Making Friends to Last A Lifetime: An Ethnographic Study of Parasocial Relationships and Soap Opera Characters

EmmaLee Elizabeth Haight Pryor

Brigham Young University - Provo

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MAKING FRIENDS TO LAST A LIFETIME:
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND
SOAP OPERA CHARACTERS

By
EmmaLee Elizabeth Haight Pryor

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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This thesis by EmmaLee Elizabeth Haight Pryor is accepted in its present form by
the Department of Communications of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis
requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

Daniel A. Stout, Committee Chair

Dennis Martin, Committee Member

Allen W. Palmer, Committee Member

Date: 5 Sept. 2002

Sherry Baker, Graduate Coordinator
As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of EmmaLee Haight Pryor in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

Date

Daniel A. Stout
Chair, Graduate Committee

Accepted for the Department

Sherry Baker
Graduate Coordinator

Accepted for the College

K. Newell Dayley
Dean, College of Fine Arts and Communications
ABSTRACT

Making Friends to Last a Lifetime: An Ethnographic Study
Of Parasocial Relationships with Soap Opera Characters

EmmaLee Elizabeth Haight Pryor

Department of Communications

M. A. Degree, August 2002

The purpose of this study was to build theory about parasocial relationships and to examine what affect, if any, religion had on parasocial relationships. Using qualitative methods, the researcher watched the show three times with five women followed by an in-depth interview. The women chosen were LDS stay-at-home moms who had watched a soap opera for at least a year.

From this data came several surprising findings about religion and soap opera viewing. The women said they did not feel guilty about the content of the shows, rather the time required to watch. This guilt was alleviated by structuring their daily tasks around watching the shows. Also, since the women viewed the show as entertainment, they were less likely to judge the actions of the characters as harshly as if it were real-life. Current life situation was also the biggest factor in whether or not a parasocial relationship existed and how strong that relationship is.
This thesis illustrates the need for a comprehensive theory about parasocial relationships. As the media becomes more prominent in our lives, parasocial relationships will need to become understood in greater detail in order to understand what possible effect, if any, they could have.
I would like to acknowledge the head of my committee, Dr. Dan Stout, for his never-ending encouragement and guidance during each stage of this process. I would be remiss if I did not also acknowledge all of the people who so freely gave of their time and energy to watch my son, Luke, while I worked on researching and writing my thesis: my parents, Gordon and Emma Jean Haight; my in-laws, Keith and Kristine Pryor; my sisters, Lisa Dean and Marsha Judkins; and my husband, Scott Pryor. I appreciate their willingness to help me reach my goals in both academics and life.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A woman gives birth to twins, with different fathers. Demons possess a woman’s body causing her to inflict mental and emotional suffering on others. After more than 14 marriages, a woman is still confident that her new man is the one. A father sells his daughter as a prostitute to have money for drugs. If these were stories in the real world, we would expect the people to appear on some sleazy daytime talk show. Instead millions of viewers have made them their friends and they tune in everyday to see what disaster will befall them next. Soap operas have long had the power to fascinate. The storylines include such incredible elements that viewers are left saying, “I’ve got to see what happens next.”

Viewers become extremely emotional about their stories and characters even though they say they know they are not real. Why? What creates the desire to view the lives, loves, and losses of people they come to know as well as their friends? And what happens to cause a loss of that desire? This research specifically studied stay-at-home mothers that belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) to find out. Additionally, it was felt the only way to truly gain a more complete picture of the factors that create this complex interrelationships between viewer and character, parasocial interaction and relationships, is to study them qualitatively. Parasocial interaction has
been defined as the interaction between the viewer and either a character or persona on television (Horton & Wohl, 1956). The religious audience is just beginning to be studied so it will be interesting to add that element to this research.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore those relationships that the viewer builds with characters on soap operas. The research questions that have guided and emerged during this preliminary study are:

Research Question #1: What are the factors/motivations that initiate parasocial interaction and parasocial relationships?

Previous studies have successfully applied interpersonal frameworks to media contexts to describe this phenomenon. This is analyzed further in the literature review.

Research Question #2: What are the factors/motivations that maintain parasocial interaction and parasocial relationships?

What good is it to begin a relationship if it does not last? Producers of soap operas know that they must keep the viewer coming back for more to maintain ratings.

Research Question #3: What are the factors that strengthen or weaken parasocial interaction or parasocial relationships?

In a review of the literature, there has been a lack of research about the reasons for fluctuations within the parasocial relationship.

Research Question #4: Do interpersonal relationship building theories that have been used previously to examine parasocial interaction provide the best explanation of this phenomenon?

As will be discussed further in the literature review, interpersonal communication theories have been used to study parasocial interaction and relationships. Whether or not this is the most astute way to describe parasocial interaction has yet to be determined.
Parasocial Interaction and Parasocial Relationships

Parasocial interaction is the precursor that affects media motivation, selection and outcomes (Rubin & Rubin, 2001). Typically, parasocial interaction has been studied under a compensation model to try to explain the occurrence of parasocial interaction, but that has been unsuccessful (Tsao, 1996). Rather parasocial interaction is a function of a more active and instrumental orientation of the viewer (Kim & Rubin, 1997; Rubin et al., 1985). Thus a greater understanding about the factors involved in parasocial relationships needs to be undertaken (Rubin & Rubin, 2001).

A recent review of parasocial interaction studies has found that research is lacking about the “nature of parasocial interaction....[consideration about] the significance of the relationship for viewers based on relevant individual differences and background characteristics...In short we still lack knowledge about the formation, development and role of parasocial relationships” (Rubin & Rubin, 2001). Changes in society and communication technologies have altered the way in which people communicate, and the motivations behind types of communication. The spread of communication technology will affect society’s interpersonal communication techniques. Parasocial interaction is a salient issue as people’s interpersonal communication techniques are thought to be used to interact with characters on television and possibly used to replace face to face human interaction to some degree.

Soap Operas

The best way to study parasocial relationships would be to find media outlets that are structured in such a way as to strongly encourage those types of relationships. Soap
operas have the highest rate of repeat viewing (Barwise, Ehrenberg, & Goodhardt, 1982), viewers talk to characters on the screen or to each other about the content (Lemish, 1985; Whetmore & Kielwasser, 1983), and soap opera viewers are involved on several different levels: looking for clues to predict plot outcome, attention to fashion, identification with a favorite character, and observation of interpersonal dynamics (Whetmore & Kielwasser, 1983).

In order to facilitate involvement, production techniques such as music, lighting, camera movements, and dialogue are designed to make the show more intimate and emotional (Cassata, 1983). On soap operas, conversation provides opportunity for the viewers to get to know the characters and how the characters feel about each other and their actions (Fine, 1981). Audience members are able to participate in the experiences of the characters through several ways: "the central role of characters in plots, the insight given into how characters think and feel, the resemblance of characters to everyday people, and the time spent on character history and plot development" (Rubin & Perse, 1987).

Participants

As will be shown in the literature review, the most common research participant is the college student. This researcher felt that in order to gain a greater understanding about the dynamics of parasocial relationships, a more unique group needed to be studied. That is why this study is focusing on stay-at-home moms that belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The religious element also sets this study apart from previous studies. That church has traditionally discouraged its members from
watching soap operas specifically and television in general. This aspect should provide new insight into parasocial relationship theories.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

As this is meant to be a theory building work, there needs to be a foundation of knowledge about parasocial relationships (PSR) and how they have been studied in the past. This section will examine the ideas presented by Horton and Wohl (1956) which have formed the basis for current PSR theories. Next, previous studies have used interpersonal relationship communication theories to try to describe how PSRs are formed, these will be discussed in greater detail. As motivation is a key component in media usage, that research will also be presented. Then the various studies that have been done on soap operas will be reviewed. After which the studies that have specifically applied parasocial relationships to soap operas are discussed. Finally something must be said about the female religious audience and how that might affect the findings of this preliminary study.

Parasocial Interaction and Parasocial Relationships

In the literature, parasocial interaction and parasocial relationship seems like interchangeable terms. For the purposes of this study, however, they are separate phases of the same phenomenon. Horton and Wohl (1956) first defined parasocial interactions as the belief of the viewer that they are “involved in a face-to-face exchange rather than in passive observation.” In other words that they are cognitively involved in what is
going on in the show they are watching rather than just sitting mindlessly on their couch or recliner. The individual audience member feels as though he “knows the persona more intimately and profoundly than others do; that he ‘understands’ his character and appreciates his values and motives” (Horton and Wohl, 1956). The initial parasocial interaction (PSI) between the performer and the individual possibly determines whether a parasocial relationship (PSR) is formed. For the purposes of this thesis, PSI describes the beginning stages of the PSR which comes after more depth of feeling is created for the character or persona.

The main characteristics of people with PSRs are: (1) they believe they ‘know’ the personality from seeing him on television (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Rubin, Powell, & Perse, 1985); (2) they arrange their schedules around their shows (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Nordlund, 1978); (3) they feel that the personality is their friend (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Rubin et al., 1985; Nordlund, 1978); (4) they talk or give advice to the television while viewing the show (Rubin et al., 1985); (5) at times gain knowledge or advice about their own personal lives from the personality (Rubin et al., 1985); and, finally, (5) they may try to contact the personality via mail or telephone (Rubin et al., 1985). Each of these components was used to determine questions for the interviews of the participants.

So then, as proposed in research question #1, what motivates an individual to initiate a PSR? Previous studies have used interpersonal theories to describe the development of PSR. These are: attachment theory (Cole & Leets, 1999; Cohen, 1997), media system dependency theory (Grant, Buthrie, & Ball-Rokeach, 1991), loneliness (Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985; Perse & Rubin, 1990; Perloff & Krevans, 1987),
homophily\textsuperscript{1} and self-esteem (Turner, 1993) and uncertainty reduction theory (Rubin & McHugh, 1987).

Attachment Theory

Attachment theories try to explain how people form close relationships and interact with significant others. A three category scheme has received the most attention. First is the Secure attachment. People in this category tend to view themselves and others and their relationships in a positive light (Shaver & Hazan, 1987). They also believe that real love exists and lasts (Shaver & Hazan, 1987). These beliefs could be the result of having loving, supportive, and available caregivers (Kobak & Sceery, 1988).

Avoidant attachment styles represent insecure relational beliefs; they tend to be more negative about relationships, themselves and others (Feeney & Noller, 1990). They also believe that love is fleeting and have a hard time trusting others which could be due to having caregivers being unresponsive and hostile (Kobak & Sceery, 1988). Anxious-ambivalent attachment is also an insecure relational belief. They differ from the Avoidant attachment style that while they hold a negative view of themselves, they idealize their relational partner (Feeny and Noller, 1990). They believe that falling in love is easy, but are uneasy about their partner’s commitment (Shaver & Hazan, 1987). These types of beliefs develop from inconsistent, inappropriate and insensitive parental responses to the child (Hindy & Schwarz, 1994).

These attachment styles are considered stable enough to predict how individuals will behave in a relationship. People with a Secure attachment style are able to engage in more self-disclosure (Pistole, 1993), be more sociable (Duggan & Brennan, 1994), and

\textsuperscript{1} Feeling of similarity between self and someone else.
seek support during times of distress (Mikulincer & Florian, 1995). In contrast to that, Avoidant people attempt to maintain more distance from others (Feeney & Noller, 1990), have more hostility and have more difficulty regulating gratification (Kobak & Sceery, 1988) and are less likely to socialize (Duggan & Brennan, 1994). Lastly, Anxious-ambivalent people appear more anxious (Kobak & Sceery, 1988), seek extensive contact with their partners, are more ‘clingy’, experience more mood swings, and invest more in their relationships (Hindy & Schwarz, 1994).

Finally, these attachment styles are linked to the way the relationship turns out. Secure people tend to have more satisfying and rewarding relationships (Kobak & Hazan, 1991) that are longer lasting (Feeny & Noller, 1990). In the end, Secure individuals are more likely to have positive relationships and to have better views of their partners than those with an Avoidant or Anxious-ambivalent style. People with Avoidant styles are less likely to experience intense love (Feeny & Noller, 1990) or to even be in love at all and they have shorter relationships (Shaver & Hazan, 1987). It also is less upsetting for them when relationships come to an end (Feeny and Noller, 1992), and they feel more isolated and lonely than other people (Shaver & Hazan, 1987). To finish, Anxious-ambivalents are more likely to fall in love quickly (Hindy & Schwarz, 1994), but they also have problems maintaining those relationships (Shaver and Hazan, 1987) and when the relationships end, they are fairly surprised (Feeny and Noller, 1992) and feel worse for having had the relationship at all (Hindy & Schwarz, 1994).

Cole and Leets (1999) analyzed data to determine whether or not attachment styles related to the formation of PSR. They surveyed 115 college students about their PSR and then had two attachment style questionnaires. The researchers found that
anxious-ambivalent had more PSI than did Avoidant style individuals and that Secure style individuals “as a group engage in only a moderate level of parasocial interaction, secure individuals who mistrust others have higher levels of parasocial activity” (Cole & Leets, 1999). To explain some of these results, Cole and Leets (1999) wrote, “Anxious-ambivalent and a subset of Secure individuals may turn to parasocial bonds as a result of unfulfilled relational needs.”

In a similar study, Cohen (1997), also studied the links between individuals’ models of attachment and any PSR that they have formed. Cohen (1997) hypothesized that “working models of attachments are more likely to be accessible to adults who are involved in romantic relationships than to those who are not……Therefore, a greater correspondence is expected between the content of dating adults’ working models and the intensity of their PSR.” There has been the belief that PSR’s are formed to compensate for a problem in a relationship, so the “PSR would be more intense the more anxious a subject is” (Cohen, 1997). Gender differences were also taken into account; that men who have less social support than women, would turn to the TV for comfort when they are nervous about their relationships while women would depend on family and friends not the television. A survey was administered to 109 students; and, Cohen (1997) found that “working models of attachment were more likely to be activated by dating than non-dating subjects in PSR.” Gender did differentiate between uses of television viewing in that women viewed it as a relational activity and men were more task oriented. The research also “suggests that men turn to TV to solve problems whereas women see TV as a friend or companion” (Cohen, 1997).
By using questions that examined how the women felt about their lives and their particular situation, the researcher examined how that related to their PSI and PSR.

**Media System Dependency Theory**

Media system dependency theory shifts from a persuasion-centered concept of media to media as an information system. The media system has the power to control the information relayed about groups, organizations, individuals and systems. The strength of this theory is that this view affords “a framework in which messages or media content could be understood as products of dependency relations between the media and other social systems rather than as disembodied products of unembedded media organizations” (Grant, Guthrie, & Ball-Rokeach, 1991). This theory attempts to explain phenomena at both micro and macro levels of analysis, exploring dependency relations within and across levels of analysis.

Dependencies are thought of along three general dimensions: play, orientation, and understanding. These are then divided into social and personal dimensions which total six types of individual-level media dependency relations. They are: (1) Solitary play which is the consumptions of products for pleasure or aesthetic value; (2) Social play is using the media to reach goals related to social recreation; (3) Action orientation is how one makes behavioral decisions; (4) Interaction orientation is seeking advice about how to act with others; (5) Self-understanding is using the media’s resources to learn more about oneself; (6) Social understanding is using the media to learn and understand more about society (Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984). The main question to ask is “Why do I go to this medium to fulfill this goal?” The dependency approach “seeks to identify relations between goals and resources” (Grant et al., 1991).
Grant et al. (1991), applied this theory to the PSR formed with television shopping channel hosts. Television shopping shows are structured to encourage PSR, which in turn encourages buying from these shows. Buying products on these shows is the best way to interact with the host. Grant et al. (1991) found that "once viewers develop parasocial interaction with the hosts, this relationship then fosters more intense media dependency relationships." The study also showed that the individual's dependency relationship using television "is a very important factor in mediating between individual characteristics (such as viewing level or demographics) and effect (such as parasocial interaction and buying)" (Grant et al., 1991).

This information was used in the study by asking questions about media usage and what function the media has in the participants' homes.

Loneliness

Everyone has heard the saying, "No man is an island," yet there are many in society that feel as though they are. Part of being human is the need to feel connected to others. Horton and Wohl (1956) hypothesized that the basis for initiating parasocial relationships came from loneliness, or a lack of sociality. Researchers of PSI and PSR have assumed that "the need for social interaction is a constant and that those persons with the same score on a social participations measure would experience the same level of need fulfillment" (Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985). This is not an accurate assessment for three reasons: (1) individuals’ desire for both an intimate other and a general social network (Weiss, 1973). So even though a person may have a social network, he may still desire intimacy with just one person. (2) Like any other aspect of our lives, our needs for interaction vary, they are not constant (Cutrona, 1982). (3) Lastly, our ability to
actually obtain satisfying social interaction is variable according to our life situations (Cutrona, 1982). Ultimately, when it comes to social interaction, each person’s needs are different from other’s needs. Simply increasing interaction does not solve the problem of loneliness.

Loneliness is described as “resulting from an individual’s perceived discrepancy between two factors, the desired level and the achieved level of social contact” (Perlman & Peplau, 1982). Bell and Daley (1985) related loneliness to certain patterns of communication such as difficulty in communicating, being anxious and apprehensive about communication and individuals’ evaluating their abilities as communicators negatively. Temporary loneliness is dealt with by trying to become more socially active or having solitary productivity while chronic loneliness kills the coping behaviors and people become apathetic (Rubenstein & Shaver, 1982; Weiss, 1982).

Rubin, Perse, and Powell (1985) conducted a study trying to link loneliness and PSI with local television newscasters. They hypothesized that someone who is lonely would seek to use local television news in a goal-directed instrumental manner. Instrumental use would show characteristics of news program dependency, higher viewing levels, greater belief in realism of the show and all of this would result in PSI with the television newscaster. Surprisingly, they found that participants were “more likely to turn to television when they experienced loneliness. This latter association, though, did not manifest itself in levels of television viewing or in parasocial interaction with television news personalities” (Rubin et al., 1985). Also, the study speculated that the motivating need “for parasocial interaction may stem from an active bonding with a
persona who is perceived as real and similar, rather than the initially speculated deficiency motivation” (Rubin et al., 1985).

In Perloff and Krevans (1987), study of older persons television usage, it was shown that psychosocial factors were a greater predictor of television behavior than demographic and other situational factors. More specifically “emotional loneliness was consistently the best predictor of older persons’ television uses, preferences, and gratifications” (Perloff & Krevans 1987). However, consistent with Rubin et al. (1985), “emotional or social loneliness did not significantly predict parasocial program preferences. Instead, life dissatisfaction was the best predictor of parasocial preferences” (Perloff & Krevans, 1987).

Finally, Perse and Rubin (1990) hypothesized that chronic loneliness is related to reduced interpersonal interaction, increased electronic media use, and passive television use. They found, among the college students surveyed, that they were more likely to turn to a movie first and television second when they felt lonely. Since the lonely are more passive in their orientation of watching television, they are only watching it to fill time; they are less likely to form strong PSRs. Interestingly, “the chronic lonely viewers in our sample, although seeking to fill idle time, [and] did not seek to escape their problems by watching soap operas” (Perse & Rubin, 1990). The lonely do have a greater reliance on television and some reduced interpersonal interaction does accompany chronic loneliness, but PSI and PSR are not formed out of loneliness according to each of these studies. More detail is needed about life dissatisfaction to shed further light on how it effects PSI and PSR. Using ethnography in this study should do just that.
Homophily and Self-Esteem

The basis of two persons liking each other comes from similar attitudes, values, and beliefs. Lazarsfeld and Merton (1954) used the term “homophily” to describe “a tendency for friendships to form between those who are alike in some designated respect.” Similarities in the major areas of education, social status, and religious beliefs cannot help but begin some interpersonal attraction and could possibly help the communication process between two people. There are four homophily dimensions: attitude, background, value (morality), and appearance (McCroskey, Richmond, & Daly, 1975). Self-esteem also plays a role in how one interacts with others (Rosenberg, 1965). Individuals with low self-esteem have a hard time making friends, describe themselves as shy, and have a more difficult time talking with new people (Rosenberg, 1965). Homophily and self-esteem have both been shown to have an impact on interpersonal relationships, so it would stand to reason that it would impact PSR.

Using the ideas presented above, Turner (1993), surveyed 281 students about self-esteem, homophily, and parasocial interaction. He found that instead of focusing only on the physically attractive, it was more important to be attractive as a social or work partner. Also, those who had low self-esteem and were less likely to communicate interpersonally would “not feel threatened in a parasocial relationship” (Turner, 1993). Time was shown to have no effect on the development of PSR. This study showed that “at least part of a person’s psychological make-up may be responsible for his or her parasocial interaction with certain types of television performers” (Turner, 1993).

Each participant was asked to compare herself and describe her favorite character. This should show to what extent similarity affects PSI and PSR.
Uncertainty Reduction Theory

Berger and Calabrese (1975) believe individuals use any method possible to try to reduce uncertainty. Uncertainty reduction theory (URT) suggests that various communication strategies are used to develop relationships by getting to know people very well. The people who use URT are active, goal-oriented people. Ultimately, “the more interaction that occurs, the more likely it is that the relationship will develop” (Rubin & McHugh, 1987). Therefore the more communication and exposure to media personalities, the more the individual will have increased attraction or liking to the personality and parasocial interaction will result. The three major components of the URT process are: communication, liking, and intimacy (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). URT can then be viewed as a mediator of the relationship development process (Berger, 1986).

Rubin and McHugh (1987) tested URT as a method of establishing PSR. They also found, like Turner (1993), that PSR was not related to physical attractiveness or amount of time spent watching the personality but rather personalities that are attractive as work or social partners. Therefore, “relationship development with a media persona is not a matter of sheer exposure duration, but a function of attraction that leads to parasocial interaction” (Rubin & McHugh, 1987). While watching the shows with the women, the researcher will be able to gage how well they know or understand their favorite characters. Another aspect of this would be the amount of time the women spend contemplating or talking about the show or characters before or after the show.

Each of these studies supports the idea that interpersonal relationship theories can, and should, be used to explain the formation of PSR. All of the theories presented above
are pieces of the puzzle in trying to understand how PSRs work, what begins them, what causes them to continue and the factors that strengthen and weaken those relationships. They provide an interesting perspective on traditional media theories. However, they might not provide a complete picture of how PSR's work because of the differences between having a relationship with a real person and one with a media created character. It is more desirable to create a new theory about how PSI and PSR are initiated and maintained so that the uniqueness inherent in PSI and PSR will be explained.

Parasocial relationships have garnered a lot of research attention. Studies have been conducted about such subjects as: television shopping networks (Auter & Moore, 1993); political talk radio (Hofsetter & Gianos, 1997); breaking the fourth wall of television (Auter, 1992); public affairs talk radio (Rubin & Step, 2000); local news personalities (Perse, 1990; Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985); and, children’s wishful identification with favorite television characters (Hoffner, 1996). One important aspect of each of these studies is the lack of differentiation between real people, such as those on talk radio, and characters, such as on television. It would seem logical that people would form different types of relationships with real personalities and fictional ones. Also none of these previous studies have considered any religious implications and how that enters into the PSR equation.

Motivations

Parasocial interaction falls within the category of a uses and gratifications theory. Uses and gratifications theory simply means that the participant is active and specific in her use of media in order to fulfill a certain need. Instrumental orientation is “purposive use of media content to seek information. Ritualized or diversionary orientation issue of
a medium regarded as important, such as television, in a generalized, time-consuming fashion” (Conway & Rubin, 1991). So the motivations for watching television have been identified as: seeking information, relaxation, entertainment, arousal, social interaction, companionship, escape and time consumption (Rubin, 1981). In a study of local television news viewing, the main motivation to watch was to learn information that would then help them in their conversations with others (Rubin, Perse & Powell, 1985).

Different motivations lead to different effects. Rubin and Step (2000) found, for the talk radio audience, that PSI and exciting entertainment motivation predicted intentional and frequent listening to a favorite host while PSI, task attraction and information motivation were linked to a belief in the importance of the host’s information. When the pass time/habit motivation was added to that, the listener felt the host would influence his attitudes. Finally, PSI, information motivation and pass time/habit motivation would predict the listener following the host’s advice to become more active about societal concerns.

Loneliness has been shown to not be a motivation for PSI (Perse & Rubin, 1990; Rubin et al., 1985; Perloff & Krevans, 1987). People who are lonely do watch a lot of television or movies, but that is mainly to pass the time rather than watching a specific show for a certain personality. Rather than being a motivation for PSI, loneliness has been shown as a predictor of television behavior (Perloff & Krevans, 1987), which is to watch a lot of television to pass the time (Perse & Rubin, 1990). One important element that is missing from each of these studies is the strength of the PSI and how that affects the strength and development of the PSR.
Motivation, as such, is not one of the major areas of focus of this study, but it can be found within the initiation and maintenance research questions as an answer to how these relationships start and continue. Motivation is also implied within the strength and weakness research question as something that changes or evolves as the relationship does.

Soap Operas

The majority of studies done about soap operas have been about content. From these studies of content, theories have been presented about the soap opera audience vulnerability to what the audience can learn from soap operas. This section will discuss the previous studies that have been done about soap operas, starting with content analysis that has led to hypotheses about what the viewers motivations might be for watching and the possible effects of long term viewing of soap operas. It is important to understand what is actually being shown on the soap operas, and how the structure of the soap opera contributes to the development and maintenance of PSR.

Content

Perhaps the most interesting content analyses have involved sex on the soap operas. There has been everything from the portrayal of sex acts (Greenberg, Abelman, & Neuendorf, 1981) to patterns of intimacy (Lowry, Love & Kirby, 1981). In more recent years researchers have been more concerned with the social responsibility of the soap opera in portraying sexual acts. Soap operas portray sexual issues in an unrealistic manner (Olson, 1995) and the amount of sex portrayed has had a significant increase (Lowry & Towles, 1989). The ways the characters deal with moral violations and the way those violations are resolved has also been studied (Sutherland & Siniawsky, 1982).
Another subject of study has been male and female power and how it is portrayed on soap operas (Asante & Gonzalez, 1983).

One of the more important aspects of soap operas is their focus on family and the events that happen within them. Liebes and Livingstone (1994) did an ethnographic study of families on soap operas, comparing American and British soap operas. The romantic and interpersonal relationships that characters on soap operas form have also been studied (Barbatsis, 1983). One of the mainstays of soap opera conversations is the way that the characters gossip about each other, which has translated over into having the viewers gossip about the stories and characters on the soaps (Riegel, 1996). These conversations increase the intimacy level felt from the viewer towards the character (Fine, 1981). Even though it would seem that soap operas would have changed a lot from radio days and early television, soap operas have basically stayed the same throughout the years (Cassata, 1983).

Motivations for Watching Soap Operas

College students (probably because they are most accessible to researchers) and the ways, reasons and effects of watching soap operas have been studied the most of any group which is why this study chose to use stay at home moms. Carveth and Alexander’s (1985) study of college students found five motivations for watching soap operas: enjoyment, boredom prevention, reality exploration, escape and character identification. Compesi (1980) identified seven motivations: entertainment, habit, convenience, social utility, relaxation or escape from problems, escape from boredom, and reality exploration or advice. Another reason college students watch is the popularity among their peers of
certain shows which provides a conversational connection with those that watch it (Babrow, 1990).

Another way to look at motivations is to find the way a person’s attitude toward the soap opera affects her intention to watch. Babrow (1989) found that students anticipate social pleasure, romantic fantasy, and learning when they are watching soap operas. The strongest determinant of attitude toward the soap opera was the perceived social pleasure or the opportunity to socialize with others (Babrow, 1989). Corresponding to Turner’s (1983) findings about self-esteem and parasocial relationships, Babrow (1989) found that college students’ self-concept was “the single biggest predictor of intention” to watch.

Alexander (1985) discovered three motivations in the 10-14 year old age group for watching soap operas: enjoyment, avoidance, and reality exploration. A study of female viewers found that they watch soap operas to pass time, for companionship, for excitement and to relax (Greenberg, Neuendorf, Buerkel-Rothfuss & Henderson, 1982). Some of these motivations overlap: entertainment, escape, and information seeking, suggesting that these motivations could crossover to most groups.

Effects of Viewing Soap Operas

The literature is lacking in a comprehensive look at effects research within the soap opera genre. Within the studies of content there were calls for effects research because of the possibility that people may be learning either how to behave or how the world works from watching soap operas and that is a disturbing thought. Children have been increasingly watching soap operas, and the effects on them have yet to be studied but cause some concern about what the effects may be (Cantor & Cantor, 1984).
Studies that have been done on the effects of viewing have not had a positive outcome. Shrum (1999) found that heavy soap opera viewers showed significantly more distrust and a greater likelihood that they would experience marital problems than light viewers which would be consistent with a cultivation effect. A difference was also found in viewers of sitcoms and game shows and soap operas. Viewers of soap operas had lower satisfaction in “day to day life, fun and enjoyment in life, how happy you are, and success in life. Soap opera viewing was also positively and significantly related to a general negative mental state” (Tan & Tan, 1986). Basically soap opera viewing predicted stress and unhappiness among the study’s participants. The question that then emerges is what came first, the unhappiness or the soap opera viewing? While this study does not look specifically at effects, the women discussed what they felt were the effects on them.

Other studies have supported the idea that soap opera viewers see the world differently than non-soap opera viewers (Buerkel-Rothfuss & Mayes, 1981). Carveth and Alexander (1985) and Ruben (1985) argue that the frames soap operas give viewers affect the way in which they see the world. The way the audience perceives the values on soap operas could affect the way they see the world (Schrag & Rosenfeld, 1987). But once again, there has not been any definitive study that has found a direct causal link between soap opera content and viewer beliefs or behaviors.

Parasocial Relationships and Soap Operas

The focus of this thesis is the relationship between PSI and PSR and soap operas. Several studies have been done concerning this topic. Each of these studies were done
quantitatively. This section will explore these studies in an effort to provide an even greater understanding of the unique aspects of PSRs and soap operas.

_Uncertainty Reduction Theory and Personal Construct Theory_

As mentioned before, uncertainty reduction theory occurs when an individual actively seeks information to reduce uncertainty, and as uncertainty is reduced liking is increased which increases the depths of the relationship as one is better able to predict how the other person will act. Personal construct theory holds that one attempts to make sense of the world by employing individualized construct systems (Delia, O'Keefe & O'Keefe, 1982). These constructs are also used to make sense of media or television characters. The development of a construct system has been linked to the amount of time and the frequency of interaction one has with the character (Berleson, Applegate, & Neuwirth, 1981). These theories are related by the idea that the longer the parasocial acquaintance leads to higher parasocial complexity levels (Perse & Rubin, 1989).

Perse and Rubin (1989), using these theories, found that “uncertainty reduction is a basic aspect of parasocial relationship development.” It was also discovered that when the participants were describing soap opera characters, they were using a significant percentage of their interpersonal constructs, which means they were seeing the character in the context of their, the participants’, lives. Length of time was not found to be a direct influence on PSR. The main findings of the study were that “people may apply social construct systems to form impressions of soap opera characters. And as confidence to predict soap opera characters’ attitudes, feelings and behaviors increases, the likelihood of parasocial interaction increases” (Perse & Rubin, 1989).
Role of Motivation and Activity in Media Effects

Building on the idea that instrumental viewing is purposive and active, using media content for goal-directed needs or wants, Kim and Rubin (1997) studied how activity and motivation influence media effects of soap operas. They found that instrumental motivation has a direct and positive influence on parasocial interaction, which is consistent with previous research (Rubin & Perse, 1987). Kim and Rubin (1997) also strongly linked program satisfaction with parasocial interaction. The audience selectively perceives portrayals in support of their beliefs, and “by focusing on and relating to the stories, viewers have greater empathy, attraction, and feelings of similarity with characters” (Kim & Rubin, 1997). With higher levels of parasocial interaction, there is the possibility of increased cultivation effects “because of a reliance on social reality definitions shared by a favored personality” (Kim & Rubin, 1997).

Affective, Cognitive, and Behavioral Involvement

Within the uses and gratifications theory is an aspect called involvement and there are different ways of expressing that involvement with the media. Affective theories of affiliation believe that people are basically good and that motivates them to form bonds with others (Rubin & Perse, 1987). Parasocial interaction is an example of affective involvement. Cognitive involvement is thinking about messages during and after exposure (Levy and Windahl, 1985). Behavioral involvement is talking about messages or plot developments after viewing (Rubin & Perse, 1987).

Applying the aspects of uses and gratifications theory presented above to determine the importance of specific motivations, Rubin and Perse (1987) found that perceived realism, viewing intention, and attention were related to parasocial interaction
by the viewer thinking and talking about the show afterward. In comparing their findings to a study of romance novel readers, Rubin and Perse (1987) wrote: “Using soap operas as a functional alternative by the inner-directed viewers of the present sample may be a relaxing way to escape more demanding interpersonal interaction at the time.” This is, in other words, to take some time out for them. This is thought to be one of the main reasons these participants would cite as to why they watch soap operas.

**Audience Interpretation**

Noble (1975) presents the idea that viewers interpret the stories through a process of recognition, being an active viewer by imposing on the character the beliefs of someone they know in real life. So the viewers’ identification with, recognition of, and evaluation of various characters may play a part in how they interpret the whole storyline which leads them to sympathize with various characters based on their own personal experience. This can lead to different interpretations of the same story or the appreciation of one character over another depending on the viewer.

With that in mind, Livingstone (1990) found that “the differences in how they [the viewers] interpret characters are what allow viewers to become involved emotionally with them and to take sides as the narrative unfolds.” Basically the parts of the stories that resonate with one’s life experiences color one’s opinions about those stories and the characters within them. However, interpretive positions are not wholly distinct; some characters are centrally ambiguous in that viewers do not really have a strong feeling about them. From Livingstone’s (1990) study of viewers’ interpretations of a narrative, she found that “viewers differ in their interpretations relative to their sympathy with and evaluation of characters’ actions, inferred cognitions that lie behind the actions, and
predictions about future events, but not about inferred motives or the relative importance of two of the characters over the other two.” What needs to be done to bridge that gap of understanding? Livingstone (1990) calls for a structural account of the role of the viewer in relation to the structure of the text, which has not yet been done yet, which this study will try to do.

The LDS Audience

Religion has not been studied in connection with parasocial relationships; that is one of the aspects of this study that is unique. Having participants belonging to the LDS church creates an even greater opportunity because of the disapproval of soap operas within the LDS community. An article published in the Ensign, a monthly church publication for adult members, printed an article written by a woman that had stopped watching soap operas and had found that she could make better use of her time and felt her spirituality increase (Strong-Thacker, 1991). The perceived problem with soap operas is the values, or lack thereof, they portray. The lifestyles of the characters on the soap operas are a far cry from how an active LDS woman should be living her life.

The majority of talks given at General Conference\textsuperscript{2} about the media involve media effects, which are thought to be strong and direct (Stout, 1996). Some of the effects are described in a lesson manual for the women’s organization: “learning to be violent, to think that immorality is normal and good, to expect instant solutions to problems, to want something for nothing, and to believe in unrealistic situations and incorrect values” (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1991, p. 195). So it is

\textsuperscript{2} This is a semi-annual meeting of all the LDS church authorities to instruct the church members.
understandable that the church would dissuade the watching of soap operas with the content they contain.

With the obvious discouragement of inappropriate media, how actually do LDS women use the media? Valenti and Stout (1996) found that:

“The institution may be clinging to a model that worries about media telling us what to think about, but some in the flock apparently know where they belong and know how to think and decipher for themselves what not to think about. Religiosity within this sample group of women is consistently high; their media use is diverse.”

The participants in this study were did not reflect the strong conservative beliefs presented by the religion. They admired women in non-traditional roles. Apparently the values they have to judge their own lives may not translate into how they judge characters on television.

In a study of LDS women’s use of the media, two extremes were found to exist (Stout, Scott & Martin, 1996). The first group was Traditionals, they “place strong emphasis on what is considered ‘immoral’ content in selecting movies and television programs and whose style of talking about the media reflected strong institutional influence” (p. 247). The second group was Independents, they described their mediated experiences “in individual, goal oriented terms and assessed their value more from a personal, private point of view rather than an institutional perspective” (p. 247). This shows the diversity within the LDS culture with regard to media usage. It would follow that the participants within this study express feelings that correspond to these two categories with their viewing of soap operas.

Basically, within the LDS culture there is diversity of opinion about the media. The emphasis has been too strong on not wasting time watching soap operas, or other
television shows with questionable morals, for the participants to not know or feel the disapproval. That is one of the more appealing aspects of this study: how the women cope with the contradictions of watching the soap opera when they know they have been advised against it, the contradiction between the values portrayed and those held by LDS members, and how this all effects any possible PSRs.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this section is to explain who participated and how the data was collected and analyzed. Since this study involved a qualitative type of data collection and analysis while the vast majority of previous parasocial relationship and soap opera studies have been quantitative in nature, a justification of this type of research for this type of topic needs to be addressed.

Justification of Method

This study is looking at relationships, which by their very nature are multi-faceted and complex, perhaps beyond the power of quantitative analysis to explain. Qualitative data collection and analysis is useful for providing context for the specific culture within which the participants live. The reason for ethnographic viewing is to immerse oneself in the culture or life of the participant. The usefulness of interviewing is to gain greater understanding of the way the participant knows the meanings of things. In other words, to create the context for the culture of this specific participant, the researcher must hear the participant’s answers to the questions that are audible and also the meanings that are found within the answers.

Also, it should be noted here that although the transcripts provide some clues about how concepts are related, the actual linking takes place not only descriptively but
rather at a conceptual level. If the researcher "studies structure only, then one learns why but not how certain events occur. If one studies process only, then one understand how persons act/interact but not why. One must study both structure and process to capture the dynamic and evolving nature of events" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 127, emphasis in original).

Participants

The goal of this study was to find stay-at-home moms that are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that have watched soap operas for at least two years. To find these participants, friends and relatives were asked if they knew anyone that fit that description. Several family members of the researcher asked in their Relief Society meetings (a women's organization within the LDS church) if that applied to themselves or anyone they knew. From that, five women were found that fit the description.

Several of the participants were known to the researcher beforehand and as such more information was known about their lives than is shown in the transcriptions. Rachel is a friend of the researcher's sister. Elise is a friend of another sister. Heather is the wife of an associate of the researcher's husband. Carly lives in the researcher's neighborhood. Shelly is in the church congregation of the researcher's mother-in-law. None of the participants knew of other women that currently watched soap operas.

As a thank-you for participating, the researcher gave the women a gift certificate to a popular store. None of the women seemed to have any inhibitions about participating in the study and seemed open about how they felt about soap operas and their lives.
Data Collection

To gain a greater understanding of how parasocial relationships fit into these women's lives, the researcher watched the soap opera three times with the participants and followed up by a final interview. Some of the questions for the interview were adapted from Rubin et al.'s (1985) parasocial interaction scale. The questions were changed to be more open ended to encourage the women to talk in greater detail about each aspect of parasocial interaction and relationships.

All viewing times and interviews were taped and later transcribed. The interviews lasted between 20 minutes to an hour depending on the participant. Also, the researcher kept notes during the viewing times about what was going on in the participants' homes and other thoughts.

Two of the participants, Heather and Carly, needed to be taped again for both the viewing and interviewing. The recorder the researcher used was not able to record well enough to be transcribed the first time it was done, so they were re-done about 10 months after the original. This meant that the researcher actually viewed the show six times with each of them and interviewed them twice. There was not any significant difference in the information received. Another of the interviews was accidentally taped over and so most of it had to be done again. Some of the answers varied because of the mood of that participant, but they basically remained the same also.

Data Analysis

The findings section of this thesis is devoted to describing each participant and various aspects of her life and home. From Spradley (1980) comes the definition of nine major dimensions of any social situation: (1) space: the physical place or places, (2)
actor: the people involved, (3) activity: a set of related acts that people do, (4) object: the physical things that are present, (5) act: single actions that people do, (6) event: a set of related activities that people carry out, (7) time: the sequencing that takes place over time, (8) goal: the things the people are trying to accomplish, (9) feeling: the emotions felt and expressed. These dimensions will be utilized in describing each of the women and their settings in order to give a proper context for the culture that these women share.

Ethnographic analysis consists of three parts: the parts of the culture, the relationship among those parts and the relationship of the parts to the whole (Spradley, 1980). So to build an understanding or theory about this culture, the grounded theory approach will be utilized (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This approach is more than just comparing incident to incident, it involves looking at what is not always evident and sometimes when the participant does not say what she means the researcher must look for hidden or obscure meanings that might not be obvious. This process is done through the use of coding and memos. Memos involve writing down the researcher's thoughts as she is reading through the transcripts which are then used to discover categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Being able to group concepts into categories is important because it makes the number of units workable rather than overwhelming. Also "categories have analytic power because they have the potential to explain and predict" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 113).

After categories are grouped and named, they are defined further by the specific dimensions that it encompasses. Dimensions represent the location of a property along a continuum or range which then allows for further patterns to be formed and discovered (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This is not to say there will not be participants that do not fit
into every aspect of a category, but that is to be expected, there are “always a few cases in which one or more dimensions are off slightly” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 118).

Coding was done using colors to mark similar comments in each of the women’s transcriptions. Following the coding, the comments were grouped into six specific categories and named from the dominant themes within each category. Each of these categories, or themes, that have emerged are threads in the fabric that constitutes parasocial relationships. Depending on where the viewer is within the dimension determines how strong the fabric or parasocial relationship is. All the categories are interconnected, affecting each other continuously, some more than others, but they have been separated so as to more easily see the patterns that emerge, or how all the parts contribute to the whole.

Limitations of Study

There are several limitations to this study:

1. The small, non-random sample size.

2. This study relied on volunteers and, as such, those that felt no social stigma associated with soap opera viewing. One commented that she knew there had to be others that watched in her church congregation, but they were just too embarrassed to admit it. As a result of this, the findings may be skewed.

3. All of the women were white with middle to upper-class incomes.

4. Two of the women, Carly and Heather, did not do what they normally do during their soap operas. They would have been doing housework or
laundry normally, but they preferred to sit and watch with me. That may impact on the findings.

5. The majority of the viewing was done in the summer which has a different dynamic than winter in that kids are more involved in outside activities and moms are not so involved with being at the school. The mothers with children in school each said that their viewing habits changed according to season.

6. Self-report is also of some concern as participants were asked to recall or interpret their past actions or feelings.

7. And finally, the researcher's own biases and thoughts may color the findings of this study as she had watched soap operas for a long time previous to the study.

