224] In this schema, reality television production companies literally have all the power in constructing "reality" from a production side, but also legally own the subsequent reality of the experience of and reactions to it experienced by the participants. If reality TV is indeed constructing a reality, then the owners of what subsequently takes place are not those it happened to, but the production companies who set up the situation, filmed, and subsequently edited the footage as well as the networks, to whom the production companies deliver their series. Considering the relationship put into effect by the contract puts the neglect of emotional labor in dealing with contestants after each cycle ends into better perspective. *ANTM*'s emotional labor is not easily monetized and is the very labor that they have contracted from its participants (in the legal rather than financial sense). Contracts like these exemplify larger neoliberal economic trends towards privatization, but in this case, individuals privatize themselves in the spirit of personal enterprise. For the opportunity to launch themselves into becoming branded celebrity entities and capitalizing off of Andrejevic's concept of "the work of being watched,"

[223] Debora Halbert, "Who Owns Your Personality: Reality Television and Publicity Rights," in *Survivor Lessons: Essays on Communication and Reality Television*, ed. Matthew J. Smith and Andrew Wood (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003), 42.

[224] "Who Owns Your Personality: Reality Television and Publicity Rights," 51.

individuals sell their likeness (even if unrecognizable) and experiences to media conglomerates. Production companies offer the possibility of access to celebrity and participating in that process in order to gain unfettered past, present and future access in service of a "relatively inexpensive and profitable entertainment product."[225]

All modelling is about selling a product, and in *ANTM*'s case, the product just happens to be a modelling competition television show. Fashion models are hired to highlight and sell someone else's clothes as the physical commodity to be purchased. If the model garners attention, that's simply a by-product. Reality celebrity is the same way – it's not about creating new personalities as much as it is creating a celebrity manufacturing format. If, as Sue Collins argues, celebrity is fame commodified, the *ANTM* applicant/contestant physically commodifies themselves in their relationships with the production companies in hopes of achieving fame.[226] It's in the best financial interest of the production companies to remove their support and allow contestants to fade back into obscurity because it prevents contestants from gaining too much power. If *ANTM* pushes a contestant too far too hard, it may consequently create a bigger than anticipated demand for a particular individual, which in turn gives that individual more negotiating power over their image in future dealings.

Ultimately, *ANTM* may provide the clearest cut example of neoliberal labor and the means to which reality television peddles it. As Ouellette and Hay argue:

> consider how reality TV simultaneously diffuses and amplifies the government of everyday life, utilizing the cultural power of television (and its convergence with books, magazines, the web, and mobile media) to assess and guide the ethics, behaviors, aspirations, and routines of ordinary people. At a time when privatization, personal responsibility, and consumer choice are promoted as the best way to govern liberal

[225] Andrejevic, *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched*, 6.

[226] Collins, "Reality TV's Dispensible Celebrity," 90.

> capitalist democracies, reality TV shows us how to conduct and 'empower' ourselves as enterprising citizens."[227]

At the end of each cycle, *ANTM* has not trained models as much as it has neoliberal workers specializing in "performativity, flexibility, and self-enterprise" reflecting larger shifts away from worker protections and long-term job security.[228] *ANTM*, reflecting trends of employers increasingly dependent on flexible labor, justifies removing its investment in the contestants once the cycle ends because as Dana Gabrion explains:

> …there are the ones who leave here, I can tell who's going to make it and who's not. And there [are] ones who blame the show, that are like "*Top Model* didn't do anything for me." Well I can't take every single girl and go knock on the door and get you work. You've been taught what to do. You know how to go to an agency. You know you have to go to agencies. You know you have to go knock on their doors. You know you have to go to auditions. You know you have to do this. And you can't do that if you win the show and you sit in the middle of Kansas waiting for people to call you. Because there are too many people out there trying to do this for a living. You've got a leg up use it. But if you sit there waiting for the phone to ring and it doesn't, and then get pissed at us, that's not us. Everyone out there has to hustle for it, even those top girls are trying to beat out others for jobs and beat out newcomers and stuff. So it is those girls who get out there. They move to New York or LA. They start pounding the pavement. Hit the doors of the agencies. And I've talked to a lot of them and I'm like, … "You know what it's like to get out there and hustle," And some of them aren't really prepared for it. They think "Oh, I'm famous now, so it should come to me.[229]

In a similar fashion, Mok is seemingly uninterested in the contestants after the cycle ends indicating: "There are a couple girls that we've kind of kept tabs on to see there might be something to develop with them, but not really. I mean, most of them have really gone on to their

---

[227] Ouellette and Hay, *Better Living Through Reality TV: Television and Post-Welfare Citizenship*, 2.

[228] Laurie Ouellette, "*America's Next Top Model*: Neoliberal Labor," in *How to Watch Television*, ed. Ethan Thompson and Jason Mittell (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 168-69.

[229] Gabrion, "Interview with Dana Gabrion."

modeling careers, or acting careers."[230] When asked if any of the former models keep in touch with the production team, he answers he thinks some of them do, but then follows that up with that they want to come in and pitch an idea to Mok's production company. Here, Mok reasserts his power, and if he's taken meetings, he says that he hasn't developed anything with former contestants. Although they may try to use their connection with to *ANTM* and Mok as a foot in the door in prolonging and continuing their careers, Mok's overall dismissal of former contestants underscores the way in which their labor is completely disposable – once the cycle is over, the production company no longer cares about them or what they may do unless it can somehow benefit Mok and his company.

Instead, *ANTM* repositions the work of celebrity maintenance onto the contestant by bringing them into the celebrity making process, make them dependent and complicit, and then absolving itself of any responsibility when contestants struggle afterwards positioning that solely onto contestants themselves. This is so engrained in contestants' minds because even though they lament the lack of support after their cycle, they pointedly make sure that they do not blame the production company and larger institutional structures that put them into a bait and switch position to begin with:

> "Although [Cycle 7 winner Caridee] English's tirade says the show has lost its credibility, she insists she doesn't blame Tyra Banks for the struggles she faced after leaving the competition. "This isn't Tyra's fault. We are all capable of becoming anything," she wrote. "I am saying it would have been a good call to have some after show support... When it boils down to it, there is just not a place for ANTM girls to fit post-show."[231]

[230] Mok, "Interview with Ken Mok."

[231] Gennis, "*Top Model* Alum Unrecognizable After Meth Addiction; Cycle 7's CariDee Blames the Show".

> Cycle 1 contestant Elise Sewell: “I hated my experience on the show but my subsequent modeling career was very good. I never would have tried to become a model without ANTM so I'm grateful to it for that.”[232]
>
> Cycle 1 winner Adrianne Curry: “Adrianne says she’s “grateful for what I did get out of the show” but says “as much as they want to hurl insults my way and to ‘disown’ me publicly, they can’t change the fact that I was the first…and that I have worked my ASS OFF to climb to the top. … I am grateful beyond words! I will never forget where I came from…or what got me here. America’s Next Top Model changed my life. I am not mad at Tyra or Top Model for not putting me on there. It’s her show, and she can make any choice she wants.”[233]
>
> Cycle 16 Contestant Erin Wagner: “Doing ANTM led to me getting signed with an agency, which I am grateful for. But it has not helped me advance my career further. I did learn a lot, it was a crash course on modelling and I had never modeled before the show.”[234]
>
> Cycle 2 and 17 Contestant Camille McDonald: “I want to fall out and turn my branding into an empire! Top Model has given me the exposure, but I have to take this opportunity into my own hands, because this is what I do. I'm not a lawyer, I'm not a doctor, yes I have my degree, but I've been pursuing this since Cycle 2.”[235]
>
> Cycle 18 Contestant Laura LaFrate: “LaFrate said the experience hasn't changed her in large ways. The one exception: A greater "self-awareness of how I come across as a person. I am a product, and I have to show the best part of my product."[236]

This type of response may be intentional on their behalf as to not alienate them from the production company and possible benefits from that association, but regardless, it shows the

---

[232] "People who have been on reality TV shows, what's rigged and whats not? (self.AskReddit)".

[233] Dehnart, "Adrianne Curry says Tyra Banks, Top Model "act like the first winner of their show never existed"".

[234] "IamA former contestant on *America's Next Top Model* AMA," https://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/m6mby/iama_former_contestant_on_americas_next_top_model/.

[235] Elizabeth Kwiatkowski, "Exclusive: Camille McDonalad talks *America's Next Top Model* (Part 2)," Reality TV World, http://www.realitytvworld.com/news/exclusive-camille-mcdonald-talks-america-next-top-model-%28part-2%29-12753.php.

[236] Mark McGuire, "For LaFrate, Reality Sets in After *Top Model* Ends," *Times Union*, May 31, 2012.

embedded naturalization of the dominance of the production company over the contestant as well as the internalized belief that any success needs to be manifest of their own work regardless of the larger institutional systems intended to keep them out. These barriers to entry are put in place to protect larger star investments that go above the production company to Banks herself as the series' central figure, but also to the *ANTM*'s place on The CW, itself a fledgling network in relation to CBS, which as a television network does not have the same capital as film. Everyone has a place in the larger celebrity hierarchy, which ultimately is in service to media conglomerates as they diversify their holdings and deliver content across their broad spectrum of offerings. Reality television itself is on the low end of costs, which makes it valuable to networks because, as discussed in the Bravo chapter, they need flexible content that they can schedule in to keep their larger momentum of content delivery moving.

Even though the production company may no longer support them systemically, they still use contestants' achievements in order to further prove the premise of the series; when a former *ANTM* contestant finds work after their cycle, that reifies *ANTM* as a talent generator, thus encouraging new participants as well as a "need" for the series in the modeling world. Whether that need actually exists or not, the correlation between the two reinforces *ANTM* as a good investment for The CW, VH1, and as franchisable format internationally. This relationship with its revolving amateur talent establishes how perpetuating reality formats are more important than investing in long-term nurturing of talent. Individuals are commoditized as a representation of what it means to exist and compete within contemporary flexible economic conditions based on precarious labor as well as to service the larger corporations for which they work, and who ultimately receive the benefits of their labor. In this case, *ANTM* highlights a link in the corporate

chain where individuals engage in an ostensibly "helpful" system that can flexibly promote their individuality for someone else's bottom line.

CHAPTER THREE:

Mom-ager Knows Best: Individual Ownership of Reality Stardom

> *"…why, despite the eye-rolls of half of America, does the other half worship at the altar of a family that unabashedly embraces, celebrates and monetizes that post-millennium cliché of being famous only for being famous?"*
> –Judith Newman and Leslie Bruce, "How the Kardashians Made $65 Million Last Year"[1]

> *"Contrary to earlier modes of reality TV celebrity (which separated 'real' people desiring fame from 'real' celebrities exposing their everyday lives), the prized early-twenty-first-century mode of reality celebrity has become self-branding, wealthy, and entrepreneurial, epitomized by the Kardashians"*
> –Alice Leppert, "*Keeping Up With the Kardashians*: Fame-Work and the Production of Entrepreneurial Sisterhood"[2]

> Kris: "My job is to find you opportunities … like Kimberly Cupcakes!"
> Kim: "All the things we've done. So wild."
> Kris: "Well, you know, it's not like you could sing or dance. We made the best of it."
> – *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*, Season 12 ep. 3[3]

Introduction

The previous chapter outlines the power production companies have in creating, promoting, and choosing whether or not to maintain celebrity on reality television. As seen with Bravo's self-styled reality slate, "television programming, especially on cable, is increasingly dependent on created rather than established celebrities. Turning nobodies—or virtual nobodies—into reality stars is cheaper than hiring actual somebodies."[4] Institutions like the

[1] Newman and Bruce, "How the Kardashians Made $65 Million Last Year."

[2] Alice Leppert, "*Keeping Up With the Kardashians*: Fame-Work and the Production of Entrepreneurial Sisterhood," in *Cupcakes, Pinterest, and Ladyporn: Feminized Popular Culture in the Early Twenty-First Century*, ed. Elana Levine (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 216.

[3] *Significant Others and Significant Brothers*, *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* (2016).

[4] Harriet Ryan and Adam Tschorn, "The Kardashian Phenomenon," *Los Angeles Times*, February 19, 2010.

network and the production company schedule and deliver time to audiences in the form of programming, increasingly by creating a network slate of personalities to in turn represent the overall network viewing experience. These primary and ancillary forms of content include the companies' networked systems of support that leak into their participants' social media presence. Despite the overreaching power of large media companies, there are still opportunities for individuals to break through. This begs the question of how self-made celebrities can rebrand and reiterate themselves, and when they do, to what extent do they play into established conventions of power and profitability. Individual participants' industrial cache is inscribed and accumulated from their time on the air as viewers consume and form relationships with network programming. For individuals to make headway to gain personal leverage into these closed systems of power, they need to find ways to control their own means of duration and use their ownership of their images in order to make distinctions in their celebrity temporality. This is sometimes accomplished by releasing new ventures that build on old in order to constantly reinvent themselves to remain viable in an ever-changing celebrity marketplace.

Part of the reason there is such a thriving aspirant pool for reality TV is the promise of attaining fame in following the precedent of what may be the most successful set of reality personalities to date: Kim Kardashian and her family. The Kardashians represent a model that is impossible to replicate but is nevertheless representative of and necessary for the larger celebrity reality system. As Harriet Ryan and Adam Tschorn explain, other reality celebrities "seem to exist to promote those shows, the Kardashians have turned their program into a promotional vehicle to expand their own empire."[5] Seemingly "famous for doing nothing," the Kardashian-Jenner clan has built an empire seemingly on Kim's participation in a sex tape with a former

[5] "The Kardashian Phenomenon."

boyfriend, which merited her a $5 million settlement, and has been viewed over 150 million times, making over $50 million for Vivid Entertainment.[6] However, Kim, and subsequently her family's, fame is more complicated than that since she has been in the public eye since 2007. Part of the reason the Kardashians have maintained their celebrity value is because they have maintained tight control over their branded personae. The relative agency they have is due to the backstage dealing of their agent, self-proclaimed "mom-ager" Kris Jenner. Jenner combines her matriarchal and managerial responsibilities to protect her family as well as find jobs for herself and her children.[7] Rather than relying on an external agent or institutionalized system, the Kardashians look out for themselves, which is represented in Jenner's simultaneous roles. As parent, agent, and executive producer, Jenner work and life are completely entwined as all of her personal and professional interests are wrapped up in protecting, staging, and "performing" family.

In perhaps one of the clearest examples of neoliberalism, where one's work is never done, *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* (E!; 2007-Present) is a fascinating blend of work and family life. Although their popular narrative centers on Kim's sexuality, their agency and power derive from the wealth and social capital Kris Jenner accumulated through her marriages to high-powered attorney Robert Kardashian (who represented best friend and famed football player OJ

[6] Oli Coleman, "The Kim Kardashian sex tape: An oral history," *NY Post*, March 27, 2017.

[7] Kris Jenner has been publicly associated with the term "mom-ager" since the beginning of *KUWtK*. She was described as such in promotional materials, including E!'s press releases, for the series' 2007 premiere. Essentially all subsequent write-ups, profiles, and interviews featuring Kris since then include the term to describe her. In an example of tight brand control and/or another moneymaking endeavor, Jenner attempted to trademark the word in 2016. See Brian Lowry, "Review: *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*," *Variety*, October 10, 2007; Kathy Ehrich Dowd, "Kris Jenner Files Legal Documents to Trademark the Word 'Momager'," *People*, September 23, 2016.

Simpson in his notorious murder trial) and former gold medalist Caitlin Jenner.[8] The family's wealth is inscribed into the show, but the relational qualities of its attainment and the power it provides are not. The Jenner-Kardashian clan is a mixed family featuring Kris' children from her first marriage to high-powered attorney Robert Kardashian: Kourtney, Kim, Khloé, and Rob; as well as the children the Jenners have together: Kendall and Kylie. *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* (hereafter *KUWtK*) focuses on Kris and her progeny as their lives and work are integrated; providing a unique business model for celebrity maintenance in the digital, multiplatform era.

The Kardashian-Jenners life and work are so intricately intertwined that their work is constantly maintaining their celebrity, which is completely dependent on their relationships with one another. In fact, placing cameras in the domestic sphere to capture family life is an example of work as the Kardashian-Jenners perform themselves for the consumption of others, doing what Mark Andrejevic describes as "the work of being watched."[9] Andrejevic argues that in reality television, self-disclosure is not just work, but can be the beginning of an economic transaction and "is increasingly economically valuable in a mass-customized society."[10] In an extended explanation, Andrejevic explains that reality television normalizes and encourages self-disclosure and the desire to want to be watched creates a scenario where workers are comfortable

[8] Although now Caitlin Jenner, throughout the majority of aired episodes, Jenner was still known as "Bruce." In this chapter, I will refer to Jenner as "Bruce" and using male-identifying gender pronouns when referring to her within specific episodes where she publicly identified as "Bruce," and as Caitlin when referring to Jenner outside of the series.

[9] Andrejevic, *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched*.

[10] *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched*, 35.

being watched in work situations.[11] The Kardashians are ultimately successful because they have continually reinvented ways in which audiences can or should care about them. Despite their seeming intellectual simplicity and highly emotional interpersonal relationships, their images are entrenched in gendered labor and glamourous femininity, where they balance sexual objectification and sisterly bonds. They are idealized women who have capitalized on every one of their assets (physical, financial, and familial), embodying postfeminism and neoliberalism; two of the culturally defining schools of thought in their time. The Kardashians are ideal reality stars for this particular moment for the young women who comprise the majority of their viewership, because they represent the core traits of postfeminist neoliberalism: self-branding, self-entrepreneurship, and an investment in performing traditional gender roles.[12] Their fame work is emotional and gendered, and grounded in interpersonal relationships. Their celebrity images are situated in glamour and unattainability, but through their reality show and their prolific presence on social media, they present themselves as highly accessible as they tap into what James Bennett argues are the key features for successful television personalities: they are authentic, intimate, and ordinary.[13] The communal aspect of their fame situated in their family makes them relatable also defines the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. Richard Dyer argues that stars "...play out some of the ways that work is lived in capitalist society…but remain individualized partly because the star system is about the promotion of the individual."[14] The

[11] *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched*, 28.

[12] Leppert, "*Keeping Up With the Kardashians*: Fame-Work and the Production of Entrepreneurial Sisterhood," 216.

[13] Bennett, *Television Personalities*.

[14] Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, 6-7.

Kardashian-Jenners complicate this as their work benefits from capitalism while promoting a collective conception of individuals. Their images are products of labor meant to promote themselves, but that promotion is centralized in their seeming accessibility as an entry point to join the family and take respite from never-ending competition. However, at the end of the day, there are clear limits to those who are part of the family (whether by blood or marriage) which serve to maintain the separateness which makes their situation extraordinary.

