

# MTV Revisited after 20 Years

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For better or worse, the television landscape in 2001 owes much of its look and feel to MTV -- which celebrates its 20th birthday this week, though it's still a long way from acting like a stodgy TV grownup.

Hard to believe, but it's been two decades since the birth of the cable network, officially known as Music Television. The historic first cablecast, on Aug. 1, 1981, actually had a North Jersey connection: The launch viewing party was held at The Loft restaurant on Bergen Boulevard in Fairview, because the local cable carrier (then called Vision Cable) was one of the few systems in the tri-state area to carry the new network.

In the years since, the network has achieved global reach, and MTV's effect on music, fashion, and culture has been well-documented.

But MTV has also had a profound influence on television. The network is widely credited with -- or blamed for -- picking up the pace. It's hard to tell if music videos' quick-cut edits simply predicted or reflected the world's ever-escalating speed, or if they contributed to the shortening of attention spans in America and beyond.

What's clear is that almost immediately, commercials began to take on the pace and feel of music videos. As for TV series, Hollywood legend has it that one of the hippest ones of the mid-Eighties, "Miami Vice," began with NBC's then-entertainment chief Brandon Tartikoff scribbling two words on a napkin: "MTV cops."

That series may have epitomized style over substance, but even today's heaviest-hitting dramas, like "The Sopranos," use popular music as an integral accompaniment to the story line -- in a way that was not done before MTV.

A decade ago, as MTV was celebrating its 10th birthday, Doug Herzog, MTV's then senior vice president of programming, gave

a description of the network's influence that still holds true:

"MTV has changed the video language," said Herzog, who's now president of USA Network.

"Whether it's a movie or a TV show or an advertisement, there's a new way of telling stories, a new way of communicating that I think has really evolved. Things are definitely happening faster, and [MTV's] clearly part of that evolution."

MTV has also introduced a number of television and movie personalities to America. Let's try not to dwell too long on Pauly Shore, but rather think with gratitude of Ben Stiller, Colin Quinn, Jon Stewart, Donal Logue (remember him as Jimmy the Cab Driver in that memorable 1995 ad campaign?), and Michael Ian Black (a member of MTV's "The State" troupe, who now stars in NBC's "Ed," as well as that network's summer hit, "SPY TV"). Time will tell if current MTV shock comic Tom Green has the same staying power as these folks.

Apart from the people it discovered and the effect it has had on the way television is made, MTV has also influenced TV's content.

Nowhere is this more evident than the exploding reality genre.

Sure, CBS's megahit "Survivor" could trace a few branches of its roots to shows like "Candid Camera," "Queen for a Day," "That's Incredible," and even PBS' landmark 1973 series "An American Family," which made overnight celebrities of a clan named the Louds.

But the most directly influential progenitor of this trend is MTV's "The Real World," which debuted on May 21, 1992, as a 13-part "reality-based soap opera." Everything from the 24/7 camera coverage, to the slick editing, to the handsome and diverse cast of characters can be found in today's reality contenders.

The real stumper is why it took the broadcast networks so long to steal the genre.

They seemed to wait for Europe to experience success with its "Real World" imitators before jumping into the reality fray.













The producers of "Big Brother" and its current sequel may insist that it's based on a Dutch show of the same name that has conquered Europe, but the original inspiration was surely "Real World."

The challenges of "Survivor" and shows like "The Mole" and "Fear Factor" also clearly owe a debt to "Road Rules," MTV's "docu-adventure series," which debuted in July 1995. That program sends strangers on

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## YOUR HOROSCOPE FOR THE MONTH