Ultimately, the findings of this study cannot and should not be generalized to other groups. That was not the purpose of this research. However, one result of this could be to discover that there is more to be gained from a qualitative type of study in this particular area of research.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The purpose of this section is to familiarize the reader with each of the women in this study and the major findings within each category. The relevant dimensions from Spradley (1980) will be used to describe how it was for the researcher to be in their homes and the general feeling that existed there. Following that, each of the categories will be personalized to all of the women using their own words to determine where they fall within the dimensions of each category. Finally, the findings will be discussed linking each of the women together to build theory about how parasocial interaction and relationships work. In Table 1, basic demographic information is given about each woman to simplify comparisons.

The first category is that of the participant creating an environment that allows her to watch the soap opera, make use of her time, and also have the viewing be relaxing. As some of the women did not participate in their normal activities while being taped, their descriptions of their regular activities are also included in this category. The dimensions that this category uses simply involve how extreme the viewer becomes in the process of creating and trying to maintain that environment. The second category is the history of watching. This would include what caught the viewer's interest in the beginning and why they are still watching the soap opera, their feelings about past
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>CARLY</th>
<th>RACHEL</th>
<th>ELISE</th>
<th>HEATHER</th>
<th>SHELLY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Kids and their ages</td>
<td>7 children; 20, 18, 17, 16, 14, 13, and 11</td>
<td>6 children; 17, 14, 12, 8, 6, and 4</td>
<td>1 child; 2</td>
<td>4 children; 11, 8, 4, and 2</td>
<td>4 children; 11, 9, 6, and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Residence</td>
<td>West Jordan</td>
<td>Provo</td>
<td>During study, Holladay, now Virginia</td>
<td>South Jordan</td>
<td>South Jordan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth Place</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>Milwaukee, WI</td>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Murray, UT</td>
<td>Salt Lake City, UT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband's Occupation</td>
<td>Facility Manager for LDS Church</td>
<td>Lighting Director for commercials and ads</td>
<td>Manages a Donor Center</td>
<td>Funeral Director</td>
<td>Underground Utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income per year</td>
<td>$70-80,000</td>
<td>Over $100,000</td>
<td>$60-80,000</td>
<td>$80-100,000</td>
<td>$50-60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman's Previous Jobs</td>
<td>Home Daycare, Shoe Store Manager</td>
<td>Materials Planner at Signetics</td>
<td>Various Jobs in Many Industries</td>
<td>Cottonwood Hospital Billing</td>
<td>Insurance Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years watching show</td>
<td>23 years</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>11 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of show(s)</td>
<td>Guiding Light, Young and Restless, As The World Turns</td>
<td>All My Children</td>
<td>Days of Our Lives</td>
<td>General Hospital</td>
<td>General Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Associates Degree</td>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>1 year of College</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
storylines and how they feel about missing the show now compared to an earlier time in their lives. The dimensions would comprise having the viewing be just a habit to actual caring about what is occurring on the show and with the characters.

The third category is that of show/storyline, which would have anything to do with what keeps or loses the viewer’s interest or what she does or does not like about the show or storylines and the viewer’s favorite parts that make it worth watching. The dimensions involved here would be stopping watching because the show or storyline became too unbearable to trying to change what is going on by writing letters or commiserating with other fans to calling up a friend or sister and talking about how wonderful it was. The fourth category is actor/character. This would involve any feelings or knowledge about the actor or the character, thinking about him either before or after the show, having an understanding about the character, how switching actors changes the way the viewer feels about the character, and if the viewer would follow either the character or the actor to another show. The dimensions would be anything from flipping through Soap Opera Digest at the check-out counter to looking up the show on the internet to having a desire to meet or have dinner with the character or the actor.

The fifth category is religion. This would consist of any feelings of guilt about either watching or the morals and values shown to feeling like she needs to justify the soap opera she watches as better than what is shown on the other stations. The dimensions would be between feeling guilty and like she is doing something wrong by watching to not caring at all. The sixth, and final, category is that of life situation. This would be anything from how content the woman is, to what she wishes she could change, to her outlook on life, to how she compares her reality to that of the show. The
dimensions would be feeling happy and content with her life, to major dissatisfaction with the general state of her life.

While reading about each of the women, keep in mind the idea that the women’s current life situation is integral to understanding where the women are within PSRs now. There are also some surprising ways that religiosity impacts viewing and interpretation of characters and storylines.

Heather

Heather is 32 and lives in a three-story newly built home in a recently developed area of South Jordan. She has four children ages 11, 8, 4, and 2. Heather was born in Murray, grew up in Sandy, later moved to Arizona during high school, moved back to Utah to go to Brigham Young University and except for a year in California after she was married, has lived here ever since. Her family has also moved back to Utah to be by the grandchildren. Her husband is a funeral director and they make between $80-100,000 a year. She completed one year of college before she was married and then she worked at Cottonwood Hospital in the billing department before she had her first child.

Heather has a relaxed personality and comes across as soft-spoken, but she does not mince words when it is required. An example of this is when she heard one of her son’s friends using swear words on the phone. She then spoke to him about it and how that was inappropriate. Another time when one of her daughter’s friends was over and the daughter and friend were fighting about where they could go in the house. Heather had a great deal of patience with them both and told her daughter that if there was a potential problem that she (Heather) would handle it. Heather also expressed admiration for her daughter and how ‘tough’ and independent she is. The children like to be around their mom and do what she asks them to do willingly. She loves being able to put her
youngest to sleep by lying down by him, it is a relaxing experience for both of them. She has a lot of commitment to her children’s activities as they are involved in multiple sports. The children are expected to do their work before they can play or go to their friends’ houses, and that is enforced.

During the times the researcher was there, Heather wore comfortable looking exercise outfits. Depending on what they had done that morning she was either wearing make-up or not. One time she felt comfortable enough to apply her make-up while watching the show. Heather also always had her nails done. She is pretty and seems like she is fairly friendly.

**Summary**

From reading Heather’s transcripts, several aspects about how she watches the soap opera and how it all affects any possible parasocial relationships become apparent. First, although Heather does not always have the time to watch *General Hospital*, she has a strong desire to watch it. Although the stories may not be as interesting to her now as they have been in the past, she still wants to watch it enough that she wishes to subscribe to the SoapNet cable station to watch the show at night when she has more time to enjoy it. Second, her family watched the show together when she was a teenager and now they still watch it and talk about it, and discussing it is a large part of the enjoyment of the show. Third, even though Heather acknowledges that the show is impractical in some cases, she does feel there is realism to be found, but she would like that realism to be similar to the things that she experiences. In other words, the show could be more satisfying if there were greater parallels to her experiences in some cases such as having a long-term stable couple. Fourth, Heather does not apply the same value system she uses
in her own life to what she wants to have happen with the characters or storylines on the show. In that way she moves easily between reality and fantasy.

**Dimensions of This Social Situation**

The physical place that the viewing and interview took place was in Heather’s house. There is a big living room that opens into a large kitchen/dining area. The house has high ceilings and the colors are muted. The house has a very classy feeling. The television was large and the couches were place around it. Every time the researcher was there, the house was clean, without clutter, except for a few dirty dishes.

During the times that we would watch, we would just sit on the couch. Heather told me that normally she would be cleaning the rooms upstairs or doing laundry upstairs, but her son was asleep and so she did not want him to wake up. During commercials she would set up nail appointments or call to check on her children at other people’s homes. She had more on her mind than just what was on the show. She seemed to be thinking about what she had to do for that night or what needed to get done after the show was over.

The physical things in the room were very nice and looked like they came out of an Ethan Allen catalogue. She had LDS pictures of temples and Joseph Smith on the walls. There was also some secular art that was very beautiful. The only indication of children in the living room area was a basket of toys.

The television is normally on all day long. Downstairs it is on the Disney channel, while upstairs it is on the soaps. She does not pay attention to all the shows, maybe five minutes here or there, but with *General Hospital* she is generally more attentive.
Heather enjoys the show most when it ends with a song showing all the different characters in their situations, or if they show a lot of clips and it brings back memories of really good storylines, then that is an especially satisfying day. Heather also remembers specific events in storylines that were just so good that she had to call up her sister and talk to her about it. Two of the days the researcher watched with Heather left her feeling gratified and happy about the show, saying, “it was a good day.”

*Creating an Environment*

Heather has a harder time watching the soap opera now, “I probably watch it two or three times a week. Just cause there is too much going on to watch it. It was easier to watch when I just had one or two little kids. They just took naps and we didn’t go anywhere. But now we are just running around......in the day is just getting too hard. I mean if I am here I watch it for sure, but......” So in order to maximize her viewing time, Heather has several things she does to create an ideal situation for her to watch her soap opera without feeling guilty about watching. First,

“I love when, I usually will wait until two to put my little boy down for his nap. So since he likes to lay on the bed with me and I will turn it on or otherwise I will have to lay there with nothing so if I wait till two then I can watch it. And it is definitely my turn to go in there and shut the door and not have to talk to anyone and I can put my kid to sleep as an excuse.”

The second thing Heather does is:

“I clean the bedrooms. I wait to clean upstairs until the afternoon. But I like to have the TV on all day....This TV [downstairs] is on Disney Channel all day and the TV upstairs is on soaps but I don’t turn it on until 12:30. I don’t get upstairs until then and then I leave it on and I like to watch Oprah too.”

Heather sometimes felt before that she needed to justify her time but now:

“I just think it is good for me. It is an hour that usually I am working folding laundry or something like that but if not I just, I don’t. If I did all of them [watch soap operas], but since it is just the one that I really like and usually I am not here.”
In sum, Heather feels fine about taking this hour to be her time as all the rest of it is devoted to her children and home. This is her leisure activity in a hectic life and it is relaxing to her and she enjoys it quite a bit. But if she has things that she needs to do, she will. It is not a question of whether she will watch the show, but rather if she is home to do so.

History of Watching

Heather started intermittently watching soap operas in junior high school with her mother and younger sister. After the family moved to Arizona when Heather was in 9th grade watching the show changed:

"I really got into the soaps when in early high school we moved when I was in the ninth grade to Arizona and so everyday we would come home and watch it but I didn’t know anybody and I didn’t have any friends and so that was nice. If we were going to miss it we would tape it and stuff. Yeah, so we relied on it more then I think. It was more something to look forward to."

Even after she moved back to Utah to attend college both her mom and sister would still watch *Days of Our Lives*, “it was kind of a family thing.” Heather watched *Days of Our Lives* with her roommates at college also: “All my roommates watched it and so we would all sit down and talk about it and have a drink and just go ohhhhh, and that kind of stuff, kind of a social thing.”

But then the show began to get too weird for her:

“And they were possessed and levitating and it got more into the supernatural science fiction stuff and I, it used to be like *General Hospital* is now......And I don’t know how I started watching *General Hospital*. Someone I must have known watched it and said that it was good. I think I turned it on one day and something big happened like someone was being shot and it was showers and music playing and romance and you know and I was like this is good and then I started watching because Stone was sick.”
The shows were on at similar times and so she would watch them both: "And then I just quit watching Days altogether. But I liked General Hospital and it was like Days used to be and so I got my mom and my sister."

**Stories/Storylines**

Heather’s favorite part of watching General Hospital is the romance. One of the times the researcher viewed with her, it was an anniversary show and there were a lot of clips from past shows. One of the clips just showed a former couple kissing and Heather had this to say about it:

"Oh, that was the best, I remember that day......they had just didn’t like each other and then they kissed. And then he grabbed her and kissed her and pushed her up against the wall. I called my sister and said did you see that?"

This was one of Heather’s favorite couples and it had probably been about five or six years since this couple had last been together and yet it still stayed with her.

On another show watched with her, a song was played while showing several different characters. The words of the song were poignant considering the life situations of these particular characters.

"My favorite parts of the show are when they have the song at the end and they show all the different people. But they haven’t done that in a long time. Or if they do one couple with a song or something."

As part of another extended clip set, an emotional story made Heather tear up. This story involved one child needing a heart transplant, and the best friends of the parents having their daughter die in a car crash and giving her heart to her friend. Seeing all these stories made Heather comment that they haven’t really had a good story like that in a long time:

"Sometimes, maybe every once a month or maybe once every two months you can’t wait for the next one but other than that lately it has just been like, I am happy to see it and sometimes it is good to see it and I’ll call my sister and say did you see that? And she’ll be like oh my heck. Luckily it’s not like that everyday or it could ruin your life."
Heather has several problems with the soap opera currently:

“They have [had some cool stories] and it seems like lately they are taking too long. I hate when it take too long to get to the story. It is like hurry and get there and then make up a new story....It is like they only have one story and they think they have to make it go on forever and ever and ever.”

The specific types of storylines Heather does not like are:

“Sometimes, there are some storylines I hate. Like when someone gets murdered and they think it is someone that it is not and they do the courtroom and I hate to watch those storylines because they drag on and I hate those and the fighting. I don’t like the Helena, I don’t like the Luke chasing people and Felicia and being spies and stuff like that. I don’t like that. I just like the normal people stories.”

The stories she is referring to involve a character that does horrible things to others, never gets caught and has come back to life several times. Even though Heather likes the romance and normal people stories she doesn’t like it when “they get too young like the high school kind of stuff.” Nor does she like it when:

“I hate triangle things. Or one girl likes a guy and he likes a different girl and she likes a different guy. I just like the guy to like the girl who likes him and nobody trying to break them up.”

Heather can also see certain patterns within the stories, “Sometimes they say stuff but it is more obvious and stuff like they will say I wonder who killed so and so and then in the next scene it shows the person.”

In sum, Heather likes a more quickly paced realistic storyline. The romantic parts of the stories have the biggest appeal while the more ‘exciting’ elements cause her to do her laundry or do something else while that part is on.

Characters/Actors

Integral to enjoying the storylines are the characters and actors. There are certain characters that are more interesting or fun to watch:

“I like Sonny and those people: Jax and Brenda and Jason and those people that are associated with him. I think Sonny is a really good actor. I think when you
watch him he is just really good to watch. I don’t know if he has a lot of charisma or whatever but when you are watching you are just kind of mesmerized by him. Not that I think he is that big of a babe or whatever. I mean I like some of the girls but I definitely like watching the guys better.”

Sonny is a mobster that launders money, Jason is a hit man for the mob, Brenda is Sonny’s dead ex-girlfriend and Jax is a multi-millionaire businessman that was married to Brenda. Of these characters only Sonny and Jax are on the show. When asked if she would follow the character or actor to another show, Heather replied,

“If someone I really liked did, then, like if Jason did yeah, I probably would. [Even if he was a different character] I would probably watch it for a while and see how he was. Usually it is because you like the character.”

Heather would not like to have her favorite character over for dinner, feels like she has nothing in common with them, and claims to not miss them if she has not watched in a while, but wishes that one character, Jason, would come back, and if her favorite characters are not on the show the day she watches it, she feels “disappointed.”

The characters that attract her include both physical looks and personality:

“Cause if they are really ugly but really nice then you know, and I hate to say it like Bobby she might have a good storyline but I just can’t get over that she has had a lot of surgery and augmentation and she looks like fake and her hair is like she is trying to be 20 and I just want to say grow old gracefully. Yeah, looks are a lot of it. If they weren’t good looking…there are a lot of good-looking people on the show that just don’t do it for me.”

Liking the character is more about the character rather than a good storyline:

“Usually I just like the characters because sometimes they will give them a cool storyline and they still bug me. Even the new Carly is starting to grow on me a little bit. But she bugged me for a long time….Even AJ, well, maybe that is not true, because if they made AJ a likeable person I might like him, but…”

Heather also feels that some characters need to get over certain things. For example one of the storylines has two brothers facing off. One of the brothers, Nicholas,

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3 In real life she is about 50 or 60 and she wears very form fitting young clothes.
4 The actress was replaced a few months before.
5 An alcoholic playboy that does really horrible things.
has bribed witnesses to ‘forget’ that they saw his drunk girlfriend cause a crash and the other brother, Lucky, is now angry and hates Nicholas. After explaining this to me, Heather then said, “Lucky is acting ridiculous, get over it. I hate it when Lucky and Nicholas fight. I hate that stuff. Like I just want them to be nice and to be brothers.”

Heather also knows some things about the actors in real life, but she really does not have a desire to get to know them a lot, “I mean if I read something like I was interested to know that the one character had a baby and the other character was the dad, but I don’t want to, I don’t care that much.” But there is some sort of expectation that the actor will have some similarities to the character:

“Anyway, my sister got sick and the Make-a-Wish Foundation, she wanted to go meet Marlena and so they sent us to California and they paid and we went and watched Days of Our Lives be taped so that was a ton of fun. We got to meet all the people and she got all their autographs. I was surprised because they were different [than their characters]. Like I remember one girl on the show was outgoing and bubbly but in real life when we met her she talked really soft and really quiet and knelt down to talk to my sister and she was really quiet, she was really friendly but she was really sweet and quiet. And that was surprising. And of course the ones that were mean on the show were not at all they were very nice. So that was fun and because of that it made it all the more fun to watch because you had met the people and some of them were really nice like John Black and was real nice to my sister and kind of followed her around and so then when you watched it you were like you liked him more and of course I thought he was so cute.”

When asked how she would feel about being transported to Port Charles, Heather replied:

“No, no. It is never as good. I love Steve Young and I think he is so cute and you have this image of this perfect guy, the bachelor, but I know that in real life I don’t want to meet him and I don’t want to know him because no one is that perfect. You have images in your head and I just want to think that way. I don’t want to know that. I am the same with these characters.”

The result of all this is that Heather has specific characters she likes to watch but not be too involved in their personal lives because she likes the image she has of them now. She has never looked on the Internet and only reads the magazines while standing in line at the grocery story. She does wonder about how the actors’ spouses feel about
them kissing others so passionately. It is also interesting to note that Heather never refers to the actors by their real names, only by the character names.

**Religious Influence**

When asked if she felt that being Mormon affected the way she watched a soap opera, Heather answered:

"Kind of in that I don’t agree with what they are doing but on the other hand I know that is how a lot of the people in the world live, you know, sometimes I will be...no not really. I think they try to give the good people good morals except for the sex part. But you don’t see them, like the people that are doing drugs they are bad people. You know what I mean, so except for the immorality part and I just think that is how it is. It doesn’t make me want to run out and do that."

What makes this interesting is that Heather’s favorite character is a money laundering mobster that has people killed by her other favorite character. A previous mobster had started dealing drugs and that had been dealt with harshly before, so maybe that is considered a worse action than money laundering. As mentioned before with the Lucky and Nicholas storyline, Heather wanted Lucky to get over a major illegal action that Nicholas had done so they could be friends again. With the issues of sex, Heather feels that is how people outside of her sphere live and so even though the soap opera does not portray her values, it is more realistic about the world in that area.

Heather’s family also made watching the show a family activity, with her dad even coming home from work to watch it. The attitude of her friend’s mother seems a bit more common to other Mormon homes:

"I remember in junior high watching it and she would come over and we would watch it but when we went over to her house cause it was on at three, and that is why I watched it because it was on after school or I would have never known. And then we would go over to her house and her mom would get mad at us for watching it so we would watch it at our house."
Basically, Heather is fine with the attitudes and behaviors portrayed on the show and she does not care if her children watch it with her. There is not any guilt or feeling that she needs to stop watching.

*Life Situation*

Heather is essentially happy with her life, although there is “always room for improvement” and she feels “a little overwhelmed” she is happy. She feels good about all her relationships with her family and friends. And when asked if there was anything she could change about her life she replied:

“I wouldn’t change one thing except for the housekeeper. I just feel like I am failing miserable in that because there is so much going on and there is not enough me. It is like I used to be a small business and now we are a large company and I haven’t hired anyone else. Here we are and it used to just be us and we ran smoothly and now we are this large corporation and I am the only employee. But yeah, I am really happy.”

Perhaps this contentment comes from always wanting to be a mom and being able to do it. Heather says that the life she is living is what she always wanted. She really doesn’t have “a big desire to go get a career or anything. I never did.” She just wants to be a parent and grandparent. Heather only compared real life to the soap opera in one instance when commenting about kissing on soap operas: “I don’t kiss that much anymore.”

**Carly**

Carly is a 43 year old woman with seven children ages 20, 18, 17, 16, 14, 13 and, 11. She was born in Los Angeles and grew up in Arizona and Kansas and now lives in West Jordan, Utah. She graduated from high school, worked in an at home daycare, then as a shoe sales manager. After she was married 9 months she had her 1st child and has not worked outside the home since. She now tends two children during the day. Her husband is a facility manger for the LDS church and their income is between $70-80,000.
Summary

Perhaps the most observable aspect of Carly's transcripts is how curious she is about the researcher's life. The questions she asks deal with parts of the researcher's life that Carly finds important and interesting, probably because they are the things she focuses on in her life: children, what to have for dinner, shopping around for good deals and parents. The second noticeable aspect is that Carly had stopped watching the shows when her children were older and in school and she could leave more easily. Now that she has two daycare children and she is at home during their nap, she has started to watch again. So even though Carly enjoys watching the shows, it seems more a function of situation rather than desire. Third, Carly had a hard time remembering stories and characters, especially those she was not especially interested in. It is possible that after 23 years of watching the shows, all the stories and characters blend together and there really is not a lot of emotional involvement on the part of Carly. Fourth, she really does enjoy watching the shows, and watching the actors on different shows; but she does not go as far as memorizing the actors' names or their personal situation. Carly just finds it appealing to watch the actors on other shows and it is even more fun if they become movie stars, like Meg Ryan.

Fifth, although Carly knows the show is unrealistic in some ways, she would enjoy it more if there more parallels to her life. She commented quite frequently about the children on the shows and how unrealistic the parental relationships were. The shows would be more enjoyable if they kept at least one or two relationships stable. Sixth, Carly feels no embarrassment about watching the soap operas or the values they portray despite having fairly conservative religious views. Once again, the line between reality and fantasy is blurred in favor of watching the shows.
Dimensions of This Social Situation

Carly lives in a split level home that is beautifully decorated. She is not afraid to take chances such as painting her home in a new style or things like that. Her house was very clean and the front room carpet had a plastic covering for where one was supposed to walk. The majority of pictures in the home were of the family. The living room had over a hundred movie cassettes and DVDs. While we were there she had her children stay in the basement to not wake up the children asleep upstairs. Her home had a very peaceful, calm feeling in it.

Carly's personality is very practical. We discussed grocery shopping and she knew exactly how much things cost at three major grocery stores. She also displayed a lot of curiosity about me. Carly wanted to know everything about my child, how many we were planning on having, pregnancy, my husband's career, where we were going to live, my living arrangements and anything of that nature. Things that were important to her, like children, were probably the most discussed. She did not seem to be shy in any way and she liked to talk rather than watch as was shown during each of my eight times at her home. Carly likes to know what is going on and hear stories about people's lives.

Exactly what made a satisfying viewing experience was not really discussed, except she does not like it when the storylines are stupid. She seems to prefer the romance storylines for how the relationship is between the couple. Carly watches almost everyday but she does not seem to be personally affected by what goes on in the show. It is hard to determine if watching is just a habit reinforced by her situation now or if she truly tunes in to watch people she cares about.
Creating An Environment

One of the times that the researcher was scheduled to watch the show with Carly, she had not realized it and so when the researcher arrived the daycare children (2 kids) were still up and playing and the living room area was a mess with toys all around it and a Disney movie was playing on the television. Within five minutes of arriving, Carly had put the children down for a nap and cleaned up the toys and we began to watch the show. She has the children on a schedule and that involves naps at a certain time everyday so that frees up her time to watch the show: “If the kids are up then I don’t ever watch it just cause I am doing other things and most of the time when I watch them I am ironing and folding clothes or something.” While I watched with her, Carly just sat on the couch with me.

A few times Carly was too busy to have the researcher come and watch with her, and when asked if she still watched on those days she said, “Well, I had the TV on while I was doing stuff around the house some of the time. But I haven’t seen it everyday all the time.”

Watching the show seems to be more of a function of being there with the television, rather than having a strong urge to watch.

History of Viewing

Carly first started watching soap operas while working in a home daycare: “Well back then because they took naps for 2 hours and we woke them up after. So I only got to watch 2 hours and then they weren’t all an hour long.” She was 18 years old at the time. After she was married and had children of her own she watched them more because their naptime was convenient to watch the “soapies.” After her children were older and Carly wasn’t as tied to the house she watched irregularly. But since she has
started to watch two children during the day she has started to watch them more again during their naptime. She has always watched all the “soapies” on CBS.

When asked what caught her eye about these particular soap operas, Carly answered:

“Well, just because you can miss them and come back and follow them and it’s the same characters and it is just the daily thing, seeing and I guess the next day like today they ended with that shadow so there has to be something coming up. I guess when you watch them this long you feel like you know them and you feel sorry for them and you know all that stuff.”

Sometimes, when her children were little it became almost real to her, or at least something to talk about:

“I have said things a few times a few years back when the kids were all little and I was home and stuff and I didn’t get out or do a whole lot at night and I would tell him [her husband] about something and then remember it was on the soapie and not in real life cause I was thinking about a situation and you know we would be talking about something and then it was like gosh, so and so said today and then I would realize it was the soapie and I would have to stop. And it hasn’t happened in a while.”

Show/Storyline

For the most part, Carly expressed feelings about the storylines she did not like. She does not pay attention to the stories she has no interest in:

“That went on forever. I don’t even know where that one went. I don’t know who is in charge now at all. They are both back here in this city now. I don’t know how it ended up. There was a baby they were adopting or something and the birth mother of the baby said if you don’t let the birth father be the president of the country and have this birthright then you can’t have the baby or something stupid like that. So I don’t know what is going on with it now. Just something dumb. Well, they are all dumb.”

Although she does say that there are some interesting stories going on now. The main one she is interested in involves Ross and Blake, and Carly even makes predictions about how the story will turn out. So it is not as though it is the suspense that is causing her to have an interest, rather it is the story about the characters:
“There is a girl that interfered with them and Ross slept with her but didn’t tell Blake and the girl ended up being psycho. And supposedly the girl is dead but you know she will come back cause there was never any body. The girl that was stalking Ross, she was married before and her husband died and Harley went in and found that the girl had pictures of, she thought it was Ross but it was her first husband, but they looked just like each other so it is kinda a dumb line that way. Ross probably has a twin somewhere.”

Yet even within this romance storyline Carly has some frustration with the writers’ lack of remembering history:

“What is so dumb with their storyline all the time is that Blake, they have a set of twins and one of the twins is Ross’s and the other one is the doctor Rick Bauers and then Ross has an affair later with someone and yet she leaves him for it and they aren’t married and they don’t forgive each other.”

With the majority of storylines, Carly likes to predict what future calamities will befall the characters. Even though she thinks they are “stupid”, Carly still likes to see what is going to happen:

“If Tori comes in she will just kidnap both of them, tie them up. Since they have all this information she has got to show up now. It won’t serve any purpose to just have Blake go home and say I’m sorry Ross and let’s get back together. Something dramatic has to happen. Tori has got to show up. But today is only Wednesday and so on Friday somebody has to show up.”

Even though Carly would like to see the couples stable and happy, she knows ultimately there will always be some sort of conflict or something to complicate everything. This is the paradox involved in soap opera storytelling, keeping the viewer hoping that each time something will work better and the character will finally be able to be happy, but the seasoned viewer knows that soap opera storytelling does not work that way, there will always be difficulties.

*Character/Actor*

Of the specific characters on *Guiding Light*, Carly has these things to say:
"He plays this macho character and then does this little wimpy thing to Harley all the time. She is falling right into his trap....She just needs to find some nice guy."

"He has done some trashy things on this show really but his character has always been a sweet guy. Like he got Harley pregnant and the other half of the twin and then he was with Beth at one time when they were younger. And he really didn't pass his medical exams or something they said he had cheated or something on them. But he has this angelic look or something. And that guy back there always has an arrogant look on his face. And the two of these they look more nice. Danny just looks like trouble on his face."

The way the character physically looks has some bearing on how Carly responds to the character.

Carly has her own theory about the relationship between character and actor: "I like, something appeals to that about how they adjust their personality, to me it seems like the scripts are written towards a lot of their personality on the ones I watch." When asked if the characters are real-to-life Carly applies that theory again:

"I don't know. I have seen a lot of them on different shows and you just see them, like seeing Meg Ryan watching her from As The World Turns from there a lot of them, they really are, I don't know if the actor will say they are stereotyped or stuff like that, but a lot of them their personality comes out and so I can see them on different things and know that they got to be like that. Even in interviews I have seen them on and they talk the same. I know they wouldn't be sleeping with 17 people. I just think some of the characters are close to the person who they are. A lot of the shows I think they do a real good job putting somebody with the personality. Like that Carmen, she looks like she would be that kind of more aggressive person. I don't know. I think they do a good job as far as putting someone as how they look, if they look rough and stuff."

The way the actors look fits into how Carly thinks they should for the part they are playing.

Her favorite characters are from Guiding Light:

"I've liked Reva and Josh well, their storylines have gotten stupid over the years at different times. But Reva just because she is a bubbly personality and stuff and um, Josh and he hasn't been on in a little bit but he has always been a nice guy. I have just like watching him over the years because he has been the same character, I mean the same person playing the part for so long. You know, you see them get old and stuff. Those are probably my two favorites on the show and.
I do like Harley cause I have seen her for quite a few years cause she was supposed to be like 16 on the show.”

If the character is not on the show the day that she watches it, Carly wonders about what real-life circumstances had that happen:

“...Even like today, cause he wasn’t on there today I sit there and think, I wonder what he was doing and why he is on vacation and why isn’t he on instead of somebody else, you know. It is okay, but after a few days you start wondering if they went to another show or what they do, kill them off or something. Yeah I wondered like today I haven’t seen him in a few days.”

Carly is able to see the actor and the character as the semi-same person. They seem to have meshed in her mind, yet at the same time, she has a hard time remembering any of the characters’ names and she never calls them by the actor’s names. There seems to be less emotion tied to the characters and actors. It is possible that she has watched long enough to know that everyone comes and goes and so does not really get attached.

Carly would like to meet the actors, but only if she won some trip or something, not to spend her own money. She actually has gone to a home show and seen some of the actors and that was fun for her, but she would not want to have them over to her home because it would be “awkward.” Carly prefers looking at them from a distance. But she does think it would be fun to meet some of her favorite actors.

A way that Carly likes to keep track of what previous actors are doing is by watching their shows in prime time:

“Well, I have on if they have switched and gone to evening shows I have. To see if I like that and a few of them have switched from one soapie to another but it has always been the same. Most of mine have gone to some evening show and so I have watched to see. Like even I remember, um, Designing Women used to have one of the women that I liked on the soap opera, they had an old Reva on one time and so I watched it then. If I knew and there is that show Providence, she used to be Eleni and so I watched that for a while because I like her on that show. So yeah, I do, if I know. But I don’t if soap opera’s, you would have to flip quite a bit because I know some of them have and even Alan Micheal switched and he is on Bold and Beautiful now. And he was on another show too he was on one other
show after he was on *Guiding Light* maybe it started out as *As The World Turns* so I saw him.”

In her mind even though actors switch shows, they still play essentially the same characters, and she is more interested in their evening shows than soap operas on other channels.

Physical attractiveness has never been one of Carly’s criteria for liking a certain character. It is more interesting for her to create couples, possibly trying to make the show more like her life:

“I more like if there, I just, to me, I look at it like they are good to each other. I don’t know if I look at him and think oh he’s a hunk and you know and drooled over him and things and mostly I just look at him and think I wish so and so would get together with so and so. But if someone is ugly I always think….I don’t think of any of them that I have really looked at and thought oh, he is some hunk or something. Mostly I pair them up with someone on the show.”

An interesting note: Carly moves back and forth with the characters and actors giving real-life reasons for behaviors and absences. Even though she has watched long enough to know how things work on soap operas she still would like to see stable happy couples.

*Religious Influence*

Carly has a son on a mission and one 18 year-old daughter that just got married. In talking about her daughter’s possible choices, some of the values that are important to her show through:

“She doesn’t have a job yet and I think she just wants to have a family and if David said yes I think she would want to just stay-at-home and take care of kids. And I can’t really say that because in the church and she has been out of school over a year and we have been trying to get her to go to school saying we would pay for her to go anywhere and she had no interest at all. See I worked from the time I got out of high school until I got married and I never would have dreamt of not working and just staying home and doing nothing, but when she graduated we couldn’t get her to get a job and what do you do? Threaten them? I don’t know what we did or what happened, she likes to scrapbook and do homemaking stuff.
I can’t discourage her from that. And now David [her daughter’s husband] is gone for 8 more weeks and they are not really sure about when...He is getting intelligence training and they don’t know when or where that is exactly going to happen and she hasn’t heard from him yet.”

There is a conflict in Carly’s mind about what she should encourage her daughter to do. Before she got married, after she graduated from high school, Carly and her husband tried everything they could to get her to get a job and go to school, but it didn’t work. And now that she is married and has a desire to stay at home and have children, it is hard for Carly to know how to respond. Carly and her husband were 22 and 24 when they got married and so they had children right away, but her daughter is only 18, has no schooling, and the uncertainty of having her husband in the military which combines to create a less than ideal situation for having children.

Carly has never felt that she needed to justify watching the show but she feels that being Mormon has changed the way she views it:

“Well, when I watch some of the stuff I think about it and I think, no, it makes me angry cause of my standards that they do some of the stuff on there but I know it is just a show entertainment thing. No, I wish sometimes they wouldn’t. But to me when I would flip channels over the years mine don’t have as many bed scene or they start them and then like they did today and go off to something else.”

She uses shows on other channels to justify the little bit of skin that her show uses.

The only time Carly cares if her children see the show is if there is an intimate scene:

“...If the kids come in and there is some scene going on, not so much now that they have gotten bigger and stuff, but if I am watching from 11-12 or something and the little kids come in I will say oh gross, and change the channel cause they are 4 and 2 [referring to daycare children] so I will do that, but my kids, there is not, I guess I still do flick it, the channel. But they don’t even care.”

But she prefers to watch the show alone because she does not want to answer questions about what is going on or the characters’ motivations. For the most part her children find the show boring and so they will get up and leave.
Life Situation

Carly brings real-life skepticism to the situations presented on the show, probably because she relates them to her life. One of the main discrepancies she sees is how the children are taken care of on the show. This could be uppermost in her mind because her whole life revolves around taking care of her children. It is amazing to her that the characters hardly ever interact with their children or that they just leave on trips all the time even when they just had a baby a few months before: “See I think she has a couple, two little kids, little ones cause I think her babies are only a year apart but you never see them.”

Another part of comparing reality to the soap operas is where the supposedly rich characters live:

“Ross Marler is supposed to be this big lawyer over the years and yet in their house that is the only room I have ever seen in their house and that is the only thing I have seen in their house ever over all the years on the show. There is just their living room I guess, but it is so small.....and Spauldings you see the front and different rooms in the house but all I ever see is that. And I have seen Bauers house, the living room and the kitchen.....But Marlers have this small little room, cottage-like and they have three little kids and it is really small.”

This could be something she notices because of knowing how hard it is to have a lot of children in a small house.

Carly also finds it amusing that characters are willing to do intimate acts in a family common room:

“See this front room is the whole family’s. It’s Tony’s and Catalina and all those guys that were always in the front room....Oh sure they are all in the same house now she is all private. She comes out in her lingerie like no one is supposed to see her6 ....Okay, this is the living room that everyone walks into. This is the family’s house and they are going to make out on the couch7.”

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6 This story involved a newly married couple where the husband had not come to be the night before and so the wife was trying to seduce him in a very skimpy negligee. But the grandmother came in and the girl acted all surprised and indignant.

7 One of the women that live in the home seduced a man on the couch in order to gain membership in a country club.
From her remarks, Carly found certain aspects of the situation unbelievable enough to make three separate comments about it during two viewings.

Carly is a fairly contented and happy person. She has things under control at her house and enjoys her homemaking duties. The hardest part of her life right now is trying to deal with her teenagers; the only thing she would wish for is that “teenagers would be easier.” Her relationships with her husband and children are satisfactory the only change she would make is that:

“Just, um, it is just, um, all things have to do with the kids and it would just be more that it would not be as draining emotionally. Little kids are physically draining and teenagers are emotionally draining. If it was just that part was quickly over with. Then I would be all right.”

Being a mom is all Carly ever wanted:

“I didn’t ever want to have a career, I didn’t dare want any of that. I am content as far as that goes. I just wish I could do the teenage part some more. I was a good teenager and stuff. I didn’t ever get in trouble or anything so I just assumed that if you did the right things that your kids would do all the right things and it would all be wonderful. But.....”

She did think she might want some more excitement in her life, but mostly she is just looking forward to having grandchildren to spoil.

Rachel

Rachel is a 38 year old mother of six children ages 17, 14, 12, 8, 6, and 4. She was born and grew up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She joined the LDS church when she was 18, at which time she moved to Utah. While she was pregnant with her third child she quit work at Signetics as a material planner to finish her associates’ degree in business. Rachel has been a stay-at-home mom ever since. Her husband is a lighting director for movies and commercials around Utah, and although their income varies because they are self-employed, they make over $100,000 per year.
Summary

The most conspicuous characteristic of Rachel's soap opera watching is her obvious unhappiness with her life and the way that influenced the intensity of her feelings for the show. Rachel became so involved with the show that she would imagine herself as a part of the town and think about the show all the time, but then something changed and now the show has become a frustration for her to watch. Why? Because ultimately she will never have things happen like they do on soap operas. Life will never be as romantic or as exciting as the stories on All My Children. Rachel will never get to leave all the things that are making her unhappy and suddenly become a millionaire and find the love of her life waiting with dinner and roses every night. Once she became more aware of that, watching the show simply became an annoying reminder of how her life would never be. Second, Rachel acted out a scene from the show for a class; she knows all of the actors' names and stories about their personal lives. If she could not have Pine Valley in real life, then the next best thing would be to act there. Third, Rachel feels a need to justify her time in watching by saying it is the only show she watches. Yet there is some sort of shame that she feels shown by how her husband feels about watching the show and even that the Church advises against it.

Dimensions of the Social Situation

Rachel lives in a crowded home. The house is too small for the large furnishings it has. They own a large screen television within a huge wood entertainment center. There are two large leather couches and a computer desk in the front room also. Even though the house was not messy per se, it is very cluttered. Rachel is moving across the street and they are fixing up that house to be more accommodating to all their things.
Rachel said she wants to have a place for everything so her new house will not look like the current one.

The emotional feeling in the home was one of tension. The children do not respect Rachel’s requests and only when she resorted to multiple threats would they obey her. In planning times for the researcher to come and view the show with her, Rachel was careful to make sure it was when her husband was gone as he is very against her watching it. During the second interview, the husband was home and they got into a minor fight while the researcher was there. That changed the tone and substance of some of the answers to the interview questions.

Because Rachel has worked slightly in the entertainment industry, she felt she could speak knowledgeably about the different aspects of the show. She was much more critical about flaws in the writing, characterizations and acting. Rachel had also just started watching another show, *Ally McBeal*, and was very excited about it, possibly the same feelings she had when she first started watching *All My Children*, and it was interesting to see how that was in her thoughts.

**Creating an Environment**

Rachel mentioned quite a few times that she was very busy and did not have time to watch any other television: “I just don’t have time for it in my life and this would be the one thing I would take my time for. And I used to just sit like this and watch it and cry and bawl and laugh and….” In commenting on watching the show she says that it is “more time taken from my life, but it is my time to take once or twice.” Now when she watches *All My Children* “I rarely ever sit and watch this show, I pick up or vacuum or if my husband is home I barely get to watch it. Sometimes I will be doing the checkbook.”
Rachel does say that she has too many thing to just sit and watch a show yet at the same time feels that “I am allowed to have my time too, just like anybody else in the world.”

When she first started to watch the show, Rachel would not answer the phone during the show. She also would not let her kids talk to her and if she had a baby, she would nurse the baby during the show so as to have as few interruptions as possible. Rachel says she is not as riveted at this time as she was a few years ago and even though she normally does work during the show, she felt that “this is nice cause I can sit and watch it. I am actually sit[ting] and watch without doing something at the same time except for talking about it.”

**History of Watching**

Rachel first began watching *All My Children* after several people told her she looked like Susan Lucci\(^8\) in high school. Rachel used both the words looked like and acted like Susan Lucci at least once per viewing and interview. Those comments have really stuck with her for a long time:

> “People used to tell me I acted like Erica Kane and now that I know what Erica is like I think that was a slam cause I was a flirt…..I started watching this show because people started telling me that you look like Erica Kane and when I was in high school people said you act like Erica Kane. Always new girls that didn’t like me. [laughs] I didn’t know who Erica Kane was so I watched it a few times and then I started watching it many years later when I ….I used to tape it everyday when I was at work and I would come home and watch it.”

After her initial interest was sparked by the Susan Lucci comments, there were other factors that kept her watching:

> “And I thought oh, that is interesting. I watched it again and the storylines and then it would be like someone would die and I would say I am not going to watch this show anymore until this person comes back Or I am going to watch the show until they come back, just the opposite.”

\(^8\)The actress that plays Erica Kane.
Taping the shows was a way that Rachel could watch the show everyday when she was working or at school. At times she would even tape it while she was watching:

“Like today I put it on for a few minutes and maybe tomorrow I will put it on if I have the time but before I was here or that recorder was going and I never missed it and then sometimes I would record it while I was watching in case I missed a sentence.”

As her perception of the show’s storylines has changed so has her motivation to watch the show:

“There was a point in time when it was don’t you dare talk to me when the show is on. Don’t you dare call, I will let the phone ring and the answering machine get it. It was like nooooo......Although now I do stuff if I watch it and before I would just sit there and watch it and I would be like shhhhhh no noise and I would nurse my babies so they would be quiet.”

But now if she videotapes it she will “fast forward through of course the commercials and I will fast forward through the characters that I am not interested in. Like this...who cares?” Now if Rachel has the show on she “makes phone calls or whatever. I will talk, you know, while the show is on and keep a second ear out for when an interesting part comes on.” So there was a point in time when Rachel would tape religiously if she was going to miss the show, but now if she is there she watches it, but if not it does not really bother her.