Kris Jenner, Kim Kardashian, and the Origins of *KUWtK*

Although the Kardashians seemingly came out of nowhere to become one of America's most famous families, they would not have found success without the managerial prowess of matriarch Kris Jenner. Blending the roles of mother and manager, self-proclaimed "mom-ager," Jenner establishes a neoliberal lifestyle model where work and family are completely intertwined and interdependent. The Jenner-Kardashian brand centers on the importance of family and hard work. The Jenner-Kardashians have achieved the level of fame and success that they have because they own their stories and brand, the terms for which were established from the very beginning by Kris Jenner.

In the decades before America kept up with the Kardashians, Jenner honed her skills as manager for her first client: former gold-medal winning decathlete and second husband Bruce Jenner. Whether the stories about her initial years and work together are true or not, Jenner genuinely positions herself in numerous publications as a self-made woman who has worked hard to support her family.[15] Her work as family agent and watchdog began after her divorce to

[15] Jenner has created an entrepreneurial origin story for herself across multiple magazine profile pieces as well as her 2011 autobiography. For more, see: Kris Jenner and Karen Hunter, *Kris Jenner...And All Things Kardashian* (New York: Gallery Books, 2011); Taffy Brodesser-Akner, "Where Would the Kardashians Be Without Kris Jenner," *The New York Times Magazine*, May

Robert Kardashian and her marriage to Bruce Jenner. In attempting to jumpstart Jenner's endorsement and motivational speaking career, Kris Jenner taught herself the ins-and-outs of managing to secure the best deals for her husband. They didn't have much money, so Kris took over his career, where her hard work ethic saved his career and introduced him to bigger sponsors.[16] Jenner reverse engineers her origin story to highlight the key characteristics that make up her public persona. This origin story is unironically crafted as a rags-to-riches story, which highlights her agency and entrepreneurial spirit while minimizing the Jenners' existing privilege.

Erasing their wealth and privilege makes them more relatable, even though those are the very things that allow them the luxury of setting the terms for what I am terming their "fame work." From the earliest days of their marriage, Bruce Jenner's past fame is currency that Kris Jenner uses in negotiating deals on his behalf. Caitlin Jenner had established her wealth through numerous endorsements and motivational speaking engagements whereas Kris Jenner married into money through her first marriage to Robert Kardashian, who is best known for representing best friend OJ Simpson in his notorious murder trial.[17] Kardashian's wealth stemmed from his father, who owned the largest meat-packing company in Southern California.[18] Though he strayed from the family business, he was an attorney before serving as the president of Movie

8, 2015; Dan Schawbel, "Kris Jenner on Building the Kardashian Family Brand," *Forbes*, January 17, 2012; Dimitri Ehrlich, "Kris Jenner," *Interview*, August, 28, 2012.

[16] Brodesser-Akner, "Where Would the Kardashians Be Without Kris Jenner."

[17] Although Kardashian was one of the lawyers who represented Simpson in his murder trial, he actually reactivated his law license to do so since he and Simpson were best friends. The Associated Press, "Robert Kardashian, a Lawyer for O.J. Simpson, Dies at 59," *The New York Times*, October 3, 2003.

[18] Newman and Bruce, "How the Kardashians Made $65 Million Last Year."

Tunes, a business centered on playing music between films at movie theaters.[19] Upon his 2003 death, it is rumored he left Kris, Kourtney, Kim, and Rob $100 million in a trust.[20] Likewise, Kris married into a relatively insulated social circle where her peers had similar privileges to her and her family. Although she and Caitlin met on a blind date, they were still within the same privileged Beverly Hills and eventually Calabasas social circles, which also gives them access to more than ordinary people; whether it is networking with their similarly privileged peers or meeting with networks to develop reality programs. Despite the wealth each had upon meeting, Caitlin and Kris' meeting and subsequent marriage offers a convenient origin point for the eventual success of their family. In a *New York Magazine* profile, Kris authors a rags-to-riches narrative by positioning herself and Caitlin as "broke," as the piece goes on to suggest that Kris' entrepreneurial skills were instrumental in resurrecting Caitlin's career.[21]

Formulating her backstory in terms of family not only reaffirms her current mom-ager role, but also creates a generational logic from which to understand the Jenner-Kardashian's larger fame. In this schema, Kris Jenner masters managerial work which increases Caitlin's fame and earnings. Because of that, she can better serve in this same role for her children, especially as all of her children have become branded enterprises in their own rights. The singular focus on Caitlin limits the Jenners' reach, so Kris begins developing her other family members to diversify and expand their reach. This move allows for greater control over and investment in her clientele as their best interest is intricately related to her maternal feelings. Kris will do what's

[19] The Associated Press, "Robert Kardashian, a Lawyer for O.J. Simpson, Dies at 59."

[20] "How Much Are the Kardashians Worth? A History of the Kardashian Family Money," http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/04/how-much-are-kardashians-worth_n_2762279.html.

[21] Brodesser-Akner, "Where Would the Kardashians Be Without Kris Jenner."

best for her family because it is also what is best for her. Building on her experience with Caitlin's career, Kris creates the most complex example of branded business in the transmedia age, but showcases it on a simple premise: the importance of family.

The Jenner-Kardashian ascendency is due to Jenner's orchestration of daughter Kim's celebrity. Little was known about Kim Kardashian until a 2003 sex tape made with then-boyfriend William "Ray J." Norwood, Jr. was acquired and released by adult entertainment distributor Vivid Entertainment in 2007.[22] Before this, Kardashian supported herself through work as a personal stylist. Her clients included singer Brandy Norwood (Ray J.'s sister) and fellow socialites Nicole Richie and Paris Hilton, whose own sex tape was leaked, acquired, and distributed.[23] Although Kardashian's celebrity worth was most strongly established by her father's friendship and representation of OJ Simpson, it's her connections to and initial emulation of Paris Hilton—as socialites with sex tapes who go on to have reality shows—which moved Kardashian from obscurity to celebrity.

Hilton's, and subsequently Kardashian's, celebrity addressed cultural interest in celebrity and industrial needs for content in the early-mid 2000s. The culmination of the growing disparity between the rich and the poor (and the need to vent frustrations about it) with the expansion of

---

[22] "Vivid Entertainment Spends $1-Million to Acquire Notorious Video "Starring" Sexy Socialite Kim Kardashian and Hip Hop Star Ray J," http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20070207006160/en/Vivid-Entertainment-Spends-1-Million-Acquire-Notorious-Video.

[23] Adam S. Levy, "'Different Directions': Brandy Says She's Not Friends With Ex-Stylist Kim Kardashian — Or Her Family — Anymore," Radar, http://radaronline.com/exclusives/2014/04/brandy-watch-what-happens-live-ray-j-kim-kardashian-sex-tape-khloe/; Lizzie Smith, "'We grew in different directions': Brandy grimaces when asked about her one-time friend Kim Kardashian... and THAT sex tape," Daily Mail, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2613248/We-grew-different-directions-Brandy-grimaces-asked-one-time-friend-Kim-Kardashian-THAT-sex-tape.html.

tabloid and celebrity journalism created a space for a new celebrity archetype: the celebutante.[24] Celebutantes' fame derives from wealth, connections, and sexual appeal as opposed to talent or work, and its original example is hotel heiress Paris Hilton. The increased need for content widened the celebrity pool, and Hilton's lavish lifestyle became a tabloid staple, garnering enough interest to create a reality show around her; a pattern Jenner and Kardashian would imitate, but execute more successfully.

Hilton's vapid narcissism and extreme wealth are unlikable and unobtainable, but serve as a space to direct anger with expanding income inequality and corporate power as she benefits from each.[25] Though Hilton is not relatable, she plays and parodies with her unlikeable persona. Her privilege is negotiated simultaneously through humiliation and seeming authentic access to her body and lifestyle, which are established through the concurrent releases of her sex tape, repackaged as *1 Night in Paris* (2004), and her reality show, *The Simple Life* (Fox, 2003-2007).[26] The culmination of the two types of media work well to quickly create celebrity and promotion for the upcoming reality show. The sex tape acted as a pseudo-event for Hilton and later introduced Kardashian to the celebrity world. Daniel Boorstin describes a "pseudo-event" as something staged or planned for the media which gains significance through media coverage and celebrities, or "human-pseudo-events," are people circulated through the media and "known for

[24] As defined by Merriam-Webster, a celebutante "is a debutante who has attracted such media attention as to be considered a celebrity." The term originated in 1939, and although the term "debutante" is not as prolific as it once was, the term "socialite" is an appropriate synonym. "Definition of Celebutante," in *Merriam-Webster*.

[25] Thomas Fahy, "*One Night in Paris* (Hilton): Wealth, Celebrity, and the Politics of Humiliation," in *Pop-Porn: Pornography in American Culture*, ed. Ann C. Hall and Mardia J. Bishop (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007), 79.

[26] "*One Night in Paris* (Hilton): Wealth, Celebrity, and the Politics of Humiliation," 75-98.

[their] well-known-ness."[27] The media coverage helped circulate both socialites and acted as free publicity for the shows

This particular combination of media is also highly effective in celebrity creation. In addition to driving interest, the combination of the sex tape and reality show offset one another nicely as they both offer immediate intimate access in different, yet complimentary ways. Michael Z. Newman argues that "the celebrity sex tape offers intimate access to the personal life of the famous person, seemingly overcoming the filtering of publicity in ways similar to paparazzi photos, Instagram, and Twitter."[28] Similarly, the intensely private nature of the tape, both in its creation and intended consumption, suggest these actions are spontaneous and intimate.[29] Reality television likewise strives towards presenting the lives of ordinary people. Annette Hill argues pleasure in watching reality television is partially about, "look[ing] for the moment of authenticity when real people are 'really' themselves in an unreal environment." [30] As such, the sex tape and reality television both offer opportunities to engage with aspects of what's real. The authenticity inherent in each are key to establishing and proliferating Hilton's (and later Kardashian's) celebrity image.

---

[27] Boorstin, "From Hero to Celebrity: The Human Pseudo-Event," 79; Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*, 5.

[28] Michael Z. Newman, "The Celebrity Sex Tape, Where Porn Meets Reality TV," *FlowTV* 19, no. 10 (2014).

[29] For more on intimacy and reality in celebrity sex tapes see: "The Celebrity Sex Tape, Where Porn Meets Reality TV."; Fahy, "*One Night in Paris* (Hilton): Wealth, Celebrity, and the Politics of Humiliation."; Minette Hillyer, "Sex in the Suburban: Porn, Home Movies, and the Live Action Performance of Love in *Pam and Tommy Lee: Hardcore and Uncensored*," in *Porn Studies*, ed. Linda Williams (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

[30] Annette Hill, "*Big Brother*: The Real Audience," *Television and New Media* 3, no. 3 (2002): 324.

Although *1 Night in Paris* and *The Simple Life* gave Hilton notoriety, the texts are limited in how long interest in Hilton can last. Thomas Fahy argues that Hilton is simultaneously desired and despised for her wealth and sexually available body and depends on consistent humiliation to erode economic disparities between her and those who consume her image.[31] Hilton's humiliation extends from her sex tape, where she appears bored and is degraded by her partner, to her reality show, where she is unable to do anything resembling work.[32] *The Simple Life*'s focus on putting Hilton in working class situations to highlight her inability to work is a high concept premise that will naturally run out of steam since there is no larger narrative to build on in terms of the show or Hilton's distant celebrity image. Hilton makes her body and wealth accessible, but she fails to connect with the host family in *The Simple Life* or her partner in *1 Night in Paris*, establishing how her self-promotion never extends past her ultimate interest in herself. This narrow focus limits Hilton's celebrity growth because there are few directions to take that over the long term because she is too isolated from genuine interactions with other people. Hilton's ability to interact with anyone is further diminished after her public friend break-up with co-star Nicole Richie, transferring all the celebrity work onto Hilton herself. Whereas Hilton "equates boredom with familial intimacy because [that] request puts [*The Simple Life* family] above her own self-interest," *KUWtK* is entirely about family.[33]

Hilton seemingly created the pathway for celebutaunte fame, but Kardashian/Jenner executed it more seamlessly. *The Simple Life* and *1 Night in Paris* generated a lot of interest, but have no narrative connection. The publicity and promotion surrounding Kardashian's tape

---

[31] Fahy, "*One Night in Paris* (Hilton): Wealth, Celebrity, and the Politics of Humiliation," 77.

[32] "*One Night in Paris* (Hilton): Wealth, Celebrity, and the Politics of Humiliation," 87-93.

[33] "*One Night in Paris* (Hilton): Wealth, Celebrity, and the Politics of Humiliation," 89.

(repackaged as *Kim Kardashian: Superstar*) and subsequent reality show are more tightly executed. Kardashian's instant celebrity is so tied to the sex tape that it is her introductory plotline in *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*; allowing the show to address and absorb it; simultaneously capitalizing on *Superstar* and distancing Kim from it. The release of *Superstar* and its subsequent presence in the premiere of *KUWtK* is either highly coincidental or expertly rolled out. Tabloid rumors have long suggested that Kris Jenner leaked the tape herself as a means of publicity.[34] Although this is not proven fact, the timeline is highly suspicious: Jenner began developing *KUWtK* with Ryan Seacrest and E! in 2006; the tape leaks in February 2007; Kim sues Vivid and settles out of court in April; E! announces the show in August; and it premieres in October. Over 2007, *Superstar* created and perpetuated media interest in Kardashian, which in itself created interest in *KUWtK*.

Jenner has claimed she did not know about the tape until its release, but she capitalized on it nonetheless.[35] The nature of the *KUWtK*'s pilot episode suggests how Jenner, as an executive producer, utilized her behind-the-scenes power in order to use *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* as a narrative about celebrity definition and maintenance. *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* is more centered on narrative storytelling than sequentially presenting events as they happened, the fact that the pilot explicitly deals with the tape suggests how *KUWtK* is an

[34] For more on reports of Kris Jenner leaking the sex tape, see Ian Halperin, *Kardashian Dynasty* (New York: Gallery Books, 2016); Lisa de Moraes, "No Paris, No Problem: E! Orders Up Kardashian Reality Series," *The Washington Post*, August 10, 2007; Claire Rutter, "Did Kim Kardashian and Kris Jenner deliberately leak her sex tape to make her famous?," *Irish Mirror*, May, 19 2016; Emily Smith, "Kris 'leaked Kim sex tape'," *The New York Post*, March 28, 2016.

[35] Kris Jenner explains she hired a crisis communication expert to help navigate the scandal, but does not elaborate on what that entailed. Newman and Bruce, "How the Kardashians Made $65 Million Last Year."

opportunity for damage control.[36]As offscreen manager and onscreen talent, Jenner is in a unique position to dictate what airs and has a vested personal and financial interest in the shows' success. Within the show, the business of fame is something the entire family now has in common setting a new standard for celebrity and neoliberal labor as their work success keeps the affective bonds between the Jenner-Kardashians intact. Although the *KUWtK* is built on the questionable moral choices and suspiciously coincidental release of *Superstar*, the attention resulting from the sex tape may have been the first example of resolving personal and professional problems within the family, the hallmark skill of Kris Jenner.

Mom-Ager Knows Best: Normalizing Celebrity Through TV Tropes

Although the sex tape was the means to which Kardashian found fame, that event was a momentary news blip that could not sustain interest for very long. Furthermore, it limited Kim's appeal for female audiences. *KUWtK* picks up the baton and repositions Kim's celebrity persona as a loving daughter and sister as part of a larger family unit, and the tape as something that her fiercely dedicated "Mom-ager" can help her take care of. What makes the Kardashians likable and their situation palatable is partially due to how *KUWtK* is narratively constructed. The way in which *KUWtK* reconceptualizes the seemingly self-serving and self-promoting discourses surrounding *Superstar* and *KUWtK* itself is through familiar television genres. Whereas Paris Hilton is unlikable partially because of her self-involvement and inability to relate to others, the Kardashians mitigate their self-promotion, making themselves likable, by slotting themselves into recognizable character and a wider range of narrative types. Pulling from familiar

[36] Using tabloid coverage of the Kardashians' antics between airings of the show serves as a means of "fact-checking" how plotlines in the episodes are assembled. This has sparked a recurring segment on the feminist blog Jezebel called "Keeping Up With the Kontinuity Errors," in which the blogger highlights the temporal discrepancies. Mariah Smith, "Keeping Up With the Kontinuity Errors," http://jezebel.com/tag/keeping-up-with-the-kontinuity-errors.

conventions of the family sitcom and soap operas, the ritualization of genre sets expectations of how the series will work, which facilitates the naturalization of the Kardashian-Jenner brand. The reliance on domestic genres—the family sitcom and the soap opera—packages the Kardashian-Jenners as ordinary despite their extraordinary situations. Because the genres are already so commonplace, *KUWtK* can more easily build on them in ways that feel both new and familiar. The Kardashians are normalized as a family through their work ethic and the comforting formula of the domestic family sitcom. However, it is done with "postfeminist" entrepreneurial ends in mind. The Kardashians are trying to reach for something that was never there, but their continual striving to do so also incorporate aspects of soap operas, with that genre's lack of narrative closure and focus on matriarchal families. The familiarity which makes the family's relationship to one another legible comes from several different directions, but work because they all hinge on Kris Jenner's self-proclaimed role as mom-ager. Part of the reason that the Kardashians have been able to maintain their notoriety is due to the overwhelming power they have in crafting their images. This works on several levels. As a domestic unit, Kris is the family matriarch. That power and protection are extended to a professional level as she negotiates on behalf of her family to perpetuate their business. She's an executive producer for *KUWtK*, meaning that she has power over what is shot and very likely has editorial power over episode cuts.

Although stories as to whether executive producer Ryan Seacrest or Kris Jenner had the original idea, *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* was pitched as a response to the celebrity-reality-family sitcom *The Osbournes* (MTV; 2002-2005), and that familiar formula is crucial to

understanding the Kardashians' success.[37] Resurrecting the premise put forth by 1950s classic star-sitcom *Ozzie and Harriet* (ABC, 1952-1966) Jennifer Gillan argues, "*The Osbournes* may be the newest innovation of the star sitcom in Reality TV, but its framing, its marketing, and even its characters are those of the classic sitcom."[38] As part of the Reality TV boom in the early 2000s, *The Osbournes* reconceived hard rocker Ozzy Osbourne as a befuddled stay-at-home dad dedicated to (and dependent on) his wife/manager Sharon and their children. Flipping the gender script, Sharon is the competent problem solver and breadwinner while Ozzy is largely confined to the home. Although their problems are vastly different than older domestic family sitcoms, *Ozzie and Harriet, The Osbournes,* and *KUWTK* alike imply that "…this family might seem different to yours at first, but you will soon see that it is essentially the same."[39] Following the 1950s sitcom model, *KUWtK* constructs an idealized version of family life, following the pattern where:

> Material affluence contributed to the image's allure, but it was the television family's dynamic that was so seductive. Everybody got along, everybody was happy, and everyone wanted to be together. There was just enough conflict to drive plots. By the time the half-hour was over, everybody was happy again.[40]

---

[37] Alice Howarth, "Ryan Seacrest Reveals how the Kardashians Landed a Reality Show," *Glamour*, January 20, 2015; Newman and Bruce, "How the Kardashians Made $65 Million Last Year."

