



## Reality TV is a Voyeur's Paradise

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While waiting for my car to have an oil change, I was reading an article that profiled the executive producer of the reality TV show "The Bachelor". I have never watched this show, nor do I ever intend to but I was curious about the person who came up with the idea. He's a not-too-distant relative of the ill-fated Hollywood Madam, Heidi Fleiss, if that gives you any insight into his psyche.

Reality TV has, in my opinion, taken what once was 15 minutes of fame and made it into 15 weeks, or worse. For some reason we as a nation have become obsessed with watching our fellow Americans make complete asses of themselves. Why would anyone in their right mind care how the slovenly Anna Nicole Smith spends her day? And don't get me started on those bloody Osbournes.

Psychologists, however, are having a heyday. I get the feeling that one day there will be no longer a need for lab rats running around in little mazes. After all, there are shows that deal with facing fears, communal living, survival instincts, love, rejection, and, everyone's favorite, family dynamics. Break out the Prozac and popcorn. This is entertainment.

Now that I've ranted and raved, I have to admit, there was one reality show that I thoroughly enjoyed. It was called "Gay Weddings", and it chronicled the wedding preparations of four couples, two male and two female, over four episodes. I know two lesbian couples that got married within the last two years so I had a little insight into what it takes to put together a celebration of that scope and magnitude.

But watching these four couples, all from very different walks of life, go through the minute details of arranging their weddings was as fascinating as it was nerve wracking. We saw them at their best and at their worst, which is what makes reality TV well, real. And then there was a little homophobia thrown in just to keep things interesting.

For example, one of the mothers of one of the lesbian brides-to-be offered to pay for the entire event early on in the show. Two episodes later, she recanted her offer. Apparently the fact that she was financing a lesbian wedding hit her squarely in the face like an errantly thrown bouquet. So the two women, who thought they had a nice fat budget courtesy of Mom, had to start from square one. In another episode, the other lesbian couple got a very cold reception from a hotel manager when inquiring about available wedding facilities once he found out they were gay. Apparently, marrying your same-sex partner brings out the Neanderthal in some people.

Like with most reality shows, the camera stayed on when the wedding planners and the betrothed couples got into it over things like height of the floral arrangements on the reception tables, the speed of the music for the march down the aisle, and who would stand where in proximity to the person conducting the ceremony. Tempers flared, nerves frayed, and catfights prevailed. If the straight audience thought they were going to gain insight into The Big Differences between "us and them", they were disappointed. A bitchy, bossy queen of a wedding planner will piss off people on all sides of the sexual spectrum.

The final episode gave the viewers a few moments at each ceremony. One of the male couples threw themselves and incredibly lavish affair complete with a gospel choir and bagpipers. This wedding looked more like a Hollywood production than a celebration of two men in love. But, then again, one of those men happened to be a big executive in the entertainment industry.

The other two guys wore Hawaiian shirts and had their wedding on the beach in [Puerto Vallarta](#) at sunset. One of the lesbian couples had their understated and elegant nuptials in a hotel ballroom. The other women spoke their vows in a sweet and simple ceremony in a friend's backyard. There wasn't a dry eye in my house. I'm not kidding, I was a mess and I didn't even know any

of these people.

As far as reality TV goes, "Gay Weddings" is about as much reality as I need when it comes to peering into the lives of strangers. Unlike other shows of this genre, no one married a "millionaire" they had never met before, no one had to eat slimy bugs to move to the next level, no one had to fight off other suitors for the attention of his loved one, and best of all, nobody won anything at the end, except maybe the heart of her spouse.