When Rachel was in an acting class she needed to pick a scene to do for her teacher:

“Actually I was in an acting class one time at college and we had to pick a scene from something and do it and I had taped the scene when Arlene tells her the story of how Harry is not her father and Adam is and there is all this crying and all this stuff going on, and this girl and I did it and it was really good, it was pretty fun because I was all wrapped up in the show and everything. Like I said I taped it when I went to college.”
Rachel felt this storyline enough to use it for a class. By doing this scene Rachel quite literally became a part of the show. She was able to feel the emotions of being a Pine Valley resident and what it would be like to even act on the show if not be a character.

*Show/Storylines*

Rachel’s favorite reason for watching the show has also been what has made her so frustrated with it. One of her favorite storylines involved a couple, Gillian and Ryan. Gillian had been killed a few weeks before the viewing sessions and Rachel was having a hard time getting over that: “I tried to get interested in the show, but they killed Gillian. It is not so much that I loved her, it was just I really loved the two of them together and it was just enough.” In fact the only reason Rachel had decided to come back to watching the show was because her favorite actor was joining the cast, and that will be discussed further in the *Actor/Character* category. Rachel’s opinion of the show is that it has become “garbage.”

In the past when Rachel watched, there were also frustrating aspects of the show:

“And sometimes I would get mad if they did dumb stuff like I got real sick of the Janet story and it just drug on forever and ever like when she threw Natalie in the well and stuff like that. And of course you wanted to watch it then but you know I just got sick of it….A lot of times I did change the channel during when those characters were on. A lot of times I taped it and fast forwarded through that part.”

Now there are even fewer reasons to watch the show and Rachel blames it on the writers:

“Oh, the dumb writers. You know they have had a bunch of trouble having writers on this one….Yeah, the head writer has been changed several times in the last few months. So they are lacking direction, like Rosa and Marcus, who cares? I don’t care. Give me Gillian and Ryan on the show. I wish Adam and Liza would stay together. I think when they got rid of Ruth, Ruth was Joe Martin’s wife, that was probably like the dumbest decision cause they would have like one stable couple and that was great.”

But the overall problem that Rachel sees is that there are not any good storylines anymore, that “they have all these triangles…and you know I am just sick of it.”
The last of Rachel’s criticisms of the show involves a heart transplant. Gillian was murdered on accident and another character’s heart was failing and so they put Gillian’s heart into Laura. Rachel had this to say:

“Sometimes they have really good stuff and sometimes they are really irresponsible like when they did the heart transplant. I think it was really impossible and I never thought about it till I read what other people wrote and I was like yeah. I remember thinking that it was too quick and you know there was like hardly any blood match types and you just don’t do it as quickly as they were doing it. So some of the stuff is pretty irresponsible.”

Basically Rachel would like the show to be more realistic, at least in this way. Yet she also claims that the fantasy is why she enjoys watching it:

“I just think it is so far-fetched, it is so unrealistic. And maybe that is why it is good or why I enjoyed watching it because it probably wouldn’t be true, that kind of thing.....it was so unreal.”

As with some of the other women, Rachel expects there to be enough realism that it could possibly happen but enough fantasy to keep it interesting.

Rachel’s favorite storylines have been the romances:

“You know and that is what brings enjoyment to me is to see how sweet they have these characters to each other. That is what I really like about watching the soap opera is when they have this long-term couple, and you want to see them make it.”

So it is hard for her when characters are broken up or killed because she just loves “all the romance and love they shared.” Rachel generalizes that feeling to all the characters “you know that it was so fun to watch the romance and they kind of take all the fun couples and [break them up]. But now they have the new romance in another corner with Erica and [Jack Scalia].”

There are some stories that Rachel remember very well, and would like to be able to watch them over again, some for the tears and others for the lighter moments:

“That was a good scene, I wish I had some of those on video tape. If I feel like having a tear jerker moment, that was incredible......Natalie and Trevor, probably
one of my very favorite moments is when they got married and they have this song playing when he is trying on different ties and stuff, 'I am too sexy for my shirt.' And they used to just have light fun times and it was so fun to watch then.”

And yet when asked about some of her favorite couple’s memories, she said, “There is too much to remember it all.” Rachel’s memory was so precise about some of the soap opera, yet could not even remember how her favorite character died.

The question one is left with after hearing Rachel talk about how much her feelings have shifted from positive to negative, is whether the show has really changed or if she has?

Actor/Character

Because of the bad storylines, Rachel had decided to stop watching All My Children, but she read on a chat board that her favorite actor, Jack Scalia, was joining the cast: “I can watch a show with dumb storylines, I don’t even care about it anymore, then I read one day that Jack Scalia was coming on and I can’t stop watching now.” Rachel had first watched him on re-runs of Dallas and had fallen for him then. Since he had only been on one episode before our first viewing time, Rachel had not had time to assess his character, but she was certain about his acting: “Jack Scalia is my favorite actor, I don’t know his character yet, but I am sure I will like it just because it is him and because of what he will bring to the character.” She was looking forward to seeing him in romance parts.

When Jack Scalia showed up on the screen Rachel had this to say:

“There he is! He’s aged, but charisma, you can’t erase charisma....I saw like a two minute episode between those two when he first appeared on the show a week ago from last Friday and it was instantly like, oh, yeah. Cause it was like his charisma came across. He is like a cross between the original Dmitri and Jackson.”
In describing him, Rachel says things like: “He just has such flair.” “How come more guys can’t look like him?” Look at his arms, they are so buff.” “A cutie, he is the perfect guy in this character, he could get away with anything he is so cute.” “I am in love with his personality.” Rachel was a little disappointed in his looks simply because he had aged over the past 20 years. But she was still very attracted to him. She is also very attracted to another of the male characters, Ryan: “If Ryan is on I come walking back in the room....That is the bad part of me. I am married, but you know that my eyes aren’t blind.”

One of the main complaints of any soap opera viewer is the lack of attention to the history of the characters, or when the writers decide to re-write history or even just ignore the older characters. This upsets Rachel because the characters have become like friends to her:

“They take the show that was great, and I think one of the worst things and I doubt it is the writers probably the producers but they take some of the old stable characters on the show that have been on there for 10 or 15 years and they just put them on the back burner and it would be more interesting to keep pursuing that storyline. Over the years you have watched their lives and you know it would be like me trying to keep tabs on Marsha after I moved away ....I kind of started getting pretty disgusted and not as interested more when they kept getting rid of main characters and bringing on a bunch of new characters. Where it was like a friendship thing where you had the old actors that were there that you had watched for five years and then they just for no reason, all of a sudden the actor is not there anymore. And they change the actor and change the character.”

Of her favorite characters only two are still on the show, Ryan and Jack Scalia. Those characters may lose Rachel’s interest because she feels the show is “too storyline driven.” That means the writers and producers do not pay attention to the character, they just manipulate them and change them to fit the storyline, which Rachel finds awful.
Perhaps Rachel’s all time favorite character was Dimitri. The actor had been using cocaine and was taken off the show and a replacement actor brought in. Rachel describes Dimitri:

“Oh, I loved how the actor that played the original Dimitri that he could turn it on and he was hilarious, but they didn’t let Dimitri do that very often and so when they did it, it just endeared him even more and um....what I liked about him was his charm, charisma and his warmth and how he was such a prince yet very normal and he endeared you and he was someone that you would want to be around probably because he had the sense of taking care of everything.....When he rescued Natalia, as he would call her, out of the well, talk about my favorite moments, that was like wow, it was so romantic, that it just takes you in and keeps you for a while.”

When Rachel was talking about Dimitri, she minimalized his drug problem because she felt it ruined the show for her: “Like they got rid of Dimitri you know, I know the reasons they got rid of Dimitri, nevertheless....They shouldn’t have, that just destroyed the show.” She remembers specific events that utilized his comedic ability and how much that added to her enjoyment of the show.

Rachel’s favorite romantic story was that of Trevor and Natalie. She liked the characters together, but she also liked Trevor after Natalie left the show. This is Rachel describing how she felt about these two characters:

“Trevor, you know, I can’t even really remember why I liked Trevor, except maybe the same type of thing. He had some funny stuff too. Especially I liked he was a detective, I am really having a hard time figuring out why I like Trevor. I think it was the whole feeling.....I liked him after Natalie wasn’t on the show anymore but I really liked he and Natalie together and every time I hear the song ‘How Am I Supposed To Live Without You’, every single time I think of that because they played that song when Natalie died or when they broke up or one of the things it was. I just cried when I heard that song and um, Natalie because she had the same type things that Dimitri did that she was classy but very real and very vulnerable and that all about her. She seemed like she would be a good friend.”

These descriptions are very detailed in some ways, yet she has a hard time remembering specifically why she likes certain characters, even if they are her favorite. That may
make it hard for her to like new characters even though she really cannot remember the old.

Up until Jack Scalia, Ryan had been Rachel’s favorite character, but it had become increasingly hard for her to watch:

“....just because he is gorgeous, I mean how can you help it? But that guy, that character, what they have done to him just up and down and up and down and I get sick of watching it because of it. You don’t want to sit, I don’t want to see my friends go through that. And if you watch a show everyday like that they are like your friends. I don’t like it when bad things happen all the time.”

Bad things happening are a staple of soap operas, so something has changed to make these types of character problems seem less worth watching again. The changes could be with either Rachel, or as she claims, the writers and producers.

Recasts are also hard for any viewer of the show: “No, I don’t like recasts, because the character is the actor too. Some recasts have been a big-time failure.” It is hard to maintain the same level of feelings for a new person, even if they are the same character or have better acting abilities: “I liked the first Arlene best. The second one was a better actress, if they had just brought her in the first place but you know the first one and you develop something.”

Rachel has gotten more interested in the characters from knowing about the actors’ personal lives. Everything she finds out is from the internet and from standing in line by the grocery counter. Even though Rachel uses the actors names interchangeably with the characters’, she really did not have a lot to say about the actors’ personal lives except mentioning Dimitri’s drug problem and one former actor expecting her first baby. She would like to meet the actor or the character because the character would be “eccentric, unnormal and that would be entertaining.” Rachel made a promise to herself

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9 Ryan had lost his new wife Gillian to a gunshot. It had taken a long time for them to get together, and Rachel loved watching the romance between them.
that she would not watch anymore shows, and so even though she would like to see the actor or character in a new show, she would not because of that promise.

If Rachel were able to meet the actor in person, she would not expect him to act the same as the character because “of the industry that we are in and I have done some acting and I know how you can turn it on and turn it off and it is fun, it is fun, it is fun to do that.” But she has had a desire to behave more like a character formerly on the show:

“I may have thought of things you know I should act more like Natalie would because she has class and I want that. So I think I have taken some positive you know, but they are just what someone’s interpretation is and it is just a character but when you are so into it, it is hard to remember it is just a character and not people.”

Rachel also mentioned that when she was in situations that were similar to ones on the show that if reinforced how unrealistic it was because she could not do those same things, she would need to deal with it in a totally separate manner.

Religious Influence

Being a convert to the Mormon Church, Rachel had romanticized how that would make her life turn out:

“I had the disillusion that everything is perfect you know when you are married in the temple and if you have a large family and that everything would be as it is supposed to be, but it is not. I am sure there are families that are like that but mine isn’t.”

This disillusionment could have caused Rachel to rely on the soap opera fantasy as an escape from all the things that felt out of control.

Rachel portrays her husband in a negative light throughout the transcripts because of his disapproval of watching soap operas “because you know we are not supposed to watch daytime soap operas.” So Rachel tries to justify what she is watching by comparing her show to what her husband watches:
“This is when my husband would always make comments, turn this soap off. But at night let me tell you. If he could zoom he would. It is just like everything. Of course if I hear a show that has a lot of swearing I am like turn that off and he is like that is better than the filth you watch during the day, and I am like I don’t watch the filth part and I rarely ever hear a swear word, yes you see some scenes and sometimes you see them and sometimes you don’t look. I mean it doesn’t do much for me to watch some kind of a love scene. But the romance does, it fills a void.”

So watching scenes with sexual content are fine to watch because she either does not watch them or they do not do anything for her so they are not bad. In fact, the characters Ryan and Gillian had an affair (Gillian was married) before they were married and Rachel makes these remarks about those scenes:

“The values are so bad. Morals, there just aren’t any. Although I am woman and when I watch the scenes between Ryan and Gillian I still [heaves a sigh], I am not blind…In the turret is when she was married to Jake, that doctor, Gillian was, and did you ever see it when he would meet with her and that would be their secret place to…that was their love nest. But oh my gosh, it was so romantic, and I got to watch that. It’s not that there was any sexual stuff that you saw, but it was the chemistry between those two actors and you were just I do feel it. And of course if you don’t have that kind of chemistry in your own marriage or life, you know I wish I had.”

An illicit affair was seen by Rachel as an incredibly romantic experience which should go against the values she holds. Rachel explains why it is so important for her to feel the romance:

“I still like romance. I probably feel that way because my spouse, he is not a romantic person, doesn’t send me flowers just because or write me little love notes or….he is just a guy, you know totally nonromantic. And I am completely just the opposite I crave that, so probably watching it takes care of some of that too. It takes care of ahhhhhh.”

Rachel says that it helps alleviate her romantic desires but one could make the case for exactly the opposite, that it makes her even more dissatisfied with her current situation by seeing these fantasy men act in ways that her husband does not.

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10 There was a bedroom scene.
All My Children has had some gay storylines and Rachel made an interesting, if at several points contradictory, statement about how she feels about those stories:

"He was such a good-looking guy, what a shame they made his character like that. You know one thing that I did notice that it does make me more accepting of....I don’t accept it, but some of the issues they talk about like that issue, cause you see the human side of it and not that they are real people and not some creep, that they are real people. We don’t have horns so they don’t have horns but just do stuff that I don’t agree with. So that kind of softens me to not judge you know, cause I could see the human through it."

Of interest is how Rachel can humanize gays through how an actor, who is heterosexual, portrays him as a real person even though he is fiction. Rachel goes on to say:

"That is something my husband finds offensive too, is that gay people throw it in your face. I mean I am sure that not all gay people do, I am sure. So I didn’t judge as harshly as I might’ve, I was just like oh no, gosh, oh no, you’re sick. I know that, I don’t watch all the soap operas, I do watch Dallas, and stuff that they open my eyes to the view of what the world could be like. I know it is just a fairy tale, but the issues and things you think about it and it changes how you feel."

So Rachel does feel that she becomes more liberal, or at least more accepting of different life-styles, from watching the show. She feels that the show is a more accurate representation of the world outside of Utah, and so on some level she accepts the show as reality. This then gives those types of morals shown on the soap opera to a whole lot of people.

Life Situation

Rachel felt the need to justify several areas of her life to the researcher. Each viewing time she mentioned how tired she was and all the work she had been doing either on her new house or dealing with visiting relatives. Rachel felt tired enough that she could “just go to sleep and sleep the whole day long.” From the descriptions of her life, it would be very tiring, and watching the show could be a welcome relief from her “crazy”

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11 A lesbian couple began kissing in front of her in line at Lagoon.
days, but she was very clear that she does not “sit around and watch shows all the time.”
Another item Rachel felt she needed to explain was when she was eating how long it had
been since she had last eaten and how she works out at the gym all the time. Even though
she ate cottage cheese, and Total cereal with skim milk, Rachel still felt that she would
“get fat.” Rachel is trim enough to fit into her 17 year-old daughter’s jeans, she is very
slender. When asked about the clothes on the show, Rachel answered, “In honesty, when
I am feeling fit and trim sometimes I wish I could wear stuff like that, but they would
look really ugly with garments.” Rachel feels a constant sense of inadequacy about
herself and tries to make up for it by explaining herself and her actions.

Perhaps one of the more telling signs of Rachel’s home life is how she describes
life with her husband at home: “When my husband is here he doesn’t like me to watch
much while he is here, but I’ll sneak. Like I will go downstairs to work on laundry and
while that is going I will watch the show.” Resorting to sneaking in her own home to
watch a television show on her television has several possible interpretations. She is so
addicted that she has to watch and so must do whatever it takes to watch, this is the least
likely. Watching the show clearly displeases her husband that she really does not have
fond feelings for and so she does it to irritate him, which could be likely. Or she has
laundry to do anyway and that just makes it easier to watch the show without a
confrontation, which is also likely.

Rachel also said many other things that led the researcher to believe she is deeply
unsatisfied with her current spousal relationship:

“I get to watch Jack Scalia in all situations like romance parts. I am obviously
missing something in my life.”
“And of course if you don’t have that kind of chemistry in your own marriage or
life, you know I wish I had. In reality most people may not have what they show
on TV cause it is really overdone, but if it were so that would be great.”
“How many times does a woman go back to the same guy? And how many guys, and some of the guys on the show treat the women really well and I don’t know from my own experiences that if guys do compliment women as much as that or maybe....maybe I just got a bad seed or I don’t know what it is....”

“The guy and the woman would fall in love and get married and it was so romantic and it is not the romance of the sex part but it is how the actors were able to create the emotional bond and everything else and so at that point I would see that and it replaced what my husband, who is not that way, it replaced and so I would have the attempt to replace that so I would feel that romance in my life. Dumb thing to have to feel, huh?

Because of this unhappiness, Rachel describes watching the show:

“Oh, it was a total release, it just kept my interest up outside from reality and so I would you know, and sometimes it would almost seem like it would become reality, because you are so focused on that and no one could talk during the show and that was so long ago, so long ago.”

Rachel would shift between realizing the fictional nature of the show, but then because it filled such a void, she would think about what was going to happen next with her favorite characters and storylines:

“I would think about it a lot and I would almost think of what would it be like if I was out there and Adam Chandler came walking up you know and he is such a turkey you know. And you would just like to punch him you know.”

This chronic unhappiness in her life left an emptiness that the show filled for a while, but then it has even become unsatisfying. It is too difficult to keep up the level of intensity that Rachel was displaying and she was able to do it for 4 or 5 years.

Basically, Rachel is unhappy with her life. Her relationships with her husband and children are strained, and when asked what she would wish different in her life, her answer was:

“You know there is probably never a perfect match, um, but there could be a closer one and when I think about....and I would change that one key thing of who. But you don’t know what, have you ever seen that film Frequency? ....Wow, it is just a split second decision of whether you administer the antibiotics or not and all, so if, even if things are like they are right now and as comfortable as some aspects would be, I would go back and change that.”
This is a fundamental change in her life and she would be willing to give everything else up just to be married to a different man. Her wish was not that they could be happier together or have some common ground, but that he would be gone from her life. She never thought she would have a house that looks like hers does, and she thought she “would be a much cooler mom, I am not a bad mom, I am not a horrible mom, but I probably, that is a hard question.”

So now that the soap opera is not filling the hole of unmet expectations, what is filling it? Currently the show Ally McBeal is. When asked about what she wants to do in the future, Rachel replied:

“I am thinking about going back to school and be an attorney, that is kind of what I want to do I think. And if I don’t do that then I will probably be just the opposite and just try to be a good grandma. It depends on what happens in my life between now and then. But I think it would be really fun to litigate. I want to be a judge and tell them to sit down and be quiet. I want to be like Ally McBeal and have John Cage as my business partner. Have you ever watched that, oh what a character. And what is the other guy? Richard Fish. He cracks me up, of course I have only watched one of this seasons shows last week and just realized what it was and it was like but I don’t watch, I don’t have time at that time of night.”

Rachel is imagining herself living a fantasy life as Ally McBeal and so thinks she could become like her in real life by going to law school. This may ultimately be as disappointing for her as All My Children.

Shelly

Shelly is a 37 year-old woman that has four kids ages 11, 9, 6, and 4. She was born in Salt Lake and grew up in that area and now lives in South Jordan, Utah. Her husband does underground utilities and makes between $50-60,000 a year. After graduating from high school she went to work for an insurance company for 8 years, until she had her first child after which she has been a full-time mom.
Dimensions of the Social Situation

Shelly lives in a nice home with a large lot. Her house was generally clean, but probably had not been deep-cleaned in a while. Each time the researcher came she was cleaning up or cooking in her kitchen. She was busy the whole time, except once when after she was done cooking, she sat and watched with me. She was always very friendly.

In watching her with her children and hearing her talk about them, I could tell that she is devoted to their welfare and thinks a lot about how to be a good mom. Her children were in and out of the kitchen the whole time we were watching. She wants to provide her children with every opportunity she can and defends them vigorously if she feels they have been wronged. She would like to have another child, but she just doesn’t know if she can go through everything the first year entails.

Summary

One of the main things Shelly comments on is the actors’ physical appearance whether it is their clothes, hair or weight. Second, her viewing style seems to be more superficial in nature. This could be due to the fact that she is very unhappy with the current writers and storylines. Third, Shelly turns on the television whenever she is in the kitchen so she watches quite a bit of television, but does not pay attention constantly. Fourth, Shelly went to great lengths to explain that she never just sits and watches the show; that she is always doing something unless she “deserves” to just sit and watch. She felt very defensive when her mother commented about watching the show and quickly explained that she always works while watching, yet during the interview Shelly remarked that she was the “only slacker” among her friends because she watched. Fifth, the bedroom scenes do not interest Shelly; that is not the reason why she is watching. Shelly watches because there are certain characters that she really enjoys for their looks
and their personality and the storylines do not necessarily influence her feelings for those characters.

_CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT_

When Shelly's children were younger, they would take naps and she would do "scrapbooking stuff" and watch it. Now when her children are in school she does "other things because I have more time to do housework and stuff like that. So sometimes I will cut fabric or I will wait and do bills or paperwork or stuff like that." But she is very insistent that she does not just sit and watch it:

"I never sit and watch them unless I am tired tired or I don't feel good or something or I just need a break from the kids or something I'll sit down and watch em, but very seldom, I mean like I said, I leave my kitchen a mess just so I can do it while I am in here, and then I can have it on. Cause I can't just sit and watch em. There is just no way, I've got too much to do."

Shelly uses the time that she watches as a way to be productive within the space that she watches. She saves up dishes, cooking, looking through her Scout book for ideas of stuff to do, or paying her bills or catching up on paperwork.

The show has declined according to Shelly, and so it does not hold her interest enough to just sit and watch it: "Back when I enjoyed it a lot more I wouldn't want to stop, back when Brenda and Jax\textsuperscript{12}, cause I like looking at Jax, so....There is not anyone on now that I care too much to look at." She does not like to sit and watch when she is not "riveted." One of the times I watched with her, she finished what she was doing and had this to say:

I would have gone in my room and folded clothes or done something but maybe cause it is not so riveting to me that I can feel like I can sit and watch and not be disturbed, but now sitting here I am a little ancy in a way cause I want something to do...K, now I just shouldn't be sitting here for a half-hour watching a TV show."

\textsuperscript{12} These are the same characters that Heather also liked the most.
Another time, Shelly had stayed up late and had worked really hard with her children all morning and was just sitting and watching with me and said: “I have no energy today, I was going to wash my little glassy things up there cause they are disgusting, but.... We have actually worked really hard all morning.....I have running around to do later.” The show serves as a break in a hectic day, to just take some time out and sit.

In dealing with her children during the show, Shelly is usually patient and will talk to them during the commercials or boring parts. She would put her children off until those times. But she would also do whatever they wanted. Shelly painted her daughter’s nails and did her hair during one of the viewing times.

History of Watching

Shelly first started watching soap operas when she was in high school, but then she stopped watching it when she graduated and got a job. Sometimes at her job they would just have the audio of General Hospital and Shelly enjoyed listening to it, but it was a shock when she saw some of the characters. When she was back at home during the day she started watching it again. At first she watched a lot of soap operas but then she liked General Hospital more than the others:

“Way back then I just kinda watched everything on channel 4, so it was All My Children, One Life to Live, and General Hospital. And General Hospital was just the one that I found more interesting. I liked the characters more and storylines more.”

The show used to be better Shelly contends and so she is losing interest in watching:

“...I just don’t think the writing is very good with General Hospital anymore. I really don’t. And so well I didn’t see all of the awards this year, but if you noticed they didn’t win anything. No nothing, no actresses, actors or anything. I think that may be a clue that they need to change their writers or something.”
One reason why Shelly may have thought the writing was better a while ago is that she was so much more dependant on it:

“Now that my kids are older I am surprised how kinda stuck in-doors you are when your kids are little. I also know people who take their kids everywhere, my kids are not good babies and so they are just crazy and so it is not worth going out. So now that my little one is four it is a lot nicer. I am involved in PTA and a lot more things over at the school and it actually makes a big difference.”

Basically, as Shelly admitted, her interest is determined by what is going on in her life, “if she has the time or not.” When storylines that she really liked were on she would tape it if she missed it, but now she does not care that much.

**Show/Storylines**

Shelly’s main complaint about the show is the redundancy and slow pace of the stories:

“I don’t know, they’re not, with the Lucky programming thing it seems like, I don’t know, it seems like everything is just dragging on. So I guess that is why I don’t tune in because nothing changes too much....The new writers, they seem to take storylines and just hash them to death instead of moving on. I mean like I watched the other day and they were having a dream sequence thing about what everybody was thinking. Well, we all know what they’re thinking. And that was the entire show, was about what they were dreaming. And it was like boring.”

The show is boring because it is not moving ahead with storylines, Shelly feels that the writers have allowed the show to become “stagnant.”

The show has also become darker in its storylines, dealing with sad issues. That is not what Shelly wants to see. She liked it better when there were stories that had humorous parts to them. She explains:

“I was reading those magazine paper things about Sonny and he fights depression in real life. And he would really like to do a storyline on that and I am thinking I hope they never do because that is not why I watch. I mean I guess you know they are supposed to bring real life things in, but depression that wouldn’t be entertaining to me.”
In order to be entertaining, there needs to be a balance of the drama and the humor that Shelly feels is lacking in the soap opera currently. But Shelly does expect some level of reality, which the show has not had since it got new writers, and that is what makes things like the dream sequence so frustrating to her. Those that have an appropriate mix of realism and entertainment, like the spy stories, she enjoys watching.

There are certain storylines that Shelly likes to watch better than others, or that she pays attention to more than others:

"Like Liz and Lucky, that storyline has got real boring and redundant now. I think I go for the romantic things sometimes and if they have a big storyline with the Quartermaines, I find that annoying. I don't need to watch other people fight, I mean to me that is irritating.

It is also hard to get into storylines that are partially on another soap opera that is not currently shown in Utah. They took some of her favorite characters off of General Hospital and put them in another show she can't watch and that is frustrating to Shelly.

Actor/Character

Shelly commented a lot about the characters' looks, she seemed to base a lot of what she felt for the character on physical appearance. For example: "I like Felicia too. Felicia is one of those ladies that no matter what her hair is doing, no matter what she's got on, she's like gorgeous." Observations about hairstyles and clothing were commonplace for Shelly: "I don't care for that hairdo." "She is a way pretty girl."

"Ned's sister, the blind girl that was a designer, she was way cute." "The dimpled cutie pie." About one of her favorite characters Shelly said this:

"I liked Chloe, but she left, they killed her. And I think she was graceful, kinda elegant and she was just real cute. I mean it didn't matter if she came out of the water soaking wet, she was cute, she always wore fun stuff so I liked her."

13 She used to like that storyline, but it has gotten boring to watch. They were one of the couples she liked.
Even though Shelly likes some of the female characters, she “is more of a guy person.”

Another favorite character is Jax: “He was really cute and I liked his accent and everything.” But her all time favorite character was Jason:\(^{14}\):

“He was the bad guy and there was something likeable about Jason. I like Sonny and I like Jax but I like the way they interact. I don’t necessarily like, well, I like them kinda separate, Jax is kinda cool because he is rich and wines and dines everybody and always comes out on top. I think that is fun about Jax. I think sometimes it’s best to have the combinations.”

The noticeable part about that quote is that she likes characters better when they interact together and being able to see them play off of each other.

Referring to an actor on the show Shelly had this to say:

“I keep thinking she is going to lose weight cause she came back very chunky after having her baby. And she is not a whole lot thinner. I mean I am not one to talk but when you’re going to be on TV come on. I am sure her husband makes no slouchy money so...They have tons of money. She is not as thin as she used to be.”

Shelly is actually very trim. The character she is referring to is larger than the other women on the show, but she is probably the same size as a regular woman. Shelly expects more from the people on the show in looking good. One of the less important actors has a hair-lip that is really noticeable with the amount of make-up she wears. Shelly feels that, “From far away she looks okay, but up close...I mean it is good that she can be on the show but....”

When new actors come to replace departing actors, it is hard for Shelly to have the same feelings for them. One of the main characters, Carly, had recently been replaced:

“I don’t like the new Carly so now I don’t care\(^{15}\)....I don’t like the new actress at all. I don’t think they have any chemistry; I have a harder time seeing those two together. She is not even cute. She’s not the same.”

\(^{14}\) He had left the show for a year. It is also interesting to note that Heather’s and Shelly’s favorite characters are the same but the storylines they like are different.
“I liked Carly, but they have a new Carly and I just can’t get into her. She is this tall, lanky, skinny thing and it just, I don’t know, she just doesn’t fit the Carly profile.”

It is different when new characters come on. That is acceptable and Shelly even thinks that makes the show more enjoyable, but replacement makes it hard for Shelly to maintain interest in characters she had previously liked.

Shelly does enjoy finding out about the actors’ background and lives but she feels that it does not make an impact on how she feels about the character except that you “feel like you know them more maybe.” For example she read in a magazine “that it was hard for Jason to work with Michael [child of girlfriend] because he has never been a dad before. Kids say things and ya have to improvise and....if you’ve been a dad before you can kinda do it.” She likes to know why certain characters leave the show and if other characters are coming back. Shelly subscribed to Soap Opera Digest for a year and really enjoyed it but does not mind only looking at it in the grocery line now.

Shelly would like to have her favorite character over for dinner, and she misses them when she hasn’t watched in a while. When one of her favorite characters, Jax, went to a prime-time show, Shelly watched and had this to say:

“You know when Jax went to that other night-time one I thought it would be good, but it was ugh. It was nasty, it was dumb. It was obvious why it went off the air. Cause I wanted to watch it with Jax on but he wasn’t even on it very often.”

She also thought it would be fun to meet the actor in person and even the characters, especially Jax.

15 Carly was married to one of Shelly’s favorite characters, Sonny, but now she doesn’t care if they get together or not.
Religious Influence

When asked, Shelly felt that being Mormon did not affect the way she viewed the soap opera. But her belief system about how viewing a soap opera is perceived was shown in an interchange with her mother who had shown up during a viewing time. The mother had said something about watching the show and Shelly replied, very defensively, “You don’t want to go there. I told her I never watch them unless I am doing something and I was just making bread, I never just sit down and watch them, and I don’t watch them everyday, so that’s part of the thing.” As can be seen, Shelly must feel some underlying guilt about watching the show and tries to make up for it by being productive, only allowing herself to sit and enjoy when she has a good enough excuse.

During the interview portion, while asking about whether or not anyone else she knew watched soap operas, Shelly said, “No, I am like the only slacker.” She also had mentioned the stereotype of soap operas being a waste of time and that all stay-at-home moms watch them. What is interesting about these comments is that Shelly is amazingly productive during the show. It is true that she saves specific work in order to watch the show guilt-free, but it is work she would have to do anyway.

It is remarkable to note that she does not like the “lovey scenes”, and the full extent of her value system shows when comparing her life to those of the characters:

“Only when they are real slutty and sleep around totally and sometimes you watch them and you know, Felicia is a mom and you just wonder sometimes where her kids are. What does she do with her kids when she goes off on these things with Luke or whatever? I mean most moms can’t just pick up and leave that easily.”

But the lack of responsibility shown also contributes to some of Shelly’s favorite storylines. So that creates a type of contradiction where reality and fantasy collide.
Life Situation

As has been discussed before, Shelly expects there to be at least some reality within the show. One of the things that bothered her was a couple that had woken up together and started kissing because as she noted, there would need to be some teeth brushing for that to occur in real-life. She also feels that “soap operas for the most part are the fakest kissers. They are so bad.”

Shelly is content overall with her life; she has some problems with her kids and school work and some things like that, but she is happy. Her relationships are satisfactory and the only thing that would make her life better is “more money. More money is the bottom line.” She has a desire to become a nurse after all her kids are back in school. Probably the most telling thing about Shelly comes from this statement about her expectations when she was younger, “It is actually better than I thought it would be. I never thought I would be a stay-at-home mom, cause my mom had to work, all while I was growing up.”

Elise

Elise is a 30 year old mother of one. Her daughter is two years old. At the time of the viewings she lived in Holladay, Utah, but has since moved to Arlington, Virginia for her husband’s job. Elise was born in Colorado but grew up in Mesa, Arizona. She first moved to Utah for college in 1995 and lived here until fall 2001. She has had some college in two areas: fashion design and Spanish. She has worked in various jobs but quit after the birth of her daughter, Abby. Her husband manages a donor center and they make between $60-80,000 a year.
Summary

Elise has watched her show for considerably less time than any of the other women in this study and she has the youngest child, and those things, in all probability, affects the way and her reasons for watching the soap opera. There are several points of interest in analyzing her transcripts. First, although she is constantly comparing the show to real life, she receives a great deal of amusement and entertainment from the fantasy aspects of the show. It is unclear whether or not she expects the show to have more reality, but she enjoys the show immensely just the way it is. Second, Elise says she does not have the time to watch the show as much as she likes, yet when the researcher was watching with her, Elise exhibited a haphazard viewing style. Third, even though she feels the show is fluff, Elise still has a desire to watch, especially if the characters and stories she likes are on. Fourth, the histories of the characters were confusing to Elise and as she learned more about them, the more she became involved in the stories. However, the younger characters who had just come on the show were the ones that she was the most interested in, while the older, more established characters held little, if any, appeal.

Dimensions of the Social Situation

The researcher has spent time with Elise in many social situations and so has had an opportunity to get to know her personality fairly well. Elise is a lot of fun to be around, laughs a lot, and does not take anything too seriously but she likes to get her way and usually does. She is very friendly, is very social, and is not afraid of practically anything. She has served a mission for the LDS church. Elise also has stories about anything and they are told with a great deal of wit and laughter which carries over into
how she watches the soap opera. Elise is also very confident and is not afraid to tell
someone what she is thinking.

At the time of viewing, Elise was living in a rented cottage. The décor was
eclectic and at the same time was very inviting and comfortable. In the front room were a
large amount of toys and the kitchen dining area was off to the side. The cottage was
small but functional and clean.

During viewing times, the researcher felt, at least for the majority of the time, that
Elise would rather have a conversation than watch the show. There were many common
friends to catch up on and stories about her wedding that she obviously enjoyed telling.
Elise is a cheerful person.

Creating an Environment

Elise's daughter usually takes a nap from 12:00 to 3 or from 1 to 4 and since she
likes noise, she turns on the television. While she is watching, she “usually folds
clothes....[or] try to catch up on housework.” But Elise mostly views the time to “just sit
back and just relax and not have to think about anything else. It is like at that time I don’t
have to worry about all the other things I have to get done.” Elise does not feel as though
she has to justify the time she spends watching it and she does not have any stigmas
associated with viewing a soap opera: “When people ask me like at church things or
something I will totally admit it. I have like no guilt whatsoever about it.”

During the viewing times of the study, if she had something to get done, she
would do it no matter what part of the show was on. During one scene Elise went and
made a phone call about a doctor’s bill that could have waited until a commercial, but she
just really did not care about that. She had something that needed to be done so she did
it. If a plotline that she is interested in comes on, then she will come back and watch.
Her attention was not totally focused on the show for any length of time. Elise refers to it as “mindless gratification.”

History of Watching

When Elise was in high school she first started watching the Young and the Restless during the summers, and she kept up with the stories for about 3 or 4 years, but now she has no interest in that show. Elise tells how she first started watching Days of Our Lives:

“And Days of Our Lives started when Abby was born. I started watching that because I had NBC on in the morning and I just kept the TV on to keep the noise going and Days of Our Lives and Passions was on and I really didn’t watch Days of Our Lives because Passions was on because I thought it was the hokiest thing I had ever seen and I would laugh every time I would see it and, um, it was Teresa trying to win Ethan over, it was the pretense of a little love triangle going on with them and then I stopped watching Passions after she [Teresa] was pregnant with Julian’s baby or whatever and they are just so funny and so during that time I started watching Days of Our Lives and I found it a little more interesting and so the actors were better actors maybe they had better writers with better acting. I don’t know what. And even at that it is pretty subpar anyway.”

Passions comes on before Days of Our Lives and so Elise made a conscious decision to stop watching it. When commercials for it would come on during viewing times, she would always laugh about how dumb it was and if the writers thought the viewers were stupid.

Since she had just watched the show for about a year, Elise was missing some of the historical background between some of the characters. For some of the more complicated storylines that had been going on for a few years, it took her longer to understand what was going on. But when she learned about some of the history, things made more sense to her.

The move to Virginia, and everything that has entailed, has stopped her from watching the show as much as she would like to. Her daughter has also stopped taking
naps so Elise does not have a set schedule of when she is going to be home so that has also made viewing the show harder.

Show/Storylines

The types of storylines that Elise likes to watch the best are “probably the romance development.” Elise does not really care who ultimately ends up with who but rather all the different slants the show takes within each story: “Yeah, when I say romance I mean Jennifer and Jack and you know they ought to be together but at the same time they won’t, because well, Brandon is pretty hot and he likes Jennifer so maybe and he has been dating her and maybe they will get together. I don’t know. It is kind of funny how they play out all the angles on the romances.” If things are going too smoothly for a couple, that is boring, “Belle and Shawn don’t interest me much because they are two little perfect people.”

Teasers and commercials have affected whether or not Elise watches the show. If it shows the stories she is attracted to, then she is more likely to watch but she does not feel as intensely as some of the other viewers out there about the stories:

“…they also talked about, I guess there are fan clubs. Some people like Chloe and Phillip and they call them Phloes and some like Chloe to get together with Brady and they call them Broes, I don’t know it was something weird and so it was so weird and they actually write in and they sign it like those names for who they are rooting for to get together. I thought who has the time to do this? Who would even send this?”

Even though these are Elise’s favorite stories, she was still amazed at the depth of feeling shown by more passionate fans.

To be more specific, Elise likes the teen storylines the best. This could be because they started about the same time that she began watching and so she knows the whole history about them, or just because they are simply more fun than the other
“hokey” storylines. One of the stories that she was interested in enough to have us both stop talking when it came on was about some teenagers that had put a video of one of the girls in the shower on the Internet and then played it at the school dance. The girl that had been videotaped was given the chance to decide the punishment for the girls that had done that to her.

Of the plot developments, Elise refers to them as “bizarre” or “silly” or “hokey” or “corny” or “predictable.” At one point Elise compared it to the other soap opera she used to watch, Young and the Restless:

“...and they never did anything like this. Now CBS, they, when I watched it, and this is back in 88 and 87, this is a long time ago, I remember they dealt with very serious issues on there. Like they dealt with date rape and other issues and they were much more serious about it. They weren’t hokey like this....And even in the Young and Restless the dialogue was more normal and these are just like sometimes they are just so weird.”

However, instead of expecting even just a little bit of reality and being disappointed, Elise simply finds humor in the fantasy world portrayed on Days of Our Lives.

Elise refers a lot to the writers of the soap opera. She is constantly commenting on why the writers chose to do something or if they think the audience is idiotic. So she does not separate the writers from the characters. If the characters do something stupid, or engage in corny dialogue, she does not personalize it to the character, it is more about the writers’ intentions.

Actor/Character

Elise recognizes that there are certain stereotypes that are portrayed on the soap opera:

“...This is what the soaps try to do, you know every character gets the cliché. Phillip is the rich boy, Chloe is the complicated one because of all she went though when she was young, kinda love/hate. Belle is saccharine sweet just so
perfect and Shawn is like the perfect role model son, he is so good to his parents he is a dream child.”

These are the four main characters that Elise likes. There is another couple, Jack and Jennifer, but they are not as entertaining as these kids.

One of the main areas of interest for Elise when she is watching is how the characters look. Elise thinks the actors have way too much make-up on and it actually diminishes their prettiness:

“Especially Chloe, I always think she wears way too much make-up. But lately she hasn’t been wearing as much because supposedly she is sick and so you can kind of tell that they have toned down on the make-up and it is kind of funny. I think she looks better but they try to do really pale make-up and it is kind of funny. I think she looks better…..if they just put a little color in her lips.”

When asked about what made a certain character more attractive to her, Elise replied, “I think it is because they gave him a new haircut. He used to have this long kind of weird hair, it was this haircut I really like and then once they gave him a new haircut and I thought hey that looks really good.” How the actor looks does play a part in how Elise characterizes her: “I think um, the girl that plays Belle, I think that she is a pretty girl, but they are trying to push a sexual image for her and I don’t think it works because she has too much of a good girl in her, she looks like the nice girl next door and they are trying to push this sexual image about her and I don’t think that is working.”

Elise is also very critical of the clothing on the soap opera. She does acknowledge that “it is all Hollywood. I mean if they wore normal things then people wouldn’t be as interested in watching it I think.” The main complaint Elise has about the clothing is about how immodest it is:

“I mean you should have seen the outfit this little one was wearing right here. I mean how old is she, she is young. I mean I know that Chloe is older playing younger but she is not the same age, she is about 16. And they had her wearing this little tiny super tight gold satin shimmery halter top with matching pants that were just like skin tight you could see every little curve. Her butt looked naked
and I am not kidding. It was so funny. Anyhow, they had her wearing that to the
dance with Shawn, she wanted to wear something that would help Shawn to see
her in a different light. And I thought that made her look like this little slutty
thing. It didn’t even look sophisticated or anything, it just looked horrid.”

Other comments Elise made about this particular character pointed out the contradiction
between the character and the clothes she wears:

“Yes, well, the thing that does crack me up is that Belle is so good-natured and
she is so mature and then she will just wear the most skanky outfits and if this
character, and if the writers were writing true to the character she would never be
seen in some of the outfits you see her in, but it is all because they want to show
you a little skin.”

There is one character that Elise really does not like, John. Not only does she
describe him as a “corny character” but also as “the most hammy actor, and I remember
there was just one scene where he was telling her and she wanted to know how baby JT
was conceived and he was like all you need to know is it came from the purest love and
he was just going on and on and it was sooo hammy. The love that Princess Gina shared
was beyond comprehension and going on and on and on. I was just sitting here laughing,
it was so corny.” Her feelings are deep enough that she will turn the channel “when John
and Marlena get together, it is disgusting. I can’t stand John, he creeps me out to begin
with and I think Marlena is pushing the apron, I don’t really want to see an old lady in
bed with a guy that creeps me out anyway. He is yuck.” Yet for the younger characters
she says that sometimes “you just want them to get it on.”