[38] Gillan, "From Ozzie Nelson to Ozzy Osbourne: The Genesis and Development of the Reality (Star) Sitcom," 57.

[39] "From Ozzie Nelson to Ozzy Osbourne: The Genesis and Development of the Reality (Star) Sitcom," 56.

[40] Judy Kutulas, "Who Rules the Roost?: Sitcom Family Dynamics from the Cleavers to the Osbournes," in *The Sitcom Reader: America Viewed and Skewed*, ed. Mary M. Dalton and Laura R. Linder (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005), 51.

Although family dynamics changed over the years to reflect changing standards of families, the affluence of the Kardashian-Jenners creates a foundation for escapism and wish fulfillment yet their affection for one another offer "reassurance about the stability of family as an enduring social institution."[41] Although the Kardhashian-Jenners are extremely wealthy, their strong work ethics tie them to core American values that have long been part of American television reaching back to the earliest domestic working-class family sitcoms. Like those sitcoms, which George Lipsitz argues taught Americans to buy on credit and grow the American economy after decades of living frugally due to the Great Depression and World War II, *KUWtK* likewise naturalizes conspicuous consumption and living above ones means despite the housing crisis of 2008, which sent the American economy into a moderate depression.[42] Even the name of the series, *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*, puts a modern spin on a 1950s colloquialism to "Keep Up With the Joneses" suggesting that good American citizenry was tied to consumption, and using ones neighbors as a guide for success. Although problems, family structure, and situations may be different in *KUWtK*, their adherence to the sitcom structure facilitates the notion that all families are essentially the same.[43]

KWUtK follows the same pattern as it positions each family member as a classic domestic family sitcom character and gives matriarch Kris Jenner the ultimate power. Kris' managerial power often drives the episode plots as the jobs she arranges for her daughters are done onscreen,

---

[41] Laura R. Linder, "From Ozzie to Ozzy: The Reassuring Nonevolution of the Sitcom Family," in *The Sitcom Reader: America Viewed and Skewed*, ed. Mary M. Dalton and Laura R. Linder (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005), 68.

[42] Lipsitz, "The Meaning of Memory: Family, Class, and Ethnicity in Early Network Television Programs," 71-110.

[43] Gillan, "From Ozzie Nelson to Ozzy Osbourne: The Genesis and Development of the Reality (Star) Sitcom," 56.

making their celebrity work the representation of their familial love. Alongside her is her initial client: bumbling, former gold-medal winning decathlete and often emasculated second husband Bruce Jenner.[44] Reminiscent of *The Brady Brunch* (a comparison Kim Kardashian makes in its premiere episode) the Kardashian-Jenner clan is a mixed family featuring Kris' children from her first marriage to high-powered attorney Robert Kardashian; Kourtney, Kim, Khloé, and Rob, and the children the Jenners have together; Kendall and Kylie.[45]

Further pulling from sitcom conventions, every episode extensively features the Jenner house as a central location even though the children have their own homes.[46] Reaffirming the series' commitment to family, once Kourtney has children with her long-term partner, and Khloé and Kim marry, their homes become communal locations as well. Regardless of what house is featured, two or more people are always present, solidifying the connection between family and domestic space. Moreover, family interactions don't just take place in any room, they are largely relegated to the kitchen, visually connecting the family to traditional feminized domestic spaces.[47] The comedy derives from the over-the-top situations the family experiences, largely due to their fame, affluence, and lack of social filters between one another. Ranging from buying a stripper pole as an anniversary gift to deciding to build a chicken coop for fresher eggs after visiting a nutritionist, *KUWtK* zany antics are rooted in lovingly teasing one another. As the main matriarch, Kris is often the one who has solutions to problems in professional and private realms.

---

[45] In the opening segment of the pilot, Kim herself makes the connection between traditional domestic family sitcoms and *KUWtK* and explicitly *refers* to the blended family as "six kids with two crazy parents. We're the modern-day *Brady Bunch* with a kick."

[46] In the first season, Kourtney, Kim, and Khloé have all moved out, and presently, all of the Kardashian-Jenner kids have their own homes.

[47] Brodesser-Akner, "Where Would the Kardashians Be Without Kris Jenner."

If anything out of the ordinary happens, the kids often try to keep it from Kris until they have a solution (like Khloé getting arrested and going to jail after being pulled over for a DUI), which serves as the hijinks for the episode; however, when the kids can't solve their problems, it's Kris who comes in and smooths them over.

In the earliest seasons, episodes tackle several lightweight problems and feature as many family members as possible. The first ten seasons feature a jaunty whistle as the main theme setting the tone for the light-hearted loving interactions to follow and the earliest seasons introduced each character. After six seasons of 30-minute episodes, aligning with sitcom running times, *KUWtK* adopted 60 minute episodes suggesting the shift from sitcom to drama. Beginning with season 11, the whistling was replaced with a short sequence featuring each family member individually, as if in a fashion spread, suggesting the legitimation of their fame as they no longer need to resort to gimmicks in order to make their personal and professional pursuits understandable to audiences.

While relying on sitcom structure, especially in its early seasons, the other major set of conventions from which *KUWtK* pulls are soap operas. Long a genre valued for its ability to deliver female audiences for advertisers, soap operas' serialized narratives follow complex interpersonal relationships.[48] Tania Modleski describes soap operas as "…set in small towns and involve two or three families intimately connected with one another. Families are often composed of several generations, and proliferating of generations is accelerated by the

[48] Elana Levine, "Like Sands Through the Hourglass: The Changing Fortunes of the Daytime Television Soap Opera," in *Beyond Prime Time: Television Programming in the Post-Network Era*, ed. Amanda D. Lotz (New York: Routledge, 2009), 36.

propensity of soap opera characters to mature at an incredibly rapid rate."[49] Through the combination of community and intimacy, Horace Newcomb argues that soap operas showcase the intimate properties of television while offering depictions of situations that grow and change over time, a concept that is easily extended to reality television, especially when the plots are driven by real people's lives and interactions.[50] Whereas the family sitcom works to reinforce the stability of the family, soap operas assure viewers of its immortality. Despite chaos in and out of the home, the family remains close precisely because it is perpetually in a chaotic state. The unhappiness generated by the family can be solved only in the family."[51] The generational appeal of the family (the parent-child dynamics are further complicated as there are over 10 years between Kris Jenner's sets of children) creates several conflicts.

The fact that there are so many family members originates more stories as well as multiple sources of identification, which disperses the family's brand to engage more fans. Even if a viewer does not like every member of the family, she may still watch episodes in order to keep up with her favorite. This further works with branding because it offers slight differentiations, so fans can pick the family members that best represent them. The number of Kardashian-Jenners also strengthens the connection to soap operas because it allows for inter-family relationships to develop naturally over time, especially as spouses and children enter the mix. This is an interesting cross-roads of both genres because sitcoms derive their stories from family situations while soap opera (and, by extension, this particular sub-genre of reality

[49] Tania Modleski, *Loving With a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 77.

[50] *Loving With a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women*, 79.

[51] *Loving With a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women*, 82.

television) depend on interpersonal interactions. Issues are resolved at the end of every episode, but are simultaneously regenerated due to the ongoing real lives of the family. Some programs force character introductions, especially child characters, to prolong themselves. However, Kendall and Kylie are a decade younger than Kourtney, Kim, Khloé and Rob, while Kourtney, Kim, and Rob now have children of their own, which more naturally extends the family and the series' longevity. New characters seemingly enter organically and fit themselves into the fabric of the existing formula. Kris Jenner herself has always understood the growth potential in her growing family, even before becoming a grandmother, as she frequently highlights the age span within her family as well as how natural life events can likewise become significant or interesting television plot points:

> At the end of the day, our show is just about our family and what happens, and over the last seven seasons, you've watched my little girls grow up, you've watched people get married and have babies and graduate from school and go to college. You know, it's like so much that goes on in any family, but it's magnified and dramatic, because that's who we are. So I think everyone can look at us and go, "Wow! I can relate to them."[52]

The convergence of domestic sitcom and soap operas conventions naturalizes Jenner's power in and out of the family, especially as the role of mother in each genre is central to narrative order. As executive producer, the manager for all on-screen talent, and talent herself likewise gives her power to position how the family is portrayed within the episodes while using the series as the family's main branding vehicle. As such, the family's onscreen situations are a means of image control as *KUWtK* serves as a space to repackage their life events and perpetuate their celebrity. The fact that there are real life consequences, that viewers can watch these relationships develop over time, and, most importantly, the fact that they are real things happening to real people adds a level of indexicality and erases the line between television personality and the role that she

[52] Ehrlich, "Kris Jenner."

plays on television. Offscreen, the same people are living versions of the lives that live onscreen. Celebrity gossip and fan magazines have long included features about how stars really live or what they are really like when the cameras aren't rolling. The beauty of reality television is that there is no longer that distinction between fiction and reality, or that the distinction is far smaller than it has been in the past.

Over time, positioning their work in conjunction with their wealth creates an aspirational nature of mobility, and suggests that viewers can try to keep up not just by watching episodes, but by doing and purchasing like the Kardashians. The reality show articulates the Kardashian family brand, but it also serves as the main branding platform for their other ancillary endeavors, ranging from the boutiques, their cosmetic and fashion lines, books, etc. as well as driving up their fees for product endorsements.

Tabloids, Social Media, and Celebrity Maintenance

Since the narrative content of *KUWtK* is driven by the family's "actual" lives, and their livelihood is driven by their constant public presence, the Kardashian-Jenners need more than just their television series in order to maintain their celebrity. The rise of reality television coincided with an expansion of tabloids centering on celebrity gossip, which is an opportunity Kim Kardashian, and subsequently on which her family, have capitalized. Anne Helen Peterson has traced the history of celebrity gossip since the advent of the 20th century. She points to rise of digital photography as key to the expanding paparazzi market, which in turn fed a resurgence of celebrity gossip magazines.[53] In her analysis of the paparazzi's role in celebrity production, Vanessa Diaz argues that the growth of celebrity gossip magazines "capitalize on a sociocultural

[53] Anne Helen Petersen, "The Gossip Industry: Producing and Distributing Star Images, Celebrity Gossip, and Entertainment News, 1910-2010" (Dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2011), 274.

moment" as escapist "outlet[s] for distraction" in times of larger sociopolitical strife.[54] Whereas the expansion of celebrity journalism created a space for stars like Kim Kardashian to emerge, the family likewise depends on continuous coverage to remain viable when *KUWtK* is off the air. Petersen further argues that magazines like *In Touch* rolled out celebrity stories over time, teasing readers with question based headlines and creating soap opera-esque "multipart, melodramatic narratives" to drive readership.[55] The celebrity gossip sphere plays an important part of the Kardashian's success as it extends the narrative. In addition to magazines at supermarket checkouts, the Kardashians likewise serve as fodder for the similarly thriving online gossip sites, allowing fans to keep up with the Kardashians almost instantaneously on multiple platforms.[56] Even when *KUWtK* is off air, the engagement with the family does not end, effectively creating a soap opera for the transmedia age.

Kris Jenner extends her image policing past *KUWtK* as the Kardashian-Jenner magazine appearances are mindfully chosen. Following a practice that has been in place as long as there have been entertainment stars, Kris Jenner worked with publishers to create exposure for the family. In tracing the rise of celebrity gossip in the 2000s, Anne Helen Petersen asserts:

> When *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* debuted in 2007, *In Touch* and *Life & Style* covers were instrumental in keeping the family in the gossip conversation, often through "exclusive" interviews. But those stories were "exclusive" in large part because at the

[54] Vanessa Diaz, "Manufacturing Celebrity and Marketing Fame: An Ethnographic Study of Celebrity Media Production" (Dissertation, The University of Michigan, 2015), 11.

[55] Anne Helen Petersen, "The Duggars, *In Touch* Magazine, and the Future of Tabloid Journalism," BuzzFeed, https://www.buzzfeed.com/annehelenpetersen/in-touch-the-duggar-scandal?utm_term=.xek4AnzJ5#.cvlpNAMEP.

[56] For more on the politics and labor within the production of celebrity-focused media, and ultimately how Americans relate to celebrities, see Diaz, "Manufacturing Celebrity and Marketing Fame: An Ethnographic Study of Celebrity Media Production."

> time, no one else *wanted* to cover the Kardashians — and because their ever-expanding family tree provided a steady stream of easy-to-dramatize "news." [57]

Capitalizing on a need for content, Kris Jenner has been able to provide photo opportunities, in a system where the tabloids, Jenner, and her clients all benefit. The fact that the Kardashians came to prominence in a time where several lower cost celebrity magazines launched gave Kris Jenner further negotiating power. As a gatekeeper for content working with a publication hungry for content, Jenner likely had a degree of editorial control in what ultimately made it to print.[58]

The series creates interest in the family, which in turn creates a market for their life events happening in real time both on and off screen. As Kris Jenner explains:

> I think it's a brand for the fans. We pay attention to what everyone seems to be attracted to about us. My kids are really good with social media; that's really an important dynamic in our relationship with our audience, and it's a great way to connect. One of the first things that Kim did when she started her fragrance line was let her fans have a hand in designing the bottle. She would go on Twitter and say, "What shade of pink do you like?" And that was an amazing thing, how everybody responded. Very early on, we realized that we had a very interactive relationship with the people who are our fans and watch the show.[59]

Kris Jenner's association with print is crucial to expanding the family's presence as well as their wallets. When their lives are the content of every episode, *KUWtK* becomes a smaller component of a larger empire. Since the earliest seasons of *KUWTK*, the sisters have long supplanted more established celebrities from magazine covers and work the hierarchies within the magazine world to their advantage. "Exclusive" interviews about life, style, relationships, etc. are done for a fee while Jenner simultaneously works with paparazzi agencies to "stage photos, sell them, and split

[57] Petersen, "The Duggars, *In Touch* Magazine, and the Future of Tabloid Journalism".

[58] Gamson, *Claims to Fame*, 89.

[59] Ehrlich, "Kris Jenner."

the profits" between the photographer and the family.[60] Even though Kris Jenner is an active player in the gossip industry, she manages how much of story gets out and negotiates for more money for larger life events like weddings and births.

When these stories go to press, they often tell only part of the story in order to drive fans back to the television series. Although fans may know about what's happening to the family, part of the pleasure in *KUWtK* centers around getting the rest of the story. In discussing the "tidbit economy" with regards to the relationship between publicists and journalists, Joshua Gamson explains that information about celebrities loses its value as it is spread across competing outlets, so control of information becomes a commodity which can be traded or utilized as a source of power.[61] Jenner plays into this as she capitalizes on access and information to her family, but holds the most important pieces and/or the "whole" story for herself to use as episode content. Due to the lag-time between when stories break and when episodes are filmed, edited, and aired, the Kardashian-Jenners can re-conceptualize and contain stories about them, essentially redoing their lives in order to best align with the brand. Kris Jenner creates interest surrounding the family in order to drive people back to the series while making money on both ends. Building on the interest in celebrities, *KUWtK* becomes a sort of news outlet to get the exclusive, most comprehensive version of the story. For example, promotional material regarding *KUWtK*'s 13th season premiere in March 2017 center on Kim's reactions to being robbed at gunpoint in Paris in October 2016. Though the story was widely covered across different strata of news media, Kim had yet to publicly comment, using the event as a ratings draw. The Kardashian-Jenners have become such prolific celebrities that they can control both access to information about them as

[60] Newman and Bruce, "How the Kardashians Made $65 Million Last Year."

[61] Gamson, *Claims to Fame*, 94.

well as use the series as a place to mediate the coverage. Likewise, the Kardashian-Jenner's interest in coverage extends to materials and responses they have in real time, which they exchange profusely on social media. They can cultivate control by immediately responding to or promoting stories about themselves, which takes that power away from others who may want to circulate that information. The direct interactions with fans on social media are likewise a key component of cultivating, promoting, and maintaining celebrity, and, if executed well enough, it is a space to take ownership of one's celebrity.

Alice Leppert explains how Twitter especially functions as a means of creating stronger affective bonds between the sisters and their fans:

> Much of the Kardashians' appeal lies in the virtual extended sisterhood they have fostered by establishing intimacy with female fans not only through their televisual omnipresence and array of self-fashioning products, but through social media. In contrast to other postfeminist texts focused on sisterhood, the Kardashians invite fans to participate in their sisterhood in a variety of ways, for instance, addressing fans as 'dolls' on Twitter, just as the sisters address each other on the show. Of course, the primary goal of this extended sisterhood is profit, but nevertheless, the practice suggests that connections among women are valuable, emotionally and financially.[62]

She goes further to argue that although the Kardashian-Jenners exemplify neoliberal entrepreneurialism through their constant dedication to self-branding, the popularity of their social media accounts, largely driven by their interactions with the fans, suggests an unfulfilled need for intimacy.[63] The sisters' struggles with work-life balance make them relatable, and social media makes those struggles spaces to commiserate. Social media is another space where the Kardashian-Jenners can capitalize on intimacy. The sisters' frequent social media posts, create

---

[62] Leppert, "*Keeping Up With the Kardashians*: Fame-Work and the Production of Entrepreneurial Sisterhood," 217.

[63] "*Keeping Up With the Kardashians*: Fame-Work and the Production of Entrepreneurial Sisterhood," 18.

constantly regenerating points of identification, and their robust following makes social media posts another monetizable space. As the family established their celebrity presence and because their posts reach so many people, the sisters can command upwards of $10,000 per sponsored post. Marketers are willing to pay personalities like the Kardashians to associate their products with the sisters' brand because traditional advertising cannot reach audiences who use ad blockers and streaming services to opt out of commercials.[64]

The Kardashian-Jenners strong social media presence logically leads to further brand extensions on the internet. As of 2015, each sister has launched their own lifestyle websites, further developing their individual brands by providing exclusive content; all of which is behind a paywall. Part of the reason for these websites is a result of the Kim's overwhelmingly popular mobile phone game, which showed that fans were hungry to consume the Kardashian image on its own terms and spend millions of dollars to do it.

