

Sexualizing Female Sportscasters

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_____ In this article written by Guy Harrison he dives deeply into the topic of sexualising females in the broadcasting and especially sports broadcasting field, in his article “We want to see you sex it up and be slutty.” His thesis for the piece is “This article uses Foucault’s concept of power/knowledge to examine the ways in which post feministic discourses inform the sport’s media’s gendered double standard appearance as a discursive formation, or structure of institutional power. As Foucauldian power is neither possessed nor exercised by an individual actor or group of actors, the purpose of conducting a discourse analysis in this context is to show how post-feminist discourses serve to maintain taken for granted notions pertaining to women sportscasters apperance.” (Harrison pg. 142)

Throughout the article he goes into depth about the interview process and how the market is so big, that when you are told to do something you do it in the fear of getting fired. Several women who work in broadcasting have come forward to tell their stories about how they are/were told directly that they needed to wear more revealing, tighter, and shorted clothing while airing. This is a term called nightclubification. He then goes into detail about how the interview process for men is far easier than women because if you're a woman and you are not to their ideal standard of how they think you should look, no matter how qualified you are, it doesn't matter they won't hire you. This is classified as a “double standard” which Harrison talks a lot about through the article. Overall I agree with Harrison on his statement that women are at a lose lose situation when put into situations like these where they have to choose between keeping

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their job and having a standard and self respect for themselves to not look that way while working in what should be a professional setting.

Guy Harriuson is a Professor at the Youngstown State University in Youngstown Ohio where he teaches Communication Research Studies. In his article he pulls information from nine different women from all races and ages and asks them a series of questions about how they have been attached online through email or even through voicemail about their appearance and how the companies and management are still asking them to dress in those specific ways. One of the nine women gave an example about this type of backlash. The company she worked for had incorporated something called a “tower shot” which really just stands for a full body shot head to toe. This woman’s name was Linda Cohn, and she worked for ESPN as an anchor for the sports center. She says “It seemed that over that next month I was frequently being told I couldn’t wear certain outfits because they were too tight, too revealing or inappropriate.” She even received a nasty voicemail from a concerned mother who berated her for what that mother believed to be a stance that “was too wide for young boys’ eyes.” These are the kinds of information Harrison compiled during his research to back up his thesis. One of the main ideas he steems off of is Foucault and he writes, “There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relation.” So in other words if you are knowledgeable and have no power you are not going to succeed and if you have power and no knowledge you aren’t going to succeed either. His methodology is the sole definition of what a female news sportscaster is and how he related that to his topic which is females and women in sportscasting media. His conclusion was well laid out and had a clear and

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thorough thought process that wrapped his theory up in a pretty little bow, that women who work in the broadcasting industry are more willing to do as they are told to keep their job but are ultimately objectifying themselves by doing what is told. There is also this prenotion that in order to move up in the company and be successful you must do as you are told.

I think this is a useful article that could be used in several research projects because it uses real if examples and responses from women who have been victims or being sexualized in the workplace of sportscasting. I think all women have gone through some sort of sexualizing in the workplace and hopefully if we can get more articles like this out there we can stop the spread of sexual harassment for women in the workplace.