Elise has no interest in meeting any of the actors or characters on the soap opera,
but finds it fun to find out a little bit of their personal information. She does not
subscribe to any magazines and she has only been online once to read the biographies of
some of the actors, but she is “sure if I had a computer I would probably check it out
more.” Learning information about the actor changes the way Elise feels about the
character:
"I thought that Chloe was kind of a strange character until I read her bio and she kind of and once you learn more about the actor and learn about their background like I guess she had been educated somewhere overseas and I guess her dad is like a conductor or something and she studied opera and that is why she is opera background or opera interested in the story and she has a lot of classical background and I thought that was really interesting. At first I thought this is weird, you know. I guess once I understood that then I found out more about her real background I understood why they brought that into the storyline. I am sure they found that a fascinating topic just because there aren't that many people that really do that, especially at her age."

Of note is that Elise only once referred to an actor by his real name. To her they are nothing more than what the writers create and manipulate.

*Religious Influence*

In certain comments one can gain a greater understanding about Elise’s value system. As discussed above, she is constantly shocked about the outfits a certain character, Belle, wears: “Oh, especially when they were on the island, oh my gosh, in bikini after bikini, and oh my gosh, I was just like holy cow and I mean she had a darling little body but they were showing tons of her skin. I kind of felt bad at one point, I thought if I were that girl’s mother I would be kind of worried.” Elise compares the reality of what she would do as the parent in that situation with the fantasy of the show and is amazed about what wardrobe puts her in: “See look at her she just looks so slutty. I would never let her out of the house looking like that. Looks like she is wearing a lingerie top and her pants are way too tight and way too low cut.” “…and her dad was at the dance saying oh honey, you look so beautiful and I am going oh my gosh, if any parent saw their daughter dressed like that they would be like what are you doing walking the street in that? I mean she looked like a little prostitute. I couldn’t believe they put her in that.”
Since Elise is so open about watching a soap opera, she is amazed that others feel the need to hide it from others or even their children:

“Something that I did find out that my sister-in-law, I found out by my niece came to visit and I was watching it and my niece was like oh my mom makes me go in the other room when her show is on and my niece is 13 and I was thinking Jen watches soaps? I had no idea, so it was kind of funny. She would be the last person I would think could ever watch soaps. I thought that was pretty funny. That right there makes her kids feel like she is doing something bad that they are not allowed to see it.”

Elise does not care if her daughter watches with her, although she does change the channel when the characters “get down and dirty.” In talking about a movie that she had seen, American Pie, Elise showed more of her conservative side: “I couldn’t believe when I watched that movie how vulgar, for the audience it was marketed for, I couldn’t believe how absolutely disgusting it was. I was shocked....And the fact that I watched that movie doesn’t leave this room, I was kinda embarrassed to tell you I saw that.”

When asked if being a Mormon affects the way she watches the soap opera, Elise answered,

“Probably in that I know it is just so hokey, you know what I mean. I don’t know, it depends, I don’t know, it is hard to say. A lot of it you are raised and sometimes you really want people to get it on, but it is TV and that is the way it is and you are like goll, I just can’t wait till they hit the sack. I don’t know. It is just so funny. I don’t know.”

Elise is grounded in reality; she turns to television for entertainment and knows that it is not reality so she feels justified in rooting for things that are not the same as her real-life moral beliefs. So much of what goes on during the soap opera is so far out of the realm of Elise’s reality, that she accepts it as entertainment, although she believes the writers and producers could be a little more responsible in how they are dressing young girls.
Life Situation

Elise is constantly comparing the soap opera to real-life which, if anything, reinforces her ideas about its hokeyness. Even though she accepts the show itself as entertainment at times she is still amazed at the fantasy level portrayed:

“\[I, mean, I know it is television and it is for you the viewer to watch and to look at and enjoy. It is not supposed to be realistic. But I do wish some of the people, I do know Lexie’s mom, she is babysitting the baby, she has on these silk suits and it is just a crack up. She is going to tend the baby wearing a Chanel suit wearing stiletto mules and I just think there is no way. Like I say, I know that is television and they are doing that just because it is television.\]"

In her life, Elise is feeling pretty “cocky” about the way things are going and she is pretty happy and her relationships are satisfactory. She only wishes that she was better at time management. She has dreams about designing top of the line temple dresses later in her life. She doesn’t really know how she thought her life was going to be when she was younger but she is happy with the way it has turned out.

Categories Summarized

After the coding and categorizing of the data, comparisons were made among the five women and certain patterns or themes were discovered within each category. Essentially this is the main contribution to PSI and PSR theory. The most significant finding is how directly life situation affects PSI and PSR. It is not an overstatement to say that current life situation makes or breaks PSR for these five women. Each of the women was consistent in that regard. Future research will need to weigh life situation heavily if it is to gain an accurate picture of PSR and how expendable these relationships are in the over scheme of things.

Also as this was the first study of how religiosity and PSR interact, there are two findings worth bringing special attention to. The first is how deeply engrained in the
women is the idea of not wasting time (except Elise\textsuperscript{16}) especially when watching soap operas. LDS culture may create those feelings. The women did not admit feeling guilty per se, about watching the shows, but their actions showed a need to justify what they were doing with their time, and guilty feelings would plague them unless they had a good “excuse” to just sit and watch. So to successfully merge these two desires, guilt avoidance for being lazy and watching soap operas, which are not looked favorably upon, the women would structure their work day around feeling guilty.

The second striking finding with regard to religiosity was that the women did not use their values to determine favorite characters or to judge their actions. The women use a different, worldly, set of values to judge and justify their favorite characters. This could be explained with how much the women view the soap operas as just entertainment; that the characters do not need to be held to the same rigid standards as themselves or their families. The main goal is to enjoy what they are watching and when the show is spicier or exciting, there is more entertainment.

Each of the items discussed within the categories contribute to a greater understanding of PSR. The findings mentioned here about religiosity are just two parts that belong in a PSR theory. The overall theme that stands out in each category is how current life situation determines PSI and PSR.

\textit{Creating an Environment}

There were two major themes discovered within this category. The first is the conflict and guilt the women feel about watching soap operas. On one hand they constantly justify the time spent watching by saying that they never just sit and watch,

\textsuperscript{16} She has the youngest child and so that may affect her feelings as the other women’s changed as their children became older.
they are always doing some sort of house work. The only time they sit and watch is if
they feel they “deserve” it by virtue of the fact that their baby was up all night or they
have been working very hard before the show came on and now this is “their time” to
relax. The conflict the women feel is between the idea of having some of their own time
to do whatever they want yet not being lazy since they have a great many things to do.
Watching the show while doing the dishes or laundry then takes care of that conflict and
allows the women to feel guilt free about their viewing of the show. Another aspect
could be the disapproval within the Mormon culture about watching soap operas, and by
doing work while watching the women then take themselves out of the stereotypical ideas
about women watching soap operas.

The second major theme was the women’s ability to give up watching the show if
there was something else that needed to be done. If the women were at home during the
time of their show, they would watch it; but, if they needed to run errands or volunteer at
their children’s school, they were willing to miss the show and did not weigh that as a
consideration when deciding whether or not to participate in something. They would
only think, “Oh, I am missing.....” but that was as far as thinking about it went. When
the women were more involved in the storylines, or more interested in what was going to
happen, they would tape the show to watch later. However, sometimes they would not
get around to watching the tape recorded show. None of the women were currently
taping the show. This was offset by the fact that if they were home they would structure
their days’ activities around watching the show by leaving the dishes undone, or the
upstairs messy, or the laundry to be folded or whatever would be most convenient to do
while watching their show. In sum, currently the women’s schedules do not revolve
around the soap opera except in creating an opportunity to watch the show guilt-free.
Soap operas and romance novels have a great deal in common from their
styHeather scenes to the stereotypical characters. Radway's (1987) study of women who
read romance novels sheds some light on women and the guilt feelings they experience
while they are participating in these types of activities. The women in Radway's (1987)
study felt guilty about spending money on 'trashy' novels and devoting time to things
other than their family and household. The women in this study experienced guilt, but it
was on a different level in that they could alleviate that guilt by working while watching
which would be very difficult to do while reading a book. So the translation of these
types of books into television shows allows the women in this study to still experience
the same excitement without feeling guilty.

History of Watching

Within this category one major theme was found that contained three elements.
The theme was the idea that the show had gotten progressively worse in storytelling since
the women had begun to watch. Each woman, except Elise17, expressed dissatisfaction
with the show compared to a few years ago. Now this begs the question of whether the
show had actually changed or if the women's perceptions of the show had. This relates
to the first element of what had initially hooked the woman's interest and kept it, at least
until now. When talking about their favorite characters, invariably the women talked
about what had happened in the past or that their favorite characters were not on the show
anymore and that had taken away from their enjoyment of watching. So it may be that
the show had changed because favorite characters, or the reason for watching, were put in
dumb storylines or "killed" or had moved to another show and that caused the women to
become impatient with what was left on the show.

17 This is most likely because of the short amount of time Elise had watched the show for.
The second element offers another possible reason why the women have become more dissatisfied with their shows: as their children became older and the women did not need to rely on the show as a view to an adult world because they were able to become more active, the show was more frustrating to watch because they had other things they could do with their time that they could not before. As the women became more involved with outside interests the fantasy level of the shows became more apparent and the differences between their lives and those shown became more perceptible, thus there was impatience with the shows where none had existed before. The final element of this theme is that the women had taped the show before but then gotten out of the habit or it just was not worth the effort to do so. This relates again to their lives becoming so busy and that viewing the soap opera had become less of a priority over time.

*Show/Storyline*

From reading the transcripts, four major themes emerged within this category. The first, and most all-encompassing involves the contradiction of viewer expectation and satisfaction vs. the structure of soap opera story telling. Basically the women wanted to see the characters they liked the most happy. Yet for the type of storylines that occur on soap operas, that is never going to happen because then there would not be anything interesting to watch. The women did not like devices such as triangles, yet that is a constant on soap operas. When two characters do become romantically involved, the viewer does feel some sort of a payoff, yet she also recognizes that something is going to happen to ruin it all. From one perspective there is built-in frustration in watching the stories because from the way the women guess ahead to future stories, they show that they understand how soap opera storytelling works. This knowledge may keep the viewer from forming strong attachments to particular characters because bad things will
always happen to them, but the feelings for the character will be strong enough that the viewer will feel positive emotion when good things happen to the character. The other aspect of this distance because of storytelling devices is that the viewer at times wants the bad things to happen because then at least something would move ahead with the story. So there is a slight contradiction there.

The second theme is that although the women say that the show is mostly fantasy, they feel that there are realistic parts. This also relates to the idea that they would like to see more of their lives on the show in certain areas: dealing with children and long-term, stable couples. The women contradicted themselves several times by referring to the show as unrealistic and yet talking about the realistic parts of the shows. The third theme relates to the second one: the women basically liked the same types of stories and liked the romantic aspects of the show the most, probably because that related to their lives the most. None of the women were information seeking (except Rachel a few years ago with the Natalie character) but more watching for fun and entertainment. None of the women like the fighting or the business shenanigans or the courtroom scenes. They like the more "normal" stories.

The fourth theme involves the frustration of the women in that the storylines were taking forever to resolve. As mentioned above this frustration has been recent and so may be explained by forces outside of the shows. The women’s lives have become more demanding and as time is a precious commodity for these women, they may expect more “bang for their buck.” A soap opera may be best viewed only a few times a week in order to maintain viewer interest and thwart frustration.
Character/Actor

There were three major findings in this category. First, watching the show is an at
the moment type of thing. The women do not think about the show before or after
(except Rachel for a few years). This lack of cognition may explain why the women do
not remember the names of characters or how certain stories resolved themselves. There
is not a lot of thought about the characters or actors on the show which could account for
a weakening of the parasocial relationship. The second finding is that the women liked
more male characters than female characters. Those that mentioned female characters as
ones they liked did not feel as strongly about them as the males. This is interesting
because it would seem that soap operas are written to satisfy female fantasy, so the male
characters are what women would seem to want.

The final finding encompasses the relationship between character and actor and
the women’s perceptions of each. The women think it is fun to learn basic things about
the actors’ lives, they really do not care all that much. They do not use other media,
except rarely, to find out about the actors, and if the actors switch shows the women did
not really have a desire to follow them. Some were interested in seeing the character in a
different setting, but only Carly actually watched the character or actor in another show,
either prime-time or day time. Although all the women, except Elise, would like to meet
the character or the actor, their desire does not extend to paying money or making a lot of
effort. If the actor was coming to a mall for a signing, then it might be fun to go, but
anything more than that would not be worth it. So even though the women have their
favorite characters, they really do not have very strong attachments to them as they view
them as simply fictional and therefore entertainment.
Religion

There were several interesting themes within this category. The first is that when the women were asked about the morals shown on the soap operas all immediately thought about sex. The other commandments that are regularly broken on the show, lying, cheating, stealing, swearing, and general meanness, did not even come up. The women seemed to feel that because it is not real that what was shown did not really matter because of the fantasy aspect of it all. In fact, for the sake of the story, things that these women would have disapproved of in real life were hoped for and expected. For example, Heather wanted Lucky to just get over Nicholas bribing witnesses to his girlfriend’s drunken driving accident because she wanted them to be friends again. The second theme continues the first in that the women felt that the morals shown were those of non-Mormons living outside of Utah. They believe that non-LDS people behave in the same way in their relationships as the characters on the shows. The women also compared their show to other shows they have seen saying that theirs was not as bad as some of the others. So the women justify and defend as others do that sort of thing, while at the same time condemning the show as being fake and unrealistic. The women bring their own feelings into the show by wondering if the actor’s spouse would care about him kissing someone else so passionately.

The second theme is that the women felt that being LDS made them more aware of how unrealistic the show is, that their religion makes them more grounded, and they can separate out the fantasy from reality. They live enough of real life to not be caught up in the world shown on the soap operas. This is interesting because it is a variation on the 3rd person effect theory in that these women feel that others without that religious basis would be more likely to believe and act on what happens on the show than they do.
Shelly was the only one that felt being LDS did not affect the way she viewed the soap opera. The fourth theme ties in with being LDS in that it could be considered contrary to Church beliefs to watch soap operas. The women do not feel guilty about the content of the show but more guilt about the time spent watching the show. This complex about wasting time could come from some sort of LDS work ethic or a desire to not be perceived within the stereotype of a homemaker that watches soaps all day. Shelly had a hard time with being perceived as lazy in watching the show while Elise and Carly have no trouble telling others that they watch a soap opera. They do not feel shame about viewing the show while Shelly and Rachel do. Heather has some embarrassment, but in the end is not shy about watching the show so she falls somewhere in the middle.

Life Situation

This was found to be the biggest indicator of whether parasocial relationships are strong or weak. Fluctuations of time, energy, personal relationships, happiness, and outside resources accounted for the varying feelings over time about the show and the characters. The intensity of feeling for the shows also varied according to life situation. Several of the women would rather talk to me about anything during the show than just sit and watch. Others wanted to just sit and watch and have a little conversation during commercials. Only one of the women talked to someone regularly about what was happening on the show, for the rest it was an alone experience for when they were going to be home anyway, but that did not diminish the enjoyment of the shows.

The more unhappy, the more isolated and the more tired the women were, the greater the dependency on the show and characters. The more isolated the women were, such as when their children were small, the more the show became reality to them. They would talk to their husband as if it had really happened because that was probably the
most interesting part of their day then. More research would need to be done in order to
determine the cause and effect relationship between feeling unhappy and dissatisfied and
watching the show as either a way to feel the things missing in one’s own life, or as a
constant reminder that one is missing out on something, like romance. At the point
Rachel was at, her unhappiness and what the show portrayed that she was missing fed
into one another to create a vicious cycle of dissatisfaction. Rachel felt the show filled a
need in her life that her husband failed to do, but it is more likely that it just made things
worse.

These women generally enjoy watching the show and the characters. They like
various storylines and characters and look for different things within each of their shows.
Yet as their lives became more demanding they are each willing to give up regularly
watching the show. The desire to watch is still there, but their lives currently place it on a
lower priority level. There is even a difference between watching the show in the
summer and during the school year. If they do have the time to watch, it is also
interesting that they do not pay attention to the stories or characters they are not
concerned with, that they do something else when they are on. Being busy with life has
made the women become selective viewers.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

So, where does all of this information leave us? Ultimately what does it show?

The researcher began this study with four questions and a desire to build parasocial relationship theory. Each research question will be answered according to what the data has shown.

Research Question #1: What are the factors/motivations that initiate parasocial interaction or parasocial relationships?

Initiation of parasocial interaction usually began when the women started spending more time in the home and having less social interaction than they had previously experienced. They began watching regularly when something about a particular show caught their attention. The shows they had watched when they were younger did not really seem to be a factor in determining which shows they liked now. When their children were younger, it was the one time during the day they could relax and watch without feeling guilty for not working or cleaning. It was “their time” to experience some adult feelings and situations in a day full of diapers and Barney. The television provided company which initially may not have been part of PSI but over time PSR was begun.

Research Question #2: What are the factors/motivations that maintain parasocial interaction or parasocial relationships?
This is more difficult to identify because of how individualized it is to each woman. For Rachel it was living in a difficult situation that led her to become very involved with her show. Carly maintained the interaction until her children were no longer at home and she had more freedom to leave yet she went back to the same shows after she was at home again, so it would seem that viewing is more a function of habit and something to do rather than a strong desire to view the show. Heather really enjoys watching the show to see what happens next. She would like to get a cable channel to watch the show at night, which would be more convenient to her schedule, but she does not mind missing it. Heather seems to want to see what happens next more than care about either good or bad things happening to her favorite characters. Shelly likes to watch for the clothes and hairstyles of the characters, but also likes to see intriguing storylines. She is similar to Heather in that she watches it if she is there, but if she misses the show, she really does not mind. Her growing dissatisfaction with the show makes it easier for her to miss it and not tape for later viewing. Elise also does not care if she misses the show but she really enjoys watching it when she does see it and would like to watch it more.

The parasocial interaction was easier to maintain when the women had a set schedule of children’s naps or spent the majority of the day at home. Now that they have more demands on their time outside of the home, they are less likely to watch and do not tape the show to watch later. So either their parasocial relationships were not strong enough to withstand outside pressures or there never were any parasocial relationships to begin with. This researcher concludes that the women do experience parasocial interaction, and in some cases with their favorite characters, actually have parasocial
relationships, but real life diverts their emotions, energy, and attention away from the show and characters.

Research Question #3: What are the factors that strengthen or weaken parasocial interaction or parasocial relationships?

This is where the heart of this study lies: within the importance of the women’s life situations and how much that affects their parasocial interaction and relationships. Even the women commented on how their viewing was determined by what was going on in their lives. This creates the situation where their lives are controlling the show, not the show controlling their lives. When the women need to have the show or characters fill a void in their lives, it serves its purpose, but when that need is gone, the show and characters lose that importance. Perhaps there is a need to compare the level of desire to watch with the level of accessibility to watch the shows in future research.

It did not matter to the women what values were portrayed on their shows; that did not determine whether or not they watched the shows. History of the characters did seem to play a part in having more feeling for the characters and what happened to them but even the most intense feelings for the characters, like Rachel had, over time became weak and stories were forgotten. The women did not feel guilty about taking the time to watch the show if it fit into their schedule, at least outwardly, but having the justification of doing work while watching certainly made the show more accessible to watch.

Although there were some predictions about what was going to happen on to the characters, for the most part the women did not think about what was going to happen except in general terms within the soap opera genre such as triangles. So knowing the characters and how they were going to behave did not really strengthen the parasocial relationship. The history of the character was just nice to know because the viewer then
could understand what was going on better, but it did not make her like them more. Also, even when the women would find out about the actors' personal lives and would feel as though they knew them better; it only minimally affected their overall feeling for the person. The women would rather use information about the actors' real lives to explain what happened on the show. For example, it was interesting to know that a character had just had a baby and so that was why she was gone for a couple of weeks.

Research Question #4: Do interpersonal relationship building theories that have been used previously to examine parasocial interaction provide the best explanation of this phenomenon?

The general idea is that parasocial relationships and regular relationships are built and sustained in basically the same way; that the way a person relates to other people and to a character or television or radio personality are the same. From this research comes the idea that previous parasocial relationship ideology is not complete or comprehensive. The first distinction needs to be made between parasocial interaction and parasocial relationship which have been used interchangeably in the previous research. Parasocial interaction is much more likely to occur and is much more superficial in nature than a parasocial relationship. Just because a person has feelings for a character or enjoys watching the show with that character does not mean that an actual parasocial relationship has begun. A parasocial relationship would require more commitment, time and energy from the person involved just as in a real relationship.

The second distinction that has not been made in previous research, but needs to be made is between television personalities or hosts and characters on dramas or sitcoms. People will view each of these differently because of what they "reveal" to the viewer. Soap opera viewers, as mentioned before, are probably the best to study for parasocial
interaction and relationships because the very structure of the show provides the perfect setting for parasocial interaction and relationships to exist.

Horton and Wohl (1956) used their theory to describe how viewers felt about television hosts and used language in describing that relationship that makes generalizations to other categories of shows or characters mistaken. So when previous studies have used relationship theories to describe the parasocial phenomenon with hosts or television personalities it could be more applicable than those trying to apply it to characters on shows. Horton and Wohl (1956) could not have imagined the incredible growth of the media and accessibility of information about television shows, characters, and actors and how that influences what, how, and why people watch. This research was intended to build parasocial interaction and relationship theory, but has instead illustrated the need for a more accurate and detailed model of how parasocial interaction and relationships work. The preliminary research done here has provided a basis for a general model, and after more grounded theory research is done there will be a greater ability to provide further and more comprehensive information about this subject.

Implications and Importance

The usefulness of this study has been the illustration of the need for an entirely new theory to explain PSI and PSR. Simply using human communication or relationship models to try to explain PSI is inadequate. PSI deserves its own theory to explain the uniqueness attached to it. As such, more research would need to be done to provide the basis for this theory. The ideas presented here involving life situation and religiosity and the way those factors interact and influence PSI and PSR provide a jumping point for future studies. If future studies continue to use relationship theories to explain PSI and
PSR, they will miss fundamental aspects which need to be examined independent of specific theories. In other words, they will only see parts rather than the whole.

Ethnography and grounded theory provided the ideal environment to make each of the discoveries discussed here. This thesis is ultimately a call for a new PSI theory.

Current research has found certain aspects of PSR that were replicated in this study, however, since the researchers were looking at their findings through a specific theory they may not have realized the importance of what they found. Hopefully the importance of this study will be recognized as showing the need for a new and comprehensive PSI and PSR theory, the remarkable ways religiosity functions within PSI, how integral life situation is in determining PSI and PSR, and that although each woman's experiences with PSI and PSR are unique in some respects, there are enough commonalities with which to build a basis for new theory.

Suggestions for Future Research

As with any good research, at the end of it there are always further questions that need to be asked. Following are some questions that would provide more theory building ability:

1. What is the difference between television hosts and characters on sitcoms or dramas? What is the difference between characters on sitcoms and dramas? What about movie characters?
2. Does the viewer separate the show, storyline, character, and actor? What about the writers?
3. What role, if any, does the easy accessibility of information on shows or actors play in the formation and maintenance of parasocial interaction and relationships?
4. How much role modeling is done with favorite characters? What are some other possible effects of parasocial interaction and relationships?
5. What are the possible relationships that can be formed with video and computer game characters? What role does making those games into movies play?
Future studies should also compare differences in gender and age. Greater detail about the participants' life situation, such as their marriage, would be useful in building theory. The level of the participants' religiosity could explain some of the findings within that category. Finally, people that work full time and tape the show to watch later could provide important parasocial perspectives.


*Communication Studies, 47,* 89-109.


Appendix A

Transcripts from Heather
1ST VIEWING WITH Heather (GENERAL HOSPITAL)

EH: She is putting her son down for a nap right now. The show is about to start in about 1 minute. She is still putting her son down for a nap right now it is 5 minutes after.
EH: Is this your baby's regular nap time?
HEATHER I usually lay with him and then he falls asleep. And I tried to put him into his bed too soon and so I had to lay him back in my bed.
EH: There is something so magical about Mom and Dad's bed, it is like the most comfortable place in the world.
HEATHER Isn't that sad.
EH: Do these guys really hate each other or are they faking now?
HEATHER They really do. Lucky hates him but he doesn't hate him.
EH: Is Lucky still on that things where he is trained to kill people?
HEATHER No.
EH: Has it been going? Like the soap opera and your time?
HEATHER I probably watch it two or three times a week. Just cause there is too much going on to watch it. It was easier to watch when I just had one or two little kids now. They just took naps and we didn’t go anywhere. But now we are just running around. And today they are off track.
EH: Oh where are they?
HEATHER At their friend’s house. We just got done cleaning the basement and we got a new puppy. Been out with the puppy. And they just left to go to a friend’s house except for the little one. So it is kind of crazy when they are off track.
EH: Yeah, and I bet summer is even crazier.
HEATHER Yeah. I want to get, they have that soap net. They replay them at night. A couple weekends they did like a free preview of it on TV and it was great like after the news the soap would be on and I could just watch it.
EH: Did it have commercials with it still?
HEATHER It had commercials, but they weren’t the same commercials they were like Soap Net commercials. They were the same because the show lasted the same amount of time.
EH: Maybe get TiVo.
HEATHER Yeah that would work better because in the day it is just getting too hard. I mean if I am here I watch it for sure but....
EH: Because you still have a desire to see it still.
HEATHER Yeah, sometimes I love it but....
EH: One of the other ladies in my study she loves General Hospital and it was getting frustrating for her because they changed the writers and Jason went off the show and that was more difficult for her because she really like the interaction between like Sonny and Jax and stuff like that and it wasn’t as fun for her. And I didn’t know if you had noticed a change in the writing at all.
HEATHER A little bit. I always liked General Hospital because it was more, I don’t like the Helena I don’t like the Luke chasing people and Felicia and being spies and stuff like
that. I don’t like that. I just like the normal people stories. The romances, that kind of thing. But I don’t like the...I guess I like the romantic part of it better.
EH: She also didn’t like the Quartermaines. She couldn’t stand it when the Quartermaines would just get in arguments.
HEATHER See, I hate that, but I just don’t listen to it. If that is on you just get up and put in the wash or ....you know.
EH: She said I have fighting in my own family I don’t....
HEATHER Need to sit and watch them.
EH: Did he really help Helena escape?
HEATHER He didn’t help her escape.
EH: Does Luke not like Nicholas?
HEATHER He likes him okay, but now that Lucky doesn’t.....
EH: Now why doesn’t Lucky like him them?
HEATHER He didn’t help Helena escape but Helena came to him to ask for money.......
EH: So Nicholas gave her money then to help her escape.
HEATHER Yeah, but she blackmailed him.
EH: Oh,...
HEATHER Cause she was in a car accident and she was drinking and he paid off witnesses that said it wasn’t her fault.
EH: And does she know that?
HEATHER She knows that but Helena found out and said I am going to tell everyone if you don’t give me money.
EH: What is Taggert doing there? I thought he and Luke were like...
HEATHER I don’t know. They are just having a party because Helena got caught.
EH: Is that one blond girl Carly?
HEATHER No that was Elizabeth’s sister.
EH: Does he know what he did with the car accident?
HEATHER Yeah. Lucky is acting ridiculous, get over it.
EH: It is all because of the drunk driving thing? Did Taggert do anything? He doesn’t know about the drunk driving thing?
HEATHER No.
EH: Are they together now?
HEATHER No.
EH: Does he really love Courtney?
HEATHER He is just trying to get back at Sonny I think. And Sonny needs to kind of get over it too. She looks like she spent a little too much time in the tanning booth.
EH: Yeah. Are Jax and Sonny friends now?
HEATHER No. But both of them don’t think she should be married to AJ.
EH: Is Jax with anyone?
HEATHER Skye.
EH: He is with Skye!!! Wow. Is she just really stupid?
HEATHER I guess. [laughs]
EH: What deal does he have with Sonny? Is it about his son?
HEATHER AJ, he doesn’t have one with him, he is just, Sonny is just saying leave Courtney alone and I won’t kill ya. I don’t know.
EH: Do you like Skye?
HEATHER Yeah, I kind of don’t because she is kind of a villain girl. But ....
EH: Does she actually like Jax?
HEATHER Yeah. Well, they are kind of together and they are kind of not. They are getting together. He rescued her. Carly locked her in the shed and ....
EH: Oh, I saw that when they were at the police station and Carly said that she did it and they got her off or whatever and Sonny said no you didn’t.
HEATHER Yeah.
EH: Why did she lock her in the shed?
HEATHER Cause she didn't like her and wanted her to tell her where AJ was but she didn’t know where AJ was. Jax rescued her and then they slept together, she had hypothermia so he had to get her warm.
EH: Of course he had to do it naked.
HEATHER Yeah, that was the only way and then she was mad at them because he wouldn’t let her lie to the police and say that Sonny put her in the shed. And so then she was mad at him but now she is not mad anymore because he found where AJ was and so they went. How many other people have you interviewed?
EH: There are five total. And you are the last person I have. But I had to redo you and one other lady. And I already redid her.
HEATHER How come?
EH: Because I used these big tapes to do it and the recorder that I was using I couldn’t hear anything that was being said really and also I tried to transfer the big tapes to the little tapes because I have a transcribing machine for the little tapes and it was even worse with the distortion that was there so I couldn’t ....
HEATHER Frustrating.
EH: Yeah then I had a tape in my transcribing machine from one of the interviews of the lady I did down in Provo and my husband put some stuff on it and it tape recorded him writing a paper over the top of the interview so I have to go back down and re-interview her.
HEATHER When do you have to be done?
EH: August. So I am planning on having all the transcribing and everything done and I will go down to do that last interview and then I want to write my whole paper in the month of may and then give it to my professors in June so.....
HEATHER It is a lot of work.
EH: Yeah. I should have just done it before I had my child but.....
HEATHER Do you watch any of them?
EH: No, I always want to I always like feel the desire to but I like force myself not to cause I get really into it and it is like really in my head.
HEATHER If there is something really good happening. Sometimes, maybe every once a month or maybe once every two months you can’t wait for the next one but other than that, lately it has just been like, I am happy to see it and sometimes it is good to see it and I’ll call my sister and say did you see that? And she’ll be like oh my Heck. Luckily it’s not like that every day or it could ruin your life.
EH: I really get interested in the romantic storylines how they are going to bring people together and stuff.
HEATHER I was thinking the other day I wish they would bring Jason back. This girl....
EH: Is Sarah with Lucky too?
HEATHER I don’t know, she was changing and was all wet and took off her shirt and he came in and saw her and ever since then they have been like......you know looking. And that will be a good story because Liz is going to be hurt.
EH: Are Liz and Lucky together then?
HEATHER No. Kind of, but not. They are trying to be
EH: Is he with anyone?
HEATHER No, with Alexis’s sister kind of.
EH: Alexis’s sister!? So is Sonny with Carly now?
HEATHER No. They are not together Sonny is not with anybody, but Alexis kind of likes him.
EH: Yeah that is what I heard that she was in love with.
HEATHER Yeah, but she won’t admit it to anyone.
EH: Does he love her you think?
HEATHER I don’t know.
EH: He kind of has such a wacky life.
HEATHER I can’t tell.
EH: Would you like them together?
HEATHER Yeah, I kind of am tired of Liz and Lucky I wish he would like the sister and I wish Jason was back cause I loved him and I wish he would be with Elizabeth. I hate it when Lucky and Nicholas fight. I hate that stuff. Like, I just want them to be nice and to be brothers.
EH: Yeah and fight against the world together.
HEATHER Yeah, it is just the romances part I don’t like the fighting part.
EH: The business intrigue.
HEATHER Yeah. What other shows have you watched?
EH: All My Children, it was okay, they have one extremely good looking young man on that show.
HEATHER I just watch that today.
EH: His name is Ryan.
HEATHER He was on Regis today.
EH: Yeah this lady that watched it that was her character she loved him so much, he was so gorgeous. I have watched Days of Our Lives, and that is the wackiest, it and Passions are the wackiest soaps.
HEATHER Passions has always been weird and Days used to be normal but now it so weird and that is why I stopped watching it.
EH: Well now they have this horrible, I was watching it longtime ago, and they have this whole baby switching storyline, have you heard of that? Where they, one couple had a baby but it got adopted by another couple and they got another baby with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome so now it is like 2 and ½ years later and the father of their fetal Alcohol Syndrome baby has come back and wants custody of him and then they found out that their baby was actually this other couple’s who could never have children baby, and it is just....
HEATHER See that is just too weird, it used to be so good it used to be more like General Hospital just romance and you know I mean I admit it doesn’t happen in your everyday life but it could, except for some of that Cassadine stuff but.....
EH: How did they get together I thought he was with Laura?
HEATHER He was but then she went back to Luke. He just asked her out and this is their first date. But she these people are just too old. She is like 50 and she is trying to look like she is 20, and it is like grow old gracefully. The plastic surgery is so obvious.
EH: Yeah.
HEATHER I like these folks but they are kind of getting old.
EH: Do you think they are going to end up together or do you think that this drunk driving thing is going to tear them apart?
HEATHER It will probably tear them apart.
EH: Where are they at?
HEATHER Some island in the Caribbean. I should be over there cleaning my kitchen, but I am too tired.
EH: Every time I put my son to sleep it always makes me so tired because I sit there and rock him and I am just like....
HEATHER Fall asleep I know.
EH: And it I used to lay with him, but he just liked to pull my hair and stuff and so it always made me feel like taking a nap and I thought it makes me want to take a nap so why doesn’t it make you feel tired?
HEATHER I lay with mine and he, my other ones wouldn’t let me because they would get down and go play, but he loves to go to sleep. And so I will say let’s go lay down and he’ll say okay and he plays with my hair while he goes to sleep. And so we both....it is like my little ten minute nap.
EH: So Alexis’s sister, what is she like?
HEATHER She is cute, she is nice she is not a bad guy.
EH: What does Alexis think about Ned getting together with...
HEATHER She is kind of okay with it. But Jax told Ned where AJ was and then he told Alexis and he told her not to tell anyone they were going to go find them and then Sonny came over and asked and Ned said we are going to LA to do work and he was like Alexis where are you going and she told him and so Ned is really mad at Alexis right now.
EH: Why does he hate Sonny so much? Cause of the whole Jason thing?
HEATHER I don’t know. Yeah, I guess cause of Jason, everyone hates Sonny but I am not quite sure why. Jax hates him because he thought he wasn’t good to Brenda and so.....That looks good. [movie commercial] My lights keep flickering.
EH: I know, that wind is so strong. Oh is that of Laura?
HEATHER No it is Helena.
EH: Did she already go through trial and everything?
HEATHER Yeah but she had escaped from jail but then they caught her again.
EH: She has such a large chest.
HEATHER Yeah, I think she has gotten it larger. I think she had an operation to make it large and then now she has had another one to make it larger. She is like lopsided.
EH: See I would never want to be that large. Even when I was nursing it was just so big it was so horrible.
HEATHER It was so big.
EH: He is just going to sit on the docks for an hour.
HEATHER Which means that someone is going to come up to talk to him. There she is.
EH: Did she get hurt in the car accident?
HEATHER Yeah.
EH: She is a doctor?
HEATHER She is in her residency.
EH: How old is she? Oh, good they are going to have a bonding moment.
HEATHER Uh huh. It is almost over. Uh oh. Knew that was coming.
EH: But he and Liz aren’t sleeping together?
HEATHER No, but she is still in love with him.
EH: He is not so in love with her necessarily?
HEATHER No, cause Helena wiped it out of his memory and so now he can’t be. It is
dumb.
EH: Carly would never agree to that would she?
HEATHER No, Carly would still have him but they would have joint custody and stuff.
EH: Oh, so they don’t have joint custody now?
HEATHER No, Sonny made AJ sign over all his rights to...
EH: Oh, because of the arson right?
HEATHER Yeah. My favorite parts of the show are when they have the song at the end
and they show all the different people. But they haven’t done that in a long time. Or if
they do one couple with a song or something.
EH: Oh, yeah.
HEATHER But it is over of course. They leave all that at the end. Usually my 4 year old
is down here watching Disney or something and I am up in my room watching it.
EH: Oh, while you do laundry or something?
HEATHER Yeah, I always watch in my room, because the laundry room is right by
there.
EH: Your laundry room is upstairs?
HEATHER Yeah.
EH: That is really good because all your bedrooms are upstairs.
HEATHER I know, it was supposed to be down here but I had them change it. Because
all the laundry is upstairs. Except for towels so I love it because it is right next to my
room and so I can just sit up there and do it. I clean the bedrooms. I wait to clean
upstairs until the afternoon. But I like to have the TV on all day. I don’t know it is
probably not good but....
EH: Do you have it on soap operas all day or is it Disney channel all day?
HEATHER This TV is on Disney Channel all day and the TV upstairs is on soaps but I
don’t turn it on until about 12:30. I don’t get upstairs until then and then I leave it all and
I like to watch Oprah too.
EH: Well, Oprah is pretty cool. I have watched her a couple of times. She is my new
soap opera.
HEATHER Yeah, Oprah is good. I like Oprah to watch her. Usually the kids....this is
over at three and then the kids get home at 3:30 and so after that the kids have 7 things
now practices and all.

END OF 1ST VIEWING
2ND VIEWING WITH AS (GENERAL HOSPITAL)

EH: Who is this baby?
HEATHER Brent.
EH: And this is the one that you lay with to sleep?
HEATHER Older. There is one that is upstairs that I was putting to sleep that is why.
EH: She went up to switch her baby from her bed so it is a commercial so it doesn’t matter. And it is 10 after so she probably misses the first part of each soap so she can put her baby to bed.
HEATHER I didn’t watch it yesterday.
EH: Oh you didn’t?
HEATHER I never knew what happened with Lucky and that girl kissing and...
EH: It turned out, I watched half of it when I got home, anyway it turned out she was married for three months and her husband was killed when she went to visit her parents in Bosnia and she hadn’t told anyone that she had gotten married or anything like that.
HEATHER Oh.
EH: Is this Lulu?
HEATHER No this is her daughter Maxie. [talking to son, telling to do work before going to play with friends]
EH: And Gia told Liz that she saw them kissing and then she was like I am through with both of you when she was talking to Nicholas. I just love the portrayal of childbirth on this show.
HEATHER Yeah.
EH: Is that one of the people? The main regulars?
HEATHER No.
EH: Oh, okay. Emily’s gone right?
HEATHER Yeah.
EH: How come he is bleeding?
HEATHER I don’t know.
EH: Were you watching back in these times?
HEATHER Part, kind of. I was like in junior high when this was on.
EH: Oh, this is the beginning of Luke and Laura.
HEATHER Uh huh. This must be an anniversary show but I like it when they show all this stuff.
HEATHER Yeah. There are an awful lot of boat ones huh?
EH: Yeah. That is when what’s her name died right?
HEATHER Yeah.
EH: Oh, that is Stefan. That is when they came back.
HEATHER Is it?
EH: Yeah.
HEATHER When baby gets big it is scary.
EH: Yeah, I am already terrified. I already have these big nieces and nephews that are dating and doing all this stuff. I would be more scared for my daughters.
HEATHER Yeah.
EH: Cause some of my nieces go out with some of the biggest losers. They just like these boys that even though they are going to the alternative high school and they have heard all these rumors that they have other girlfriends and stuff like that it is not true they love them the best. Even though they have troubles that they didn’t graduate and stuff they are just so cute.

HEATHER Yeah.

EH: You only have one daughter right?

HEATHER But she is tough so I am hoping. I told my husband that she is either going to choose to be good or choose to be bad and I am not going to have a say in it either way and hopefully she chooses to be good because if she is not then she will kick our butts.

EH: That is too funny.

HEATHER My son did that on the way out the door to the dentist. [drew on wall]

EH: Is it washable marker?

HEATHER I am hoping. I haven’t tried to wash it off yet because we just got home and put the baby down and everything is going on.

EH: That is so crazy. No cavities?

HEATHER No the two oldest ones.

EH: He hasn’t lost any teeth yet right?

HEATHER No. [talking to son about phone]

EH: Does he work for Sonny?

HEATHER Yeah, he works for Sonny. Are they going to get something on? They have a new one that is cuter. The other one wasn’t cute enough. Why doesn’t she sit down? It would be more relaxing.

EH: Yeah. Lucy always has the most interesting outfits.

HEATHER She has quite the figure.

EH: Oh, the weddings. She was in love with Luke wasn’t she?

HEATHER Yeah. Look at all the people that were getting married.

EH: Oh, that is Karen and Jagger. I used to watch the show just for Jagger because he wasso hot. He has been on a few TV pilots and stuff.

HEATHER Robert Scorpio. Oh, he died.

EH: Who did Brenda marry?

HEATHER Sonny, but he never showed up.

EH: He didn’t.

HEATHER He thought she would get hurt so he left her at the alter. It was so sad. They were married in real life and now they are getting divorced.

EH: Did they really get married or was it just a fake?

HEATHER It was a real ceremony.

EH: Who is that Laura?

HEATHER [talking to kids] I can’t believe that is all the people that got married.

EH: Well, maybe that they are just showing the ones that lasted, semi-lasted. What a weird dress. Felicia and Mac I guess. They got married in real life too. Aren’t they getting divorced too?

HEATHER Well, maybe, did I hear that? I don’t know. I would have like to have seen all of them but maybe that is all.

