

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The process of getting this book from inside my head and onto the page was a long one. It started in 2009, when I first published on this topic in an issue of *Jump Cut*, and was completed in 2019, when I hit send on the final manuscript. I want to offer my gratitude and appreciation to Duke University Press for believing in this project, and especially to my editor, Sandra Korn, who was with me every step of the way. I could not ask for a better or more reliable editor to shepherd me through peer review. Along the same lines, I am grateful to the peer reviewers for their time and helpful feedback. My work is better because of the time and thought they put into their reviews.

I owe much thanks to the English department at East Carolina University, specifically to my writing group at ECU, the “Femidemics,” who have been going strong since 2008. Marianne Montgomery, Anna Froula, Marame Gueye, and Su-ching Huang, you are wonderful readers and wonderful colleagues, and you have all made me a stronger writer and a more empathetic editor.

This book would have never come together if not for the formation of the Lazy Bottom Writing Retreat in 2015 with my ECU colleagues, including Anna Froula, Jennifer McKinnon, Anne Ticknor, Stacy Weiss, Amber Wigent, Cindy Grace-McCasky, Allison Crowe, Beth Thompson, and Paige Averett. This retreat offered me the much-needed time and space to, as Virginia Woolf once put it, “dream over books and loiter at street corners and let the line of thought dip deep into the stream.” These women have taught me that it really does take a village to write a book.

I am also grateful to the amazing scholars, in the field of media studies and beyond, who offered invaluable feedback on chapters or pieces of this project over the years, including Jason Mittell, Brenda Weber, Chuck Kleinhans, Erin Meyers, Faye Woods, Jon Kraszewski, Caetlin Benson-Allott, Ethan Thompson, Amy Borden, Anne Ticknor, Nicole Sidhu, the editors at *Flow* and *Antenna*, and my virtual coven of scholars, the “Back Channel.”

The scope and tone of this book shifted the day that Max Joseph of *Catfish* agreed to grant me an interview for this project. His generosity opened the door for me to interview *Teen Mom*’s Dia Sokol Savage, who, in turn, introduced me to *The Real World*’s Jonathan Murray. The information revealed in these interviews proved integral to the trajectory of my arguments. I also want to thank Irene McGee, Paula Beckert, and Bret Oliverio for taking the time to speak with me, and for their candor.

Last but not least, I want to thank my husband, Zach, and our children, Maisy and Jude, who learned to back away from my office door when I was writing. You are my biggest cheerleaders and I could not have completed this book without your support.