Kompiling K-Stardom: Interactive Celebrity Branding in *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood*

"In order to win at life, you need some Kim K skills, period."

– Kanye West[65]

In a 2104 *GQ* interview, Kanye West attributes his wife Kim Kardashian as teaching him to better manage his celebrity. However, analogous with popular discourses defining the couple as shallow and fame-obsessed, West's verbiage ultimately doesn't say much of anything. West never defines "Kim K. skills" as more than some kind of intangible communication skillset, but expects that the interviewer, and subsequently the general public to know exactly what he

[64] Sapna Maheshwari, "Endorsed on Instagram by a Kardashian, but Is It Love or Just an Ad?," *The New York Times*, August 30, 2016.

[65] Zach Baron, "Kanye West: A Brand-New Ye," *GQ*, July 2014.

means.[66] Though only mentioned peripherally by West, Kim K. skills are delineated in the mobile game *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood*.[67] Through the freemium mobile game *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood*, Kim Kardashian legitimizes her celebrity while also propagating her brand by redefining fame in her image. The game is not just a playable roadmap for achieving celebrity in the 21st century, but is an interactive experience for players to naturalize Kardashian's brand. Furthermore, it conforms with and reaffirms Kim Kardashian's own rise to fame while justifying her continued position as a modern-day celebrity. Through actively engaging with the game, Kardashian legitimizes her celebrity while also propagating her brand by redefining fame in her image – as the accumulation of "Kim K. skills."

Released in 2014 (around the same time as West's *GQ* cover story), *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood* remediates Kardashian's celebrity persona and gives players the opportunity to experience Kim's life on a different platform, and in this case, actively play with Kim's celebrity. Game play itself is simple and repetitive: Players create an avatar which they use to accumulate money, prestige, and fans from personal appearances, modeling and acting jobs, and through relationships with other static non-playable game characters. Each action replicates part of Kardashian's celebrity persona as model, boutique owner, fashion icon, and reality TV star. Players level up when they accumulate enough fame, only to be presented with more tasks to complete to maintain and expand their celebrity.

---

[66] "Kanye West: A Brand-New Ye."

[67] *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood* was created by Glu Games, a developer specializing in mobile gaming. After the success of *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood*, Glu also developed *Kendall and Kylie*, which extends the *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood*'s aesthetic and mechanic and applies them to her younger sisters. In addition to its own IP (*Diner Dash*, *Deer Hunter*), Glu Games has developed other casual games in order to extended branded entities including *Britney Spears: American Dream*, *Gordon Ramsay Dash*, and games for Major League Baseball and the *Fast and Furious* franchise. "About Glu Mobile," https://www.glu.com/about.

The game's seemingly basic premise likewise mimics one of the most common critiques hurled at Kardashian and her family: that she does not work. However, the game offers insight into the constant labor Kardashian needs to accomplish just to maintain her fame. In talking about *The Simple Life*, featuring Kardashian's former boss and best friend Paris Hilton, Heather Hendershot asserts that "The vast majority of reality TV focuses in some way on work…. Work is work. Play is work. Banter is work. Sex is work."[68] This description is also applicable to *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*, which regularly focuses on the work of being famous. Her labor is then translated into the game as the main source of play which in turn exposes personal appearances, photo shoots, and romantic dates as repetitive laborious performances necessary to remain viable in a continuously renewable celebrity sphere. Although the type of celebrity and labor embodied by Kardashian may seem hollow, it nonetheless shows how there is real economic value to the work she does.

The labor of celebrity thus becomes central to the game's core mechanic. Playing on Kardashian's huge Twitter following, the game itself is likewise predicated on the ability to be conscious of and successfully manage social media. Most communication occurs via an avatar's phone, and commentary on performance in any mini-challenge is marked with a Tweet, which can then be connected to the player's actual Twitter feed. The dependence of social media to communicate within the *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood* likewise underscores several key engagement techniques embedded within twenty-first-century celebrity, especially reality television celebrity: or "essential Kim K. skills."

[68] Heather Hendershot, "Belabored Reality: Making It Work on *The Simple Life* and *Project Runway*," in *Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture*, ed. Susan Murray and Laurie Ouellette (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 245.

The first Kim K. skill is that ***perceived* relationships are paramount in achieving fame**. This is most obviously seen through the game's overarching goal: to become the #1 star on the A-list, which is measured by how many fans (or pulling directly from social media – "followers") a player has. Just as contemporary celebrities leverage their social media followings in order to justify higher salaries or access to projects, *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood* likewise uses fans as tangible proof of fame.

The power of perceived (rather than actual) relationships is further incorporated into the game and tied directly to Kardashian herself as *the* arbiter of celebrity power. Throughout the game, Kardashian is a non-playable character who consistently provides players with opportunities to work in her stead or to work with them to boost their fan counts. Players' association with Kim is positively reinforced through in-game tweets from both the fictional tabloid media and Kim herself, both of which generate additional fans. The player's perceived relationship with Kim also gives her access to a manager and a publicist who act as additional gatekeepers for future celebrity work. All relationships within the game are largely static, but are necessary to level-up. Bars and clubs are populated with people of varying celebrity rank can help increase players' celebrity if they cultivate working or romantic relationships with them. Whether players choose to network with or date new contacts, all relationships are cultivated in professional capacities either as part of professionally based mini-challenges or publicly held dates; both sets of contacts elicit tabloid coverage and an increase or decrease in overall fan counts. One of the overlaps between game and real-life (at least the public presentation of Kim's real-life) is how players can emulate Kardashian's social media presence and incorporate in-game content into their out-of-game social media. The game allows players to update their real-life Twitter feeds with the in-game tweets tracking their progress towards becoming an A-List

celebrity. If players' friends are also playing the game, they can choose their real friends' avatars to join them at personal appearances or pursue romantic relationships with them, which are subsequently tweeted about within the game.

In addition to social currencies, the game's representation of another Kim K. skill involves collecting or consumption: **the way to celebrity is through accumulating consumer goods.** Kardashian herself comes from wealth, and the association between money and fame is integral to game play. The types of currency are in-game dollars, energy points, and K-stars. You earn money from constant modeling gigs and paid appearances. Energy is needed to do anything, and is easily expended causing you to wait until it's replenished or trade precious K-stars for more. K-stars only come from leveling up or from in-app purchases. Players increase their celebrity status with new outfits, homes, cars, and buying gifts to improve relationships, but most lifestyle enhancers can only be purchased with K-stars. Although many items have high price tags, acquiring them creates momentary relief before anxiety sets in again about what else you need to augment your celebrity lifestyle. Throughout, Kim's over-arching but unreachable presence is continually reinforced since the dollars one earns are inadequate to keep up with her.

Although the game itself, like most casual games, is limited in its playability as challenges are repetitive and never-ending, *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood* has been wildly successful. As of February 2016, *Forbes* magazine reported that since its 2014 launch, the game has made $100 million.[69] In considering how and why this game has been so popular, I want to consider how the game design creates an interactive, continuously pleasurable experience that

[69] Leena Rao, "Here's How Much Kim Kardashian's Hit Game has Made," *Forbes*, February 19, 2016.

positions players to play at being Kim where they digitally personify her branded celebrity image.

Video games theorists and designers argue that player engagement with a game is dependent on a concept called meaningful play. Meaningful play "requires that at some level a player has an active and engaged relationship to the game and is making choices with meaningful outcomes."[70] Although the skill level in *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood* is low, the game still has several instances of meaningful play, and within this game, the relationship created between the player and the game mimics the relationship consumers have with brands. Whereas Celia Lury defines brands as a relationship a person has with products over time, extended game play results in increasing the association between players and Kardashian's brand.[71] In order to create instances of meaningful play, designers must incorporate some kind of complexity within the game that in turn supports long-term play and engagement. Whereas many games feature mechanics dependent on chance or risk, *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood*'s meaningful play is derived from: choosing and continuously costuming one's avatar; choosing with whom to create relationships (friends or lovers); prioritizing the tasks to achieve first (all are timed, but some occur in limited windows that result in special limited content); deciding which resources to use or save; and deciding whether to purchase additional resources for extended game play. Although the game features highly repetitive play, video game theorists Katie Tekinbas and Eric Zimmerman explain that if designers want "to sustain pleasure over time, then the repeated action of the core mechanic needs to embody the concept of same-but-

[70] Katie Salen Tekinbas and Eric Zimmerman, *Rules of play: game design fundamentals* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003), 179.

[71] Lury, *Brands: The Logos of the Global Economy*, 2.

different. It needs to continue to offer up new variations and experiences, even if they are … subtle." [72] In achieving continual meaningful play, developers utilize temporality by building a constant awareness of time into the game itself.

One of the ways in which *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood* utilizes temporality as part of creating meaningful play is through incorporating social media into the central game design. Game success is measured via Kardashian's most powerful tool: social media. As a long time Tweeter, Kardashian has solidified her stardom via the medium by accumulating millions of followers who in turn use the constructed relationship as a way to keep up with Kardashian's life. Parallel to Kardashian's out-of-game fame, managing time and remaining timely is vital to her career and brand. Temporality is highly associated not just with celebrity, but reality celebrity in particular. There is a sense of simultaneity created within reality television since the genre is dependent on depictions of "real-ness" and "live-ness." However, the reality of television production and scheduling necessitates that finished episodes air after the immediate moments are captured (and constructed into narratives). In the time between, the Kardashians are tabloid staples, so Kim's presence on social media maximizes her level of celebrity by consistently reminding her fans she exists as well as creating additional content for them to consume in between when episodes or even seasons of her reality series(s) air. As such, Kardashian's social media prowess inspires how in-game communication occurs and more importantly, how fame is constructed and measured.

Another key way in which the game depends on temporality is by aligning game events and content with Kardashian's life, enabling players to actually keep up with Kim. Kardashian herself is involved with the game developers, who design and drop frequent updates to reflect the

[72] Tekinbas and Zimmerman, *Rules of play: game design fundamentals*, 340.

timeliness of Kim's life. Some updates align with Kim's changing physical looks ranging from her giving her avatar platinum blonde hair when Kim dyed her hair to replicating outfits seen in tabloids or Kardashian's social media accounts. Other updates go beyond avatar customizations to simulate Kim's life events: mini-narratives for avatars to get married in Florence and imitate the décor of Kardashian's marriage to Kanye West; the ability for avatars to adopt children reflecting Kardashian's pregnancies. Long-term gameplay likewise incorporates real-life calendar temporality with mini-challenges associated with seasonal holidays or weekly short-term events that reward continuous play with limited time rewards. The constant new content keeps viewers hooked on the game by giving them new opportunities to incite players to keep playing. As players continue to play the game, their bond with Kardashian's life and brand is continually strengthened and reinforced.

The thing that makes games meaningful is also what makes brands strong. Perhaps the most crucial component of meaningful play within *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood* is the first piece of playable content with which players engage and the one they encounter throughout all stages of play: their avatar. The avatar is imperative to play because, as video game scholar Bob Rehak argues, "The video game avatar, presented as a human player's double, merges spectatorship and participation in ways that fundamentally transform both activities."[73] Not only does the avatar represent the player within the game space, but is "a *reflection* of personal agency made available onscreen."[74] The avatar is crucial to meaningful play because all actions surrounding the avatar result in the highest level of choice for the player. Upon downloading, players create,

[73] Bob Rehak, "Playing at Being: Psychoanalysis and the Avatar," in *The Video Game Theory Reader*, ed. Mark J. P. Wolf and Bernard Perron (New York: Routledge, 2003), 103.

[74] "Playing at Being: Psychoanalysis and the Avatar," 111.

name and "kustomize" their own avatar, to navigate Kardashian's world. Throughout the game, players are encouraged to use their money to buy more clothing, accessories, hairstyles, homes, furniture, cars, and even pets to enhance their avatar and close the gap between ordinary person and celebrity. Developers consistently add content for the avatar to incentivize players to keep playing, and players are rewarded with additional fans when they buy new content. Moreover, the attention players give to continually updating their avatars connects directly with Kardashian's constant need to use and reinvent her appearance as a means of garnering attention to maintain her celebrity. Likewise, the emphasis put on appearance reinforces how important self-presentation is within not just celebrity culture, but the current socio-economic moment. Alison Hearn argues that reality programs like *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* "narrate procedures of self-branding, and the concrete personal brands produced on and through them simultaneously function as training for life under neoliberalism."[75] As such, engaging with the game further emphasizes this training through the constant tending of the avatar's appearance within the game, but actively tweaking one's avatar is a far more interactive way in which to engage in the lesson.

Because personal branding is integral to differentiating oneself both on and off-screen, it is the key Kim K. skill players practice throughout the game. Kardashian's brand is everywhere: the revamped Hollywood sign; each Kardash boutique interior mimicking its DASH counterpart and the K-stars. Likewise, *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood* addresses the specific dichotomy informing reality TV celebrity personae: that stars need to be approachable and authentic to attract viewers, but ultimately need to remain separate to be special. Curiously enough, Kim Kardashian and her famous family members are not a rankable or playable celebrities. Players do

[75] Hearn, "Probing the Contours of the Branded "Self," 209.

not compete with her because her celebrity is established as the ideal model for fame inside the game world. Kardashian is the definitive arbiter of Kim K. skills, and ultimately unreachable in her version of celebrity. However, conscientious game design encourages players to engage with and embody Kim's life as they continue striving for their piece of Kardashian stardom.

The ways that *KUWtK* has expanded to embrace Kendall and Kylie as they have grown from children to young women, is reproduced in the casual game space. Following the popularity of her mobile game, Kendall and Kylie's own mobile game—*Kendall and Kylie*—launched in 2015. This game was also developed with Glu Games, so it has similar aesthetics and gameplay. One of the key differences is the visual alignment of physical gameplay, which further underscores the relationship between platform differentials and brands of each generation of sister. *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood* is designed to be played horizontally; in contrast, *Kendall and Kylie* is oriented vertically, directly mirroring the physical design of mobile phones. Even though Kim has the most followers overall, Kylie Jenner's Instagram presence is almost equal to her sister's.[76] Moreover, Kylie is the most prolific sister on tumblr and Snapchat, so much so that Kim looks to her youngest sister for advice on best using the platform.[77] Likewise, whereas Kim's game is highly dependent on Twitter in order to receive information and measure one's

[76] As of March 28, 2017, Kim has 96 million followers, Kylie has 90.2 million followers, Kendall has 77.3 million, Khloé has 65 million, and Kourtney has 55 million. Kylie Jenner, "@kyliejenner," Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/kyliejenner/?hl=en; Kendall Jenner, "@kendalljenner," Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/kendalljenner/?hl=en; Khloe Kardashian, "@khloekardashian," Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/khloekardashian/?hl=en; Kourtney Kardashian, "@kourtneykardash," Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/kourtneykardash/?hl=en; Kim Kardashian West, "@kimkardashian," Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/kimkardashian/?hl=en.

[77] Leppert, "*Keeping Up With the Kardashians*: Fame-Work and the Production of Entrepreneurial Sisterhood," 229.

celebrity power, *Kendall and Kylie* incorporate stickers and filters, mimicking the more visual social media platforms (like Snapchat and Instagram) where they have carved out their celebrity personae. Their association with newer platforms also points to their popularity with younger fans. The modifications in *Kendall and Kylie* slightly change *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood*'s aesthetics and most notably update the core social media platform mimicked in the game to align with changing social media trends as well as the move towards a greater focus on the next generation of sisters.

Konclusion: Kendall, Kylie, and Third Generation Celebrity

After establishing fame for the family through Kim, Kendall and Kylie Jenner have been positioned to reap its benefits. While Kendall and Kylie were only 11 and 9, respectively, when the series began, their lives have been surrounded by the trappings and labor of celebrity. At the beginning of *KUWtK*, Kris Jenner pointed out how the younger sisters could offer an identification point for younger viewers. Like the multi-generational span of soap operas, Kendall and Kylie have come into their own as key players in the Kardashian-Jenner empire. The older siblings come to reflect more adult issues and relationships: Kourtney and Kim are partnered and have children; Khloé is divorced, but focused on rebuilding her life in her 30s. Although Kourtney and Kim's kids represent the future, they are all under 10, and as in soap operas, that limits their potential narrative plotlines. Kendall and Kylie serve an important function as they are now approaching the same ages as Kourtney, Kim, and Khloe at the beginning of *KUWtK*, and are old enough to have their own work and relationship dramas, but young enough to be of interest to draw in a new generation of fans.

Kendall and Kylie are in a position to benefit from their family's labor in establishing their own wealth and fame. Although Robert Kardashian Sr.'s claim to fame was centered

around his relationship to OJ Simpson's murder trial, Kendall and Kylie's father is a famed athlete, and now a transgender advocate. Therefore, they are separated from the Kardashian family's association with the messy celebrity of Simpson. However, they still benefit from the relationships of their parents, which extend a level of what Chris Rojek describes as "ascribed celebrity" to them. Although Rojek's definition points to inherited power transferred through bloodlines, and he argues that it has diminished with modern-day monarchies, Kendall and Kylie's celebrity is completely connected to their lineage and familial relationships.[78] However, their celebrity power goes further and is rooted in their financial privilege, which allows them to maintain the aspirational quality that is central to their personae. Fans consume their images and products with the hopes of furthering their relationship with Kendall and Kylie's images of celebrity and wealth while striving to further their own personal interests. If Kris Jenner positions her narrative as a rags-to-riches rise, initially through marriage and then through her entrepreneurial spirit, then Kendall and Kylie are the ultimate beneficiaries. *KUWtK* is constructed as an opportunity to benefit the family, and its success offered the Jenner sisters more financial opportunities as well as a platform to explore their own celebrity. From often sidelined characters, Kendall and Kylie's ascension into the family business has been rolled out in front of the camera.

Likewise, Kendall and Kylie are unmarked by the questionable claims to celebrity that still follow Kim. Although she and *KUWtK* have attempted to mediate the story and distance her from it, the sex tape remains a consistent indictment of her fame. Whereas Kim worked to transition from sexually provocative modeling for men's magazines including *Playboy* before moving gradually towards more women-focused magazines as she recuperated her image,

[78] Rojek, *Celebrity*, 28-9.

Kendall's modeling career has allowed her to bypass selling her body as an object of lust for men as she has only been an aspirational image for women as she graduated from *Teen Prom* to a*Vogue* cover model in September 2016.[79] Similarly, whereas Kim, and to some extent Kourtney and Khloé, built their initial celebrity on the exposure from the sex tape and by subsequently appearing in as many magazine interviews, product endorsements, and paid club appearances that Kris Jenner could book. Kendall and Kylie do not need to do that work because they built their fame separate from that of their older sisters. The popular reception to the continuous work that Kourtney, Kim, and Khloé did drove up their fees, allowing them more control over their careers as their fame permitted them to be choosier about their projects.