EH: Cause Lucy I know has been married a bazillion times and like if they showed all of Bobbie’s weddings.
HEATHER  They didn’t show any of Bobbies. And they didn’t show Tony and Bobbie.  
[talking to kids]  
EH:  You know the generic brand was so much cheaper than EPT.  
HEATHER  I know.  
EH:  Not that I have had to buy any recently or anything like that but I remember…..  
HEATHER  You have an announcement?  
EH:  No, no, no.  Definitely no.  
HEATHER  Are you staying at your mom’s house?  
EH:  Yeah. It is so nice to have a backyard and everything. It was so nice while it was warm but now that it is all snowy. It is nice not to be at the mortuary because it was all cement you know what I mean.  
HEATHER  [talking to kids about going to friend’s houses]  
HEATHER  They didn’t show their wedding.  
EH:  I know. Are they going to show all the birth scenes now? I would be a lot more frustrated now. I am sure it is all, hospital elevators come equipped. [they had a bed in there]  
HEATHER  I guess it hurts when you don’t have an epidural.  
EH:  I think it is so beautiful that it goes for her. Maybe an epidural slows you down.  
HEATHER  Six hours later.  
EH:  Have you always done it with an epidural?  
HEATHER  Yeah, did you?  
EH:  Yeah. I, yeah.  
HEATHER  I had an friend that has something wrong with her blood and it is too thin or something and so they won’t give her an epidural for the first they did they gave her some medicine first to make it so her blood would clot and stuff but the last one they said it was too risky and they wouldn’t and she didn’t prepare like she thought the whole time that she would get one and she was in there waiting for it she had two and she had one with and one without and she really wanted it with and she didn’t get it she screamed. Yeah, she was bawling cause it hurts like heck.  
EH:  And it is so demoralizing, if it is progressing and even then it is not progressing fast enough for what I am feeling.  
HEATHER  [talking to kids]  
HEATHER  Do you guys think I should watch soap operas? [Asking kids]  
Child:  What is that?  
HEATHER:  Do you think I should watch General Hospital, do you care if I watch them?  
Child:  no. I was watching it down there.  
HEATHER:  What if I watched them all day and didn’t do anything?  
Child:  Is General Hospital for 2 hours?  
HEATHER:  No, 1. Oh, here we go.  
EH:  Oh, she found out she was pregnant.  
Child:  Are they married?  
HEATHER:  They are divorced but they are getting married again.  
Child:  Goll, everybody on here gets divorced.  
EH:  Oh that is Dominique. And she had their baby because she was dying.  
HEATHER:  Did you watch this story?  
EH:  No, but I remember that their baby, handicapped daughter died.
HEATHER: Their baby lived. She got hit by a car and they gave her heart to her.
EH: You know when you have a heart transplant or any kind of transplant you have to be on pills for the rest of your life and you never...I guess she was normal.
HEATHER: That one makes me cry.
EH: I know that one made me tear up. That is horrible. I don’t want my baby to die.
HEATHER: She was on the first one.
EH: AS a nurse? Let me guess that is who she ended up with.
HEATHER: He died.
EH: Oh, I remember her. Oh that is the old AJ and Jason.
HEATHER: I love Jason. Oh, that was the worst. When Stone died. That is when I started loving Sonny that is when I started watching it pretty much.
EH: I liked Jason and Robin.
HEATHER: I did too.
EH: Oh that is Jax and Brenda. How come they, did they end up together after?
HEATHER: Yeah, then she died.
EH: Did Lila die?
HEATHER: No, she is in a wheelchair. I wonder when it got color.
EH: Wow, Robin was on the show forever. Is she just off at school or something like that.
HEATHER: I like these kind of days. I need to call my kids and make sure they are okay. Now he won’t go to bed until late. [on phone]
EH: Xander is not that old is he?
HEATHER: He is probably 24. It seems like they haven’t had a good storyline like that forever. Like the Sonny and Stone and BJ.
EH: Like the very emotionally.....
HEATHER: Yeah.
EH: So they are going to get remarried.
HEATHER: They just have Helena stories and they are like not good.
EH: Then how come he was off sleeping with all these other girls? How come they got divorced?
HEATHER: There he is. Rick Springfield.
EH: And that is Bobby. Sonny and Carly?
HEATHER: It is hard to see.
EH: Were you watching during that Puerto Rico?
HEATHER: That is when I started watching.
EH: Ned and Lois, Sonny and Brenda.
HEATHER: They were the best.
EH: Lucky and Elizabeth.
HEATHER: Oh, that was the best I remember that day.
EH: Oh, really what happened?
HEATHER: Oh, they had just didn’t like each other and then they kissed. And then he grabbed her and kissed her and pushed her up against the wall. I called my sister and said did you see that.
EH: They are probably the focal point or what ever. The love that has lasted the longest.
HEATHER: They probably kiss the other person more than they kiss their husband. I don’t kiss that much anymore.
EH: Once you have a couple kids or just one kid.
HEATHER: Well, that was good.
EH: They really have had some cool stories. Like cool loves stories too.
HEATHER: They have and it seems like lately they are taking too long I hate when it
takes to long to get to the story. It is like hurry and get there and then make up a new
story you don’t, it is like they think they only have one story and they think they have to
make it go on forever and ever and ever. I’ll have to call my sister and tell her to watch it
on soap net. That is what I need to get because there is too much going on during the
day. We went to Arizona over Easter and we traveled and drove in the car and didn’t see
it for days and days. Saturday morning we were just getting ready and the boys were
golfing and we turned on the TV and my grandpa has soap net on his cable and we
watched 3 days and we were all just home and the kids were playing and we watched
three days worth on Saturday morning. You could watch the whole week. And it was a
good one we missed too, we were all like oh.
EH: So I don’t understand why Sonny doesn’t marry the women that he loves. He
married Carly and Lily but not Brenda.
HEATHER: Because she got hurt and he just decided that AS long AS she loved him she
would get hurt. Because the people he really loved he doesn’t want to be with them
because he doesn’t want them to get hurt.

3RD VIEWING WITH Heather (GENERAL HOSPITAL)

EH: She is downstairs fixing the TV and the phone is also ringing.
[talking to kids]
HEATHER: I usually watch it downstairs.
[talking on phone]
HEATHER: Oh, he is hugging him?
EH: He just said this is a little too easy Brother in law.
HEATHER: Who said that?
EH: Sonny. Is this the one that you are usually putting ASleep?
HEATHER: No this is the one that was Asleep on the couch. My other one is Asleep in
bed and he is one and this four.
EH: Do you think they are having all these proclamations of love because they are going
to break them up fairly soon here?
HEATHER: Yeah, probably.
EH: Have you noticed any patterns like that?
HEATHER: Yeah, sometimes they say stuff but it is more obvious and stuff like they
will say I wonder who killed so and so and then in the next scene it shows the person. Oh
yeah? She already knows.
EH: Yeah. [laughs] So do you notice any differences now that it is going into summer?
Like are they doing anymore teen storylines?
HEATHER: Yeah they always do the younger stories in the summer.
EH: Do you like those more? Are they more interesting to you?
HEATHER: Some of them. Like I like them, but I don’t like the Maxi. I don’t like it
when they get too young like the high school kind of stuff.
EH: And Maxi is going to be going after Xander.
HEATHER: The young people really do it on the Young and the Restless. [talking to child]
[he is playing in the same room]
EH: Your kids all have such a family look. Like such a resemblance.
HEATHER: Yeah, they do. You can tell they are related.
EH: At first I thought it was all Blake but you have the olive complexion and dark eyes too. And the dark hair.
HEATHER: They get it from both of us. I am not very olive any more I used to be.
EH: Did you tan really easily?
HEATHER: Yeah. Now I just speckle. I am scared that I am going to get cancer and stuff and I am starting to get spots. These are just from the last two or three years. that is like old people. It is grandma hands. And I am starting to get them on my face.
EH: My mom passed on that thing where we get white freckles where it is like an absence of pigment when we get older. And she has them all over her arms.
HEATHER: Do you have any?
EH: I haven’t gotten any noticeable ones yet, but my sister has and she is in her thirties.
HEATHER: Like this?
EH: Yeah like that. My mom’s arms are just covered with them
HEATHER: Isn’t that weird?
EH: Yeah. Is that what Lucky gave her?
HEATHER: Must be. She just had a baby in real life.
EH: Really? She is so thin.
HEATHER: At first you could kind of tell, but....
EH: WAS she like gone? How old is she in real-life?
HEATHER: Early 20’s. On the show Juan, that was the father of the baby.
EH: They got married? He was like 15.
HEATHER: He looked young, he was Emily’s boyfriend before Xander came.
EH: The singer. What happened to him? Did he go crazy or something?
HEATHER: He left after she started liking Xander. Then he just left. So I don’t know if they are married.
EH: But they had a kid. This is so funny because my husband is this way about s’mores.
He loves he makes them the perfect golden brown and puts the graham cracker with the chocolate right next to the fire so it gets all melty. He loves it.
HEATHER: That is funny. They are good.
EH: Yeah. Oh, and it showed AJ taking a drink.
HEATHER: Oh it did?
EH: Yeah, it showed him drinking a bunch of champagne when everybody went outside.
HEATHER: Duh.
EH: After Sonny said I am so glad you married......
[talking to kids, her daughter has a friend over and they are fighting]
[commercial]
[still talking to daughter]
HEATHER: Kids, kids, kids, all of you are going to get a big spanking. [laughs]
[talking to kids still, commercial]
HEATHER: She has 8 cookies. Share those with Brett and Danielle. They both have such strong personalities that when they play they just.....
EH: That is the hard thing. You need to have a leader and a follower sometimes.
HEATHER: Did Jax ever say anything to Sonny that he heard?
EH: No but he said it to AJ and AJ was like so?
HEATHER: Why are the men so short? Did you notice?
EH: The really good looking ones?
HEATHER: All the other ones are just like this much shorter.
EH: So did Liz show on the show?
HEATHER: No, she would carry a purse or something. They never said she was.
EH: Are they in love with each other? Like Skye and Jax?
HEATHER: They are really involved with each other.
EH: Is Liz really jealous of her?
HEATHER: Yeah, she used to be, but I don’t know anymore, but when they were on AS teenagers she was.
EH: Cause Lucky was interested in Sarah first.
HEATHER: Yeah, but then Sarah went off with Nicholas.
EH: Well, that is good they are finally bringing some closure to the story.
HEATHER: Now, it won’t go on and on and on. Just a big triangle. I hate triangle things. Or one girl likes a guy and he likes a different girl and she likes a different guy. I just like the guy to like the girl who likes him and to nobody trying to break them up.
[making a phone call for a nail appointment]
[commercial]
[having son get purse]
EH: Do you like Skye?
HEATHER: She is kind of growing on me.
EH: Why do Ned and Sonny hate her?
HEATHER: I don’t know. She has been really mean to Sonny so.....Blamed him for things and stuff.
[talking to son who has taken an Oreo]
[keeps trying to dismiss him]
EH: Do you like characters based on a storyline or do you like characters even if they aren’t in a good storyline?
HEATHER: Usually I just like the characters because sometimes they will give them a cool storyline and they still bug me. Even the new Carly is starting to grow on me a little bit. But she bugged me for a long time.
[calling for nail appointment, commercial]
HEATHER: Even AJ, well, maybe that is not true, because if they made AJ a likeable person I might like him, but....
EH: Even though he has a cool storyline like in battle with Sonny.
HEATHER: We have this funeral director’s dinner tonight and I don’t know what time it is at. The Utah Funeral Directors Association dinner.
EH: I was reading in the obituaries and Berg died.
HEATHER: Oh, was that him, I saw Berg and I wondered.
[talking to child]
[making nail appointment]
HEATHER: Are they going to make this one romantic oh, he is getting drunk. That is so sad.
EH: More soap opera wedding nights are just like.....
[talking to kids, shhhhh]
HEATHER: I always like it when they play the song.
EH: Like that?
HEATHER: Those are the best days when they do that.
EH: It is very poignant I think I think the song and individuals etc. Do you think that Sonny is in love with Alexis too?
HEATHER: I don’t know, I can’t tell. People told him that she is in love with him and he doesn’t react to it so I don’t know. I wish he would be, but then again I don’t really think they are that good of a couple.
EH: He and the new Carly did you like them together?
HEATHER: No.
EH: Is that Courtney’s dad too?
HEATHER: Yeah.

INTERVIEW WITH AS

EH: Where do you live?
HEATHER: South Jordan.
EH: How many kids?
HEATHER: Four kids.
EH: Ages?
HEATHER: 11, 8, 4, 1 turning 2 in a couple of weeks.
EH: What is your age?
HEATHER: 32.
EH: Where were you born?
HEATHER: In Murray.
EH: And that is where you grew up?
HEATHER: Um, yeah, I grew up in Sandy and Arizona. Went to High School in Arizona.
EH: But then your family moved back here later?
HEATHER: Yeah, I came back to go to BYU and then they came up later to be by their grandkids.
EH: And what is your husband’s occupation?
HEATHER: Funeral Director.
EH: And what is your income bracket?
HEATHER: It is like um, 80-100 around in there.
EH: Well, they are self-employed so it probably varies from year to year.
HEATHER: Well, they get a salary but they get other things.
EH: But there are other benefits and the opening of the new mortuary.
HEATHER: It may change for the bad or he good.
EH: And what is your education level?
HEATHER: I completed one year of college.
EH: And what is your previous work experience?
HEATHER: I only worked before my oldest child and I worked at Cottonwood Hospital in their billing department.
EH: So what do you think about the writers and actors and characters? Do you ever separate those out?
HEATHER: I never think about the writers. Sometimes I will think like she is cuter than his wife or stuff like that but I know that they are married to other people and I will think I wonder if their husband ... stuff like that.
EH: Has their ever been a time in your life when you watched or relied on the soap opera more? Like if you had moved or if you were lonely?
HEATHER: Um, I think I really liked, and I really got into the soaps when Days of our Lives in early high school, we moved when I was in ninth grade to Arizona and so every day we would come home and watch it but I didn't know anybody and I didn't have any friends and so that was nice. If we were going to miss it we would tape it and stuff. Yeah, so we relied on it more then I think. It was more something to look forward too.
EH: What about when you moved to California?
HEATHER: Yeah, well we moved to Arizona and I was in 9th grade and after a few months and I also had a sister that was 10 or 11 and she watched it and my mom and my dad worked next door and sometimes he would show up at the same time and we didn't realize why we just thought he was coming in to say hello but then we figured out that he was coming home at the same time everyday and watch it with us. Anyway, my sister got sick and the make a wish foundation she wanted to go meet Marlena and so they sent us to California and they paid and we went and watched Days of Our Lives be taped so that was a ton of fun. We got to meet all the people and she got all their autographs.
EH: So what was it like to meet them were you expecting them to act like they did on the show?
HEATHER: Yeah a little bit, but they didn't I was surprised because they were different. Like I remember one girl on the show was outgoing and bubbly and but in real life when we met her she talked really soft and really quiet and knelt down to talk to my sister and she was really quiet, she was really friendly but she was really sweet and quiet. And so that was surprising. And of course the ones that were mean on the show were not at all they were very nice. So that was fun and because of that it made it all the more fun to watch because you had met the people and some of them were really nice like John Black and real nice to my sister and kind of followed her around and so then when you watched it you were liked you liked him more and of course I thought he was so cute.
EH: So when did you start watching General Hospital?
HEATHER: Well, we watched Days and it was kind of a family thing and then it got too weird and they were possessed and levitating and it got more into the supernatural science fiction stuff and I, it used to be like General Hospital is now but and then I can't remember, it must have been like 5 years ago.
EH: So it was after college and everything.
HEATHER: In college I just watched Days. And then it got so, I could hardly stand to watch it. And I don't know how I started watching General Hospital. Someone I must have known watched it and said that it was good. I think I turned it on one day and
something big happened like someone was being shot and it was showers and music playing and romance and you know and I was like this is good and then I started watching because Stone was sick. So that is when I started watching.

EH: Because they are on at the same time and so that was a pretty easy transition because then that fits in with your kids’ schedule.

HEATHER: And I was used to it at that time and I would kind of watch both but then they switched to where they were on at exactly the same time. And then I just quit watching Days altogether. But I liked General Hospital and it was like Days used to be and so I got my mom and my sister.

EH: And they both like it so much too?

HEATHER: Yeah. I mean if they are home they will watch it.

EH: So then when you were in California when Blake was going to be a Funeral Director you watched Days? I remember you saying that you watched it a lot cause you had a little baby and you were in a little apartment.

HEATHER: When I wasn’t watching Barney. Yeah. But I mostly watched it in high school. But it wasn’t AS good and so I didn’t like it AS much. There would be periods where I would turn it on. Like today when I was on the treadmill and Young and Restless was on and I watched that and I kind of know the people that are on it.

EH: And kind of know what is going on.

HEATHER: And if it was good then if I was home then I would watch it tomorrow. But it didn’t really grab me. It has probably been six months since I watched it. I can’t really remember there really being anything that I loved. I really liked it in high school and in college I would watch it with all my roommates. All my roommates watched it and so we would all sit down and talk about it and have a drink and just go oohhh, and that kind of stuff, kind of a social thing.

EH: Does it feel like it is a coping or relaxation technique?

HEATHER: it is relaxing definitely. I love when, I usually will wait until two until to put my little boy down for his nap so since he likes to lay on the bed with me and I will turn it on or otherwise I will have to lay there with nothing so if I wait till two then I can watch it. And it is definitely my turn to go in there and shut the door and not have to talk to anyone and I can put my kid to sleep AS an excuse.

EH: Have you ever used other media to find out about a show or characters?

HEATHER: I buy the magazines sometimes. If I am in line in the grocery store and I see something interesting I maybe buy it every three months. I don’t have a subscription.

EH: Have you ever looked on the internet?

HEATHER: No, we don’t have the internet.

EH: Are you interested in the character or the actor?

HEATHER: The character. I mean if I read something like I was interested to know that the one character had a baby and the other character was the dad. But I don’t want to I don’t care that much.

EH: Okay, Do you feel like you need to justify your time that you watch?

HEATHER: Maybe sometimes, but now I just think it is good for me. It is an hour that usually I am working folding laundry or something like that but if not I just I don’t. If I did all of them but since it is just the one that I really like and usually I’m not here.

EH: Do you feel that being a Mormon affects the way you watch the soap opera? The way you look at it?
HEATHER: Kind of in that I don’t agree with what they are doing but on the other hand I know that is how a lot of the people in the world live you know, sometimes I will be…..no not really. I think they try to give the good people good morals except for the sex part. But you don’t see them, like the people that are doing drugs they are bad people. You know what I mean so except for the immorality part and I just think that is how it is. It doesn’t make me want to run out and do that.

EH: So you first remember watching it in high school and you watched it with your family.

HEATHER: We watched it even before we moved and I remember in jr high watching it and she would come over and we would watch it but when we went over to her house cause it was on at 3, and that is why I watched it because it was on after school or I would have never known. And then we would go over to her house and her mom would get mad at us for watching it so we would watch it at our house.

EH: How much time do you think you spend watching it then AS compared to now?

HEATHER: I probably watched it more just because it was a social thing too, like my friends liked it and you know when you are young you are not going anywhere you can’t drive and you can’t you know. We didn’t have softball like these kids so whatever and so we would just watch it and it was a social thing.

EH: Who is your favorite character?

HEATHER: I like Sonny and those people Jax and Brenda and Jason and those people that are Associated with him.

EH: And why do you think you like them?

HEATHER: I don’t know. I think Sonny is a really good actor. I think when you watch him he is just really good to watch. I don’t know if he has a lot of charisma or whatever but when you are watching you are just kind of mesmerized by him. Not that I think he is that big of a babe or whatever.

EH: Do you like the guys on the show more than the girls?

HEATHER: Yeah. I mean I like some of the girls but I definitely like watching the guys better.

EH: How would you describe your first impression of like Jason or Sonny? Like watching him dealing with Stone’s death is that what drew you in to Sonny’s character?

HEATHER: Yeah, probably the acting there must have been a lot of chemistry. Kind of like a good movie that you watch that you know the characters really well.

EH: If they weren’t on the day that you watched it or if they still aren’t on the show, like if it is all about the Quartermaines, do you feel like it has been a waste to watch it?

HEATHER: I don’t watch it. I have it on and then if nobody good is on then I still have it on but I don’t sit down and watch it.

EH: Do you see any similarities or differences between yourself and your favorite characters?

HEATHER: I have nothing in common with any of them.

EH: How much other TV do you watch on average?

HEATHER: I watch a lot of TV.

EH: DO you watch it or do you have it on?

HEATHER: I have it on all day I don’t watch all day. I watch if a show is on I will watch five minutes or something. I used to watch a lot at night when my kids were little but now we are just gone and so we don’t watch it. Last night I really wanted to watch
the Bachelor but we at a baseball game. So I ran home and I said honey you bring home
the kids so I caught the last 15 minutes.
EH: WAS it good? Who did he cut?
HEATHER: Yeah, Shannon the dark haired girl. She was kind of ornery. But there is a
certain maybe three or four shows that I like and if I am home I will watch them,
otherwise it is not worth it. There is too much trying to get kids to bed and I watch the
news. Mostly the TV is on with Nickelodeon and Disney.
EH: How do you feel about your current social situation right now?
HEATHER: Yeah got enough friends. Too busy to have much more social then I have.
EH: Do you ever like to sit and think about or while you are working think about your
favorite character or storyline and what is happening right now?
HEATHER: I don’t think about why just because I know that the writers did it. Yeah,
cause this morning I called my sister did you watch the show yesterday cause it wAS
good. I think about it in ways that I got to watch it today, but I don’t think about the
show and what happens because there is too much other stuff.
EH: Have you ever felt guilty about the time content or whatever about watching your
soap opera?
HEATHER: no, I don’t feel like I watch that much, it doesn’t stop me from going
somewhere or doing something or like helping the class I never think but that is the time
is on, but I will think oh shoot I am going to miss General Hospital but it doesn’t make
me not go.
EH: Do you ever talk to your husband about watching it?
HEATHER: No, he laughs. I told you we had the soap net. Or he will come home and I
will be crying and he will laugh at me or something but he doesn’t care. And after the
news I would turn it on in bed and if it was General Hospital and I would try to tell him
and he would laugh.
EH: He doesn’t care either way?
HEATHER: No.
EH: DO you feel that either the soap opera or characters are reality based?
HEATHER: No. They go too far.
EH: Do you ever feel frustration at the writers of the show?
HEATHER: Sometimes, there are some storylines I hate. Like when someone gets
murdered and they think it is someone that it is not and they do the courtroom and I hate
to watch those storylines because they drag on and I hate those and the fighting and you
sometimes.
EH: How do you feel when your favorite character makes a mistake?
HEATHER: I feel bad. I was frustrated.
EH: Do you feel like you are a part of the town of your soap opera?
HEATHER: No.
EH: Do you ever compare your actions, beliefs or relationships to those of the
characters?
HEATHER: No.
EH: If you were transported to Port Charles would you feel like you were with friends?
HEATHER: No, no. It is never AS good. I love Steve Young and I think he is so cute
and you have this image of this perfect guy the bachelor but I know that in real life I
don’t want to meet him and I don’t want to know him because no one is that perfect. You
have images in your head and I just want to think that way. I don’t want to know that. I am the same with these characters.
EH: Would you like to have your favorite character over for dinner?
HEATHER: No, no.
EH: Do you feel like you miss them if you haven’t seen them for a while?
HEATHER: No, not really.
EH: If the character or actor/actress skipped shows would you follow them to another show?
HEATHER: If someone I really liked did then, like if Jason did yeah, I probably would.
EH: Even if he was a different character?
HEATHER: Yeah I probably would watch it for a while and see how he was. Usually it is because you like the character.
EH: Have you ever talked to the screen perhaps giving advice to your favorite character?
HEATHER: I have talked to the screen in frustration, like oh duh or that is stupid.
EH: Would you like to meet any of the actors or actresses in person?
HEATHER: I would be interested in seeing them and stuff like if I saw them I would like to watch them you know like be a fly on the wall or whatever but I don’t know that I would want to interact or anything like that. One time, I used to watch with my friend in Arizona, Ned, was at the mall and we went and got a picture signed with him and stuff but you know what he was kind of weird even in that you could tell just from meeting him. Artsy or something and it was just like even though he was cute in the short amount of time we met him it wasn’t great.
EH: And it probably made you think I don’t know about his character now.
HEATHER: Yeah, and so now I like him but....
EH: Have you ever read articles when they featured your favorite soap or character?
HEATHER: Yeah.
EH: What is more important to you to be physically or personality more attractive?
HEATHER: Both, cause if they are really ugly but really nice then you know, and I hate to say it like Bobby she might have a good storyline but I just can’t get over that she has had a lot of surgery and augmentation and she looks like fake and her hair is like she is trying to be 20 and I just want to say grow old gracefully. Yeah, looks are a lot of it. If they weren’t good looking. There are a lot of good-looking people on the show that just don’t do it for me.
EH: If they are not on the show the day you watch it how do you feel?
HEATHER: Disappointed.
EH: Do you feel happy in your life? Are you content in your life?
HEATHER: Yeah. I feel a little overwhelmed but happy.
EH: Are things going the way you want the to go in your life?
EH: If you had a wish about your life right now, what would it be?
HEATHER: A nanny, no a housekeeper.
EH: I would choose a chef.
HEATHER: So what do you want to do later on in your life? After your kids are all in school or even grown up more out of the house?
HEATHER: I have no idea. No, just I don’t know, what our parents do. I don’t have a big desire to go get a career or anything. I never did.
EH: Are your relationships with your husband and children satisfactory?
HEATHER: Yeah, except for Jake [teasing son sitting there]. I feel good about all my relationships with my family and friends.
EH: If you could change anything about your life what would it be? 
HEATHER: I wouldn’t change one thing except for the housekeeper. I just feel like I am failing miserably in that because there is so much going on and there is not enough me. It is like I used to be a small business and now we are a large company and I haven’t hired anyone else. Here we are and it used to just be us and we ran smoothly and now we are this large corporation and I am the only employee. But yeah, I am really happy.
EH: When you were younger is this how you thought your life would be?
HEATHER: Yeah, this is what I always wanted.
Appendix B

Transcripts from SHELLY
1st time watching the GENERAL HOSPITAL with SHELLY

EH: So how did your son do at...? [national wrestling championships]
SHELLY: He did fourth, which out of the nation we figured was pretty good.
EH: Uh huh.
SHELLY: My husband um, when we were down there, didn’t know how well he had
done, and we didn’t know how well the kids he was up against. Cause at regionals they
have a program that tells you how well the kids have done in their state and how well
they have done in their area, whatever and we didn’t know how old the kids were that he
had done and four of them had taken first in their region which is huge that is like many
states,
EH: Oh yeah.
SHELLY: And two had taken second and one had taken third. So that is how well the
kids rated that he wrestled.
EH: Oh that is wonderful.
SHELLY: So he took fourth, he should have done better, but fourth in the nation that is
not too bad. And his first year at nationals so.... I haven’t watched it for a few days but
I’m not sure what is going on. But it seems like everytime I see it it hasn’t changed
much.
EH: Oh really? Do you like sonny? Do you want him with Carly or I guess there is a new
one that is coming.....?
SHELLY: I don’t like the new Carly so now I don’t care.
EH: Oh, okay.
SHELLY: I don’t like the new actress at all. I don’t think they have any chemistry, I
have a harder time seeing those two together.
EH: Unhum. Yeah. But um... do you like Alexis? I like Alexis. Is she still together
with Ned? [Referring to characters as they appear on the show]
SHELLY: No.
EH: Oh, they split.
SHELLY: That’s the new Carly.
EH: Yeah
SHELLY: She is not even cute. She’s not the same. I don’t know what happened to the
old Carly, I never liked.... Sometimes you, I, buy the Soap Opera Digest or something so
you get background information, I don’t know why she left the show.
EH: Yeah. If they either fired her of if she left.
SHELLY: Yeah. Cause usually when someone is leaving they tell you a month in
advance that they are going to something else. Like when um tall blond guy, I can’t
think of what his name is the Australian guy.
EH: Oh yeah, I know who you’re talking about.
SHELLY: But his show didn’t even work out
EH: Jax
SHELLY: Yeah Jax.....
EH: Jax was....I liked Jax.
SHELLY: Yes, but you knew in advance that he was leaving and so, so um and her she was like all of a sudden gone. So I don’t know if she kicked em off somehow or what. And I think this storyline is getting old too.
EH: The Sorrel
SHELLY: Um Hum. [10 seconds] I don’t know, I just don’t think the new writer is very good.
EH: Oh did they switch writers?
SHELLY: So many months ago, I don’t know how long, its been a little while.
EH: Oh at the beginning of the summer last year, I think, because...
SHELLY: I don’t think the new writers...[child interrupts her with a question] they are right there buddy.
SHELLY: I don’t know it’s kind of funny.
EH: Do you prefer him with Laura or do you even care.
SHELLY: I like Felicia too. Felicia is one of those ladies that no matter what her hair is doing, no matter what she’s got on, she’s like gorgeous.
EH: Oh, yeah. Always looking good.
SHELLY: Yeah. That is one thing that Lucky is still weird. I don’t know if they have a new Stavros or an old one. Cause I don’t remember the Stavros.
EH: Um hum.
SHELLY: From the way beginning.
EH: How long have you been watching?
SHELLY: Probably like since a teenager, off and onish. You know. I mean when I worked obviously I didn’t see it.
EH: Yeah. See he used to be on Days of Our Lives. I used to watch Days of Our Lives. And I always thought he was so good looking.
SHELLY: Didn’t, who else used to be on Days?
EH: Oh a lot of them.
SHELLY: I am really bad with recalling the names of the people. The guy who came back to be with Bobbi, didn’t he used to be on Days?
EH: Oh yeah he did, no he used to be on Santa Barbara.
SHELLY: Oh.
EH: He was Cruz.
[kids talking in background]
EH: Do you like Gia and Nicholas?
SHELLY: Yeah, I think, I’m glad they finally gave Nicholas a love interest. I mean he like never really had anybody. I don’t care for that hairdo. I haven’t seen Gia for a while, that like kinda not very attractive. [laughs] She is a way pretty girl.
EH: Oh yeah. But Elizabeth is the one who is a model, right?
SHELLY: Well no, she won out.
EH: Oh she won out?
SHELLY: Yeah.
EH: Oh I didn’t know that. I thought Elizabeth did.
SHELLY: Elizabeth didn’t want to do it. I am not sure what is going on here. I don’t know if Nicholas is faking loyalty with Luke or something I am not sure.
EH: Oh.
SHELLY: Cause I haven’t watched it much.
[kids talking]
SHELLY: So, I don’t know, I think the characters have changed a lot and I think that makes it hard to follow them.
EH: Uh huh.
SHELLY: And like I said the new writer they seem to take storylines and just hash them to death.
EH: Yeah.
SHELLY: Instead of moving on. I mean like I watched the other day and they were having a dream sequence thing about what everybody was thinking. Well we all know what their thinking. And that was the entire show was what they were dreaming. And it was like...
EH: How frustrating.
SHELLY: Well, it was boring. Like we all know that is what they think.
EH: Who is your favorite character do you think, on the show?
SHELLY: Jax used to be.
EH: Did you like Jax with Brenda or did you like Jax with the blond girl?
SHELLY: Anybody [laughs]. Jax in general.
EH: He was just really cute.
SHELLY: He was and he was really cute and I liked his accent and everything and um, I like Sonny a lot, and I like ....
EH: Cause Sonny has been on there forever. Did you like him with the old Carly, or did you like him with Brenda better or even going back further did you like him with um that Caryn?
SHELLY: I don’t think I watched when he was with Caryn. I don’t know I am kinda fun with the Brenda Carly triangle. My all time favorite, I should say, is actually Jason.
EH: Jason. Who do you want Jason to end up with? Elizabeth?
SHELLY: Elizabeth. Carly was too flaky for me. But I don’t know what is going on with him. I heard that they were bringing him back all the way and then he kinda came back and left again. So I’m not sure about what he is doing, but I really Jason.
EH: Do you like, um, so you don’t like Lucky and Elizabeth together anymore, necessarily?
SHELLY: I think it’s boring. And they aren’t doing anything with it. Like I said I think they are, I don’t know, kinda stagnant with what their doing. It’s not moving ahead.
EH: Now how many kids do you have?
SHELLY: Four.
EH: Four?
SHELLY: And the neighbor kids, my one neighbor has got Wilderness Camp.
EH: Oh.
SHELLY: Where did the tablespoon go? Sorry, um ....what else can I say about it?
EH: Have you ever been tempted to watch, start watching another one that might be more interesting or....
SHELLY: You know, my husband ribs me the other day about coming in and I turn the TV on when I am in here I guess because I need company, I don’t know.
EH: Yeah.
SHELLY: So I watch like even One Life to Live just cause I am in here a lot of times fixing lunch or something but I really don’t care if I miss any of it.
EH: Yeah.
Son: Mom can I have some pineapple please.
SHELLY: No, right now is not a good time, k. The show is over in forty-five minutes then we will talk about it okay.
Son: Noooo.
SHELLY: Braxton, forty-five minutes is not that long. You will be grounded bud.
[more conversation with son, show comes back on]
SHELLY: K, we will talk in a minute. I don’t know, see I think they are dragging this out. Stavros has been back for a week.
EH: Oh, he has?
SHELLY: Yeah, and it is like....
EH: And he hasn’t been out yet?
SHELLY: Play downstairs bud. I don’t know their not, with the Lucky programming thing it seems like, I don’t know it seems like everything is just dragging on. So I guess that is why I don’t tune in because nothing changes to much.
EH: Uh huh.
SHELLY: I didn’t like it when they took some of the people off and put them on Port Charles [a spinoff of General Hospital].
EH: Oh yeah.
SHELLY: And we don’t even get Port Charles.
EH: like the one lady that was in charge of the ball?
SHELLY: Yeah.
EH: What was her name?
SHELLY: I am so bad with names. Yeah they took her off and put her on Port Charles and we don’t even get to see Port Charles. So every once in a while they combine the shows and if they do part of it at the Port Charles time we don’t see it. That is kind of annoying.
EH: Yeah.
SHELLY: I like that they put Scottie on this one and took him off Port Charles. Scottie is kind of fun. I would kinda like to see Laura and Scottie get together.
EH: Laura and Scottie? Really?
SHELLY: Yeah.
EH: Do you think they are going to?
SHELLY: Well, they get them close and then they pull them back again.
EH: Oh.
SHELLY: So I don’t know.
EH: Did you like Felicia and Mac together?
SHELLY: It got stagnant, they didn’t do anything. It was fun when they were private eyes and stuff.
EH: Yeah.
SHELLY: And then they didn’t have a storyline anymore. I was surprised when they had Bobbi and what his name breakup.
EH: Bobbi and .....?
SHELLY: The guy that switched the antibiotics.
EH: They had them break up?
Shelly: yeah
EH: I didn’t know that.
SHELLY: Remember the girl that came back on, well now their together
EH: Really, he got back together with that doctor lady?
SHELLY: That nurse. That he had framed her brother earlier while he was with the Fbi or whatever.
EH: Do you like that better together or do you....
SHELLY: They haven’t shown too much of them yet, just a little bit off and on. I don’t know it is kinda fun to have new characters on that are fun.
EH: Yeah.
SHELLY: I think it is funny how like they have all these people on the show and it never shows them work. And the ones that have the kids it’s like where are your kids right now?
EH: Like her [referring to a character on screen] son?
SHELLY: Yeah!
EH: What’s his name?
SHELLY: Micheal.
EH: Micheal.
SHELLY: I read in a magazine that it was hard for Jason to work with Micheal because he has never been a dad before. Kids say things and ya have to improvise and ..... and if you’ve been a dad before you can kinda do it. Am I totally messing up your recording here? [referring to her mixer].
EH: I don’t think so. It has a pretty good range I think.
SHELLY: Okay. Go outside sweetie.
[daughter talking to her, responds after going to commercial].
SHELLY: We have swimming together, my sister-in-law- and I and we haven’t even talked about this show. Did you ever call her?
EH: Your sister-in-law? You know what, JoAnn, her last name is ........ Oh yeah I did, she stopped watching them like a year ago because she started feeling guilty.
SHELLY: She did?!
EH: Yeah she felt to guilty.
SHELLY: Well we will have to have a chat.
EH: I know. Yeah I think that is what she said.
SHELLY: How funny! I never sit and watch them unless I am tired tired or I don’t feel good or something or I just need a break from the kids or something I’ll sit down and watch em, but very seldom, I mean like I said, I leave my kitchen mess just so I can do it while I am in here, and then I can have it on. Cause I can’t just sit and watch em. There is just no way I’ve got too much to do. I haven’t made bread that long.
EH: Oh you haven’t?
SHELLY: No so sometimes it’s like to wheathy or I just haven’t figured out the right, but that one was just right.
EH: So is this just your made up recipe?
SHELLY: No, I got it from the Kitchen Kneads people. And they told me about something called white wheat, I don’t know if you are familiar with wheat, but it has a much milder flavor than other wheat. And my kids like it a lot better. I like the wheat
flavor but it is milder. I made my daughter a sandwich and she asked if it was store
bought or homemade and I told her store bought and she said oh darn and that made me
feel good.
EH: So basically since Jax went off the show, he’s not coming back.
Shelly: Oh, I remember what I was going to tell who I liked. Ned’s sister, the blind girl
that was a designer. She was way cute.
EH: She was way cute.
SHELLY: I like it when Ned and Alexis and Jax and they all were like...
EH: Pretending to be with each other?
SHELLY: Yeah, I thought that was funny.
EH: How did Alexis and Ned break up?
SHELLY: I think she ran from the altar.
EH: Oh, she did?
SHELLY: Yeah I don’t think she could handle the commitment thing, I guess the Nurses
Ball is coming up. I always enjoy that.
EH: Oh yeah.
SHELLY: They keep talking about Nurses Ball T-Shirts being on sale. Would you like a
Dr. Pepper?
EH: No thank you. I, that is the one caffienated drink I don’t like.
SHELLY: A regular coke?
EH: no that is okay.
Shelly: I don’t know. I am missing the old writers but....
EH: Do you like AJ?
SHELLY: I had a hard time getting used to this actor,
EH: Well they went through a couple AJ actors,
SHELLY: Yeah, I don’t mind this one. I liked him when he was getting close to the girl
who works for the FBI.
EH: Oh yeah, but she was going with a police officer
SHELLY: Yeah, Taggert. They had that little triangle with her and AJ. I don’t know if
she is gone or not. I don’t know if she is on hiatus or off the show or what.
[kids talking in the background]
SHELLY: I don’t know what the thing is with the girl that he is staying with at that
house.
[long quiet]
SHELLY: I never had it this sticky before. Are you a bread maker?
EH: I long to be I don’t have a KitchenAid or a mixer like that, so it is not going to
happen soon.
SHELLY: I thought it was just about right cause it wasn’t sticking in here, but it is just a
little, I know adding flour at the end is nasty, so I will put a little bit of oil on my hands
and see if that helps.
EH: What do you think of Emily and this kid?
SHELLY: I don’t know.
EH: What happened to her?
SHELLY: I think she got shot. I missed that, must’ve been when I was in Fresno or
something. By Sorrel’s guys or something. I don’t know. Hey Buster Brown! [to son]
Okay, just a second, I will get you a cup okay. Those are dirty buddy.
[no talking for a long time]
SHELLY: I think he can be cute, Lucky, but they keep changing his hairdo, but they change his hairdo about every other week.
EH: I was wondering about that cause they make it look like it is sticking out as many different places as possible.
[grandmother arrives, sits at table with daughter talking a lot for the rest of time]
SHELLY: I can't stand it when the Quartermaines are on.
EH: Really, you don't like any of them?
SHELLY: Well, it's annoying the way they bicker, like not even.....So a lot of times I don't even listen when they are on or I don't....I get enough of that at home I don't need to watch it.
SHELLY: We are watching soaps mother. I am a research subject mother. [laughs] I think the one good thing they have done for this storyline is have Nicholas and Lucky be friends.
EH: Oh yeah.
SHELLY: How old is your little boy?
EH: He is eight months old.
SHELLY: Oh how fun
EH: Yeah he is, well he is almost nine months old. He doesn't want to learn to crawl he wants to walk and mostly that involves me bending over walking with him.
SHELLY: Do you have a walker?
EH: no I don't. I know they're bad, but kids love to do that at that age
Shelly: If you don't have any stairs it should be okay.
EH: We have stairs up and down.
SHELLY: Do you?
EH: yeah.
Shelly: I would put a broom across here so their walker stopped.
EH: Yeah.
SHELLY: She is doing a research project [directed at the grandmother] what is it? Your?
EH: My master's thesis. I am doing it on LDS women who are stay at home moms who watch soap operas.
SHELLY: You don't want to go there. I told her I never watch them unless I am doing something and I was just making bread, I never just sit down and watch them, and I don't watch them everyday, so that's part of the thing.
Grandmother: Well you could not watch them for two weeks or a month and they still would be at the same place, why don't you interview me let me tell you.
EH: Do you watch soap operas?
SHELLY: No.
Grandmother: I mean like I say you could tune into it one week and almost a year later maybe a few little things but they still got the same worries, the love affairs, these...
EH: Well that is the basis of soap operas, the genre is one of turmoil and conflict.
G: Yeah.
SHELLY: See I think that is why I used to like it when Jax and Alexis and them were on because it was more fun and it wasn't such a conflict that they were trying to not get caught having the...
EH: Funny things.
SHELLY: Yeah and that was fun to watch that was entertaining and I think that is why I am not so much into it right now. Cause everything is kinda dark it’s night.

Grandmother: In my day it was to read these true romances and they were the same kind of thing all of a sudden after doing some research into it I thought you know what they don’t solve it like a normal happy intelligent person would solve it. And I thought you could keep reading those because it was so obvious how to solve the problem, but the problem is they want you to keep watching and keep buying the product....

SHELLY: What were you going to say?

EH: I was just wondering if you found that your interest cycles? You know what I mean, like that you have been disinterested like this before, but then you get caught up in another storyline, maybe and then you become more involved in it again, and then it becomes more boring again or really slow again.

SHELLY: You know I haven’t noticed that. I guess mine seems to go more with what is going on in my life. Whether I have the time or not.

EH: Oh okay.

SHELLY: Whether I have the time or not.

EH: So it is not necessarily what is on there, as what is out here?

SHELLY: I’ll admit there for a while when Jax and those guys were all on I I I enjoyed it and would tape it to watch later because I enjoyed watching them cause I liked them.

Grandmother: And they set a style for hair.

SHELLY: And Felicia used to have hair clear down to her bum. Back in the very beginning it was this long long long.... When she first cut it off it was just like [gasps]. But yet she can wear it anyway, wow. I think it interesting how Luke grew up in Coalville too. Did you know that?

EH: No.

SHELLY: He did. He grew up in Coalville Utah. What kind of hairdo is that? It is just weird. Every week it is kinda different. They are not modern.... I don’t know what they are. But he used to be on Bold and Beautiful or something like that. I never watched any of those.

EH: Did you like the old Lucky better?

SHELLY: Uh hum. Probably just because he was on for so long.

EH: Yeah.

SHELLY: I read on the outside of a magazine standing in a checkstand that Brenda might be coming back, but I don’t know.

EH: Would you like that?

SHELLY: Yeah, I kinda think she’s cute.