 <p><b>VIRGO</b> Aug. 23 -Sept. 22 You may be dedicated but you can't take on the whole world by yourself. Get help. Your numbers: <b>2, 17, 45</b></p>	 <p><b>CAPRICORN</b> Dec. 22 -Jan. 19 You're up for new and exciting adventures. Add some spice to your life. Your numbers: <b>6, 23, 32</b></p>	 <p><b>TAURUS</b> April 20 -May 20 Opportunities for romance will develop through relatives. Be careful while traveling. Your numbers: <b>12, 23, 35</b></p>
 <p><b>LIBRA</b> Sept. 23 -Oct. 22 Someone will openly oppose you if you try to push your way into his or her heart. Your numbers: <b>4, 22, 34</b></p>	 <p><b>AQUARIUS</b> Jan. 20 -Feb. 18 Your need to be excessive will work against you. Control yourself. Your numbers: <b>3, 20, 44</b></p>	 <p><b>GEMINI</b> May 21-June 20 Be yourself, and you will surely attract the right kind of attention this month. Your numbers: <b>8, 26, 38</b></p>
 <p><b>SCORPIO</b> Oct. 23 -Nov. 21 Don't overspend on entertainment. Pamper yourself without being extravagant. Your numbers: <b>7, 18, 33</b></p>	 <p><b>PISCES</b> Feb. 19 -March 20 Trouble fulfilling your desires? Talk to your partner about your likes and dislikes. Your numbers: <b>9, 21, 47</b></p>	 <p><b>CANCER</b> June 21-July 22 Aggressive action will cause alienation and a lack of trust. Build on a friendship first. Your numbers: <b>13, 19, 29</b></p>
 <p><b>SAGITTARIUS</b> Nov. 22 -Dec. 21 Put the past behind you. Build a better future for yourself and those you love. Your numbers: <b>1, 29, 40</b></p>	 <p><b>ARIES</b> March 21-April 19 You'll have to keep busy if you want to take your mind off unpleasant memories. Your numbers: <b>5, 11, 39</b></p>	 <p><b>LEO</b> July 23 -Aug. 22 Don't make hasty decisions if you start seeing him or her while still involved. Your numbers: <b>4, 27, 49</b></p>

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## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3		5	6	7		9	10	11
12										
15										
								24	25	26
27								33		
34										
37										
			41							
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51										
56								58		
59								61		

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|---|--|
| <p><b>ACROSS</b></p> <p>1. Pulver's rank (abbr.)</p> <p>4. Confront</p> <p>8. Certain spice</p> <p>12. Sailor's "yes"</p> <p>13. "An apple ___" 2 (wds.)</p> <p>14. Footnote word</p> <p>15. Navy pilot's rig</p> <p>17. On the briny</p> <p>18. James and Kett</p> <p>19. First gardener</p> <p>21. Average grade</p> <p>23. Muscle</p> <p>27. Water barrier</p> <p>30. Actor Baldwin</p> <p>33. Form of "to be"</p> <p>34. Lyric poems</p> <p>35. Executive position</p> <p>36. Jewish month</p> <p>37. Animation unit</p> <p>38. Genghis ___</p> <p>39. Alphabet sequence</p> <p>37. Glistens</p> <p>40. Phi beta ___</p> <p>42. Pouch</p> <p>44. Suit to ___ (2 wds.)</p> <p>47. Islamic holy city</p> <p>51. Like a poem</p> <p>54. Agenda</p> <p>56. "___ That a Shame"</p> <p>57. Lament</p> <p>58. Cocktail lounge</p> <p>59. Passing styles</p> <p>60. Oklahoma city</p> <p>61. Fuss</p> | <p><b>DOWN</b></p> <p>1. Alleviate</p> <p>2. No, to Ivan</p> <p>3. Chair</p> <p>4. Quiz answer</p> <p>5. Dental org.</p> <p>6. Site of miracles</p> <p>7. Observed</p> <p>8. Florida resort city</p> <p>9. Stomach muscles, for short</p> <p>10. French Co.</p> <p>11. Writer LeShan</p> <p>16. Strides</p> <p>20. Broadcast network</p> <p>22. Apiece</p> <p>24. Oafs</p> <p>25. Part of QED</p> <p>26. Andean country</p> <p>27. Wharf</p> <p>28. Brainstorm</p> <p>29. Seaweed</p> <p>31. Ms. Thompson</p> <p>32. Geologic time periods</p> <p>36. Sparked electrically</p> <p>38. Crazy ___;</p> <p>41. Treaties</p> <p>43. Correct faults</p> <p>45. Salinger girl</p> <p>46. College course, for short</p> <p>48. Castro's country</p> <p>49. Clothed</p> <p>50. Dynamic beginning</p> <p>51. Stupid fellow</p> <p>52. Circle meas.</p> <p>53. Hoosier St.</p> <p>55. "Bali ___"</p> |
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