Although the Kardashian-Jenners have built a strong model of how to succeed in celebrity without seeming to do any "real" work, their reputation is one built on several simultaneously moving parts. The brilliance of the Kardashians is that they do celebrity maintenance as a mechanism to cement family bonds. The Kardashian-Jenenrs' foray into reality television introduced them as personalities, which they then parlayed into endless offscreen endeavors. Because of their success, reality celebrity became a launching pad for personal gain via ancillary deals where the sisters were strengthened, resulting in individual lucrative deals. Kris Jenner's control over *KUWtK* from the beginning has given her power to affect what is seen onscreen, as does her simultaneous personal involvement as everyone's talent manager and talent herself. Each family member has a vested interest in each other's success for their own financial gain. The successes that result from their familial bonds in turn becomes an expression of familial love, reinforcing the entire branded enterprise. This circular benefit cycle is bolstered by

[79] Kate Dries, "Rise of the The Kardashians: How a Family Created a Magazine Cover Dynasty," Gawker Media, http://jezebel.com/rise-of-the-kardashians-how-a-family-created-a-magazin-1691015013.

KUWtK, which pulls from established television genres that reinforce the importance of family. Over the medium's history, Tom Shales affirms that:

> Television has educated the audience about television, if about little else, and people, even kids, now know all the formulas: the formulas for gags within sitcoms, the formulas for the 22-minute plots with the tidy endings and facile moralistic "messages" included in some of them-usually about being yourself or being happy with yourself-whatever. Everything has been recycled to the point of numbingly predictable ritual.[80]

With the recognizable conventions at the forefront of the series, the family's use of it as a means of promoting and prolonging their places in the public eye are normalized: despite the fact the family may seem different due to their make up, wealth, and fame, their "labor of vulnerability" creates an intimacy that makes them feel as though they are just like us. Because they not only work as performing themselves and their love for one another, but own it gives them, and Jenner as their manager, to spin it off into endless permutations while taking the largest cut of the profits.

[80] Tom Shales, "Essential Lessons from *The Osbournes*," *Electronic Media* 21, no. 48 (2002).

CONCLUSION

The Celebrity Ap-President: Public Personae and the Dubious Relationship Between Politics and Reality TV

One needs go no further than the White House to see how central the brand-work and time-work of celebrity are in contemporary American culture. In an age where you can't be President if you can't be President on television, and increasingly on social media, Donald Trump and his advisors recognize the importance of media showmanship and understand that the ability to sell an image is more important than conveying actual policy. Although a longtime tabloid icon and minor celebrity, real estate magnate Donald Trump solidified his public image as host of the reality-competition shows *The Apprentice* and *Celebrity Apprentice*. Over 14 seasons, Donald Trump presented an image of a peerless leader, so it's unsurprising that he followed the same pattern in his run for president. Trump's ascension from seemingly joke candidate to Republican nominee to 45th President reflects larger trends in the importance of celebrity, especially on television, where the cult of personality becomes a means of identification. Representative of larger systemic hierarchies of taste and class within politics and television, Trump personifies the nation's baser instincts as opposed to elitist intellectualism while benefiting from systems of privilege not available to his "populist" customers, contestants, or electorate.

Politicians have long been recognized by celebrity theorists to be in a separate sphere than entertainers but operating from what P. David Marshall defines as "a *system* for valorizing meaning and communication"[1] and "one of the key places where cultural meanings are

[1] P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), xlviii.

negotiated and organized."[2] Politicians are representative not only of their constituents, but of the larger democratic system, and become receptacles for, ideally, the most prescient American values of the time. Chris Rojek's analysis of the emergence of celebrity is extremely helpful in thinking through the confluence of celebrity and politics in America. He positions celebrity as the result of three historical processes: "the democratization of society; second, the decline in organized religion; third, the commodification of everyday life."[3] The revolt against monarchial power was replaced with the ideology of the common man. With the similar decrease in organized religion, the pre-ordained figurehead lost its position and power, leaving a vacuum. This is where capitalism and commodity culture comes into play. Because there is no permanent figurehead, leadership can adapt to changing needs and desires, so those who want to assume the position need to commodify themselves as products that voters can choose to consume. The frequency of elections allows for voters to change their minds aligning with "the logic of capitalist accumulation requires consumers to constantly exchange their wants."[4] The logic of capitalism is further instilled in the American democratic system since it's all about winners, and the president's role as the epitome of symbolic power within the entire system makes it the ultimate political prize. Winning is central not only to the political system, but to America's market based economy which promises that the best will survive and thrive whether in the business world, on reality television, or in the White House.

After the runaway success of *Survivor*, creator Mark Burnett applied the competitive atmosphere of the jungle to the concrete jungle with *The Apprentice* and instilled Donald Trump

---

[2] Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*, 5.

[3] Rojek, *Celebrity*, 13.

[4] *Celebrity*, 14.

as host. Before this, Trump was a known personality having appeared in various movies and television shows, largely as himself, but he had an image problem. The 1990s were a rough decade for Trump as his marital and financial failures became national news. *The Apprentice* offered Trump the opportunity to rebuild his image as a bankable commodity.

In order for *The Apprentice* to work, the CEO at the center needs to be an expert in order to create the hierarchy between participants and the judge/host. As such, the series goes to great lengths in order to establish Trump as the sharpest most enterprising person in any room that he's in by isolating him from others while pointing to his various properties and licensed image as proof of his expertise. Jane Shattuc explains that "hosts [use] the authority of their experience from many programs on the topic to establish his/her identity," and as such, the series goes to great lengths in order to position Trump as the sharpest most enterprising person in any room that he's in.[5] Regardless of who makes decisions for Trump Enterprises, Trump is solidly in charge on *The Apprentice*. From the introduction, Trump's rebrand is firmly in place as *The Apprentice* needs to position Trump as powerful, successful, and charming in order for the series to gain traction. Trump describes his Manhattan as the center of international business and power and himself as the person who has mastered it as he traverses the city in a limo and helicopter. He lists his diverse holdings to reaffirm his success and immediately disperses with his past financial failures and spins them an asset as he overcame that made him even more successful.

The nature of the game itself further asserts Trump's dominance. He introduces each challenge, and although he has advisors to assist in assessing performance, the decisions as to who remains in the competition are Trump's alone, which is actually stated in the closing credits.

[5] Jane M. Shattuc, "The Shifting Terrain of American Talk Shows," in *Companion to Television*, ed. Janet Wasko (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 328.

Each challenge is designed to showcase business skills and create conflict between contestants and teams as they compete to win them. Trump inserts his brand into the series as contestants are housed and face elimination all within Trump Tower, demonstrating Trump's culpability and investment in *The Apprentice*'s success. The episodes' production values further establish his dominance by making sure Trump is in literally the best light and giving him the biggest, nicest chair. As he sits at the center of the boardroom table, the attention of the cameras and contestants alike are on him. Trump's personality also shines throughout the series. He makes himself personable and ultimately likable with his direct and assertive language. The boardroom is a dark space while Trump is illuminated in a high back leather chair with a speakerphone and portfolio in front of him, whereas the contestants sit in a line (or two lines if there are a lot of them) with nothing in front of them. Trump has the accessories of success and preparedness to make the best decisions whether or not he uses them. Tension is created by synthesized percussive beats as contestants attempt to advance by making themselves appeal to Trump, which is resolved with melodic keyboards once one is fired.

In addition to his business acumen, *The Apprentice* suggests Trump has comparable people smarts. He can quickly determine who is spinning their performances to make themselves look better and has no time for bullshit. Contestants have the opportunity to have their business skillset be recognized by an expert proving the underlying American myth that rewards the most qualified and hardest workers. In this schema, Trump is the decider; an extremely useful construction for Trump's personal enterprises and eventual candidacy. Trump expands his eventual political persona with *The Celebrity Apprentice.* In an exercise of disciplining the rich and famous, especially those who gained notoriety despite minimal work, Trump puts celebrities

(read: the powerful) in their places as they deferred to Trump's expertise in the boardroom in hopes of winning money for charities.

Although the gameplay and set-up are crucial to recreating Trump's successful image, it's their positioning as reality television that gives the series and Trump such credence as its celebrated star. Although a much-maligned genre, reality television is effective due to its dependence on intimacy and authenticity, which are articulated through emotion. This is where Trump makes his greatest connections with audiences because *The Apprentice* positions the stakes as high and the exchanges as real. Heather Nunn and Anita Biressi assert that celebrity work is highly emotional work and argue that: "the celebrity figure performing emotion is at the high (visible) end of a spectrum of emotional conduct; conduct by which many of us are now expected to manage our public lives in order to *demonstrate* integrity, authenticity, and personal commitment to our public role (see McKenzie 2001)."[6] Arguably, the most prominent feature of *The Apprentice* is when Trump interacts with contestants before eliminating one of them. As contestants attempt to justify their failings and berate their competitors, Trump quickly cuts through their spin and asserts the foundation missteps in their performance. His decision making is driven by instinct and passion which are constructed as essential traits for his business success. In every boardroom elimination, Trump talks to a room of sycophants trying to use the opportunity to further themselves, adding a level of distrust to their statements and interactions, further asserting Trump as someone who can recognize emotional truth and authenticity and dispense with the phonies who jeopardize his own authenticity. However, the element of surprise in Trump's behavior comprise dozens of YouTube compilations of Trump's best firings, which

[6] Heather Nunn and Anita Biressi, ""A Trust Betrayed": Celebrity and the Work of Emotion," *Celebrity Studies* 1, no. 1 (2010): 49.

are completely emotional as Trump reacts to the behavior of those in front of him, suggesting that emotion drives each episode and viewer identification with Trump.

Trump's singular power and expertise on *The Apprentice* is easily translated into leadership in the political realm and moved the Trump character out of the Boardroom and onto the ballot. Whereas political aspirants must build their personae from the ground up, especially on the presidential level for those unfamiliar with politics Trump doesn't have to spend the same amount of money in order to publicize who he is or what he stands for because he has been cultivating that image for decades. As a personality with little patience for incompetence that could threaten his bottom line, Trump has positioned himself as the outsider to come in take over the failing political system which is held up by red tape, political infighting, and special interests. Trump as reality CEO is so rich and powerful that he does not need to depend on either special interest dealings, so can speak his mind. And if political movement happens because of deal making, who better than television's most visible businessman to do it? In the political arena, candidates would love to have pre-awareness that someone like Trump does.

Trump's past in reality TV transcends to his present as a political candidate as discursive elements about quality underpin how he is presented and the populace he speaks most directly to. Although Trump is an elite himself, his presence on reality television and his persona can cut through elitist prejudice due to larger unspoken class implications of reality television and its viewers. Whereas new media outlets use reality television as an insult to degrade his candidacy, and perhaps also degrade the viewer who enjoys reality shows, Trump uses this discourse to strengthen his persona and engage with people who know him from *The Apprentice*. The genre's dependence on emotion over intellect puts reality television into long-held cultural hierarchies of taste, which Michael Newman and Elana Levine argue "reproduce the dominant social structure

[and] perpetuate unequal divisions by class and other social groupings." and "secure the culture of an elite against the intrusion of undesirable masses, and thus to perpetuate the privilege of the dominant"[7] Television is seemingly becoming a "legitimized" medium, a distinction loaded with elitist logic. As Hollywood stars sanction the medium by lending their credibility to television series and as critics and academics alike laud "quality television," this creates a hierarchy where for some programming as to be "the best," it must be in comparison with programming that is not. If taste aesthetics are highly tied to class, reality television is perceived as amongst the lowest of the low. Following this logic, if the working class needs to work more in order to make ends meet, they likely have less time for leisure, and less time to dedicate to following difficult programs in real time. If we continue to follow stereotypes of the working class or working poor, it's also very possible that they don't choose to spend their money on access to premium cable, DVRs, or multiple streaming services that often necessitates keeping up or binging with those programs, which in itself is a luxury. Reality television offers a special respite. If viewers do not have a lot of time, the repetitive structure of a program's formula as well as its frequent use of clips to introduce each episode and that bookend commercials, the programs, much like soap operas, are easy to watch, even if distracted. Likewise, one of the "guilty" pleasures associated with reality television is watching unlikable people and getting to feel superior to them; especially those with money and/or power. This is where Trump shines: he deals exclusively in firing stupid people.

When the news media say reality television is stupid, they are suggesting viewers who like it are stupid. As a reality personality who is all about power and frequently uses it to call

[7] Michael Z. Newman and Elana Levine, *Legitimating Television: Media Convergence and Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

other people stupid, Trump becomes a champion for the disenfrachised as he uses his voice to speak for his viewers. When government is seemingly inefficiently run, why not run it like a successful Trump business, which have been repeatedly advertised on *The Apprentice*? He respects the viewer and taps into what is attractive about his series and translates that into language that can also be applied to him as a candidate. After the US government has spent decades acting in the best interests of itself and the wealthiest citizens: bailing out Wall Street and not Main Street in light of the 2008 financial crisis; the disappearance of social safety nets, the ability to be aggressively self-serving becomes an increasingly desirable trait as a means of survival as well as to vilify needing outside assistance at all. The working class has been decimated in the larger turn towards a service economy, and a population that is angry and disenfranchised. Without the protection of unions and shifts to freelance contract work which decreases salaries and opportunities for insurance, Trump becomes a mouthpiece for anger. It not that people aren't smart in loving reality television, it's that NBC and Burnett crafted such a strong product that viewers has naturalized *The Apprentice* and Trump's values. Trump offers a new solution to business as usual. For fourteen seasons, Trump has been televisually presented as a leader; something that political advisor Roger Stone argues has been central to repackaging Trump as a presidential candidate. Despite the content of his candidacy, Trump's presentational mode directly connects with his reality persona as someone who can solve seemingly complex issues through the power of personality. Donald Trump's reality television-based celebrity and social media presence was instrumental to his successful candidacy partially because of how news networks used the conventions of reality television in order to engage viewers in election coverage. Trump's candidacy became a regular news item because of the spectacle surrounding it and the often antagonizing things he would say. Likewise, Trump's Twitter became news in

and of itself, legitimating his celebrity. Although his political persona was crafted based on his *Apprentice* persona, it too was constructed and maintained not only in the windows of time created by his campaign team and delivered to networks hungry for ratings, but was also extended Trump himself off-screen both during and after his series aired.

APPENDIX I: Supplemental Bravo Tables and Figures

Broadcast Networks	Basic Cable Networks	Premium Cable Networks
• Groups of television stations that agree to air content generated by one centralized source. • Coverage is regional. Local networks affiliate with national broadcasters to air their programs. If unaffiliated, local broadcast networks must provide their own programming. • Airwaves are public and licensed to networks. Subject to government regulation. • Originally transmitted over the air into area households. • Cable television develops as a means of expanding broadcast signals to remote areas.	• Networks available only through cable subscriptions • Supported by combination of ads and per-subscriber fees. • Bundled and offered as part of lowest tiered level of cable subscription. • Transmitted originally via coaxial (but now digitally through fiber-optic) cables that come directly into subscriber homes	• Networks available only through cable subscription • Supported by additional subscription cable fees • Purchased on "a-la-carte" basis • Transmitted originally via coaxial (but now digitally through fiber-optic) cables that come directly into subscriber homes
Examples: CBS, NBC, ABC, Fox	Examples: CNN, MTV, ESPN, A&E	Examples: HBO, Showtime, Starz

Table 1: Types of Television Channels[1]

[1] Megan Gwynne Mullen, *Television in the Multichannel Age: A Brief History of Cable Television* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 1-24.

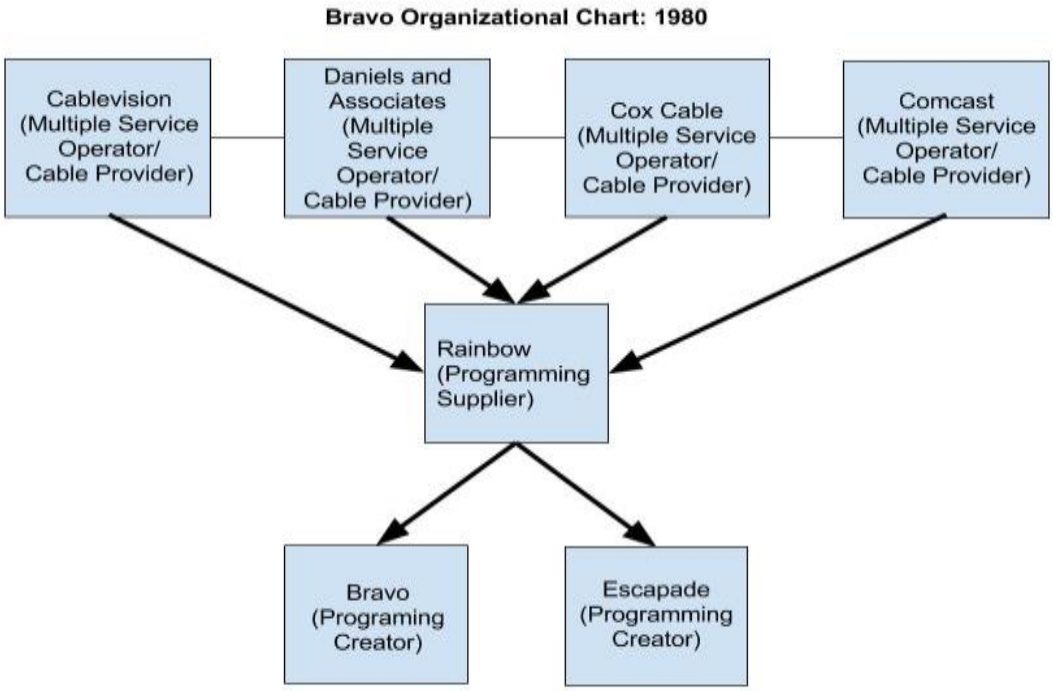


Figure 1: Bravo Organizational Chart - 1980[2]

[2] Rainbow Network is a programming service developed "by a consortium of four multiple-service operators – Cablevision, Daniels & Associates, Cox Cable and Comcast. The MSO's have a total of 1.25 million subscribers around the country, all of whom will be offered the Bravo series. Bravo will also be available to other cable networks." Terry, "Performing Arts Cable Service Preparing To Go On Satellite; Programs Will Be In Stereo."