[quiet for a long time, dramatic scene]

EH: Does Stavros want Laura back?

SHELLY: He’s seen her from afar, since he’s so-called back alive again. But he hasn’t actually talked to her yet, and Lucky keeps saying he has this weird feeling and keep thinking about Stavros. Like I said kinda hokey right now. This here is all....I think this is the second Nicholas they had too.

EH: It is.

[kids come in and talk to her]

SHELLY: I like Alexis’s and Sonny’s relationship.

EH: Their friendship?
SHELLY: She can be freaking out, wigging out and hyperventilating and he’s giving her the bag and telling her to chill and it’s funny.
EH: I really like Alexis’s character myself. She seems like a fun person to me.
SHELLY: I wish she and Ned were together because I think they were kinda fun together.
EH: Yeah.
SHELLY: Sonny and his wife split up.
EH: Sonny and what girl?
SHELLY: Sonny the man and his wife.
EH: Really?
SHELLY: The dimpled cutie pie.
EH: Oh yeah, Rena Sofer was her name, Lois.
SHELLY: Yeah. They were cute together. I am surprised in the office because the last few times I’ve tuned in he has been at that girl’s house. And I don’t know what that is. She rescued him.
EH: Oh she rescued him?
SHELLY: Well, I think cause he was wounded. She was helping him, when Sorrel got him at the cemetery. See I missed that part, so I don’t know what that was. I was reading those magazine paper things about Sonny and he fights depression in real life. And he would really like to do a storyline on that and I am thinking I hope they never do because that is not why I watch. I mean I guess you know they are supposed to bring real life things in, but depression that wouldn’t be entertaining to me.
EH: I know. That wouldn’t be...
[kids talking to her]
EH: You have a nice big backyard.
SHELLY: You know our grass is like going weird this year. There is a grub that’s out and I don’t know if we’ve got it or not cause we have watered a lot and it still looks like it is dying.
EH: Oh yeah.
SHELLY: And there was grub that got in it last year, and so my husband needs to get the stuff on it. With all the rain we’ve gotten it should be just absolutely green.
[talking to kids]
EH: What does your husband do?
SHELLY: He puts in underground utilities which is exactly what these guys are doing but much faster and much better.
EH: Has he been working on 45th South and State Street?
SHELLY: No actually he is in Riverton right now putting in a new neighborhood.
EH: Oh okay. Because they are going to be replacing the waterlines right infront of where I live.
SHELLY: He mostly does new. The guy that he works for does new developments and so usually he’s putting in brand new ones. But he has been watching these guys and he’s like I have no idea what they’re doing why they’re doing it that way, it’s not logical to him.
EH: That’s not good to hear. [laughs]
SHELLY: No and I am so annoyed I just about ran over a flag lady the other day. She wouldn’t let me out on 90th.
EH: Oh really?
SHELLY: And there was a roller on the right side and she was letting traffic come from 90th into the neighborhood but she wouldn’t let me go out and I was so annoyed. I was on my way taking my kids to swimming lessons I didn’t have time to come back around and come this way and to me there was no logical reason why I couldn’t go out. So I got home that night and my husband goes and talks to them and says what guidelines do you have to go by? Who tells you guys what you can close and can’t. Do you just do whatever you want or are there people telling you? They said Cause long as we get an optional route it is okay what we are doing. And I said well they haven’t given us one. One over there that is full of construction now is not adequate.
EH: I haven’t been on 106th, I don’t even now what is going on over there. I don’t want to.
SHELLY: It is a nightmare. It is just annoying and they have to bus all my kids to school now. Cause there is no way for them to walk and that is annoying cause they have to catch the bus like 20 minutes before normally which makes it rough to get up earlier, which is kind of a drag when you’re a little kid.
EH: And your kids are on year round? Would you prefer traditional?
Grandmother: What are you doing under the plastic?
SHELLY: The bread is under there it is raising.
G: Oh.
SHELLY: Do you want to do your own sewing or do you want to wait for me?
G: I have to go soon so...
SHELLY: Okay well we are alright. You might go down and see if there are colors in the thread box you need.
G: I think we are just going to do white.
SHELLY: Are we?
G: We have enough white to do it.
SHELLY: I bought her these capris and they have gotten so short in the wash we are going to take them higher. Just 15 more minutes.
G: I will go down now.
EH: His hair got very white.
SHELLY: Even his face got so aged.
EH: yeah.
SHELLY: Laura seems kind of overweight. Compared to the olden days.
EH: Lucky made a move on Gia?
SHELLY: No, they were doing something and he walked in and caught em. It was his way of kicking Lucky out so he could pretend that he was getting on Helena’s side.
EH: The power went out.
SHELLY: Just right during my show.
EH: Does your power go out regularly?
SHELLY: No but they used to turn the water off and that was annoying. Have you ever tried to live without water. That was very hard.
EH: Horrible.
[power came back on]
SHELLY: I was in here trying to cook, and I guess I wash my hands a lot when I cook. I was so, my hands kept getting yucky and I had no way of washing them off. [laughs] I definitely appreciated water.

EH: Is he telling him to commit suicide or something?
SHELLY: No I think he is telling him to get rid of the gun and go straight or whatever.

[long pause in talking]
[kid comes and talks]
SHELLY: She is watching soaps with me. [referring to daughter]
EH: Yeah.
SHELLY: You need to finish your hairdo.
Daughter: Grandma did it.
SHELLY: Oh she did? It is not done. So how did you pick this topic or idea?
EH: Well for another class I had to pick a research subject and I did soap operas and lying and I just watched a bunch of soap operas and counted up the lies...
SHELLY: Were there a ton?
EH: Yeah, well it depends what soap opera you are watching. Some soaps are definitely more than others. Days is definitely more than One life to live. So, then I had all the research on soap operas and I thought that I could use all this research. Cause I really used to love watching soaps. I watched every single one except for the ones on channel 2.
SHELLY: Really?
EH: Yeah.
SHELLY: Oh, you bad.
EH: I know. So they were fascinating and I still like to pick up Soap Opera Digest and just if I have time standing there, look at it and see what ...
SHELLY: I like to find the background on them.
EH: The actors?
SHELLY: Like Emily she's quite a poet and they had an example and it was really deep and she sings and dances and does a lot of stuff so I like to kinda find out the background info on them.
EH: Does that make you like them better?
Shelly: Probably. I don't know cause I guess you feel like you know them more maybe. I don't know. I didn't know, when I used to work, um I used to pay insurance claim and we would listen to soap operas, you know audio, and I never saw what Lois looked like for a long time while she was on. I just heard her voice and the first time I saw her with the voice it was just like wow. [laughs] She didn't match. I will be glad when you guys get rid of all those bubblegums.
EH: Well Felicia and her husband split up too. You know that was the guy that she was dating a long time ago.
SHELLY: Oh that's right. He used to be on. And then he was on that night one.
EH: Oh yeah Melrose Place.
SHELLY: Yeah it was Melrose Place. I never watched that one.
EH: No. Do you watch any nighttime dramas?
SHELLY: No, not really. I watch Survivor. [laughs]
EH: That is a soap opera.
SHELLY: But I like the first one better than the second one.
EH: Majority of people did.
SHELLY: And I think the reason is, and you definitely had an opinion on who you wanted to win.
EH: Who did you want to win?
SHELLY: On the first one? The other person.
EH: Not Richard Hatch?
SHELLY: Oh no. That guy made me hurl. He's awful.
EH: Why do you think they voted for him. Cause that one lady, see I never saw it, I just...[show came back on].
SHELLY: Oh ho, I wondered if something was up with that. Um I am trying to remember why Richard won.
EH: I think it was because the one girl Elizabeth, or whichever girl it was that one other lady was mad at her.
SHELLY: Oh yeah that was right. But that just made me gag that he won because he was just disgusting.
EH: the only reason I know anything about it is because my husband switched telephone companies and we got these magazines for free for like 6 months and one of them was US weekly and so it had like all the dish on everything. And they were doing this weekly Hatch report or whatever on Survivor 2 and he was just the most obnoxious writer, I thought he was so obnoxious. He was so rude about everybody.
SHELLY: He kept doing commentaries during Survivor 2 or his predictions on one of the I think it was like the Early Show or something, and it was like what, who cares what his opinion is?
EH: Why does everyone think he knows what he is talking about?
SHELLY: So I will be interested to see the next one.
EH: In Africa?
SHELLY: I have to say when in the first one when the flood came through and they were in their camp and it washed all their food away, that was really disheartening. I mean you just felt for them cause they had been gone all day, they hadn’t eaten for 2 days and they lost the immunity challenge or the challenge that got them food and they came back to their camp and there had been a flash flood while they were gone and their camp was like in the middle of a crick bed and it just washed everything away.
EH: And they didn’t give them any food?
SHELLY: No and it washed their blankets away and it washed their rice away it washed their knives away, I mean everything.
EH: So what did they eat?
SHELLY: Nothing. They went to bed. They were starving, they were wet cause of the rain, they were freezing, they really didn’t sleep that night. Then the next day when it got light they went downstream because they well maybe some of the stuff had got caught, and actually the rice can had gotten caught in a tree.
EH: Oh wow.
SHELLY: And the lady that won she actually, I mean I like that there are younger people there, there’s men there and she like swam out in the current and got the rice. And you are just going she’s tough. She wanted that rice. I just feel for em. Yeah, I don’t know. Anyway so I do not sit and watch like this.
EH: Yeah.
SHELLY: Probably because I am not riveted. I would have gone in my room and folded clothes or done something but maybe cause it is not so riveting to me that I can feel like I can sit and watch and not be disturbed, but no sitting here I am a little ancy in a way cause I want something to do.
EH: Yeah.
SHELLY: K, now I just shouldn’t be sitting here for a half-hour watching a TV show.

2nd Time watching GENERAL HOSPITAL with SHELLY

SHELLY: Okay will you put it back down in the computer room?
[kids talking in background]
SHELLY: This is one of those days were everything is just in here. Okay go play [to her kids]. She is taking notes.
EH: Now these are three of your four?
SHELLY: The fourth is at a friend’s they were doing something with a dog. Okay kids, go outside and play.
CHILD: Mom!!
SHELLY: What? I don’t know, hon.
[kids keep talking, minimal yes no answers from SHELLY.]
SHELLY: So what are you doing Braxton?
CHILD: Mom!! How did you break that?
SHELLY: Cleaning out the crack in the chair.
CHILD: Mom that was to the blue one.
SHELLY: I know.
SHELLY: I just started a job as part of the support crew or whatever you go in and put new inventory in from like 6 pm at night until like 1 in the morning. I am just dragging today.
EH: Oh my word.
SHELLY: That is why nothing is getting done. I don’t know what I am doing. That is why nothing is done. That is why it looks the way it does cause I’ve been....what a mess. My husband didn’t clean that. Um, one neighbor is working there right now. They were supposed to take him off the show a while ago [referring to the show].
EH: Oh really?
SHELLY: He never really has a good storyline.
EH: Well now that they brought Stavros Cassadine back to life.
SHELLY: Yeah. He went crazy last year sometime.
EH: Oh with the whole Carly thing.
SHELLY: Yeah.
EH: Oh Stavros is...
SHELLY: Stalking Laura. See I don’t know what I’ve been doing but I haven’t watched it since we watched it. Oh and half this mess happened last night while I was gone, my husband’s not very dependable when it comes to cleaning.
[kids come in yelling distracting attention]
SHELLY: What happened?
EH: I think Stephan turned it off because he is in there.
[kids talking]
EH: Uh oh, I bet he got shot. I bet I am just guessing.
SHELLY: Well that’s tricky. He got shot Emily got shot.
EH: They can go to the same rehab clinic.
SHELLY: There you go. [laughs]
[kids talking, commercial]
SHELLY: I was talking to my neighbor about my grass and he wanted to come and put iron on it.
EH: Oh, was that the guy out front?
SHELLY: Yeah, and if he wanted to do it I said go ahead. The cool thing about this job is that you get 50% off at the store, for just your stuff and 30% off at Banana Republic and 20% off at Old Navy for your family. How cool is that?
EH: That is way cool.
SHELLY: Other than that I am just really tired.
EH: Do you have to go in every night or is it just....
SHELLY: No, it’s only like once a month. Just two days in a row once a month, so....I just am not used to not getting any sleep that was hard.
EH: DO you care if I come sit up at the counter now?
SHELLY: No. It was just that I hadn’t cleaned up breakfast and just had lunch.
EH: How did your bread turn out?
SHELLY: It was OK. I don’t think it rose as much. I think I let the yeast rise a little too much in the bowl, I wasn’t paying attention, but it did ok. In fact I need to make another batch today. I don’t know if I have the energy. This is the last of the cookie dough, I didn’t have a chance to cook it all before I left.
[long time of just the show. Daughter sometimes talking. SHELLY keeps doing dishes]
EH: Oh that is a huge pan.
SHELLY: Isn’t it lovely? Got it at Cosco a couple of years ago. It is so nice.
EH: Oh, yeah.
[long time of silence, watching show. Dishes still going on]
SHELLY: I think it is almost too funny that Carly is almost taller than Sonny. We are due for a visit from Jason.
EH: I wish he would’ve kept Carly there just so then Sonny might’ve felt something for her. I don’t know.
SHELLY: Well he had to feel something or he wouldn’t have come to rescue her. What did I do Friday that I didn’t....I think we were running errands....Then we could’ve seen what made Sonny come back.
EH: Yeah.
SHELLY: One thing about working at night that I don’t think is fair, is that I am going to be coming home and doing everything that....
EH: Oh that your husband didn’t do?
[commercial]
SHELLY: I think tonight will be hard because I will be in the kids stuff and I will see all the kids stuff I want to get.
EH: Oh that will be nice. Do you have to work there a certain amount of time before your discounts kick in?
SHELLY: Nope I already have it. I just don’t have any money cause I haven’t got paid. I mean it is not a big money maker. My friend says maybe she will get about 80$ a month. You know if you are doing it to make money it is not a big money maker. She says what she does is just puts that out for clothes for the family. You know so you don’t really count it into your budget and then you know if you got it and you got the discount then it just makes it that much easier to get things. They have like Dockers church pants and everything. And that will be really handy for my boys.

EH: Having two little boys, I am sure they wreak havoc on their clothes pretty rough on them.

SHELLY: You wouldn’t think going to church and coming home would so messy. Especially the one that is here today. He is like my little messy varmin. If anyone can get dirty between here and the church it will be him. I was noticing last night all their shorts, they had these cute long levis shorts. I don’t know if you have seen them this year they have like a double stitch right here they are way cute. They are a dark denim and they have like a big double stitch down here. They are really cute.

EH: That is at the gap? I will have to go there because it is so hard to find shorts that are longs.

SHELLY: Well I was just briefly looking, we had to put everything in size order, smallest size they had was a ten and I wear a 6 so that didn’t do me any good. That was the only pair that I kinda looked at and saw. I got half the floor done and half the counter done

EH: that is the hard thing when there are too many things to do. Then it is just like.....

SHELLY: Well and this stinks and is bad. I wanted to get the breakfast stuff done before noon. But I have just not been in very high gear this morning. When I was younger, this is bad to say, but I could stay out till way late and not anymore.

EH: I know now it is like the thought of being out late is so not even appealing to me. I think my son is going to get up twice tonight. There is no way.

SHELLY: In a way I wouldn’t mind one more kid, but in another way I don’t think I could handle the night. I would wipe me out. I don’t have very good babies the first year. They are very demanding. Colically and ....

EH: How did you get them to sleep?

SHELLY: I nursed them.

EH: Okay, and when they woke up in the night you would just nurse them..

SHELLY: Yeah, it was bad cause they wouldn’t take bottles because my kids are lactose intolerant the first year. So that means I can’t eat any dairy, so the only formula they could have is nasty looking, it doesn’t dissolve, it is not sweet. So everytime I tried to feed my kids out of the bottle, number one they don’t like the bottle and number two the milk is nasty so they would soon not eat than eat out of a bottle. So that is why in the first year I can’t really leave them because no one can tend them.

EH: Yeah, that is my son. He won’t take a bottle, up until just barely and he won’t do formula at all. So that means I am going to have to nurse for at least the first year. He doesn’t sleep at night.

SHELLY: My kids were bad that way and they wouldn’t take pacifiers the little snots

EH: I know it is just a fun little toy, he likes to put it in his mouth backwards. Mom is pacifer.

SHELLY: I know that is bad too to nurse them to sleep.
EH: I don’t know how else to do it?
SHELLY: I enjoyed it though.
EH: It is a beautiful thing.
SHELLY: It just makes it inconvenient for other people.
[daughter talking to mom]
[show on, mom not really answering daughter]
SHELLY: Too bad they can’t really kiss in front of Stavros that would really chafe him.
EH: Stavros still loves Laura?
SHELLY: Oh yeah. That would kill Stavros.
[daughter talking still]
EH: You know real mobsters would have killed by now
SHELLY: Oh yeah. Real mobsters would have killed Sorrel long time ago.
EH: Oh yeah.
[daughter talking, ]
SHELLY: Another thing I do sometimes while this is on if I don’t have my kitchen to
clean or something. I am a Scout leader and so I will sit down and look through my
Scout books and try to get ideas of stuff to do.
[daughter talking, mom answers]
[long silence, show on]
[having conversation with daughter]
EH: Carly is going to mess it up again.
SHELLY: Probably.
[commercial. Daughter talks to me]
EH: You know I was just putting pictures in the album today and I was remembering how
cute he was. He has brown eyes like you and and long eye lashes and tans nicely. He has
the chubbiest cheeks but he is really skinny everywhere else. He is at my mom’s house
being tended.
SHELLY: Dad doesn’t like chocolate chips so we have to make his own.
EH: He doesn’t like chocolate at all? Or just in cookies?
SHELLY: He loves Oreo’s he will eat Oreo’s but he doesn’t like choc chip cookies he
doesn’t like choc pie, you know stuff like that, he is just not normal. I tell him how do
you eat Oreos and not like, he thinks I ruin cookies if I put choc chips in them.
[daughter talking]
SHELLY: But if you need any T-shirts I noticed they were on sale.
EH: That would be very good. It is hard to keep things clean, cause my son is always
wiping his face.
[talking to her son]
SHELLY: Do you want to see a picture of Bradley? This is another thing that is quite
often a soap opera project. [referring to cluttered desk] The one in the red is
him[wrestling pictures] he is doing what is called a gut wrench when you are one top and
roll them over yourself.
EH: You just have to be really careful not to let both your shoulders touch at the same
time?
[talking to daughter]
EH: You know my husband wrestled.
SHELLY: Really?
EH: He always says to use their own resources against them. So he always does that to me and it makes me so mad.

SHELLY: And this is one where you twist their legs and then roll them. They can’t stop it cause you’ve got their legs. You can try and stop it with your hands but there is no way you can. This is all the boys who went from Utah to regional I don’t know them all, but.....

EH: And where is your son in them?

SHELLY: There.

EH: So what are the ages that you have to be to be there?

SHELLY: You have to be eight at the beginning of the season so that is why my younger one that was in here, he is eight now but wasn’t at the beginning of the season. This group is eight to age14 I believe.

EH: There are some pretty big kids on that top row.

SHELLY: That is him again, he has a really good bridge.

EH: Yeah he does.

SHELLY: That is him in the red, and that is the ref. Did I tell you about the ref? I have pictures of him...Goll!!!!

EH: Yeah. So this is up in Idaho. It was because he was wearing the blue before?

SHELLY: If your name is first on the thing then you wear red and if it is second then you wear blue. My one from Nationals are done now I need to go pick them up. We didn’t take a lot of wrestling I just took more of ones while we were there.

[daughter talking, mom shhs her, tells her to call her friend].

[daughter talking, mom tells her to go play]

SHELLY: How many different soaps do you have to watch to do this now?

EH: So far I have watched General Hospital, and All my children and General Hospital and Guiding Light.

SHELLY: Not One Life to Live?

EH: Not yet.

SHELLY: I’ve watched that one sometimes if I am making lunch or something.

EH: A lot of people watch General Hospital.

SHELLY: Do they?

EH: Well, a lot of the people I have found. I am going to someone who is watching Days of Our Lives on Wednesday. She has only been watching for a year though, ever since she stopped working to stay at home with her baby. Her daughter takes a nap religiously between 1 and 3 everyday so she is like you. A lot of people watch it this way. You know just background noise, just have it on.

SHELLY: I really really do, unless I am really tired or something or else I need a break from my kids I will sit down and just watch it. Back when I enjoyed it a lot more I wouldn’t want to stop, back when Brenda and Jax, cause I like looking at Jax so.... There is not anyone on now that I care to much to look at. I really like it when they do singing like when Ned sings or something.

EH: Oh, like when they have the concerts and stuff. What is Ned’s alter ego?

SHELLY: Eddie’s Angels. I liked it they used to have that young kid on, but not any more.

EH: Oh, Juan?
SHELLY: Yeah.
EH: Cause Emily went to Zander.
SHELLY: They kinda just wrote him off. And I used to watch it when Ricky Martin was on.
EH: What did you think of him on there?
SHELLY: He was kinda cool, liked him when he sings. I have a healthy mother so I don’t do anything that is not semi-healthy, these are oatmeal whole wheat cookies.
EH: Ahhh. That is what my husband would for me to do.
SHELLY: There are so many people that make just the Toll House or the very very sugary, I figure if you are eating a snack you might as well have something that is good in it.
EH: Yeah, and is this the white flour you were talking about?
SHELLY: It is not 100% because I didn’t have enough flour made up already, so I put a little bit of white flour in it. I am not into the big ole lovey scenes so I am glad they don’t do them too often.
EH: They have more breaking up scenes then ones like this. He is going to give up Gia isn’t he. I think so because it will be more important to find out what Helena is up to.
SHELLY: Well I don’t know why he doesn’t tell her.
EH: Cause you can’t tell cause then there wouldn’t be conflict in their relationship.
SHELLY: True.
[talking to son who just got home]

THIRD TIME WATCHING WITH SHELLY

[daughter talking, she says what?]
SHELLY: Oh, they found him. I haven’t watched for a while. Well remember at the end of that they couldn’t find him, the bomb went off, they found Sorrel, they took him out, but they couldn’t find Sonny anywhere. And then I have been running errands so I haven’t watched it.
EH: So this is a sit down and watch day.
SHELLY: For a minute I am tired. We have been working hard today, cause we have lessons for two weeks that we haven’t done housework for two weeks and so I have been making my kids work all morning.
EH: I am sure that takes a lot out of you.
SHELLY: Oh it does, big time. At a commercial I may go blow my hair dry. [laughs]
EH: Did anybody die in the blow-up?
SHELLY: Not that I am aware of, but did I tell you that I was talking to my sister-in-law and she said Emily is leaving the show. I guess this rehab place is how they are going to write her off.
[son talking to her]
SHELLY: If I liked her then I probably would be interested in this conversation, but I don’t care for her. She bugs me.
EH: Is it like the hair or the eyes?
SHELLY: I don’t know... something. And she is like dramatic with her lips. I don’t know it seems like she is over dramatizing. And not to be rude, but what is with Amy’s face?

EH: She wears the most make-up or something.

SHELLY: Well it is like a hair-lip that they have tried to fix and ..... [talks to son]

EH: What happened to him again?

SHELLY: Well he got shot and was in the blast.

EH: Oh okay.

[son is disobeying, talking to him]

SHELLY: Her whole upper lip is weird and her nose.

EH: I thought that her make-up was just weird and that they never got her lipstick on right.

SHELLY: From far away she looks okay, but up close....I mean it is good that she can be on the show but..... [talking to daughter]

SHELLY: The little girl they picked to play that part doesn’t act that good.

EH: Well I never thought Michael acted very well either.

SHELLY: No. But Lulu is older now.

EH: How old?

SHELLY: I don’t know, probably 5 or 6 now. I keep thinking she is going to lose weight, cause she came back very chunky after having her baby. And she is not a whole lot thinner. I mean I am not one to talk but when you’re going to be on TV come on. I am sure her husband makes no slouchy money so... They have tons of money.

EH: So they can afford a weight trainer for 3 hours a day.

SHELLY: She is not as thin as she used to be.

EH: That is her sister that has the lip problem.

SHELLY: She is a nervous wreck.

EH: Yeah, is she at a hotel? Or in her room? I guess that is her room. Oh I thought she was in a hotel.

[commercial]

[commercial]

SHELLY: I was going to say to that when my kids are in school and stuff I do other things because I have more time to do house work and stuff like that. So sometimes I will cut fabric or I will wait and do bills or paperwork or stuff like that.

EH: Oh yeah. I have found that people will give it up for the summer and then go back to it in the fall.

SHELLY: I don’t know why they are making a big deal out of chicken pox all of a sudden.

EH: Because they want everyone to get the immunization?

SHELLY: We got it and it worked for us. They gave it to my little one and my niece had chicken pox and they didn’t get it.

EH: You know I never had chicken pox. I have been around people who have had it and I have never gotten it. And I am really scared that I might get it now that I am an adult.

SHELLY: Have you gotten the vaccine?

EH: I haven’t but I should look into that.
SHELLY: You should. It is an expensive one.
EH: That is why they are trying to get people to immunize.
SHELLY: Well mine was covered by insurance because I came home, cause we were up camping so we came home and I looked to see and that was on my little one’s well baby check-up, it was $55.
EH: And how old is he?
SHELLY: He will be four August 31.
EH: So they don’t give it to them till they are that age?
SHELLY: I have no idea. I mean it has been a good year or more since we had his shots. I think he is done till we go to kindergarten.
[talking to daughter]
[show on]
SHELLY: I bet it was Stavros. It looks like he has a just got out of bed hairdo.
[daughter talking]
SHELLY: I don’t get what is going on here.
EH: I thought Stavros was the older brother, I think he looks younger than Stephan.
[telling daughter to play outside, ignoring her]
SHELLY: Well if Emily is leaving I wonder if they will keep him on there.
EH: Yeah.
SHELLY: Oh, I thought she was into Sonny, why is she there?
EH: No, she wanted to know about Sorrel.
[talking to daughter]
EH: I bet she worked for Sorrel, or they are related. Sorrel’s daughter?
SHELLY: There you go.
[dramatic scene, no talking long time]
[talking to daughter]
[commercial]
EH: What are your children’s names?
SHELLY: Micah, Braxton, Brittani and Kobe.
EH: There are very unusual names.
SHELLY: We tried, Kobe was supposed to be Brody. Last minute, about a month before he was born, we heard Kobe on TV and it was like that was a pretty cool name. And it was before Kobe Bryant got really big. And so it was like kinda cool. I wanted to go back to Brody. But my husband has a cousin named Brody so it was like. But I still like Brody, if we have any later life accident we will name it Brody. Brittany, we couldn’t agree on any girl names at all.
EH: See that is the thing, Scott and I know what our girl name is but it took us forever to come up with a boy name.
SHELLY: We were going to name Brittani Kia, up until she came out and then she didn’t look like a Tia. We were sitting in the waiting room at Olan Mills one time and this girl kept answering the phone, “Hello this is Kia” and so we thought that was kinda cute. But then when she came out, we couldn’t agree on a baby name and we were looking through baby name books and I hate the most common names, we come home and guess what Brittany is like the number one or two common. And I am just going oh for heavens sake.
EH: Do you spell it differently?
SHELLY: We did an I on the end. But like in her kindergarten class there were 3 Haleys, 2 Wyatts. How unusual is that?
EH: That is a very uncommon name.
SHELLY: There were so many doubles in her class but Brittani wasn’t one of them. I think Brittani is older it is more common before her.
EH: My sister named her daughter Tawny Linn and there were 2 Tawnys in her class and one of them was actually a Tawny Linn also.
SHELLY: Oh my word. I don’t think that is common.
EH: I think, and she named her son Gabriel and she expected him to be the only one named Gabriel in his class, but there was another one.
SHELLY: We were going to name her Mackenzie, but then there were some people that lived down the street from us, and they named their daughter Mackenzie she was born about 6 months before Brittani and they have since moved away now. She could’ve been a Mackenzie. Brittani is okay. I would’ve liked the name, I like the names that are more butchy for girls. My husband hates them. Like Taylor or Alex or just any of those names that are more traditionally boys. I really liked Alex.

[show on]
[long time no talking]
[kids in background]
[commercial]
[talking to kids]
SHELLY: I have no energy today, I was going to wash my little glassy things up there cause they are disgusting, but ....We have actually worked really hard all morning.
EH: I can understand that. I think it is fine to relax just for an hour or whatever.
SHELLY: I have running around to do later.
EH: Oh like errands?
SHELLY: My husband is Scoutmaster and so I need to pick up Scout stuff. I should start charging him for that.
EH: Oh like a dollar per mile.
SHELLY: I told him I was 50$ per hour. And he is out of his contacts and I called the doctor’s office and they are like 35$ for like two boxes and I called Cosco and they have the exact same ones for and they are like 28$ but they won’t give them to me without a prescription, so I have to go get them to write me up one. I think that is pretty dumb cause if you know...and I have his boxes.
EH: I wonder why they want you to have a prescription? Because....
SHELLY: Because it is like a pharmacy.
EH: Oh.
SHELLY: So I got to go over to eye doctors and get the prescription and get some for him and then I noticed that all the stores are starting to put their summer stuff on sale and with the kids going back to school in 3 weeks, if I wait till then all the summer stuff is gone and all they have is winter stuff.
EH: And how is the Gap going?
SHELLY: It was those two nights that I was very tired. But that is one thing I want to go to Old Navy and see what they have there. My kids all wear slims and if they don’t have slims they just drown them. We found some slims at the Gap but they were a really good price. For little boys. They got some pants kinda like what he has on, the health-tec.
EH: Oh yeah?
SHELLY: For about three bucks. They got them multi-colored and red and black, black on the sides, so I got him a couple pairs and I got my other boys gym shorts for like eight dollars.
EH: Oh look at all those fingernail polish colors.
SHELLY: What colors we going to do.
Daughter: I don’t know I got them all so I could pick.
SHELLY: Okay.[talking a little to daughter]
EH: Are your kids pretty good about shopping?
SHELLY: No they are terrible. Like a nightmare. Because they are so skinny I can’t just buy a size and let them have it. They need to try them on.
[talking to daughter]
SHELLY: They hate trying pants on. The other day at VF they were wearing their swimming suits. They are such boys.
[show on]
[daughter talking]
EH: Did you get that at Old Navy?
[referring to polish]
[daughter talking and talking]
[telling son to stop banging something]
EH: Do you think they are getting back together?
SHELLY: I don’t know I think they should.
[daughter talking]
SHELLY: He didn’t see his face did he?
EH: No. Just the back of his head.
[commercial]
SHELLY: I have very weird children. When they all used to take naps I could do scrapbooking stuff and watch this.
EH: Wow, there is still a lot of time left, we must not be seeing Stavros today.
SHELLY: My sister-in-law might start watching again. Her kids all go back on track next week so she might be able to start watching again.
EH: Oh does she want to watch again?
SHELLY: Well, I was telling her some of the things that were going on and she is like oh my heck.
[talking to daughter]
[daughter singing loudly]
[show on]
[daughter talking, mom ignoring]
[laughing about stuff on show]
SHELLY: I love it when she loses control and he has to get the bags out for her.
EH: He has been on the show forever.
SHELLY: See I don’t know what happened to his little girl.
EH: Oh with Dominick?
SHELLY: Yeah that little blond she is so cute. But when they moved him to Port Charles and I couldn’t watch it I had no idea what happened to her.
EH: Didn’t Lucy have the baby?
SHELLY: Yeah, she was a surrogate mother or whatever.
[talking to daughter]  
SHELLY: I think soap operas for most part are the fakest kissers. They are so bad.
EH: They are missing the real emotion behind it.
SHELLY: Is that Laura’s house again.
EH: Yeah, I think so.
[talking to daughter, painting fingernails]
EH: You know what would be fascinating is if because that guy is back, Stavros if that brought Luke and Laura back together just like it drove her and Scottie apart the first time. Isn’t that what happened?
SHELLY: I don’t remember.
[commercial]
EH: I wonder what it will be like to have a houseful of kids.
SHELLY: Wild, but it seems normal now.
EH: Are you more comfortable in having your kids go over to friends houses or come over here?
SHELLY: They tend to come over here more. I don’t know why. Maybe the big backyard.
EH: I think it would be nice to have your kids at home because then you have more control over what goes on.
SHELLY: There are some people...Like there is this one family and they have the same kids age as my family and they can never play at their house ever. But no, I like to know what they are doing. One friend we let them play with their house has a lot of teenagers so they have a lot of R-rated movies around, you know they rent them and so now I start saying stuff to him like what is that rated?
EH: My sister has a family that lives across the street and they always have horrible stuff on over there. And also the mom is a total junk food snacker. They have two refrigerators and she is always buying treats. We went over there one time for dinner and they had spaghetti, pizza and one other main dish and for dessert they had all this different Schwann’s ice cream of all the different varieties. So her kids go over there and they eat a ton of candy and they watch these shows and it drives my sister insane.
SHELLY: For the most part he’s pretty much here. They don’t have any set schedule. Like they don’t have a particular dinner time that they eat at and he will come out with huge bags of chips and just sit and eat at the fence and he will eat Top Ramen dry. Half the time he eats dinner with us, just because he is here. I was telling my friend that there are just some days that I have had enough, but she says you know what, I hear people say that if it wasn’t for the one family that I lived next door to that you know....
EH: Then I wouldn’t have known what a normal family was like.
SHELLY: And she says you are going to be that for him. I’m like I guess I don’t know.
[show on]
[talking to kids, telling them to stay outside]
EH: Have they been hooked up that way?
SHELLY: Not that I have ever seen. See in most houses he would have like morning breath or something. You would be going just a minute, let me brush my teeth.
[kids talking, dropping things in the toilet]
[kids talking]
SHELLY: Oh, I didn't expect to see her sitting by Sorrel, but now it all makes sense though. Did you know that she grew up pampered but broke away from that life, that is all you need to now.

EH: Everyone betrays Sonny.

SHELLY: How come all you guys are in here today? [to her kids]

SHELLY: Braxton always has someone squawking. See? Busy kid.

FINAL INTERVIEW WITH SHELLY

EH: So you live in....
SHELLY: South Jordan Ut.
EH: How many kids do you have?
SHELLY: Four.
EH: Their ages?
SHELLY: 11, 9, 6 and 4
EH: And what is your age?
SHELLY: 37.
EH: And where were you born?
SHELLY: In Salt Lake.
EH: And that is where you grew up?
SHELLY: I kinda grew up all over, I was in Sandy Bountiful, West Jordan.
EH: Oh, but you were all in Utah.
SHELLY: Yeah, in the general area of Salt Lake.
EH: And what is your husband's occupation?
SHELLY: He does underground utilities.
EH: Okay, and your income?
SHELLY: 50-60,000.
EH: Okay somewhere around there. And what is your education level?
SHELLY: Just high school.
EH: And what is your previous work experience?
SHELLY: I worked for about 8 years for an insurance company. Medical and Dental insurance.
EH: All right now this is going back to the soap opera. What do you think about first of all about the writers, then the actors then the characters. Okay, so do you differentiate between all three of those on the soap opera?
SHELLY: I used to think it was the actors but then when they changed the writers on General Hospital I didn't, they had some of the same actors but the writing was just didn't seem as good. The storylines were not as real and so probably the writing and then the actors.
EH: Okay. Do you think there has ever been a time in your life when you watched or relied on the soap opera more? Watched it more religiously perhaps?
SHELLY: Maybe when my kids were younger and I didn’t get out as much. I mean I know I watched it more then but I don’t know if that is what was going on in my life or if I just had more spare time. I don’t know. I didn’t get out as much. Cause I didn’t. When they were little I didn’t do as much outside the home.
EH: Yeah, cause you didn’t have to drive them places and stuff?
SHELLY: No, and I couldn’t leave them and so, and now I do more over at my kid’s school and you know more outside things and cause I can cause I can get away, before I couldn’t.
EH: Okay. Is it a coping or relaxation technique for you?
SHELLY: Relaxation.
EH: Have you ever used other media to find out about the characters/actors or the show?
SHELLY: I subscribed to soap opera digest for like a year. And it was kinda fun.
EH: Have you ever used the Internet for it?
SHELLY: No.
EH: Are you interested in the characters or the actors? Which one do you like better? Like were you more attracted to a specific character because they looked good or because they were so nice then you got interested in what the actor was doing and if they ever left the show would you wonder what happened to the actor?
SHELLY: Oh, that is tough. Sometimes I think the actor makes the character.
EH: Cause when they switch actors then it is very hard.
SHELLY: Yeah. Probably the actor I guess because I don’t know, Cause they changed a couple of the actors and I don’t like the characters as much as I used to so I don’t know. That is tough.
EH: If you find out about the actors lives like when you subscribed to soap opera digest does that change the way you feel about the character or the actor at all? Like if you find out about their personal lives.
SHELLY: It was fun to read about them and just go oh okay.
EH: But is didn’t really make an impact.
SHELLY: No it didn’t make an impact it was just fun to know about their background but it didn’t change anything really.
EH: Do you feel like you need to justify the time that you watch when you do watch?
SHELLY: We talked about this before. I usually will try to do something while I watch. Other than when my kids were really really little and I wasn’t getting a lot of sleep like if they woke up a lot in the night then I felt like I deserved to just sit and watch. Now that my kids are older I am usually folding laundry or cooking something in my kitchen or doing something I don’t have enough time to just sit and watch.
EH: Do you feel that being a Mormon affects the way that you watch the soap opera at all? The situations or anything?
SHELLY: No.
EH: And what soap opera do you watch?
SHELLY: General Hospital.
EH: Now these are just some questions about your history of watching it. And I know that you probably did this already when I came and watched before but we just need to go through it again. Okay, so when do you first remember watching it?
SHELLY: High school.
EH: And did you watch it with anyone?
SHELLY: Probably with just my girlfriends, I am not sure.
EH: And how much time do you spend watching it compared to then and now?
SHELLY: Well, like in my high school time?
EH: Yeah.
SHELLY: Well, then I could only do it in the summers cause I was in school. Probably more now. Not this second now, but because I could only watch in the summer and then as I got older I got summer jobs and it just wasn’t an option.
EH: And you had stopped watching it when you worked for the insurance company but then when you became a stay at home mom again you started watching.
SHELLY: Yeah, right.
EH: Now what caught your eye about this particular soap opera? Why did you decide on General Hospital over the other ones?
SHELLY: Way back then I just kinda watched everything on channel 4, so it was All My Children, One Life to Live and General Hospital. And General Hospital was just the one that I found more interesting I liked the characters more and storylines more.
EH: Okay. So who is your favorite character? And why?
SHELLY: I like Jason, but he is not on anymore. He is just a bad guy.
EH: And he is cute.
SHELLY: He was the bad guy and there was something likeable about Jason. I like Sonny and I like Jax but I like the way they interact. I don’t necessarily like, well, I like them kinda separate, Jax is kinda cool because he is rich wines and dines everybody and always comes out on top. I think that is fun about Jax. I think sometimes it’s best to have the combinations. I liked Carly but they have a new Carly and I just can’t get into her. She is this tall lanky skinny thing and it just, I don’t know she just doesn’t fit the Carly profile.
EH: Are there any women on the show that you liked or anything?
SHELLY: I liked Chloe but she left, they killed her. And I think she was graceful, kinda elegant and she was just real cute. I mean it didn’t matter if she came out of the water soaking wet she was cute, she always wore fun stuff so I liked her. No, I am more of a guy person I guess.
EH: I can understand that General Hospital has more than its share of nice-looking men.
SHELLY: I gotta go for Sonny too. His dimples are just too cute.
EH: I know. Okay. If these people aren’t on the show when you watch it, if they don’t have those particular storylines or those characters do you feel like it is a waste to waste to watch it and you don’t pay attention to it as much?
SHELLY: Yes. If they’ve got I used to like Liz and Lucky but that storyline has just got real boring and redundant now. I think I go for the romantic things sometimes and if they have a big storyline with the Quatermaines I find that annoying. I don’t need to watch other people fight I mean to me that is irritating.
EH: Okay. Have the teasers for the next day affected the way if you watch the next day or not?
SHELLY: It used to when I was more riveted. At things like oh yeah they are going to be on but now I like I said I just don’t think the writing is very good with General Hospital anymore. I really don’t. And so well I didn’t see all of the awards this year, but
if you noticed they didn’t win anything. No nothing, no actresses actors or anything. I think that may be a clue that they need to change their writers or something. There is a lot of fantasy stuff now. Like what a person is thinking or dreaming situations. I think that is kinda hokey.
EH: That would be very frustrating.
SHELLY: Because it is not real.
EH: Yeah because you want progress in the storyline. How much other television do you watch on average. Like at night or daytime.
SHELLY: I am bad whenever I am in the kitchen I pop the TV on and I think probably more for company. So I have it on, whenever I am doing dishes, cooking anything I automatically turn it on which is a real bad habit. I do.
EH: How do you feel about your current social situation?
SHELLY: Now that my kids are older I am surprised how kinda stuck in-doors you are when your kids are little. I also know people who take their kids everywhere, my kids are not good babies and so they are just crazy and so it is not worth going out. So now that my little one is four it is a lot nicer I am involved in PTA and lot more things over at the school and it actually makes a big difference. You have little ones so....
EH: I have one little one. He is not so fun to take places sometimes. When you first started to watch it what was your social situation like? Was it how you wanted it to be?
SHELLY: Yeah.
EH: Would you ever like to sit and think about your favorite character or storyline and think about, or when you are just doing stuff and think about what could possibly happen with it, I mean before it got to the point in the writing in everything?
SHELLY: NO I guess I didn’t give it that much thought.
EH: It was just an at the moment thing.
SHELLY: Yeah.
EH: Have you ever felt guilty about the time or the content or whatever about watching your soap opera ever?
SHELLY: Only if I wasted it.
EH: Do you ever talk about watching soap operas with your husband? Does he care?
SHELLY: No, no. He doesn’t care, other than if I see someone on another show or something then I will say oh he used to be on and he will look at me like whatever.
EH: He doesn’t have an opinion either way about you watching a soap opera?
SHELLY: I think you got the stereotype that soap operas are a waste of time and all stay at home moms watch them and....
EH: Does anyone else in you family watch soap operas? Your mom or sisters?
SHELLY: My sister-in-law.
EH: Has she started watching them again?
SHELLY: I don’t know we haven’t talked in a while. I think she turns it on just every once in a while but I don’t think she is faithful like we both used to be.
EH: Do you have any close friends that watch it?
SHELLY: No. I am like the only slacker. [laughs]
EH: DO you feel that either the soap opera or the characters are reality based in any way?
SHELLY: No. They really aren’t you got rich people and no I don’t think so.
EH: Do you ever feel frustration at the writers of the show?
SHELLY: Yes.
EH: Because they do these dream sequences. They took what reality there was and they messed around with it?
SHELLY: Yes. They really did.
EH: How do you feel when your favorite character makes a mistake? When they do something really stupid with their lives?
SHELLY: It frustrates me.
EH: DO you feel frustrated with the character or the writers that are making them do it?
SHELLY: The writers. Only cause they got a lot of people watching and you hope I know it is not based to teach people stuff but I hope that people watching are not doing the same thing.
EH: DO you feel like you are a part of the town of your soap?
SHELLY: NO.
EH: Do you ever compare your actions beliefs or relationships to those of the characters?
SHELLY: Only when they are real slutty and sleep around totally and sometimes you watch them and you know, Felicia is a mom and you just wonder sometimes where her kids are. What does she do with her kids when she goes off on these things with Luke or whatever. I mean most mom can’t just pick up and leave that easily.
EH: Okay. What if you were transported to the city would you feel like you were with friends?
SHELLY: Probably. Yeah, which is kinda hokey, but yeah.
EH: I can understand that. Have the characters ever been real-to life in any instances?
SHELLY: Not to me. I don’t think so.
EH: Would you ever like to have your favorite characters over for dinner?
SHELLY: Oh sure.
EH: IF the character or actor switched shows would you follow them to the other show?
SHELLY: You know when Jax went to that other night-time one I thought it would be good but it was ugh. It was nasty. It was dumb. It was oShellyious why it went off the air. Cause I wanted to watch it with Jax on but he wasn’t even on it very often.
EH: Have you ever talked to the screen giving advice to the characters.
SHELLY: No.
EH: Would you like to meet the actor or actress in person?
SHELLY: Yeah.
EH: Would you like to meet the character if they were real in person ever?
SHELLY: Maybe some of them. Nobody is like that in real life. It would be fun to meet a Jax. Someone who would do chivalry things.
EH: Have you ever read articles in mags when they have featured your favorite soap opera character?
SHELLY: Yeah.
EH: Do you feel as though the character or actor is attractive physically or personality, which way? Do you feel like they are an attractive person?
SHELLY: Yeah.
EH: If they are not on the show the day you watch it, how do you feel?
SHELLY: Sometimes I don’t watch.
EH: Are you happy content in your life right now?
SHELLY: Yeah, I got some problems with my kids and their school work and some things like that but overall it’s pretty good.
EH: IF you had a wish about your life what would it be?
SHELLY: More money. [laughs] More money that is the bottom line.
EH: What would you want to do later on in your life after all your kids are in school?
SHELLY: I have always wanted to be a nurse. I have thought about going back to school.
EH: Okay. Are your relationships with your husband and children satisfactory?
SHELLY: Yeah.
EH: If you could change anything about your life what would it be? Just the money issue?
SHELLY: Yeah.
EH: When you were younger is this how you thought your life would be?
SHELLY: No it is actually better than I thought it would be. I never thought I would be a stay home mom, cause my mom had to work, all while I was growing up.
EH: Wonderful. Thank you.
Appendix C

Transcripts from Elise
EH: Do you usually do dishes while it is on?
ELISE: I usually fold clothes, this is what I have noticed about this, if the show they feel like they have the need to repeat things as many times as possible to clue in people if they just walked in and haven’t seen it before and it just doesn’t go fast enough for me. I mean like, it just takes forever for something to happen. So I will listen for something and then I will walk in if a plotline is on that I am interested in then I will go in.

[show on]
ELISE: This is one that I like, um goll what happened here. See that girl with the glasses she is the girl that gets ridiculed at school everyone makes fun of her and she ends up dating the most popular guy and so these girls were jealous of her and they kept playing practical jokes against each other and they were really mean this is the one that went to far, they um took pictures of her in the girls shower at school and they put them on the internet as if it was her that made the site to make money and so she is like a juvenile naked on the internet. They traced and found out that these were the ones that did it and now they are prosecuting and she has to make a decision about what she wants to have happen to them.
[talking to daughter Abby]
[putting her on a horse etc]
ELISE: Just in time for the commercials. [Laughs]
[commercial]
EH: Is this when she usually takes her nap, and that is why you?
ELISE: Normally I just sit here and try to catch up on housework so I like noise and that is how I started watching it. I used to watch Passions but now it is so ridiculous it was odd and I would think who writes these things and even this one I think what are the writers even thinking do they think that I am an idiot but mostly it is just mindless gratification. Really I just sit there and just Laugh, I think it is funny.
[talking to daughter]
ELISE: Yeah she usually takes a nap from 12:00 to 3 or from 1 to 4 but she is not even, I put her down a couple of times and she is not tired. So oh well.
[talking to daughter about going to bed]
ELISE: Would you like a Diet Pepsi or anything?
EH: Yes I would love a Diet Pepsi, it is just my little indulgence.
ELISE: I don’t care between Diet Pepsi or Coke and so I just buy whatever is on sale it doesn’t matter to me. Is it on?
EH: Nope, now it is.
[show on]
ELISE: Oh, one of the girls that put up the website, that is her mom. Their next-door neighbor is this guy that just got out of prison. And I guess he buried some can underneath in their yard before their house was built and her daughter……and it was kind of mysterious and they found it and they were like what could it be what is in it and they finally opened it up and it led to all these clues and um, they um, [Laid her daughter down for a nap]. Anyhow, I think that he must have been in, that is his wife, but I think
the reason why he went to prison is because he beat up on her or something like that and he just barely got back and she is all nervous and everything. I think he robbed a jewelry store. Because they are trying to slip in this plot thing in during the summer something mysterious that happened this summer. And there is like this old Lady in the show I think she has been on the show for ages and she was telling this story to one of the people about how her husband gave her this ruby, it was this beautiful ruby and she took it in to get it cleaned and the store got robbed that night. And since this happened that long ago so they decided to go and investigate and try and find out who did this. And it is like these young kids that want to do it. And it is like what are they thinking. It is pretty Laughable. Anyhow that can has to do with all of this because that can he was probably the one that had the partners that robbed the jewelry store cause when the kids found that can and they traced it it was like a trail it was like a hunt and in the locker was like all these code words on a piece of paper and then a bunch of pictures of all this jewelry and one of them was the ruby so...That is Brady nerdy guy and that is the overweight girl that they make fun of at school. You know they try to do all the roles at school and they are here to support Chloe. It is a big mystery because Chloe is not going to prosecute for jail time it is for something else and you don’t know yet so it is like putting you on the edge of your seat [Laughs]. You want to know what it is that Chloe is thinking because it has to be something bad.....She wants them to pay like the way she suffered and she wants to make it an example of those kind of people so they won’t make fun or pick on all the other people that are at school. It is kind of funny I don’t remember and I can’t imagine school ever being that horrible. It is like there is no way.

EH: So did Shaun and Belle get together?

ELISE: Yeah, did you know about the Last BLast Dance? Do you watch it?

EH: I have seen part of it and plus I read in Soap Opera Digest and stuff.

ELISE: Well, you know they both like each other but it is like they can’t say it, so they are really pushing it. The tension between them and after the dance they almost kissed but then someone interrupted them with information with knowing who did the prank on Chloe. So yeah, they were right there and were very very close.

EH: Now is Chloe still dating Phillip?

ELISE: No, she was very hurt that he would believe that she would do something like that. Then he sent her an apology on videotape because he knew that she would never see him, but he felt horrible like the biggest jerk. And I can’t believe that I fell for that.

EH: He is the biggest jerk.

ELISE: Yeah, and he didn’t support her. But that is Phillip, he doesn’t like to reason things out, he likes things easy just a clear Black and white. So once he found out he just felt awful and he was like I just lost the best thing I ever had bLah bLah bLah bLah.....[Laughs]

He is 16 and he is like I want to be with her for the rest of my life. So anyhow and it was just kind of silly. So he sent her an apology and Chloe was thinking about it, she knew that it was really sincere and she felt bad for Phillip because she knew it was a mistake he would have to live with and she showed Belle the video tape and she said you should give him another chance because he is really sorry and so she was considering it and thought that this summer maybe they should spend some time apart and let us get over all this stuff.

EH: Do you like Chloe?
ELISE: She is so amazingly rude to her mother, and you know I had a friend in high school that was that way to her parents, I mean I know all teenagers are jerks to their parents but this went beyond I couldn’t believe the things she would say and I would just look at her and would be like that is really hurtful. She would just say, you are so stupid to her mother and really hurtful things, and so when I saw this I thought of Julie. Chloe they try to pLay, this is what the soaps try to do, you know every character gets the cliché, Phillip is the rich boy, Chloe is the complicated one because of all she went through when she was young, kinda like a love/hate. Belle is saccharine sweet just so perfect and Shaun is like the perfect role model son, he is so good to his parents he is a dream child. See how long they are staying in the courtroom, We are not going to find out what Chloe thing is going to be until at least Friday.

EH: Oh that is right they lost their house, and so everyone chipped in to build it.

ELISE: Yeah, that is right that was Last summer and they lived with Chloe’s family.

[show on]

ELISE: They are tying to make you feel sorry for Jan. She was just nothing but ruthlessly cruel to Chloe. But now they are trying put these little things to make you feel sorry for her. Her dad is abusive to her mother verbally and her boyfriend verbally abusive to her and she accepts that because that is how she is raised and she sees that as normal and now they are trying to make you feel sorry for her because her family is not there to support her.

EH: Do you like the teen storylines or the adult storylines?

ELISE: Oh the teen storylines they are much more interesting. They are young and crazy and....Here is the thing about the photos. Isn’t that amazing? Their school trip is going to be right near the jewelry. Oh that is the other thing. The school trip to study the environment.

EH: In Puerto Rico? Man that is nice.

ELISE: Isn’t that cool? [Laughs] And Phillip is pLanning on going on the trip because he has decided that he is going to put all women out of his mind about Chloe because he knows in his heart that there is no way that Chloe is going to forgive me for this. But it is better off that I study hard and get good grades so I can get into college and please his dad. And he told his dad that he wasn’t going to see Chloe and he was going on this summer trip to study the environment and that will get my mind off of Chloe and help me get over this. You see Chloe is going on the trip to get away from all the excitement going on around her so they have actually showed previews of it that they are both on the pLane and I guess Chloe decides not to go or something. But we won’t know about that until next month. [Laughs] It will be interesting to see what happens. Pretty funny.

EH: You know I have noticed that they usually pLay up the teen storylines during the summer to get more viewers.

ELISE: Oh, of course and they follow them through but they really saturate them during the summer. Of course they do cause they have these teens and young kids that want to watch. Characters that are their same age that they can reLate to.

EH: Whatever happened with the baby switching storyline?

ELISE: You know that was the most complicated plot. It took me months to figure it out when I first started watching the show. I could not figure it out. I was going what in the world? As much as they repeat things I remember asking somebody what is up with this baby switching plot and then finally it all clicked together because it is really
complicated. Cause you have Stefano Dimera, cause his daughter wanted to have a baby
but couldn’t have children so he found somebody that was willing to give the baby up for
adoption.
EH: Marlowe.
ELISE: And I guess she was related to one of his servant. The guy that had the horrible
fake accent.
EH: I was pregnant Last summer so I spent the whole summer watching it just like it was
so stupid. They switched the baby like right at birth and I just couldn’t believe that.
ELISE: And it just happened to be that Marlow had her baby the same day that Hope did
and Stefano and that baby that Hope had is special to Stefano cause Hope was under his
influence when she was pregnant and she was got pregnant cause she slept with John and
is he just the most corny character? [Laughs] He is the most hammy actor and I
remember there was just one scene where he was telling her and she wanted to know how
baby JT was conceived and he was like all you need to know it came from the purest love
and he was just going on and on and it was sooo hammy. The love that Princess Gina
shared was beyond comprehension and going on and on and on. I was just sitting here
Laughing it was so corny and Hope like this oh John tell me more. And so that is why I
guess Stefano switched the child because he saw how Marlow drank and used drugs and
he wanted his daughter to have Hope’s. But now his daughter knows.
EH: She has become bad?
ELISE: Well, she has become bad but I want to keep my family together so she has the
right reasons. So it is pretty funny.
EH: They found Marlowe’s body right.
ELISE: They found the body and they tried to destroy it but that just led to more
suspicion. [show on] That is the husband. Now Lexie that there is going to be a thing
going on between Lexie and Brandon. Brandon is the doctor.
EH: I thought Brandon liked Sammy.
ELISE: Oh he still does, but Lexie has become very close to him because he helped
Lexie swap the DNA in the first place when they were going to do the baby samples and
it just made it more evidence that her child was Hope’s child. So anyhow that is what she
found out. Her father swears to her that he has nothing to do with it. Yeah right. But I
don’t know much about these two. They had a past but I don’t know if it was a romantic
past or if he helped her or what happened.
EH: He helped her, when her husband would beat her he would come and arrest him and
put him in jail.
ELISE: But her husband thinks he did it so he could have an affair with her. And that is
not true?
EH: He never had an affair with her. Actually I thought she and Roman were getting
together.
ELISE: I don’t understand so why does Brandon hate Abe.
EH: He had a friend and there was a gun and it shot one of his friends and made him
paralyzed when he was ten.
ELISE: Oh that is the kid in the wheelchair. So that is why he hates Abe. He doesn’t
hate him because he thinks that he likes his mother or because he took his father away
from him.
EH: I think he hates him for that reason too but I think he mostly hates him because that kid is paralyzed. And because he never went back and did anything.
ELISE: They showed that. And he likes Sammy too.
EH: Who is Sammy with?
ELISE: Sammy is likes of course the guy, Austin, the perfect guy that she like manipulated and ruined her sister’s marriage so she could go after him.
EH: Oh she ruined so many things.
ELISE: So Sammy is bad, but she is so funny.
EH: Lucas is the father of the son.
ELISE: But she had claimed it was Austin’s but then told him the truth and I think that is what happened.
EH: Yeah, she drugged Austin so she could have sex with him and then claimed she got pregnant from that. But then she slept with Lucas so he was the father.
ELISE: They are not even going through to find out what is going on, what Chloe is going to do. They are just like Scooby Do and the gang I am not kidding. [Laughs] Do you hear them trying to talk her into going on this trip. It is so funny. I swear I could write these things so much better than they do [Laughing]. Don’t you think that just a normal person could write better. I wonder who are these people?
EH: You know, I wanted to write for a soap operas. Because I thought I could do it better.
ELISE: At least bring it to Melrose caliber.
EH: Oh yeah definitely.
[no talking]
EH: What do you think of their clothes and make-up and stuff?
ELISE: Oh, it is hilarious I am like who did your hair this morning. Oh, yeah and Chloe wears way to much make-up and she is so pretty and it really, and I look at how much make-up they throw on her and I think why do they do that to her. Do they think it makes her look better? Because I seriously don’t think it does.
EH: No.
ELISE: See that girl right behind there I think they are trying to introduce her more to the script she is interested in Phil. Just because I remember she had asked him to the Last Dance but he was already taken Chloe and she kinda looks and him and sighs. I think they are going to try and throw her into the plot a little bit.
EH: Do you like Craig and Nancy?
ELISE: Oh, I never, how did they meet up? They are a really odd couple.
EH: They schemed and plotted and did all these things to get to be the chief of staff.
ELISE: They schemed to get that way. What did they do.
EH: Well at that time it was um, Sammy’s sister had an affair with Mike. She did it because she was so frustrated with Austin right?
EH: Well she and Austin were going farther and farther apart, and so Austin was getting closer and closer with Sammy and he would always make excuses for Sammy.
ELISE: See I look at Austin and I think he is such an idiot you are dumb. They try to play him off as this totally nice guy and I am like there is nobody like you.
EH: And then, so yeah, and they told everybody about the affair. Well they did all these other things that I can’t remember now.
ELISE: Why did they feel like they had to tell people about the affair?
EH: Well, that was a bad spin on the hospital, or someone with that kind of reputation
someone who would break up a marriage you wouldn’t want them to be the chief of
everything at the hospital.
ELISE: Oh she was the chief?
EH: No, it was the guy she had the affair with. He was up for it. The board was voting
on it. They did all sorts of things. I didn’t really watch then I just would tune in every
once in a while to see it. And everyone hated them when they first came to town. And
you know that Nancy abandoned Chloe and she didn’t even tell Craig about it until Last
summer when Nancy’s father brought Chloe and said I can’t have her at my house
anymore. Cause she had secretly given birth to Chloe.
ELISE: So what do you think about that? Cause she won’t tell Chloe anything about
that, and I know that want to use it for another thing. She is so ashamed. I mean you
obviously know that Nancy was raped because but you don’t know by who, and Chloe
wants to find her father and Nancy was like told her don’t do it. She said if he wanted to
see you don’t you think he would’ve contacted you by now? It would just cause you
more hurt and I have feeling that maybe I don’t know that it has to be somebody in the
plot that you know. I am thinking what if it was Stefano Dimera or something like that.
Cause you know how she has the connection with Stefano have you seen how Chloe is
into opera and everything and Stefano has always complimented Chloe on how cultured
she is and he loves to listen to her sing. Like when they went to France for the
coronation. Did you ever hear about that? Greta is a princess she is adopted and she had
to pass a series of tests…
EH: Did you watch that when she was like in the Garden of Eden? Then there was the
bad guy.
ELISE: That was so weird, that was so bizarre. They had to pass all the different
temptations and they passed and that is how she got to be a princess. It was all pretty
silly. Anyhow, um, when they were flying over Stefano was really impressed with
Chloe and she was just an amazing girl and here was a woman that spoke Italian and was
into opera like Stefano and that made me wonder if there was some sort of connection
there. And even like Shaun and Belle they say don’t get to involved with Stefano and she
is like why I think he is a nice guy.
EH: And they say he kept my mother in a cage and …..
ELISE: I never saw that was that just strange or what.
EH: Stefano has died so many times and he has done so many horrible things.
ELISE: He has died huh?
EH: Oh like so many times.
ELISE: Really, like how has he died?
EH: Well they never found his body, they just assumed he was dead.
ELISE: Well, that is their big mistake that they always assume that huh. She is just a big
ole wimp. She should just stick up for herself. You know I feel bad but I feel that people
like that….oh here they go.
[quiet]
EH: Oh and there is Phillip in his tight shirt. Are they trying to get Chloe and Phillip
back together again?
ELISE: I don’t know.
[quiet]
EH: What do you think about Belle’s brother?
ELISE: Brady. Oh he likes Chloe.
EH: Do you like him?
ELISE: Oh, he is pretty brutal like verbally, like really brutal abusive to Marlena.
EH: Do you like him better for Chloe than like Phillip?
ELISE: Um, Chloe and him have more in common. I don’t know. That is going to be
the love triangle maybe this summer and I saw that from the beginning. It will be
interesting to see what happens. Oh that is directed to Phillip.
EH: Oh, yeah poor Phillip.
[commercial]
EH: How is Kristin doing?
ELISE: She is doing great. This is her birthday present it is late. She is having fun. She
will be finished with her Master’s in September. Can you believe that she will be done.
She is just doing an internship now and then she is done.
EH: What is she going to do? Is she coming back here? Going to Arizona?
ELISE: Not sure. I think she is going kind of look at different options to figure out what
would be the best one for her and go with it. I am really proud of her though. She is, I
can’t believe how fast that time went. I mean it flew with what she has done.
EH: She is so cool.
ELISE: I know I really adore her. We have been best friends since we were like 12. Just
forever. She is just such a real person. With no pretence about her and that is what I like
her. I like that in most people like you and Lisa and Tammy....
EH: How is Tammy doing?
ELISE: She is doing great too. She had a little flower business before she would do
friend’s weddings and stuff like that. So and she had a license and everything but it was
just getting to the point where she would ask her sisters to help her out to do things and
they were just flaky and she really needed a partner. And I have a friend, she is Mike’s
best friend’s wife and we have gotten to be pretty good friends since we were married
and she is an amazing florist and she used to work down at Heritage Gardens and do the
flowers there and she was trained by a really really good guy and she is like meticulous
and she is like that much better than Tammy and I mentioned it to Tammy and they met
at Abby’s birthday party they sat down and talked about it and decided to do it. And they
have had a wedding every weekend for like two months in a row. They are doing really
good. Jen is a little frustrated because Tammy, so Jen is trying to train her up on things
and how to do things with the flowers.
EH: That is hard to say, let me show you.
ELISE: And Jen has come to me and I told her she needs to have a heart to heart with
Tammy and Tammy has come to me and said that Jen is so much better than me and I
said why don’t you ask her to teach you?
[show on]
ELISE: Mimi’s hair looks a lot better right now. They always do her hair in really weird
hairstyles and they look horrible.
EH: I hate Chloe’s glasses cause it makes her eyes look huge. They make her look
different.
ELISE: Oh see it is touching a nerve with her. They called her Gargantua. Cause she is
big and fat. She is a replacement actress for the actress that was a lot bigger than her.
EH: They probably thought she was too big.
ELISE: I don’t know what they thought. I was really curious. I don’t know why they changed her. She did a really good job the other girl did.
EH: I don’t know why they swore her in.
ELISE: I don’t know either. Is that what her decision was to not do anything so they will stop?
[quiet]
EH: They are going to have to give them zits or something.
ELISE: Yeah, I am really curious what they are going to do. [Laughs]
EH: Poor Jan.
ELISE: Yeah her hair looks good there, I don’t know why they do these strange things to it.
[commercial]
EH: So is Tammy not going to be a seminary teacher anymore then?
ELISE: No she is still teaching, this is kinda what she does on the weekends. And Tammy and Jen are both responsible people that they are going to follow through on things you know it is not like, I don’t know if you have met Tammy’s sisters before but they....
EH: I have met Rebecca. What happened to Rebecca?
ELISE: I guess she is engaged. A really nice guy. They are just flaky. Tammy has just been the mother of all those kids. Cause Tammy’s mom has a lot of problems and Tammy had to be an adult way to early.
EH: Now you met on your mission?
ELISE: No Kristen met Tammy on her mission. So that is how they met and then we all lived together.
EH: At the Flower Basket.
ELISE: Yeah, I am excited about their business because I think they are going to do very well. And most of it has been word of mouth and they do compliment each other cause where Jen doesn’t want to do bookkeeping and things like that Tammy is totally up on that she is like let me do that I want to do it. And whereas Tammy doesn’t like to sit down and tell people how much everything is going to cost Jen is really good at that. Jen is very assertive that way and she is just. Tammy is just too nice. She would say, I will give it to you for free and Jen is like no we will do it for money. So it is pretty cool. And it was good for Jen because she was working for Franklin Covey and then she had a baby same age as Abigail, and she started working at home for Franklin Covey doing home program and she hated the department she was working for the people that managed it were jerks and she just dreaded it she said she would always put it off until the Last minute cause she hated doing it. And finally she is like I don’t want to do this anymore and she was looking for something to do and she loves the flower business and she even prayed about finding an opportunity and then when she saw Tammy at the birthday it was pretty funny cause she was like oh yeah she does flowers. It was kinda funny cause Tammy was like I am trying to find someone who wants to do this with me cause it won’t work to have me doing it with my sisters anymore and it was really interesting how it all worked out.
EH: That is way cool.
ELISE: And they get....it is such a hokey soap [Laughs] [a commercial for Passions].
ELISE: That is so corny.
EH: She looks so grown-up.
ELISE: Has she been on there for a long time?
EH: A couple of years.
ELISE: Cause I thought she had been on there a long time.
EH: Well, she was just born probably like 5 years ago.
ELISE: Oh, okay.
EH: She is actually on a tv show on the Disney station. She has her own show. It is like a space show.
ELISE: Like a sitcom thing?
EH: Yeah.
ELISE: That girl gets around.
EH: Who are those two people.
ELISE: She is that one girl I told you about that was fat.
ELISE: Oh, another thing that was so funny, when they went to the Last BLast Dance, I mean you should have seen the outfit this little one was wearing right here. I mean how old is she, she is young, I mean I know that Chloe is older playing younger but she is not the same age, she is about 16. And they had her wearing this little tiny super tight gold satin shimmery halter top with matching pants that were just like skin tight you could see every little curve. Her butt looked like it was naked and I am not kidding. It was so funny. Anyhow they had her wearing that to the dance with Shaun, she wanted to wear something that would help Shaun see her in a different light. And I thought that made her look like this little slutty thing. It didn’t even look sophisticated or anything it just looked horrid and her dad was at the dance saying oh honey you look so beautiful and I am going oh my gosh if any parent saw their daughter dressed like that they would be like what are you doing walking the street in that. I mean she looked like a little prostitute. I couldn’t believe they put her in that.

2ND VIEWING WITH ELISE: DAYS OF OUR LIVES: JULY 25, 2001

ELISE: I just have to make a cake and then I will be in there to watch.
EH: Oh they haven’t left on the trip yet.
Husband: Is this General Hospital or Days of Our lives?
ELISE: Days, and those are the two people that almost did it.
EH: They almost did it?
ELISE: Oh yeah, they were like totally naked and everything under the covers and then she said that she didn’t want to and of course he was the perfect gentleman and it made me laugh. Anyhow, when I was at the grocery store today, standing in line they had a soap opera magazine right there and they had a picture of Chloe and Phillip and it was
saying in the front how, cause they have shown previews and I guess Chloe is not going on the trip when she sees Phillip there and so she is going to stay in Salem cause she sees him on the plane and they are trying to do some sort of love triangle between Chloe Phillip and Brady and then they are also trying to do a love triangle between Shaun Belle and Phillip. Cause Phillip when he goes on this trip he is going to see how cute Belle is.

EH: Oh yeah, and didn’t he used to like Belle a lot?

ELISE: I didn’t know that. So he did used to like her. When was that?

EH: It was like two years ago.

ELISE: And did she like him back?

EH: No. But I think they went on a couple of dates but then Chloe came to town.

ELISE: But now that they are leaving on this trip they said I guess the teasers said, you never know what tropical vacations can lead too you know maybe he will have eyes for Belle.

[talking to husband about a business trip, he is buying tickets]

EH: Are you all going?

ELISE: No. They don’t have any direct flights out to DC and there is no way I am taking Abby on a flight with a Layover flight. She barely makes it to Arizona let me tell you.

EH: You barely make it to Phoenix. [Laugh]

ELISE: Exactly.

EH: So you have to make a cake? What is that for?

ELISE: Oh, um we are all getting together to go over to my in-Laws tonight for dinner, she invited us all over and I was like I will make a cake.

EH: Wonderful.

ELISE: And my mother-in-Law was like great. Anyhow, um I thought that was pretty funny what I read.

EH: Well you know what that will have them do, it will have them both fall in love with other people but then they will get married to each other anyway or something like that.

ELISE: I don’t think they will have them get married, but what I think they will do is like if Chloe ever gets together with Brady and she will look back at her first love with. and that is what is going to happen.

EH: So if she and Brady ever break up.....

ELISE: Or she will always be thinking in the back of her mind what about Phillip? You know they always play that.

EH: What might have been.

ELISE: Would you like a Diet Pepsi?

EH: Yeah I would love one. That is my indulgence.

ELISE: Do you want a glass of ice or?

EH: Oh no this is great.

[show on]

EH: So what has been going on with Nicole and this guy?

ELISE: That is her dad.

EH: Oh right. Do you like Nicole?
ELISE: Not really, I mean she is so transparent. All the characters really are. They try to make you feel sorry for her because she is playing up the dad angle. I guess in her past he did something......
EH: He prostituted her.
ELISE: How did you know that?
EH: Cause when I was watching the show she told the guy she was in love with, Sammy’s twin brother, Eric.
ELISE: Sammy has a twin brother? I have never seen Eric.
EH: Oh, Eric left. Because he was in love with Nicole but then he got together with Greta and then they broke up because he and Nicole almost did it again.
ELISE: Oh. Interesting. See look at her she just looks so slutty. I would never let her out of the house looking like that. Looks like she is wearing a lingerie top and her pants are way to tight and way to low cut.
EH: Yeah.
ELISE: You know how Diedre Hall I guess she has she plays I guess there is another woman that they are trying to....what is her name?
EH: I don’t know but she is an angry woman or something, she is trying to look like her?
ELISE: Yeah, is that the same is that Diedre Hall also?
EH: You know Diedre Hall has a twin sister.
ELISE: In real life?
EH: Yeah, in real life.
ELISE: That’s who it is then. Cause I was wondering and she looked like her but at the same time she looked different and I am going how did they do that? How did they do that with make-up to get her to look so close to that?
EH: They just brought her in.
ELISE: I didn’t know that, how interesting, I mean I know in the past she had a twin sister and then she died.
EH: Yeah, she got killed by the Salem strangler. I actually have a Days of our lives photo album it goes back through all the years.
ELISE: He is so awful, can you imagine your dad ever wearing something like that?
[Laughs]
EH: No.
ELISE: He is such a nerd. I think he thinks he is 25. One of the funniest things I ever saw was when Brady was going to save his sister Belle. I don’t know she had fallen in the elevator cause she went to the top of the building. So he had to go to the top of the building but of course he has to take off his shirt because he didn’t want to have a shirt on while you are saving your sister and I Laughed so hard. I thought do they play me for a fool? It was so funny.
EH: Because they spent like 6 hours on make-up today.
[talking to husband about arrangements for trip]
ELISE: Why did you stop watching soaps?
EH: They really got horribly frustrating for me to watch cause I kept thinking the same thing over and over again.
ELISE: And it is so predictable.
EH: Plus they took off the people I liked. On General Hospital, I really liked General Hospital, and there is this one guy that I thought was so gorgeous, Jax and one guy before
that was Jagger. They are doing some sort of flashbacks here? Is this the night that it almost happened?

ELISE: No, this is the night, it was so corny. Did you ever see the slo mo dance between Shaun and Belle. I almost, I am not kidding it was so funny. He got her a poodle, it is so cute, I love poodles. Um, oh. [responding to screen]. That was the night that Stefano had blown up the bridge and the section of the hospital that had done the DNA testing on the son and remember she had swapped the DNA samples thinking she, remember Brandon had done that for her thinking that is would make it be clear, but all that it did show that it was that one guys son, and they had to do something about it so they blew up the Lab and everything. So they had to walk home from that big restaurant that they always go to...

EH: Oh, Tuscany?

ELISE: Yeah, and they were walking home and they stopped and they just had a nice all night love talk and he carved their initials in the tree and she cried she said it was the nicest thing anybody had ever done for her it was so hokey. You know in high school I used to watch the Young and the Restless during the summers and they never did anything like this...

EH: These soap operas on NBC are a lot different. You can tell the differences in the soap operas from station to station.

ELISE: Now CBS they when I watched it, and this is back in 88 and 87, this is a long time ago, I remember they dealt with very serious issues on there like they dealt with date rape and other issues and they were much more serious about it. They weren’t hokey like this. Is this just NBC that does these really hokey soaps?

EH: Yeah, Passions and Days are the most....Like General Hospital has this whole AIDS things and you know they have this AIDS ball every year they have more stuff like that. On ABC a lot of them deal with gay issues they usually have a least one gay character on the show.

ELISE: Do they have a love interest and everything? Interesting.

EH: Yeah. You know Ryan Phillipe who is married to Reese Witherspoon? He was on One Life To Live and he was a gay character on there. And it showed him coming out and everything and so he met someone and that is why he left the show or something. I can’t remember. And they deal with like you said the rape issue.

ELISE: You know how on 90210 they always have the big issues like Tori Spelling boyfriend in it....

EH: The singer or the one that was on the boat that was all brooding.

ELISE: Not the one with the alcoholic issues but the one before that Brian Austin Greene, but what was his character name on the show? He had a problem where he overspent at the clubs and he kept overspending and spending and it dealt issues like that. And then he stole money from his Donna and to me that is a little more believable and even though it was really hokey and their hair was like done and their make-up was unreal but....

EH: And see they kind of deal with like see people always have multiple personalities that you don’t find out about.

ELISE: And even in the Young and Restless the dialogue was more normal and these are just like, sometime they are just so weird.

EH: Well, they always have, and back before you were watching but there was a character named Billy and her dad also prostituted her for money for drugs and then they
introduce this new character, and they just have these horrible lives and their dads do these horrible things to them and they fall in love and the man they love...I don't know. And that is Jennifer and Jack.

ELISE: They just barely brought them back. I guess they used to be on the show before.

EH: Oh, they were huge, I was so into them.

ELISE: I think they are trying to make that a big thing, people to want them to get them back together but they are going to take their sweet old time.

EH: Are they hooking up? I hated it because Jack like when their baby was born, Abby, she got sick and it was because of some construction site where he had dumped radioactive waste from his company. It was a plastic anemia. That is what a lot of these soap opera kids get.

ELISE: Well, what does that mean?

EH: It is just like a really rare disease that can only be stopped with a bone marrow transplant, it is a good way to find out if someone is really the father.

ELISE: Oh, that is why you are saying it. Oh have you seen other shows where the kids get it?

EH: Oh yeah, on General Hospital, All my Children, Another World....

ELISE: Oh how funny, and they do it make it so scary about the father.

EH: Or a sibling they didn't know about before.

ELISE: Do you know why they are living together now? She came back into town, I guess she was in Ireland, I guess Jack found out where she was and followed her and came back and Abby loves him so much because she is his Daddy and he doesn't want to take full custody because she needs a mom too so he has a great idea: why don't we get a house we will have separate rooms and we will have Abby there so she will have the best of both worlds because we will both be there for her. And of course she regrets it and is like I can't do this it is driving me crazy and driving me nuts but then he and Greta and he have gotten friendly, and that is all it is just a friendship but he is using Greta to make it seem like more than just friendship to Jennifer. And so whenever Jennifer sees them together she is always very suspicious and is like what is going on and she can't talk to Greta and you can see that Jennifer is getting jealous. And so that of course that is going to pull something together.

EH: When Jack left Jennifer got involved with Stefano's son Peter. And he did all these horrible things and she was in love with him but then I never saw what happened there.

ELISE: Now why did Jack leave?

EH: Cause he felt so guilty, he left a note saying that he couldn't deal with it anymore. Because of the radioactive waste that had caused his daughter to be so sick.

ELISE: Interesting. Cause for some reason she keeps talking about how they went to Africa together, that she and Jack went to Africa together with Abby and he followed some business venture there and it would all fall through and she was just sick and tired of it so she just pick up and left and went to Ireland. And she keeps saying the reason she went to Ireland is because of the guy that she fell in love with they never show her, they just keep saying this in conversation that there is a guy that she fell in love with in South Africa and he went to Ireland so she, but nothing ever happened between them but she thought that something might happen and when he saw her there he was like I am not interested in you that way. So it mortified her and so she stayed there and worked in a pub and raised Abby there. Have you seen the girl that plays Abby on here, she is really
cute they need to see this one girl that has long blond hair, she reminds you of the girl on Poltergeist. She just looked like a girl that they said okay you’re a girl you’re cute and you’re blond so come on and do the part cause she would sit there and read her lines verbatim and with no emotion or anything it was horrible, a horrible child actress. And they sacked her for this cute little brunette and she is darling and she is a good actress. I wouldn’t be surprised to see her going into movies and stuff cause she is just so precocious. I see that and I think that is amazing that a child that young can be so believable. I mean it didn’t sound like she was reading lines if they ever show her. But she is really cute, she is cute with them being her parents.

EH: Like natural about it?

ELISE: Yeah. And a lot of kids can’t pull that off. So yeah, and it is rare to see a soap opera kid be a good actress. Like Sammy’s kid, oh isn’t he awful?

EH: Yeah.

ELISE: The one with the ears that stick out to here. I don’t know why....

EH: Yeah I always wonder if they have their real kids on there cause they are just so unattractive and so....And I think where did they find this kid..

ELISE: Funny looking kid, huh. And he is a horrible actor he is like okay mommy, I love you mommy and I love you too. And if you see the one who plays little Abby on there she is a cutie. Don’t you remember that mother daughter sex talk you had with your mom? [referring to show]

EH: It didn’t end up like that. It was more like can we stop talking about this, I mean seriously.

ELISE: I don’t think I ever had that talk with my mom. They put way to much lipstick on her. But her hair looks better now they were just doing weird things to it. Is she listening to All by myself or something holding her dog. Oh, this is the song that they danced at the Last Blast.

EH: I don’t know it just showed them dancing in the sand to that song.

ELISE: Oh yeah. Every time they do these dance sequences.......I have never seen that dog before. That is weird.

EH: Packing his hair dryer.

ELISE: Oh, he put a hair dryer in there?

EH: Are Victor and Nicole together?

ELISE: Yeah, that is the thing that Victor doesn’t want anyone else to know that. But I mean how obvious can you be. You have Nicole Walker living in your house, and she wears these really skimpy outfits and she is here because they work together. Did you know that Victor Kerioukis is....

EH: Jennifer Aniston’s dad.

ELISE: I just found that out. I remember seeing on there that his name is John Aniston and I was thinking there aren’t too many Anistons I wonder if they are related somehow. But you can kind of see it in their features, their eyes.
[talking to husband about email]
ELISE: Look at her I am just amazed that they put her in these outfits. And it is all normal.
EH: So have Marlena and Brady made up then?
ELISE: I don’t know, I guess she put out a picture of his mom to make him feel better.
EH: Isabella?
ELISE: Yeah. Was that like a big line like way back when? Cause they never show any flashbacks or anything like that.
EH: Isabella and John got together it was a whole big story. He chose Isabella over Marlena.
ELISE: Oh, at the beginning he did? Or when they first knew each other?
EH: No, see what happened is...
ELISE: Oh hang on, I want to hear why she is saying it is all her fault here. This is funny.
EH: Okay what happened is that John used to be Roman, and he was known as Roman so he and Marlena were together.
ELISE: Okay, but they have a Roman on there right now.
EH: That is right and he came back. And it turned out that John was programmed to believe he was Roman by Stefano and he was actually this John Black guy who was a priest or something like that, his assassin his thief whatever, so the same thing he did to Princess Gina he did to John. So when the real Roman came back, it was so funny, cause everyone was like we thought you looked differently but we thought that you have been in an accident. And John and Roman look nothing alike.
ELISE: Oh that is so funny. I know. I was thinking how could they do something like that. So they seriously thought it was Roman.
EH: Yeah. And he was Roman for like five years. In fact he was on while I was like in Junior High as Roman. So then, Isabella was Stefano’s daughter....
ELISE: Wait, I thought she was Victor’s daughter.
EH: Yeah, she turned out to be Victor Kerioukis’s daughter, but it was this other bad guy, so then John started hanging out with Isabella and actually Isabella had a really bad half sister and she was locked up in a mental institution and Jack was the one who saved her because she was locked up there, but it was because she knew the truth about her family or something.
ELISE: So they tried to keep her away, okay.
EH: So finally John and Isabella finally hook up and.....
ELISE: And he was Roman at that time, so it was Roman that hooked up..
EH: No, he was John now well, he didn’t know who he was. But he hooked up with Isabella because the real Roman came back and plus Marlena was gone for a long time and then she came back.
ELISE: Why was she gone and why did the storyline take her away?
EH: I don’t know. Oh, because Stefano did something to her. Yeah, he stole her and everyone thought she was dead. So then they got each other back somehow. But even though she had feelings for both men she decided to stay with Roman cause he was her husband and that is who....
ELISE: The original Roman.
EH: Yeah, the original Roman instead of going with John and so John hooked up with Isabella. And then that is how Belle was conceived because after Isabella died, cause Isabella got some cancer or something and it was all melodramatic. And then afterwards John and Marlena they had these feelings for each other but she was married to Roman. And that is how Sammy started hating her mom cause she saw them having sex on the board table during the Christmas Party or something like that and that is how Belle was conceived. That was like the one time they slept together.

ELISE: It was for a Christmas Party? So this is when she was with Roman.
EH: Yeah she was with Roman, because she wanted to stay with him because of Sammy and Eric and....

ELISE: But she had a one night fling with John.
EH: Yeah, but they loved each other. But then after that they knew that it was wrong and that they couldn’t be together. And then there were a whole bunch of test about it because there were a whole bunch of things wrong with Belle that they didn’t know and actually John said you have to have her tested to see if this is my baby cause I want to know if it is my baby. Because he kept saying to her that we love each other and we need to be together. She was like I can’t leave Roman because of Sammy and Sammy was bulimic at this time and she and she was going into the life of a stripper or a prostitute or something. I don’t know she was doing something bad.

ELISE: Bad girl?
EH: Yeah. And she was bulimic and she was hating her mother because she knew. And they had this test and it came back that Roman was the dad and so everyone was like great he is the father. Then a year Later it turned out that Sammy, you know she is one of those people at the hospital,....

ELISE: She isn’t a nurse but is one of those somebody.
EH: She was one of those people that pass out the books or whatever. Turned out that she had switched it so that John really was the father of Belle and I think Belle had a plastic anemia or something and so that is what made them find out that John was the father and so that caused Marlena and Roman to split. And no, I actually think it was on their anniversary date that Marlena and John slept together.

ELISE: On Marlena and Roman’s anniversary. Wow.
EH: That is what made it very poignant cause it was like it was like our anniversary because they still remembered before. So then Roman and Marlena broke up and Roman left and I think Roman is back isn’t he or is he gone?