First Name	Last Name	Start Date	End Date	Job Title
Marc	Lustgarten	1980	1988	President; CEO of Rainbow Programming Division
Joshua	Sapan	1988	1995	President
Kathleen	Dore	1996	2002	President
Jeff	Gaspin	2002	2004	President; Executive Vice President of Program Strategy at NBC Entertainment and assumed President role upon NBC buyout
Lauren	Zalaznick	2004	2011	President; Promoted to head of cable for NBCUniversal merger with Comcast
Frances	Berwick	2011	Present	President of Lifestyle Networks at NBCUniversal Cable Entertainment – Assumed this title in 2014, but Bravo president of Bravo in addition to other NBCU cable networks
Andy	Cohen	2004	2013	Executive Vice President of Talent and Development

Table 2: Bravo Leadership, 1980-2017

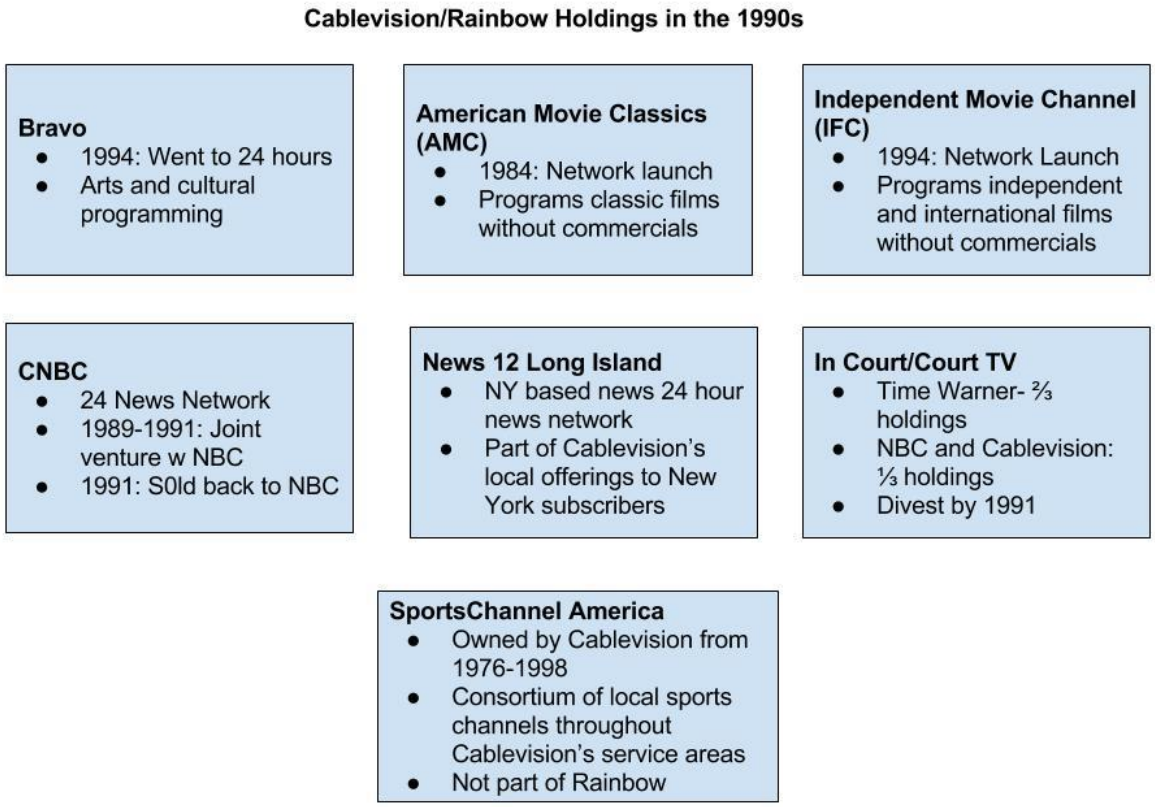


Figure 2: Cablevision and Rainbow Holdings in the 1990s

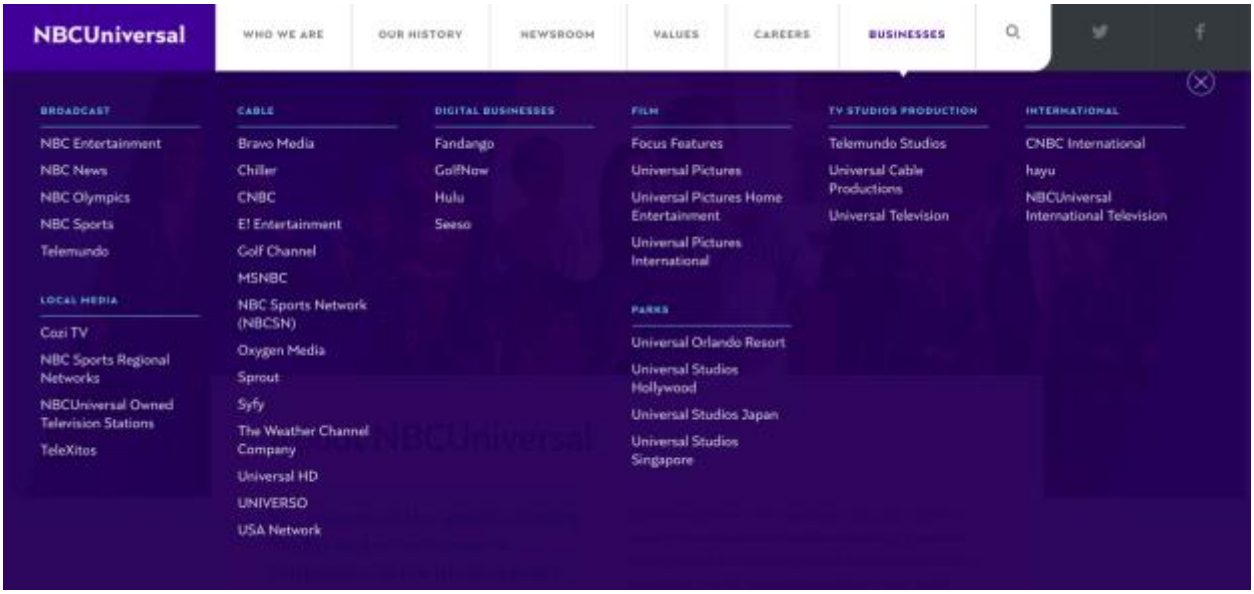


Figure 3: NBCUniversal Holdings as of 2017. Screenshot of NBCUniversal "Businesses" – May 3, 2017

APPENDIX II: Supplemental *America's Next Top Model* Tables and Figures

Production Company	Basic Information
10x10 Entertainment	Ken Mok's Production Company • Production logo shown at the end of each episode • Used whenever Mok involved as a producer in a project (Film credits for 10x10 include *Invincible* (2006) and *Joy* (2015)
Ty Ty Baby Prods. → Bankable Productions → The Tyra Banks Company	Tyra Banks' Production Company • Production logo shown at the end of each episode • Used whenever Banks involved as a producer in a project (Talk show: *The Tyra Banks Show* 2008-2010); Disney TV Movie: *Life Size 2* (2018)
Anisa Productions	*America's Next Top Model* Production Company • Responsible for all aspects of production from casting through post-production • Production company under which employees are paid • CEO: Ken Mok
Pottle Productions	Holds all trademarks associated with *ANTM*

***Table 3: Production Companies Associated with* America's Next Top Model**

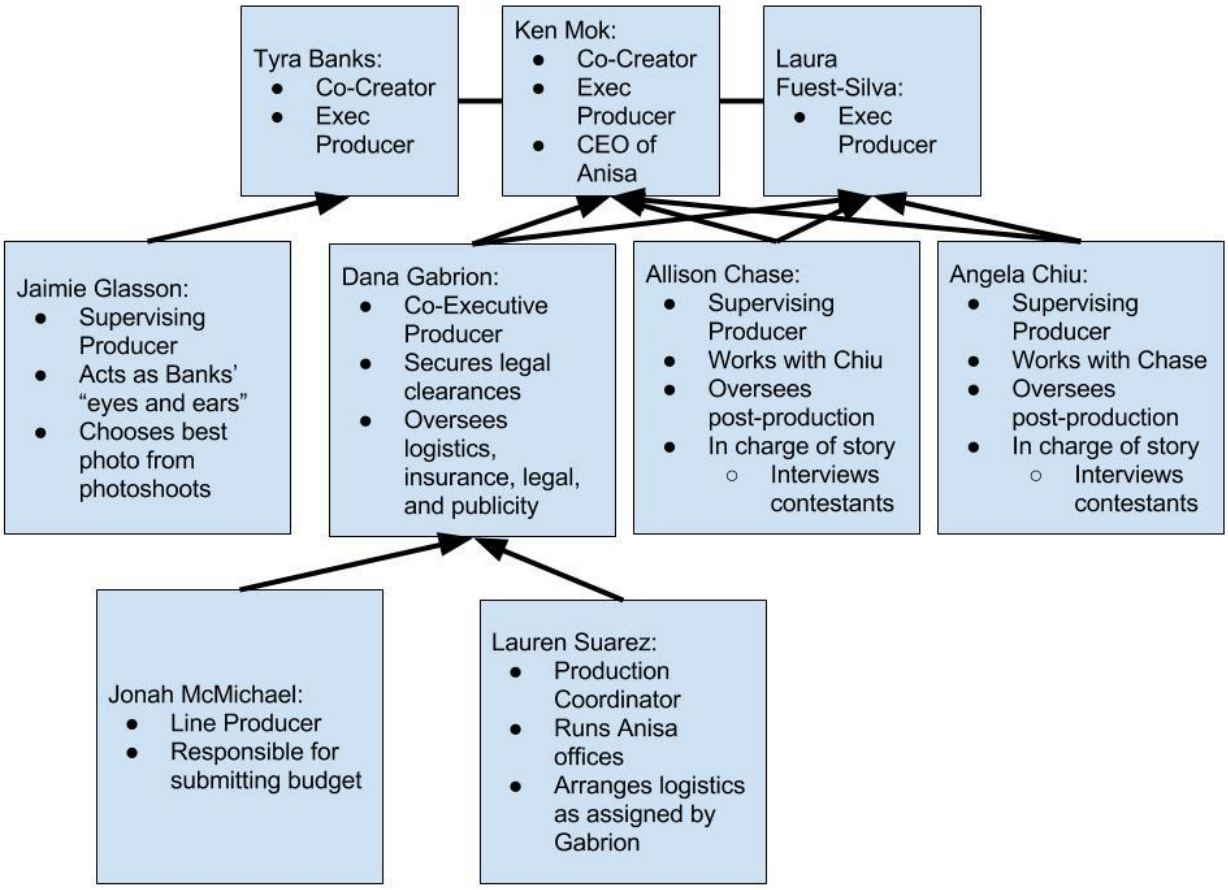


Figure 4: Anisa Productions Organization Chart 2012-2013 (People I worked with and interviewed)

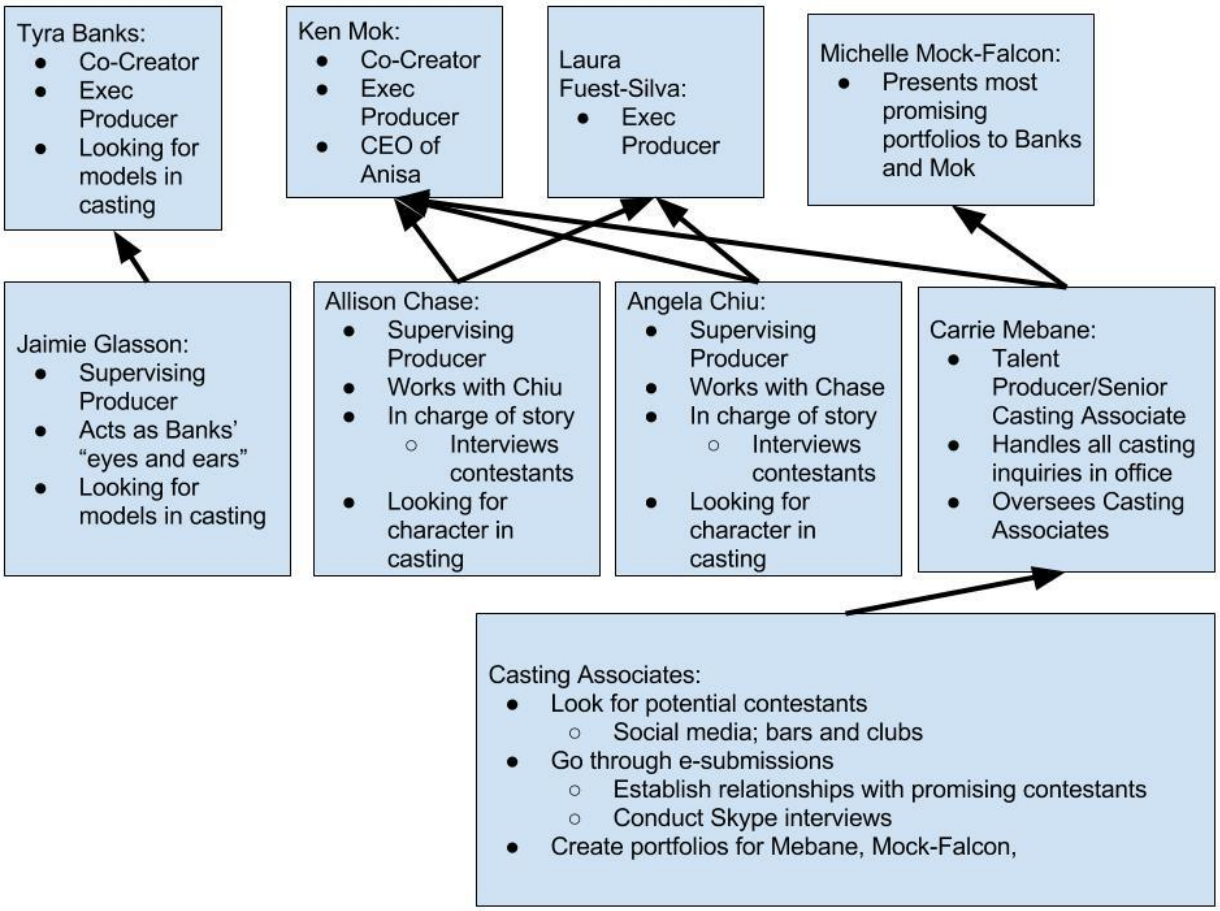


Figure 5: Anisa Productions Casting Department Organization Chart 2012-2013 (People I worked with and interviewed)

APPENDIX III: Kollection of Kardashians

This appendix outlines the Kardashian-Jenner familial relationships and includes photos and minimal biographical details. All photos are screencapped from *KUWtK* episodes.



Figure 6: Kris Jenner (nee Houghton, formerly Kardashian). Photo:* KUWtK *season 13, episode 2. Original airdate: March 19, 2017.



Figure 7: Robert Kardashian, Sr. (From left to right; Khloe, Kourtney, Robert, Kim). Photo:* KUWtK *season 1, episode 5. Original airdate: November 11, 2007.



Figure 8: Caitlin Jenner (Formerly Bruce). Photo: **KUWtK** *season 8, episode 11. Original airdate: August 11, 2013*



Figure 9: Caitlin Jenner (formerly Bruce). Photo: **KUWtK** *season 13 episode 8. Original airdate: April 30, 2017*



Figure 10: Kourtney Kardashian; 1st daughter of Robert Kardashian and Kris Jenner. Photo:* KUWtK *season 13 episode 2. Original airdate: March 19, 2017



Figure 11: Kim Kardashian-West; 2nd daughter of Robert Kardashian and Kris Jenner. Photo:* KUWtK *season 13, episode 7. Original airdate: April 23, 2017.

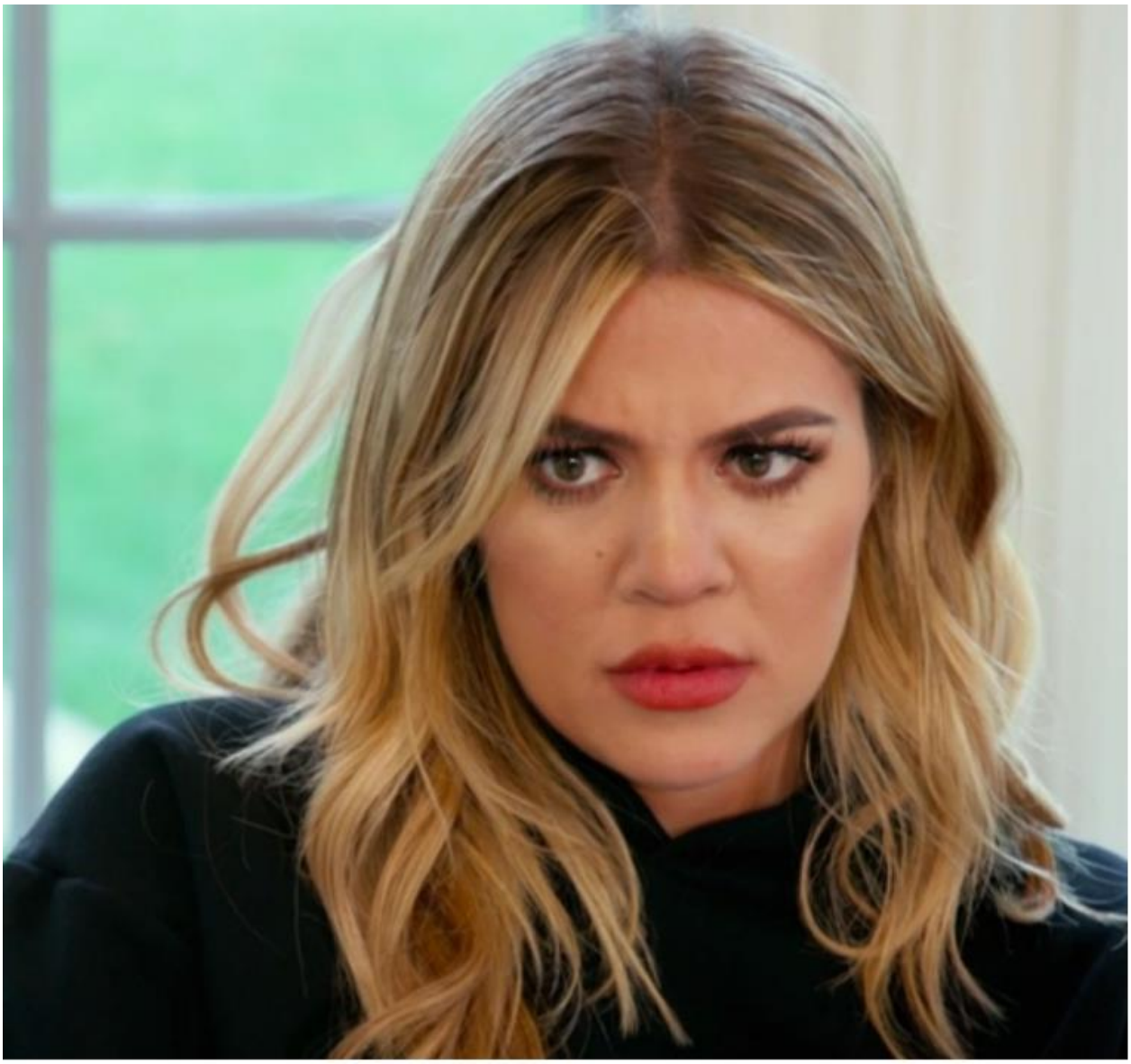


Figure 12: Khloé Kardashian (formerly Khloe Kardashian-Odom); 3rd daughter of Robert Kardashian and Kris Jenner. Photo:* KuWTK *season 13, episode 7. Original airdate: April 23, 2017.



Figure 13: Robert "Rob" Kardashian, Jr.; Son of Robert Kardashian and Kris Jenner. Photo:* KUWtK *season 13, episode 7. Original airdate: April 23, 2017.



Figure 14: Kendall Jenner; 1st daughter of Kris and Caitlin Jenner. Photo: **KUWtK** ***season 13, episode 2. Original airdate: March 19, 2017.***



Figure 15: Kylie Jenner; 2nd daughter of Kris and Caitlin Jenner. Photo:* KUWtK *season 13, episode 9. Original airdate May 7, 2017.

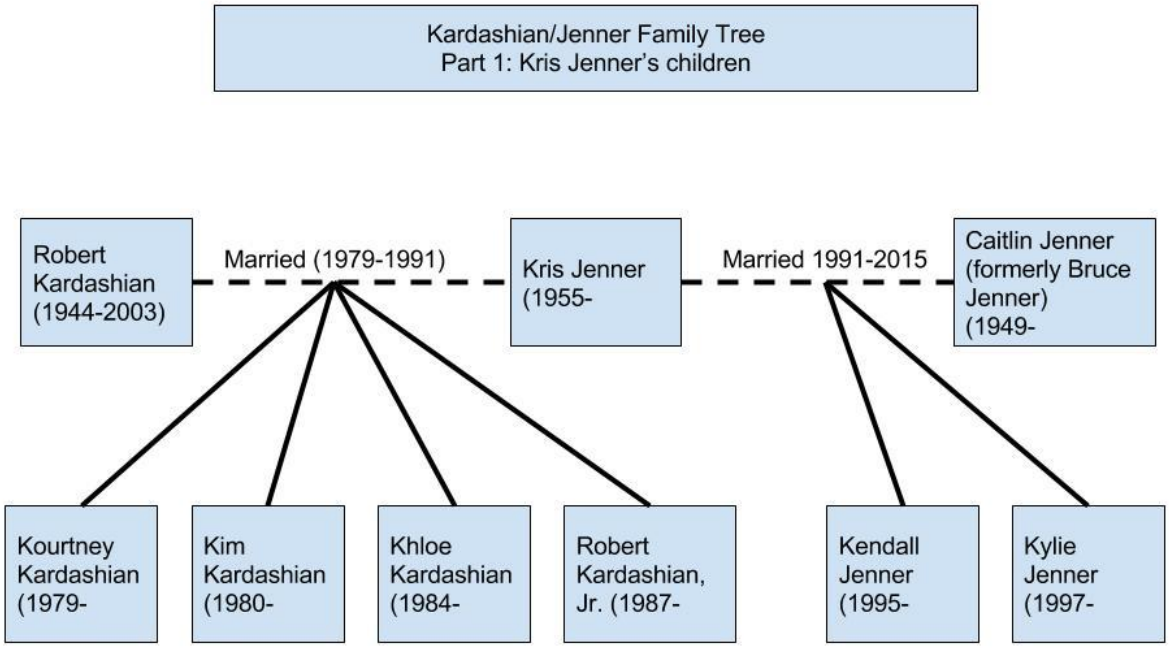


Figure 16: Kardashian/Jenner Family Tree. Part 1: Kris Jenner's children.

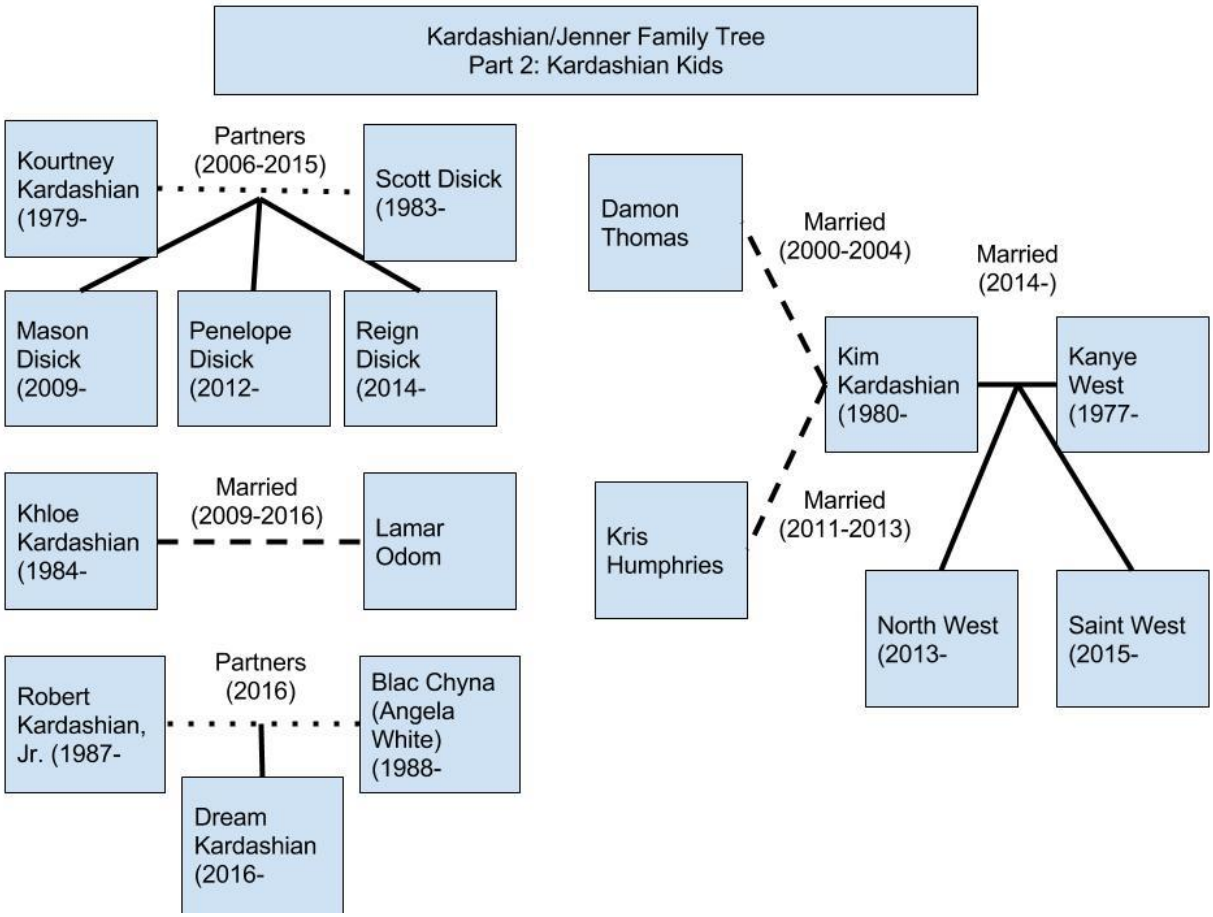


Figure 17: Kardashian/Jenner Family Tree. Part 2: Kardashian Kids.

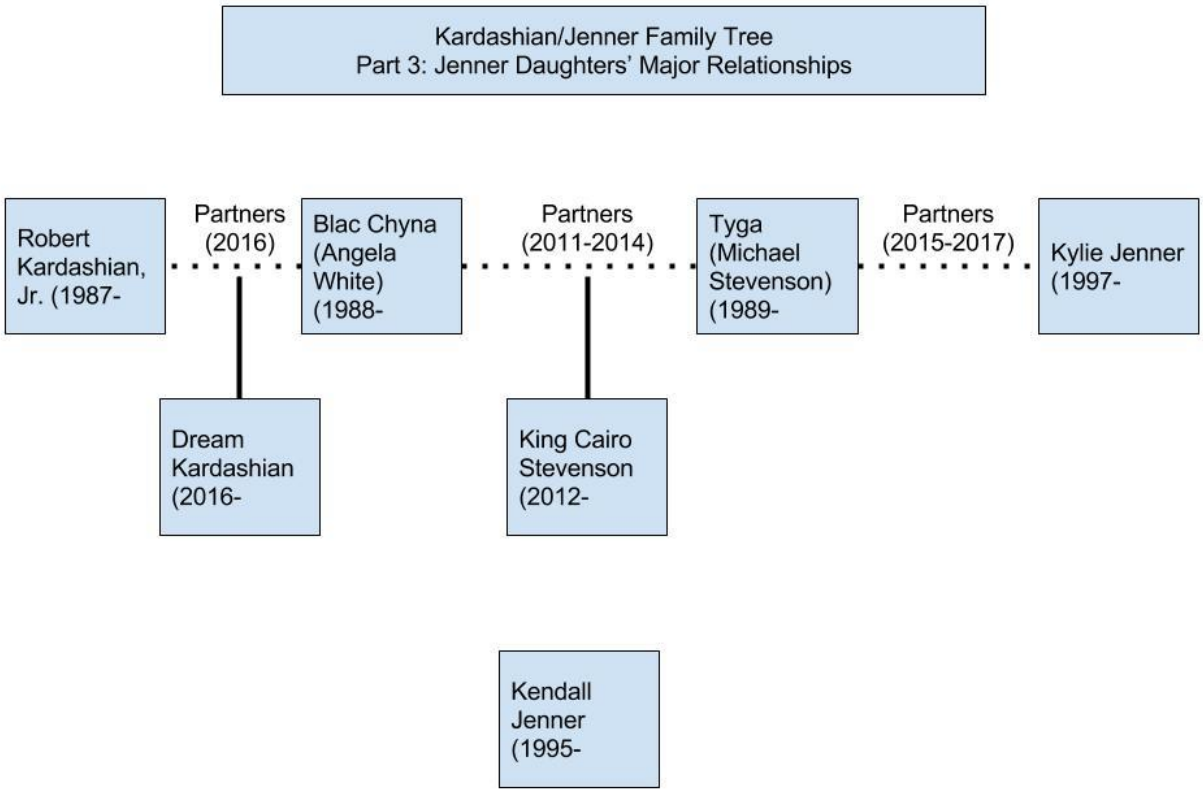


Figure 18: Kardashian/Jenner Family Tree Part 3: Jenner Daughters' Major Relationships



Figure 19: Still from **Kim Kardashian: Hollywood*****. Photo by author.***



Figure 20: Kim Kardashian as Non-Playable Character in* Kim Kardashian: Hollywood. *Photo by author.



Figure 21: Price Breakdown for buying K-Stars in* Kim Kardashian: Hollywood*. Photo by author.



Figure 22: **Kim Kardashian: Hollywood** ***incorporates Twitter and has its own Twitter. Photo by author.***



Figure 23: **Kim Kardashian: Hollywood** ***frequently incorporates real life events into the game. Photo by author, Tweet from June 15, 2016.***



Figure 24: **Kim Kardashian: Hollywood** ***frequently incorporates real life looks into the game. Photo by author, Tweet from June 10, 2016.***

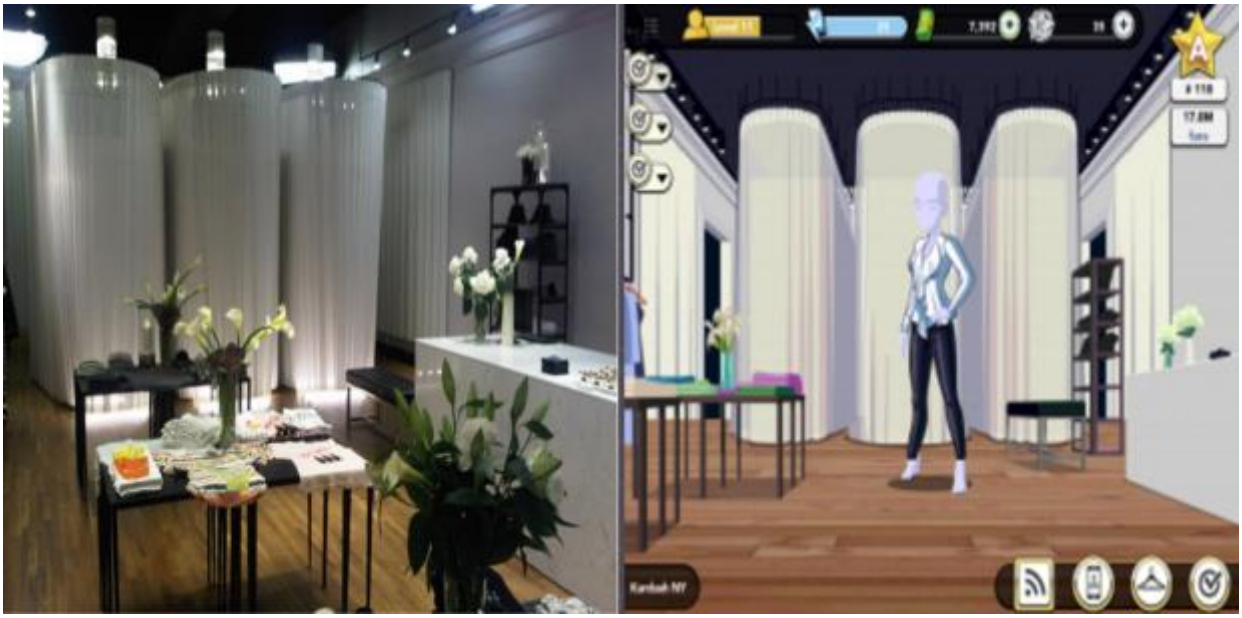


Figure 25: NYC DASH store interior and its rendering in* Kim Kardashian: Hollywood. *Photo by author.



Figure 26: **Kendall and Kylie** ***replicates aesthetics from*** **Kim Kardashian: Hollywood*, but rotates the visual alignment to reflect the vertical design of mobile phones are held. Photo by the author.***

Bibliography

"ABC Unveils TV Cultural Cable Channel On April 12." *Billboard (Archive: 1963-2000)*, 1981 Mar 21 1981, 44-44, 79.

"About Glu Mobile." https://www.glu.com/about.

America's Next Top Model. "Cycle 20 Participant Application." 13, 2012.

———. "Cycle 21 Eligibility Requirements." 4, 2013.

Andrejevic, Mark. *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004.

Angelea Preston vs. Tyra Banks, The Tyra Banks Company, Ken Mok, Laura Fuest Silva, Anisa Productions, The CW Network, Caner, Sherri R.

ANTM Casting Department. "Interview with *America's Next Top Model* Casting Department." By Lindsay Giggey (2013).

Baron, Zach. "Kanye West: A Brand-New Ye." *GQ*, July 2014.

Becker, Christine. *It's the Pictures That Got Small: Hollywood Film Stars on 1950s Television*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2009.

Bennett, James. *Television Personalities: Stardom and the Small Screen*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Bennett, James, and Su Holmes. "The "Place" of Television in Celebrity Studies." *Celebrity Studies* 1, no. 1 (2010): 65-80.

Benson, Jim. "*Top Model* Takes Strikers Off Payroll." *Broadcasting & Cable*, November 7, 2006.

Berkowitz, Harry. "Bravo Uses Edgier Fare to Attract Viewers." *Los Angeles Times*, Febraury 1, 2000, F-10.

Berwick, Frances, Bob DeBitetto, and Charlie Collier. "Brand Builders Unite." By Mike Schneider (TV Guide Magazine). *2012 Cable & Telecommunications Association for Marketing Summit* (November 7 2012).

Boddy, William. *Fifties Television: The Industry and Its Critics* [in English]. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990.

Boorstin, Daniel J. "From Hero to Celebrity: The Human Pseudo-Event." In *The Celebrity Culture Reader*, edited by P. David Marshall, 72-90. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Brodesser-Akner, Taffy. "Where Would the Kardashians Be Without Kris Jenner." *The New York Times Magazine*, May 8, 2015.

Brother VII, Tagi. "Confessions of a "Preditor": What Goes on Behind Reality TV's Cutting Room Door?" *Editor's Guild Magazine* 26, no. 2 (2005). Published electronically March-April 2005. http://www.editorsguild.com/v2/magazine/archives/0305/features_article01.htm.

Brown, Colin. "US TV warms to foreign film." *Screen international (Archive: 1976-2000)*, September 12, 1997, 6.

Browne, Nick. "The Political Economy of the Television (Super) Text." In *Television: The Critical View*, edited by Horace Newcomb, 585-99. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

"Cablevision, Viacom strike $575-million deal." *Broadcasting (Archive: 1957-1993)*, 1988 Aug 22 1988, 45-46.

Caldwell, John Thornton. *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television*. Console-ing passions. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008.

———. "Second-Shift Media Aesthetics: Programming, Interactivity, and User Flows." In *New Media: Theories and Practices of Digitextuality*, edited by Anna Everett and John Thornton Caldwell, 127-44. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Carter, Bill. "Popular Talk Show on Bravo Will Expand to 5 Nights." *New York Times*, November 22 2011.

Chase, Allison, and Angela Chiu. "Interview with Allison Chase and Angela Chiu." By Lindsay Giggey (2013).

Cohen, Andy. *The Andy Cohen Diaries: A Deep Look at a Shallow Year*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2014.

———. *Most Talkative: Stories from the Front Lines of Pop Culture*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2012.

Coleman, Oli. "The Kim Kardashian sex tape: An oral history." *NY Post*, March 27, 2017.

Collins, Laura. "EXCLUSIVE: "It was like Top Model prison." Dethroned *ANTM* All-Stars winner breaks silence claiming Tyra Banks "EXPLOITS" women, keeps them on 'ice,' not allowed to drink, eat, or talk while filming for up to 20 hours and casts them aside." DailyMail.com, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3186136/It-like-Model-prison-Dethroned-ANTM-Stars-winner-breaks-silence-claiming-Tyra-Banks-EXPLOITS-women-keeps-ice-not-allowed-drink-eat-talk-filming-20-hours-casts-aside.html.

Collins, Sue. "Making the Most out of 15 Minutes: Reality TV's Dispensable Celebrity." *Television and New Media* 9, no. 12 (2008): 87-110.

Copple Smith, Erin. ""Affluencers" by Bravo: Defining an Audience Through Cross-Promotion." *Popular Communication* 10, no. 4 (October 1, 2012): 286-301.

Cunningham, Todd. "Reality TV: The Invisible Front in Hollywood's Labor Wars." http://www.thewrap.com/reality-tv-invisible-front-hollywoods-labor-wars-58026/.

de Moraes, Lisa. "No Paris, No Problem: E! Orders Up Kardashian Reality Series." *The Washington Post*, August 10, 2007.

DeCordova, Richard. *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America* [in English]. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990.

Merriam-Webster.

Dehnart, Andy. "Adrianne Curry says Tyra Banks, Top Model "act like the first winner of their show never existed"." https://www.realityblurred.com/realitytv/2007/05/top-model-1-adrianne_tyra/.

Diaz, Vanessa. "Manufacturing Celebrity and Marketing Fame: An Ethnographic Study of Celebrity Media Production." Dissertation, The University of Michigan, 2015.

Dowd, Kathy Ehrich. "Kris Jenner Files Legal Documents to Trademark the Word 'Momager'." *People*, September 23, 2016.

Dries, Kate. "Rise of the The Kardashians: How a Family Created a Magazine Cover Dynasty." Gawker Media, http://jezebel.com/rise-of-the-kardashians-how-a-family-created-a-magazin-1691015013.

Dyer, Richard. *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Dyer, Richard, and Paul McDonald. *Stars*. New ed. London: BFI Publishing, 1998.

Edgerton, Gary R. "Introduction: A Brief History of HBO." In *The Essential HBO Reader*, edited by Gary R. Edgerton and Jeffrey P. Jones, 1-22. Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 2008.

Ehrlich, Dimitri. "Kris Jenner." *Interview*, August, 28, 2012.

Elkins, Evan. "'The Kind Of Program Service All The People Want': Pat Weaver's Failed Fourth Network." *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 35, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 176-94.

Ellis, John. "Scheduling: The Last Creative Act in Television?". *Media, Culture, and Society* 22 (2000): 25-38.

———. *Visible Fictions: Cinema, Television, Video*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Fahy, Thomas. "*One Night in Paris* (Hilton): Wealth, Celebrity, and the Politics of Humiliation." In *Pop-Porn: Pornography in American Culture*, edited by Ann C. Hall and Mardia J. Bishop, 75-98. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon, 1978.

Gabrion, Dana. "Interview with Dana Gabrion." By Lindsay Giggey (2013).

Gamson, Joshua. *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

———. ""It's Been a While Since I've Seen, Like Straight People": Queer Visibility in the Age of Postnetwork Reality Television." In *A Companion to Reality Television*, edited by Laurie Ouellette, 227-46. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2014.

Gennis, Sadie. "*Top Model* Alum Unrecognizable After Meth Addiction; Cycle 7's CariDee Blames the Show." TV Guide, http://www.tvguide.com/news/americas-next-top-model-meth-addiction-jael-caridee-1052969/?obref=obinsite&obref=obinsite.

Gillan, Jennifer. "From Ozzie Nelson to Ozzy Osbourne: The Genesis and Development of the Reality (Star) Sitcom." In *Understanding Reality Television*, edited by Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn, p. 54-70. New York: Routledge, 2004.

———. *Television and New Media: Must-Click TV*. New York: Routledge, 2011.

———. *Television Brandcasting: The Return of the Content-Promotion Hybrid*. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Grainge, Paul. *Brand Hollywood: Selling Entertainment in a Global Media Age*. London; New York: Routledge, 2008.

Grego, Melissa. "How to Rebuild a Cable Network." *Broadcasting & Cable*, March 29, 2010.

"Grossman unfazed by new cultural TV competition." *Broadcasting (Archive: 1957-1993)*, 1981 Jan 19 1981, 96.

Halbert, Debora. "Who Owns Your Personality: Reality Television and Publicity Rights." In *Survivor Lessons: Essays on Communication and Reality Television*, edited by Matthew J. Smith and Andrew Wood, 37-56. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003.

Halperin, Ian. *Kardashian Dynasty*. New York: Gallery Books, 2016.

Hawaii_Bombay. "CariDee Englsh Speaks Out About Jael Strauss' Meth Addiction." http://ohnotheydidnt.livejournal.com/71938833.html - cutid1.

Hearn, Alison. ""Meat, Mask, Burden": Probing the Contours of the Branded "Self"." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 8 (2008): 197-217.

Hendershot, Heather. "Belabored Reality: Making It Work on *The Simple Life* and *Project Runway*." In *Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture*, edited by Susan Murray and Laurie Ouellette, 243-59. New York: New York University Press, 2009.

Hill, Annette. "*Big Brother*: The Real Audience." *Television and New Media* 3, no. 3 (2002): 323-40.

Hillyer, Minette. "Sex in the Suburban: Porn, Home Movies, and the Live Action Performance of Love in *Pam and Tommy Lee: Hardcore and Uncensored*." In *Porn Studies*, edited by Linda Williams, 50-76. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.

Holloway, Daniel. "NBC in Talks to Revive *American Idol*." *Variety*, February 9, 2017.

Holmes, Su. ""All you've got to worry about is the task, having a cup of tea, and doing a bit of sunbathing": Approaching Celebrity in *Big Brother*." In *Understanding Reality Television*, edited by Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn, 111-35. New York: Routledge, 2004.

"How Much Are the Kardashians Worth? A History of the Kardashian Family Money." http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/04/how-much-are-kardashians-worth_n_2762279.html.

Howarth, Alice. "Ryan Seacrest Reveals how the Kardashians Landed a Reality Show." *Glamour*, January 20, 2015.

"IamA former contestant on *America's Next Top Model* AMA." https://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/m6mby/iama_former_contestant_on_americas_next_top_model/.

Jenner, Kendall. "@kendalljenner." Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/kendalljenner/?hl=en.

Jenner, Kris, and Karen Hunter. *Kris Jenner...And All Things Kardashian*. New York: Gallery Books, 2011.

Jenner, Kylie. "@kyliejenner." Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/kyliejenner/?hl=en.

Johnson, Catherine. "Tele-Branding in TVIII: The Network as Brand and the Programme as Brand." *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 5, no. 1 (2007): 5-24.

Kardashian, Khloe. "@khloekardashian." Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/khloekardashian/?hl=en.

Kardashian, Kourtney. "@kourtneykardash." Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/kourtneykardash/?hl=en.

Kardashian West, Kim. "@kimkardashian." Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/kimkardashian/?hl=en.

Kavka, Misha. *Reality TV*. TV Genres. Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.

Kepley, Vance, Jr. "From "Frontal Lobes" to the "Bob-and-Bob" Show: NBC Management and Programming Strategies, 1949-65." In *Hollywood in the Age of Television*, edited by Tino Balio, 41-62. New York: Routledge, 2014.

Kompare, Derek. *Rerun Nation: How Repeats Invented American Television*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Kraszewski, Jon. "Country Hicks and Urban Cliques: Mediating Race, Reality, and Liberalism on MTV's *The Real World*." In *Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture*, edited by Susan Murray and Laurie Ouellette, 205-22. New York: New York University Press, 2009.

Kutulas, Judy. "Who Rules the Roost?: Sitcom Family Dynamics from the Cleavers to the Osbournes." In *The Sitcom Reader: America Viewed and Skewed*, edited by Mary M. Dalton and Laura R. Linder, 49-60. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005.

Kwiatkowski, Elizabeth. "Exclusive: Camille McDonalad talks *America's Next Top Model* (Part 2)." Reality TV World, http://www.realitytvworld.com/news/exclusive-camille-mcdonald-talks-america-next-top-model-%28part-2%29-12753.php.

Langer, John. "Television's "Personality System"." *Media, Culture, and Society* 3 (1981): 351-66.

Leppert, Alice. "*Keeping Up With the Kardashians*: Fame-Work and the Production of Entrepreneurial Sisterhood." In *Cupcakes, Pinterest, and Ladyporn: Feminized Popular Culture in the Early Twenty-First Century*, edited by Elana Levine, 215-31. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2015.

Leventhal, Larry. "Rainbow - No Identity Crisis at Bravo or AMC." *Variety (Archive: 1905-2000)*, December 11, 1995, 30, 41.

Levine, Elana. "Like Sands Through the Hourglass: The Changing Fortunes of the Daytime Television Soap Opera." In *Beyond Prime Time: Television Programming in the Post-Network Era*, edited by Amanda D. Lotz, 36-54. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Levy, Adam S. "'Different Directions': Brandy Says She's Not Friends With Ex-Stylist Kim Kardashian — Or Her Family — Anymore." Radar, http://radaronline.com/exclusives/2014/04/brandy-watch-what-happens-live-ray-j-kim-kardashian-sex-tape-khloe/.

Linder, Laura R. "From Ozzie to Ozzy: The Reassuring Nonevolution of the Sitcom Family." In *The Sitcom Reader: America Viewed and Skewed*, edited by Mary M. Dalton and Laura R. Linder, 61-71. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005.

Lipsitz, George. "The Meaning of Memory: Family, Class, and Ethnicity in Early Network Television Programs." In *Private Screenings: Television and the Female Consumer*, edited by Lynn Spigel and Denise Mann, 71-110. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.

Lotz, Amanda D. *The Television Will be Revolutionized*. New York: New York University Press, 2007.

Lowry, Brian. "Review: *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*." *Variety*, October 10, 2007.

Lury, Celia. *Brands: The Logos of the Global Economy*. International library of sociology. London; New York: Routledge, 2004.

Maheshwari, Sapna. "Endorsed on Instagram by a Kardashian, but Is It Love or Just an Ad?" *The New York Times*, August 30, 2016.

Mann, Denise. "The Spectacularization of Everyday Life." In *Private Screenings: Television and the Female Consumer*, edited by Lynn Spigel and Denise Mann, 41-70. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.

Marshall, P. David. *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*. Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

———. *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*. Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

Marwick, Alice, and danah boyd. "To See and Be Seen: Celebrity Practice on Twitter." *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* 17, no. 2 (2011): 139-58.

Mayer, Vicki. *Below the Line: Producers and Production Studies in the New Television Economy*. Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011.

McDonald, Paul. *The Star System: Hollywood's Production of Popular Identities*. Short Cuts. London: Wallflower, 2000.

McGuire, Mark. "For LaFrate, Reality Sets in After *Top Model* Ends." *Times Union*, May 31, 2012.

"Mercedes-Benz drives Bravo deal." *Variety (Archive: 1905-2000)*, September 7, 1992, 32.

Modleski, Tania. *Loving With a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Mok, Ken. "Interview with Ken Mok." By Lindsay Giggey (2013).

"Movies of the the Mainstream Find a Home on Bravo." *New York Times*, October 27, 1985.

Mullen, Megan Gwynne. *The Rise of Cable Programming in the United States: Revolution or Evolution?* Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 2003.

———. *Television in the Multichannel Age: A Brief History of Cable Television*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008.

Murray, Susan. *Hitch Your Antenna to the Stars: Early Television and Broadcast Stardom*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Newman, Judith, and Leslie Bruce. "How the Kardashians Made $65 Million Last Year." *The Hollywood Reporter*, February 16, 2011.

Newman, Michael Z. "The Celebrity Sex Tape, Where Porn Meets Reality TV." *FlowTV* 19, no. 10 (2014).

Newman, Michael Z., and Elana Levine. *Legitimating Television: Media Convergence and Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, 2012.

Nunn, Heather, and Anita Biressi. ""A Trust Betrayed": Celebrity and the Work of Emotion." *Celebrity Studies* 1, no. 1 (March 2010): 49-64.

Ouellette, Laurie. "*America's Next Top Model*: Neoliberal Labor." In *How to Watch Television*, edited by Ethan Thompson and Jason Mittell, 168-76. New York: New York University Press, 2013.

Ouellette, Laurie, and James Hay. *Better Living Through Reality TV: Television and Post-Welfare Citizenship*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Pub., 2008.

PBS. "An American Family: Anniversary Edition." http://www.pbs.org/programs/american-family/.

"People who have been on reality TV shows, what's rigged and whats not? (self.AskReddit)." https://www.reddit.com/r/AskReddit/comments/4r7elb/people_who_have_been_on_reality_tv_shows_whats/.

Petersen, Anne Helen. "The Duggars, *In Touch* Magazine, and the Future of Tabloid Journalism." BuzzFeed, https://www.buzzfeed.com/annehelenpetersen/in-touch-the-duggar-scandal?utm_term=.xek4AnzJ5 - .cvlpNAMEP.

———. "The Gossip Industry: Producing and Distributing Star Images, Celebrity Gossip, and Entertainment News, 1910-2010." Dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2011.

PikaPika217. "Sheena Sakai Stops by fourfour and serves up some T!" http://ohnotheydidnt.livejournal.com/63345138.html.

Potes. "America's Next Top Picket Line." http://www.televisionwithoutpity.com/show/americas_next_top_model/the_djb_interview.php.

Rao, Leena. "Here's How Much Kim Kardashian's Hit Game has Made." *Forbes*, February 19, 2016.

Raphel, Adrienne. "America's Next Top Instagram Celebrity." *The Atlantic*, August 5, 2015.

Rb. "Bravo to Run Complete 'Twin Peaks'." *Broadcasting (Archive: 1957-1993)*, January 18, 1993, 99.

Rehak, Bob. "Playing at Being: Psychoanalysis and the Avatar." In *The Video Game Theory Reader*, edited by Mark J. P. Wolf and Bernard Perron, 103-28. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Rice, Lynette. "*Jersey Shore* Back for a Second Season on MTV." *Entertainment Weekly* (2010). Published electronically January 30, 2010. http://insidetv.ew.com/2010/01/30/jersey-shore-back-for-a-second-season-on-mtv/.

Rojek, Chris. *Celebrity*. London: Reaktion Books, 2001.

Romano, Allison. "Bravo! NBC has a cable net." *Broadcasting & Cable* 132, no. 46 (November 11, 2002): 12-13.

———. "The NBC You Don't See." *Broadcasting & Cable* 132, no. 49 (December 2, 2002): 1-1,38.

Ross, Sharon Marie. *Beyond the Box: Television and the Internet*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Pub., 2008.

Ruoff, Jeffrey. "Can a Documentary Be Made of Real Life?: The Reception of *An American Family*." In *The Construction of the Viewer: Media Ethnography and the Anthropology*

of Audiences, edited by Peter Ian Crawford and Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinsson, p. 270-96. Aarhus, Denmark: Intervention Press, 1996.

Rutter, Claire. "Did Kim Kardashian and Kris Jenner deliberately leak her sex tape to make her famous?" *Irish Mirror*, May, 19 2016.

Ryan, Harriet, and Adam Tschorn. "The Kardashian Phenomenon." *Los Angeles Times*, February 19, 2010.

Schawbel, Dan. "Kris Jenner on Building the Kardashian Family Brand." *Forbes*, January 17, 2012.

Schneider, Steve. "Bravo Thrives on Culture." *New York Times*, December 15, 1985.

Schwartz, Tony. "Cable TV Pioneer Still Takes Risks." *New York Times (1923-Current file)*, 1981 Aug 03 1981, 2.

SDM. "New Times for Cablevision." *Broadcasting (Archive: 1957-1993)*, August 12, 1991, 44-45.

Sender, Katherine. "Dualcasting: Bravo's Gay Programming and the Quest for Women Audiences." In *Cable Visions: Television Beyond Broadcasting*, edited by Sarah Banet-Weiser, Cynthia Chris and Anthony Freitas, 302-218. New York: New York University Press, 2007.

Shales, Tom. "Essential Lessons from *The Osbournes*." *Electronic Media* 21, no. 48 (2002): 23.

Shattuc, Jane M. "The Shifting Terrain of American Talk Shows." In *Companion to Television*, edited by Janet Wasko, 324-36. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Sicha, Choire. "Bravo's Andy Cohen, multiplied." *Los Angeles Times*, June 21, 2009.

Significant Others and Significant Brothers. *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*. 2016.

Smith, Emily. "Kris 'leaked Kim sex tape'." *The New York Post*, March 28, 2016, All Editions; Pg. 10.

Smith, Lizzie. "'We grew in different directions': Brandy grimaces when asked about her one-time friend Kim Kardashian... and THAT sex tape." Daily Mail, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2613248/We-grew-different-directions-Brandy-grimaces-asked-one-time-friend-Kim-Kardashian-THAT-sex-tape.html.

Smith, Mariah. "Keeping Up With the Kontinuity Errors." http://jezebel.com/tag/keeping-up-with-the-kontinuity-errors.

Sorkin, Andrew Ross, and Bill Carter. "NBC Is Said to Be Close to Acquiring Bravo." *New York Times (1923-Current file)*, November 4, 2002, 1.

Staff, MTV News. "*Jersey Shore* Cast Returning for Season Three." http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1644117/jersey-shore-cast-returning-season-three.jhtml.

Steinberg, Brian. "Bravo Bolsters Its Affluence Appeal." *Variety*, April 9 2013, 15-16.

Stelter, Brian. "Cable Executive Gets a Taste of Reality TV." *New York Times*, September 6 2009.

Stern, Christopher. "Bravo beefs up schedule; going 24 hours next year." *Broadcasting & Cable (Archive: 1993-2000)*, August 2, 1993, 22.

Suarez, Lauren. "Interview with Lauren Suarez." By Lindsay Giggey (2013).

Tekinbas, Katie Salen, and Eric Zimmerman. *Rules of play: game design fundamentals*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003.

Terry, Ken. "Performing Arts Cable Service Preparing To Go On Satellite; Programs Will Be In Stereo." *Variety (Archive: 1905-2000)*, October 8, 1980, 135.

The Associated Press. "Robert Kardashian, a Lawyer for O.J. Simpson, Dies at 59." *The New York Times*, October 3, 2003.

Todreas, Timothy M. *Value Creation and Branding in Television's Digital Age*. Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 1999.

Tsai, Michelle. "Are Reality TV Actors Professional?" Slate, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/explainer/2007/08/are_realitytv_actors_professional.html.

Turner, Graeme. *Understanding Celebrity*. London: Sage, 2004.

"Vivid Entertainment Spends $1-Million to Acquire Notorious Video "Starring" Sexy Socialite Kim Kardashian and Hip Hop Star Ray J." http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20070207006160/en/Vivid-Entertainment-Spends-1-Million-Acquire-Notorious-Video.

Waxman, Sharon. "Union Plans To File Suit For Reality TV Workers." *The New York Times*, June 29, 2005.

Williams, Raymond, and Ederyn Williams. *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*. Routledge classics. New York: Routledge, 1974/2003.

Ytreberg, Espen. "Premeditations of Performance in Recent Live Television: A Scripting Approach to Media Production Studies." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 9, no. 4 (2006): 421-40.