ELISE: He is still on.
EH: Also Roman had a daughter she was the one that was with Austin.
ELISE: The older daughter. Is that a half sister?
EH: Yeah just a half sister and she was doing all this stuff to Austin and Carrie.
ELISE: Oh, yeah, I have heard them talk about it, they never show anything.
EH: She knows who JT’s biological father is.
ELISE: Yeah.
EH: But he doesn’t?
ELISE: No he doesn’t know. He is not very fond of John and they think it would make things worse.
EH: So that is why they named him Brady is because it is their Last name and he remembered his past as being part of the Brady family. He just loved them. And then they named their son John but thank heavens they changed it to JT or whatever.
ELISE: Yeah they named him John Thomas.
EH: Yeah, after John because John saved Princess Gina or whatever.
ELISE: Yeah.
EH: Are they divorced again?
ELISE: Yeah, they are divorced.
EH: Hey, this might be a summer of bonding.
ELISE: I know, and maybe Brady will bond with his mother, or I guess Marlena I should say.
EH: Stepmother. You called that one. I thought that she started out using Victor.
ELISE: Yeah, she totally did, I don’t know she is using him for a lifestyle and she likes the status and also the status of the company of Victor.
EH: So what does Kate do now?
ELISE: They did have her working at a diner but they.
EH: Kate was working there/
ELISE: Did you know how Kate tried to murder Victor. She hired a hit man and then felt really bad about it and tried to stop it but he was like nope we made a deal I am going through with it. Victor found out about it that he hired a hit man wore a bullet proof vest so it looked like he got shot and they carted him off and this was Paris the coronation that this happened, so anyhow, they carted him off and Philip knew also that his mom had done this, well that somebody had done this, he wasn’t sure that it was his mom. Philip kind of played a long in the game that he was dead. Yeah told his mom that he had him cremated. And she was like how could you do that without me even knowing and felt horrible and she was like everything is mine and got really greedy and like I want to redo the whole house get rid of everything old. I want to do everything new and she was bossing people around and being really nasty and Philip was watching in horror going Oh, my gosh I can’t believe my mom is doing this. I think Victor had kind of given him this idea that his mom was behind it, but I don’t know. And so he saw that and he would report back to his dad and Victor was just planning for the right time to let Kate know. So what they did was kind of drugged her up and Nicole was in on it too so they kinda drugged her up.
EH: I bet she kicked Nicole right out of the house.
ELISE: Well, Nicole was out of the house before that, she had started to leave what is his name her husband…
EH: Lucas.
ELISE: Lucas. Nicole didn’t want anything more to do with that but she, I don’t know, I think, I can’t even remember anymore what really happened it was kind of confusing. So Kate was all drugged up and Victor went up to the bedroom kind of dressed like the Phantom and saying why did you do it Kate. Kind of getting her to confess and she freaked out and then he went down and was all happy and was like tomorrow she is going to know that it is all over. And so he was sitting down in front of the fire place and Kate came down and saw him there and she was all drugged up and so she took the poker and he didn’t see her and she kinda wacked him on the head and he fell over on the ground and was like I am not going to be the joke of this. And so she put the ashes out of the
fireplace so it started a fire in the house thinking he would burn down with it. And Philip went in and saved him before it burnt down and he knew what happened and he knew that Kate had tried to kill him. So that is twice that she had tried to kill him. So he had proof and everything because he had the poker. Cause she went back the next day after the fire burnt down the house trying to find the poker cause she knew that it would have her fingerprints on it and stuff and it might look kind of suspicious and he went up to her and was like looking for this Kate? And he said I have enough evidence to convict you and or we can make a deal. You can leave with nothing and not have anything and you don't say a word. So that is what they did. So Kate is broke.

[talking to husband]

ELISE: Yeah so Kate worked at the diner for a while and embarrassed Philip and he was like Dad we can't just cut her off like that. He was embarrassed because his friends were making fun of him. Your mom is a waitress at a diner. So of course it was just for selfish reasons that he didn't want her to work there.

EH: Yeah, that sounds like him. You know that Kate was not pregnant with Philip.

ELISE: I heard about that. Now who exactly did she steal the embryo from.

EH: Vivian stole the embryo from Kate and Victor.

ELISE: Vivian who is that?

EH: Vivian was in love with Victor and she thought that this will bring us closer together. Vivian was a really wacky character. They were having in vitro fertilization.

ELISE: Who? Kate and Victor?

EH: Yeah.

ELISE: Cause she couldn't get pregnant or what?

EH: Yeah she couldn't get pregnant but they wanted to have a child together.

ELISE: Even though they weren't married?

EH: Um they were married.

ELISE: Oh they were married and then they got divorced.

EH: They got divorced yeah because she had an affair with Vivian's....well, there are too many people.

ELISE: And look at Phil, he's high maintenance.

EH: And so anyway, and Vivian was pretending that she was getting in vitro fertilization with her side kick guy, but instead she stole the embryos and so she got implanted with Victor and Kate's son.

ELISE: And did they find out Later?

EH: Oh yeah,

ELISE: And so when she had the baby she was there. So Kate never gave birth to Philip but he is her son. That is what happened, okay. There is something really weird, so they all know about it? Does Philip know about it?

EH: I am sure, I don't know.

ELISE: Oh that is so funny.

[End of Show]
actually cares about what happens to the characters. She also mentioned how it was her escape she was with a little baby all day and how she gets to have time to sit and relax and veg.

**3RD TIME WATCHING WITH ELISE: DAYS OF OUR LIVES**

EH: Oh what happened here?
ELISE: Oh, um, she wouldn’t go on the plane, remember she was going to go, but Philip was on the plane even though he said that he wouldn’t and she saw him on there and she was like I can’t go.
EH: So how come Philip didn’t end up going?
ELISE: Because he promised his dad he would go. Have you ever balanced your checkbook?
EH: Yeah. Every month.
ELISE: You are so good, I never have.
EH: Oh, really?
ELISE: We never have, since we have been married. Do you find mistakes that the bank makes?
EH: No, um we haven’t.
ELISE: What bank do you use?
EH: Well, it used to be Draper but now it is Zions.
ELISE: Draper Bank and Trust is that what it used to be?
EH: Yeah, and my husband does this thing on xcel...
ELISE: That you balance, his own program then.
EH: Or something that you balance the checkbook in.
ELISE: So it is not quicken, he made his own.
EH: Yeah, something, I don’t know.
ELISE: Did he make his own or did he buy a program that is made for it?
EH: No I think he just used Quattro pro because that is what we have. And he just did all the cells so they do certain things.
ELISE: Add and stuff. Yeah Mike was thinking about doing the same thing and I thought....Oh, what is this, oh I guess he is thinking back or she is thinking back. Um, I was like what, what is going on. So, Mike was thinking of doing the same thing and I was like just buy Quicken but that the same, you have to spend all this time trying to figure out the program and it would be time consuming.
EH: Yeah cause you just have to start adding up everything yeah.
ELISE: I really should and I told Mike that I am going to start, in fact that will be, our anniversary is in August and that will be our anniversary present I will buy him quicken. And I will be very careful about trying to balance this, I feel bad. I mean we have overdraft, though, and I don’t go out and spend money mindlessly I always have some idea of how much we have.
EH: See that is how my husband used to do it and I was like religious about balancing my checkbook every month. And then it is hard to merge the two styles. Cause he was used to just having the duplicate ones.
ELISE: Yeah, the duplicates those are the ones that we have. And you don’t have duplicates now?
EH: No, I hate the duplicates because you have to put the thing in between each check....
ELISE: No, you don’t, I never put it in.
EH: Oh, but it doesn’t go through.
ELISE: Not to the next one. You get some idea. And I don’t even put that thing in between it.
EH: See that is what he used before and I was like no, we are going to keep it in the register and marking it off and....
ELISE: You know Mike never....You would think that being a business major that Mike would be into balancing his checkbook. But neither one of us are. We are horrible. We can’t save money because of that.
EH: Cause you just don’t know exactly where.
ELISE: We have a 401K and I think, oh, okay. If there is an emergency we can use a card, we have plenty of cards, we have lots to max out on if we wanted.
EH: See we put everything on our Discover card and then we just pay it off every month so we get the cash back every year.
ELISE: Yeah we do that with Discover too. Actually I do it from card to card like as soon as the introductory rate runs out then I switch to another card. And I have been doing that cycle. We actually almost had, and I don’t know if when you got married, we both had a lot of debt because we bought the ring and um, you know just wedding stuff and you know I was on my own for a while in college and I had a student loan and granted I didn’t consolidate the student loan. But we consolidated then and we had it almost all paid off but once I stopped working, it was just like all of sudden....
EH: Where did all the money go?
ELISE: Yeah, it was, we sank right back into debt again, so....
[got some toys for my son]
ELISE: You know it is amazing, if we were smart in hindsight I would’ve thought goll I would’ve saved that second income.
EH: It is 20/20.
ELISE: How old is he now? Seven months?
EH: Nine.
ELISE: Oh, my gosh.
EH: You can see he slept on his hair and sweated.
ELISE: Hey at least he has hair.
[talking to my son]
ELISE: Have you ever thought about sending his picture to Parents Magazine or something?
EH: No, I have wanted to, they were having like this Hawaiian Tropic Baby contest and thought I should send his picture in to that. That is a darling toy.
ELISE: It flips over and then you have your blocks underneath. It was like 20 bucks over at Toys R Us. And it is one of Abby’s favorites.
[getting toys for my son]
ELISE: He is going to take her out, wow! He is going to take her to Tuscany I am sure.
EH: Back room, oh, back row.
ELISE: Did you guys get a notice about your tax returns?
EH: Yes, isn’t that great! We get 600 bucks back.
ELISE: So do we, I am like thrilled, but it is all going toward our overdraft. Cause we dipped into it and I was like we will just pay it off, why not. Can I get you a Diet Coke or anything like that?
EH: Yeah, that is fine.
[long silence while show is on]
[talking on phone about hospital bill]
EH: Does Jan have a crush on Philip?
ELISE: Oh, on Shawn? Oh everyone has a crush on Shawn, they all like Shawn. He is so sensitive and smart but he doesn’t have a girlfriend so he is free to purse about anybody. You remember that one girl I told you about before that was interested in Philip, she has asked to sit next to him on the plane before Chloe got there and he was like telling the girl no, I want to sit alone and it was kinda interesting. But she is still after him so we will see what happens with that. But do you remember they were suggesting that he and Belle might get together, and they were showing this little preview I guess when they are on the ferry, that I guess the ferry has an accident that they are traveling on in Puerto Rico and people fell off and Philip goes down and puts Belle on the ground so she doesn’t, he goes to protect her. So I don’t know, we will see. Have you guys ever gone to Little Gym before?
EH: No what is that?
ELISE: Have you heard of that? It is so neat I took Abby there. And they have it for his age too. He would be in the Bugs class. And that is for four months to 10 months, non walkers. Anyhow it is every Monday from 11:30 to 12:15 it is so dang cute, it is on Foothill and there is also one on Bengel Blvd. Where do you live?
EH: I live on 45th South and State Street.
ELISE: I guess you could hit either one. I have gone to the one, cause your first class is free and Abby loves it. They just have a gym set up and it is all padded and they it is a structured play type of thing is what it is. It is so well done. And I think it is pretty well priced. Um, like for the summer pricing for 8 classes it is 64$ so less than 10$ a class.
EH: So do you leave them there or do you stay?
ELISE: No you stay with them and you participate. It is so cute to see her interact with the other kids not necessarily that, see how she plays and what she tries to do and how brave she’ll be. It is really cute. You should try classes up there.
EH: I should. What is it called again?
ELISE: Little Gym, it is in the phone book. And you can look at that.
EH: Oh, your dad would love this.
ELISE: Little baby Robert would love this too. He would go crazy. It is really cute they have songs at the beginning that introduces all the kids and says their name. And then you have a little song that you do a little march too and you walk and then you run and then you skip and stuff. It was just cute and then they have sticks that they play with and then it is just cute. And then you get out and you have free play and every 15 minutes the instructor will come and show them how to do a trick and they have a little balance beam and all the kids try that. They have one of those things that you hold, and what is it called…..Anyhow it is too big for the little ones and you hold them as they go across and it is just so cute to see the kids that are brave enough to do it. Oh look here is the girl she
is getting a make over. That is the girl from American Pie. Oh my gosh that was a horrible movie, did you ever see it?
EH: NO, but I heard about it.
ELISE: I couldn’t believe when I watched that movie how vulgar, for the audience it was marketed for I couldn’t believe how absolutely disgusting it was. I was shocked. And that girl looks so much like that girl, it is the girl from Buffy the Vampire Slayer.
EH: Oh, the witch girl.
ELISE: Oh, the girl that is Buffy’s friend that has reddish hair.
EH: Yeah, she is a witch.
ELISE: Oh, I didn’t know that. I don’t watch the show I just know she is on there. And the fact that I watched that movie doesn’t leave this room, I was kinda embarrassed to tell you I saw that. It was awful. I keep getting mail for this at this address. What do I do?
EH: I bet you would need to call BYU.
ELISE: Isn’t that a cute book? I got it at Costco for like 7$
EH: Oh, dear.
ELISE: What is the matter?
EH: He just put something in his drink.
ELISE: Oh, I missed that.
EH: Are you just going through all your files.
ELISE: Trying to get organized.
[show on, quiet for a long time]
ELISE: Yeah, he was rude and condescending, yeah, he handled that like a champ. Good values.
EH: Poor stupid Philip, right.
ELISE: And he buys it.
[talking to son]
ELISE: I was watching the Today show this morning and it had Katie Couric on there and she was talking to someone from some magazine about traveling on airplanes and how to look your best when you get off a long flight and how airline air is horrible and how it dries out your skin and this and that and different things you can do. And how you could put a face mask on that is like a disposable mask that you peel off that is like giving yourself a facial and everything while you are sitting in your chair. And Katie was like well, won’t people think you are weird if you do that and she was like well, what do you care because they are all wearing overalls and jumpsuits. And I was thinking what a rude woman, I was like does this woman think all these people that travel are complete hicks trailer trash and it almost made me want to write into the Today show and I couldn’t believe that comment I actually wanted to write to the magazine, I can’t remember which one it was it is the one that has, what is the Lady that is dating Jack Nicholson now...
EH: Oh, Laura Flynn Boyle.
ELISE: Yeah, she is on the cover this month. I wanted to write in and say, well first I wanted to get the transcripts so I could get verbatim what she said. Cause it was just so rude. Because she was referring to all the people in coach. I was like what an idiot that woman was. I wonder if they are going to get comments on that.
EH: I am sure they will because coach is not,....
ELISE: Oh, it was like heaven forbid you are in coach. How dumb. Oh, have you seen the clips at the end, then they have Belle at the very end and she looks at the camera and
says get tempted. And I was laughing so hard because she is cute but she is not what you would call sexy, she doesn’t have sex appeal she is just cute. I was just cracking up. They might show it.

[show on]
ELISE: Teach him about what?
ELISE: That is what her name is. I didn’t know she was a witch. That is so weird.
EH: She is actually a lesbian witch, she has become lesbian now. Remember her boyfriend was the werewolf but .....now she has hooked up with another witch and they make magic together.
ELISE: Wow. I wonder if they are related they look a lot alike.
EH: Man they sure move around a lot.
ELISE: That could be the island the stuff is on. Wow.
[commercial on]
[talking to my son]
[getting toys for my son]
[show on]
EH: Now is Brady like really socially inept, is that the premise here?
ELISE: He just kinda thinks everybody, I don’t know kinda I don’t know if he thinks they are beneath him or I don’t know what his deal is. He is just weird. And he is incredibly rude. What did he say?
EH: He said go back to your table dad. She wishes Marlena was her mother?
ELISE: Does she?
EH: I don’t know.
[long silence]
EH: I want you to look at Marlena’s dress.
ELISE: What about it?
EH: How it goes down all weird. Cause you are a fashion designer aren’t you?
ELISE: Well, right.
EH: What do you think about ..
ELISE: What they wear? It is extremely unrealistic to what normal people wear. I always think it is funny. It is all Hollywood. I mean if they wore normal things then people wouldn’t be as interested in watching it I think.
EH: Yeah.
ELISE: Everyone having their hair done the way they do I mean it is a funny funny world that they live in. That is the way that it is supposed to be.
[talking to my son]
[commercial]
[long time no talking]
EH: Do you ever design any clothes anymore?
ELISE: I don’t design I just sew stuff. For Abby.
EH: So you don’t do it for big people?
ELISE: No, it is too time consuming.
EH: I remember what you used to do it was so pretty like your bridesmaids dresses.
ELISE: Oh, my bridesmaid dresses were so.....Do you know what happened....
EH: I heard what happened that right Lisa said, can you believe she put these together in just a few days.

ELISE: A month before the wedding my soon to be sister in Law Katie she just didn’t feel like she was part of the wedding. Can’t you just do some bridesmaid dresses. And I was like if I have Katie then I have to have my sister of course and I have to have Kristen and if I have Kristen then I need Tammy cause she is the reason why Mike and I are together in the first place and if I have Tammy then I need Lisa and the list just went on and on and I was just like…..and she made me feel so guilty cause this little snotty sister in Law and she was like 18, and she was just feeling like it was all about LaDawn and I was like of course it is all about me it is my wedding. If I was smart I would’ve just been like absolutely not cause I told her no at the beginning and she said to me it would mean so much to me if you would have Katie be happy about this. So I agreed and I went out to look at dresses and I had less then a month and you have to special order everything and I tried to look for a dress at the store that I could like buy five of and it was like no not going to happen.

EH: Especially since you have to make them garment worthy.

ELISE: That was the other thing. And this made me absolutely crazy. And she said why don’t you sew Katie just a cute little sheath and you could do dresses for everyone else, and if I did that then she would look like the maid of honor and believe me she is not my maid of honor. And I was like when you have to sew, when you do one right after the other….

[answers phone, talking to them for a while about hospital bill]

ELISE: So yeah she wanted her to have a special dress and all the other ones to have a regular dress. And I was like no, it is all or nothing Diane, they are all going to have the same dress or I am not going to do this at all and she was like okay okay. So Katie is notorious for wearing the shortest skirts the tightest things so when she had to wear this total dress that wasn’t tight that covered her arms. I couldn’t find fabric that I liked on a bolt because you would have to special order it. So you know I had to sew 5 dresses in a month with all the other things going on around a wedding at the same time. It was so high stress I wish now I would’ve not.

ELISE: I haven’t seen this one, this is new. Oh maybe they will show her here. Oh no they have to show Belle. Belle is the funniest. Get Tempted.

EH: They have a lot of lipstick on too?

ELISE: I have never seen her have so much make-up, she has as much make-up as Chloe wears.

EH: See I would feel really uncomfortable wearing that type of a dress.

ELISE: That is because she is going to fall out. First of all a woman her age you don’t have a lot of firmness left unless they are fake and I don’t know, she doesn’t look like she went into plastic surgery. Um,… Katie when she had her wedding, oh my gosh. She just got married Last year. Actually her wedding day was two days before ours. It was like the 14th interesting. They had the wedding out there too.

EH: Oh.

{talk about Katie’s wedding}

END OF 3RD VIEWING
INTERVIEW OF ELISE

EH: Address.
ELISE: Arlington Virginia.
EH: How many kids? Ages?
ELISE: One.
EH: Her age?
ELISE: Two.
EH: How old are you?
ELISE: 30.
EH: Where were you born? Where did you grow up?
EH: So when did you move to Utah?
ELISE: I moved to Utah when I moved to college that was 95.
EH: Husband’s occupation?
ELISE: He manages a donor center.
EH: Income Bracket?
ELISE: Between 60 and 80.
EH: What is your education level? In what?
ELISE: Some college. I took a couple things I took fashion design, and then when I transferred over to the U I changed it to Spanish so I could finish quicker because they didn’t have a fashion design program.
EH: Previous work experience?
ELISE: I worked in the printing industry, in the retail industry and um, a financial planning and business trust industry.
EH: Do you still watch Days of our Lives?
ELISE: I do, I don’t watch it watch as often as I used to just because I have been so busy with this move.
EH: What do you think about the writers, actors and characters?
ELISE: I think it is some of all of each of those. You know sometimes I just watch it and just crack up because I think, it is all for a guilty pleasure anyway, but it cracks me up some of the dialogue and I think who wrote this because it is not realistic dialogue a lot of the time. Sometimes I think about the costume designer and the make-up people too, I often wonder you know they can make people look really pretty without making it look like....Especially Chloe I always think she wears way too much make-up. But Lately she hasn’t been wearing as much because supposedly she is sick and so you can kind of tell that they have toned down on the make up and it is kind of funny. I think she looks better but they try to do really pale make up if they just put a little bit of color into her lips. And as far as the clothing I think they do okay as with some of the characters but with like whoever does the hairstyles for the teenagers, I know when I was a teenager there was no way that I would have been able to do my hair like that. I mean they have these amazing hair dresser people. But I mean I know it is television and it is for you the viewer to watch and to look at and enjoy it is not supposed to be realistic. But I do wish some of the people, I do know Lexie’s mom she is babysitting the baby she has on these silk suits and it is just a crack up and she is going to tend the baby wearing a Chanel suit
wearing stiletto heels and I just think there is no way. Like I say I know that is television and they are doing that just because it is television.

EH: Has there been anytime in your life when you watched/relied on it more? (moved/lonely?)

ELISE: When Abby was smaller just because she would take afternoon naps and it was like the time that was mine time and now she is awake, she is refusing to take naps and so she will watch it with me because there is the baby switching thing on it she sees the babies and thinks that is kinda cool, but I don’t let her watch when they get down and dirty or anything like that. But she knows and recognizes that mom’s show is on.

EH: Is it a coping or relaxation technique?

ELISE: Yeah, I will grab a Pepsi and I will just sit back and just relax and not have to think about anything else. It is like at that time I don’t have to worry about all the other things I have to get done.

EH: Have you ever used other media to find out about the show/characters/actors? How often and which media?

ELISE: You know probably about 6 months I went on line cause I saw a commercial for it, I can’t even remember what it was, the day I went on line I thought it was really interesting they did a little bio on each of the actors and I remember going through a couple of them and I thought it was interesting but that was the only time I did that. I am sure if I had a computer I would probably check it out more.

EH: So you have never bought soap opera weekly?

ELISE: I haven’t but I have looked at it while I am standing in line at check out.

EH: Are you interested in the characters or the actors? Which came first? Do you like to find out about the actors lives? Does that change the way you feel about them?

ELISE: Yeah, a little bit, yeah I thought that Chloe was kind of a strange character until I read her bio and she kind of and once you learn more about the actor and learn about their background like I guess she had been educated somewhere overseas and I guess her dad is like a conductor or something and she studied opera and that is why she is opera background or opera interested in the story and she has a lot of classical background and I thought that was really interesting. At first I thought this is weird you know, I guess and once I understood that then I found out more about her real background I understood why they brought that into the storyline. I am sure they found that a fascinating topic just because there aren’t that many people that really do that especially at her age.

EH: Do you feel like you need to justify the time in watching?

ELISE: No, I don’t have to justify anything. [Laughs] No, when people ask me like at church things or something I will totally admit it I have like no guilt whatsoever about it.

EH: Does being a Mormon affect the way that you view soap operas?

ELISE: Probably in that I know it is just so hokey, you know what I mean. I don’t know, it depends, I don’t know it is hard to say. A lot of it you are raised and sometimes you really want people to get it on, but it is TV and that is the way it is and you are like goll, I just can’t wait till they hit the sack. I don’t know it is just so funny. I don’t know.

EH: So you don’t think that it changes the way you watch?

ELISE: I don’t really know what you mean. Like will I turn the channel if I see something getting a little raunchy cause Days of Ours Lives isn’t really bad, they don’t push the bedroom scene that often, and when they do though, like when I will turn it is when John and Marlena get together it is disgusting, I can’t stand John, he creeps me out
to begins with and I think Marlena is pushing the apron, I don’t really want to see an old Lady in bed with a guy that creeps me out anyway. He is yuck. I don’t know what that means.

EH: Do you ever compare your values to the ones on the screen?
ELISE: Yeah, well the thing that does crack me up is that Belle is so good-natured and she is so mature and then she will just wear the most skanky outfits and if this character and if the writers were writing true to the character she would never be seen in some of the outfits you see her in, but it is all because they want to show you a little skin. Oh, especially when they were on the island, oh my gosh, in bikini after bikini and oh, my gosh, I was just like holy cow and I mean she had a darling little body but they were showing tons of her skin. I kind of felt bad at one point I thought if I were that girl’s mother I would be kind of worried.

EH: What soap opera do you watch?

History of watching....

EH: When do you first remember watching it? Did you watch it with anyone?
ELISE: I actually watched what is the one on CBS with... Young and the Restless I started watching that during high school during the summers and then like each summer when I could actually start watching it again but then I probably maybe started keeping tabs on it maybe 3 or 4 years. I probably watched it really thoroughly probably 2 summers in a row and then every once in a while if I saw it on TV I would watch it or catch up on it, but now I really have no interest in it at all. And Days of Our Lives started when Abby was born I started watching that because I had NBC on in the morning and I just kept the TV on to keep the noise going and Days of our Lives and Passions was on and I didn’t really watch Days of Our Lives cause Passions was on because I thought it was the hokiest thing I had ever seen and I would laugh every time I would see it and um, it was Teresa was trying to win Ethan over it was the pretense of a little love triangle going on with them and then I stopped watching Passions after she was pregnant with Julian’s baby or whatever and they are just so funny and so during that time I started watching Days of our Lives and I found it a little more interesting and so the actors were better actors maybe they had better writers with better acting or I don’t know what. And even at that it is pretty sub par anyway.

EH: Both show wear so much make-up. Like poor Teresa she was made up like Chloe all the time.
ELISE: They must have the same make-up person. You know they are both very beautiful women and it cracks me up that they think they have to put cake that much on them.

EH: How much time do you spend watching it then and now?
ELISE: Then, I used to watch it everyday. Since I have been on the move for the past 6 months I don’t know.

EH: Do you think when your life settles back down again....
ELISE: If Abby goes to like a daycare probably, not daycare a preschool I guess I should say. That is what we are trying to get her into. Yeah, if she is in preschool if I am not doing anything, if I am not working I probably will watch it more.

EH: Oh, are you planning on going back to work?
ELISE: If Abby goes into preschool it cost about a $1000 a month. That is the going rate here. In fact when I thought that was expensive I was telling someone that and they were
like really only a $1000. And I think she needs to be in preschool it will teach her more structure then I give her, I am not a very good mom I just let her do whatever she wants I think it would help her to learn to get along with other kids and have structure and it will be good for her I think she will have a lot of fun and she won’t be so bored but if I do then I will have to go back to work to pay for that I would probably work full time or part time and I just want to find something not high stress and easy paycheck I just want to pay for preschool is all.

EH: What caught your eye about this particular soap?

EH: Who is your favorite character and why?

ELISE: Um, it is interesting, I never watched it when Jennifer and Jack were on it before and since they were brought back they are fun to watch I really like Jack and Jennifer. I don’t know. I used to like to watch you know Chloe Philip and I think it will be interesting if Chloe and Brady get together and Belle and Shaun and that sort of thing. Belle and Shaun don't interest me much because they are two little perfect people and then Jan comes in then Shaun wants to protect her I just think that is funny that they would write that in because what guy would ever do that. I saw on a commercial what happened and also I caught up on months with just a few episodes.

EH: So what are the storylines hat you like then?

ELISE: Probably more the romance development. It is more interesting to me.

EH: The couples that have a possibility of getting together this summer are more interesting?

ELISE: Yeah, when I say romance I mean Jennifer and Jack and you know they ought to be together but at the same time they won’t because well Brandon is pretty hot and he likes Jennifer so maybe and he has been dating her and maybe they will get together. I don’t know. It is kind of funny how they play out all the angles on the romances.

EH: How would you describe your first impression of him/her?

EH: If they weren’t on the show the day you watched it, did you feel as though it had been a waste?

ELISE: Oh, yeah, like today actually when I turned on, I was hoping to see, because I had seen that commercial about Jan and Belle and losing the baby and I was hoping they would do that today but it had nothing to do about it so. I watch maybe 20 minutes of it and then they just followed up on the baby switching thing and then Jack moved out cause Jennifer made him move out. Nothing interesting.

EH: How have the teasers for the next day affected if you watch or not? But the commercials affect you?

ELISE: Yeah, because they will say, this week on days of our lives and you will see a commercial shows them something about this is going on and saying you will never believe what happens next or something like that or you will see what happens and it is funny. So they do teasers but not for the next day and so you have some time that week.

EH: So that makes you want to watch, if it is something you are interested in?

ELISE: Yeah, sometimes, it depends on what it is.

EH: What are some similarities and difference you see between yourself and that character?

EH: How much other television do you watch on average?

ELISE: How many minutes of television? Daily I watch it is hard to say because I am always in and out of projects while the TV is on I just keep it on to have it on.
EH: Okay, actual active viewing where you are sitting and watching, not just the company.

ELISE: Probably depending on the day, probably anywhere from 2 to 4 hours.

EH: How do you feel about your current social situation? Is it where you want it to be?

ELISE: I have been so busy I haven’t even thought about it. I have met a lot of really nice people I have gone out with a few people I have met here um, the ward is really friendly and really nice um, I have met other people outside the ward too. I met one Lady over at the Disney I had Abby there and she had a two year old also and Abby and her will play together and so you’re like yeah, let’s get together and I have gone out with her a couple of time with play dates for the girls and that was fun. Yeah, just people like that, there is another couple of people, there aren’t many people in this building that have kids and so it is funny whenever anybody sees Abby they are like you got kids great like there is one woman that has a five and one year old and have play dates and so....

EH: What about when you first started to watch it, what was your social situation like? Were you ever lonely?

EH: Do you like to sit and think about your favorite character/storyline and what could happen next? Do you ever think about the soap opera when you are not watching the show?

ELISE: Huh, um, maybe when I checked on the internet or if I am looking at the grocery store, but not really, I don’t stew over it.

EH: Have you ever felt guilty about the time, content, whatever about watching your soap? What did you do? How did/do you deal with it?

ELISE: No. I don’t.

EH: Do you ever talk to your husband about watching it? Does he care?

ELISE: Oh, yeah, totally. Um, my husband will joke um, like oh he has been home on a Friday and my soap is on we will be watching it and he is like are they going to do it joking around. He will always just joke around with me and it cracks me up. Sometimes he will even ask did you watch your soap today.

EH: So he is not even beyond not caring to supportive of it.

ELISE: Right. He knows it is my time. He is like whatever works.

EH: Does anyone else in your family watch the soaps? What about close friends?

ELISE: Um, no, not that I know of I don’t even know of, no one in my family I think I am the only one. Something that I did find out that my sister in Law I found out by my niece came to visit and I was watching it and my niece was like oh my mom makes me go in the other room when her shows are on and my niece is 13 and I was thinking Jen watches soaps I had no idea so it was kind of funny she would be the Last person I would think could ever watch soap. I thought that was pretty funny. That right there makes her kids feel like she is doing something bad that they are not allowed to see it.

EH: Do you feel that either the soap or any characters are reality-based? How much and what?

ELISE: Um, no I don’t really think it is. No, I don’t think it is very realistic at all.

EH: Have you ever thought about a character and used their actions to help you in an unfamiliar situation?

EH: Do you ever feel frustration at the writers of the show? When and why?
ELISE: I just feel like they are nuts, but I guess they got some new writer and that is the thing and they are the ones that are pushing a lot of hot romance they are pushing the Chloe triangle thing and the young romances.
EH: Oh and also that is for summer.
ELISE: Exactly they are getting that ready. I found that out in one of the soap opera magazines at the counter it had a picture of Chloe and Belle with Shaun and Phillip it was like daytimes hottest couples. I thought that was kind of funny. In it they were saying the writers are going to push the issue of where they are going to college and um, that sort of thing and they also talked about I guess there are fan clubs some people like Chloe and Phillip and they call them Phloes and some like Chloe to get together with Brady and they call them Broes I don’t know it was something weird and so it was so weird and they actually write in and they sign it like those names for who they are rooting for to get together. I thought who has time to do this. Who would even send this.
These are questions that all must be answered:
EH: How do you feel when your favorite character makes a mistake?
ELISE: I just am like oh brother, that is about all I thought. There is nothing I can really do the writers are going to write what they want to do. It just cracks me up, but I just think okay, go for it.
EH: Do you feel like a part of the town of your soap?
ELISE: No.
EH: Do you ever compare your actions, beliefs and relationships to those of the character?
ELISE: No.
EH: If you were transported to (city) would you feel as though you were with friends?
ELISE: [Laughs] I would feel totally out of place
EH: Are the characters real to life in some instances? What have those been?
EH: Would you like to have your favorite character over for dinner?
EH: Do you miss them if you haven’t watched for a while?
EH: If the character (or actor/ess) switched shows would you follow them to another show?
EH: Have you ever talked to the screen, perhaps giving advice to your favorite character?
EH: Would you like to meet the actor/actress in person? What about the character, if he/she were real? If the actor didn’t act like the character would you be disappointed?
ELISE: No, I actually have no interest.
EH: Have you read articles (soap opera digest, weeklies or others) when they have featured either your soap or your favorite character?
ELISE: Yeah.
EH: Do you feel as though the character/actor is attractive? (physically or personality?)
ELISE: Yeah, I don’t know at first I didn’t think Brady was that good looking and now I think he is better looking.
EH: Cause of his personality.
ELISE: NO, I think it is because they gave him a new haircut. He used to have this long kind of weird hair it was this haircut I really liked and then once they gave him a new haircut and I thought hey that looks really good. I think um the girl that plays Belle I think that she is really pretty girl, but they are trying to push a sexual image for her and I don’t think it works because she has too much of a good girl in her she looks like the nice
girl next door and they are trying to push this sexual image about her and I don’t think that is working. Brandon I used to think was cute, but sometimes when he smiles or does weird things with his mouth I think oh you look so goofy. I don’t know it all depends.

EH: If they are not on the show the day you watch it, how do you feel?
ELISE: Sometimes if I know that something is not on that I am interested in then I won’t watch it then I won’t pay as much attention to it. I will do Laundry or whatever I have to do.

Overall questions about the person:
EH: Are you content in your life? Happy?
ELISE: Yeah, I feel pretty happy.
EH: Are things going the way that you want them to?
ELISE: Yeah, um, sure, I mean we are always on a journey, I feel pretty cocky about the way things are going.
EH: If you had a wish about your life what would it be?
ELISE: I wish I was better at time management. That is what I wish I were better at. I wish I was really good at time management.
EH: What do you want to do Later on in life?
ELISE: I always thought I would like to try to do something in design I don’t know if I ever talked to you about it was designing temple dresses. Yeah I always, ever since my mission I have always wanted to do that, that is part of the reason I wanted to do a design degree, so I could get some training and learn how to do it so I could get into that industry. I would like to design a decent line of temple clothing. It would probably very marketable. Because especially when you think about how these young, the Mormon population the women get married quite young and if you are going to get a temple dress and you see the choices that are available to you and it has just been recently that you have had anything decent available, but I want to go further than that, I don’t want it to just be decent, I want it to be like I want to buy that dress because it is so cute not just this will do this is pretty good. I want it to be like Ralph Lauren of dresses. I want it to be high end and really well made and something you hold onto for an long time because it is just made really well.
EH: Are your relationships with your husband and children satisfactory?
ELISE: Oh, yeah.
EH: If you could change anything about your life what would it be?
EH: When you were younger, is this how you thought your life would be?
ELISE: I think I was clueless at that age. I really don’t know. Yeah, I guess to a point, I mean I would really like to do the design thing but I also realize how much time, how time consuming it is and I mean I am not the kind of person, like I said I am horrible at time management, and I am afraid if I were to do something like that right not I would be a basket case even doing the fashion show at BYU that gave me a good dose of reality about how intense getting into the design industry is. You have to be on your feet 24/7 and you can’t stop to rest. It was insane that semester the whole year actually. That was a good experience for me just to realize how much time it would take to do something like that. That is why I am picturing it a little bit more in the future when I, when Mike is a little more stable with his job and I can maybe afford a nanny. [Laughs]
Appendix D

Transcripts from Rachel
EH: So how long have you been watching this?
RACHEL: Olivia how old.....13, 13 years, and almost every day. The last year I have watched it sporadically but regularly, so it is not any everyday thing.
EH: Okay, I just want to know what you think about each of the characters like if they are new or if it is a dumb storyline or anything like that.
RACHEL: That doctor right there is Jake Martin, he used to be Joey Martin until he came back as a different person many years later. I am not sure what I think of him. Of course he is good looking, but his character is just kind of weak, he is going through a lot of weird things. One of things about Greenlee, no sound, [to kid] she is a rich girl, unplug it sweetie right now [to kid] go downstairs and play. Her character is evolving, and some characters after they decide they like the actor and their contracts work well, they will turn them into a good person after they are a demon. She is evolving and realizing she can’t be such a selfish girl.
EH: Then they will need to introduce another one like her.
RACHEL: Yeah, and she just got, she was engaged with this boy, [talking to son] and they were totally in love with each other and everybody kept telling them they weren’t going to get married, but I missed the episode, about two weeks ago when they broke up, it was because some girl from his past came and it is this guy. This guy’s wife just got shot and killed. And I am really displeased with that one. Because they were just a cute little love couple. You know and that is what brings enjoyment to me to see how sweet they have these characters to each other. That is what I really like about watching the soap opera is when they have this long-term couple, and you want to see them make it. But they just killed her off and I am really upset, oh but I am not really upset, I am not losing sleep over it or anything. But it is like do I really want to keep watching it? If that guy hadn’t come in I probably would’ve stopped watching. But the guy who played Nicholas Pierce on Dallas, his name is Jack Scalia, and he’s been my favorite actor forever. I never watched any soap operas before that. It just happened to be on at a time when I was home and I watched it. This is guy is a recast of Dmitri Merrick, the actor got caught with some cocaine or something and got put in jail.
EH: Do you like him?
RACHEL: No, I don’t like recasts. Because the character is the actor too. Some recasts have been a big-time failure and....He is actually is a big-time soap opera star too. He was brought over from another show or he got killed off his show and played Dmitri.
EH: Do you like her?
RACHEL: Ryan is the new guy. She is new character a cross-over from General Hospital I don’t really know any history about her, you know I haven’t really followed that storyline cause it just makes me sick. That she is the secret twin. This is the new character, well, she is the new cast of an old character that they brought back on the show. You know, someone’s sister. This guy is a new character, some drug dealer and he is trying to swindle this girl or get her to take drugs or something. You know who she is don’t you?
EH: Yeah, Erica Cane. Who is she married to now?
RACHEL: She is not married, and this guy that I like that came on the show is going to be her love interest. That is Mateo.
EH: Now is Haley off the show now that she..
RACHEL: No she is on the show still, she is a very busy girl. Ms. Kelly Ripa.
EH: Do you like her?
RACHEL: Yeah she has been on the show for a lot of years. I would venture to say 10 years.
EH: I remember when she first came on and had the black hair thing.
RACHEL: The Elvira look...One of my very favorite love stories of all time is Natalie and Trevor. But only the first Natalie, or maybe the second Natalie, but it was the Kate Collins Natalie. And I guess she just came on last week and was doing some Heaven thing trying to get Gillian to realize she is dead. A bunch of old actors that they killed were there.
EH: Is this about Bianca?
RACHEL: Must be cause she is missing. They are going to show us right now where she is. I started watching this show because people started telling me that you look like Erica Cane and when I was in high school people said you act like Erica Cane. Always new girlS that didn’t like me. [laughs] I didn’t know who Erica Cane was so I watched it a few times and then I started watching it many years later when I...I used to tape it everyday when I was at work and I would come home and watch it.
EH: So what is going on with Bianca? I know she is a lesbian.
RACHEL: Oh, okay alright. Well she just got back, I don’t think she has a girlfriend thank goodness.
EH: Did that effect you at all when they had, cause they had one gay guy on it before, Ryan or Phillip or something like that.
RACHEL: Yeah, what was his name. He was such a good-looking guy, what a shame they made his character like that. You know one thing that I did notice that it does make me more accepting of...I don’t accept it, but some of the issues they talk about, like that issue, cause you see the human side of it and not that they are real people, and not some creep, that they are real people. They breath and they are like people think of Mormons you know they are actual people like we are. We don’t have horns but just do stuff that I don’t agree with. So that kind of softens me to not judge you know cause I could see the human through it. But we went to Lagoon on the 4th of July, and I was feeling sick from the ride and I told my husband and I feel like I need to puke and the guy that was standing there with the lesbian couple in front of us he heard me and he translated what I was saying to think that I was going to hurl about these girls and they were holding hands and stuff and then they kissed, and they had the black pants with the wide belts and the weird hair and nose ring and whatever rings they had and so he said something to them and all of a sudden they started hugging and kissing and...
EH: Oh, really playing it up?
RACHEL: Yeah they were playing it up, and that is something my husband finds offensive too, is that gay people throw it in your face. I mean I am sure that not all gay people do I am sure. That is like saying all Mormons don’t drink you know or something like that. Which hopefully they don’t but there are a lot that do. So had I just witnessed this and we say a lot of gay guys walking around too, even in Utah. If you want to see
the variety of weirdness, go to Lagoon and find it. So I didn’t judge as harshly as I might’ve, I was just like oh no gosh oh no, you’re sick. I know that, I don’t watch all the soap operas, I do watch Dallas, and stuff that they open my eyes to the view of what the world could be like. I know it is just a fairy tale, but the issues and things you think about it and it changes how you feel. She is trying to hook up with him now.

EH: Why did they break it off?

RACHEL: I don’t think they ever were together. They are sharing an apartment but they, she was engaged to someone else...and then when she broke up with the other guy, there was such sadness I think it kind of confused her so they started a relationship after that. Danny she has a tape recorder [son is yelling in background, she had turned off the computer because he wouldn’t turn off the sound] going here. She won’t be able to hear what is going on when she listens back. Ryan was there. That is the bad part of me. I am married but you know that my eyes aren’t blind.

EH: I can understand that.

[kids talking, crying]

RACHEL: He just married this girl that was dying from a failed heart, all of a sudden she was sick one day cause she took drugs so that gave her some virus and she was going to die all this stuff within a couple of weeks, so they kill off his new wife so she can get the transplant and he was marrying just to be nice cause she was going to die. And then she didn’t die.

EH: Now are they like together?

RACHEL: I am not sure cause I didn’t watch it last week. But it sounds like it from what he is saying. He is the guy that was going to marry Greenlee. And he came in as a total jerk too.

[kid talking]

RACHEL: Matteo’s sister, did I tell you that already? This girl is supposed to be in high school. Mommy please can I go to Pine Valley High? She was having this big old crying. And I have read stuff on the All my Children boards on the internet and they just make fun of it. If they brought her on as a college student it would be different, but... there he is! He’s aged, but charisma, you can’t erase charisma. What did her car break down. This is Erica Cane, did you notice that. I saw like a two minute episode between those two when he first appeared on the show a week ago from last Friday and it was instantly like oh yeah. Cause it was like his charisma came across. He is like a cross between the original Dmitri and Jackson.

EH: So he is a drug dealer?

RACHEL: I guess, yeah. A user and a dealer. He kinda brought in JR, Dixie and Adam’s son, got him on drugs and stuff. And then there is a whole other story with that. I think his name is Sweeney. I don’t know the story of her character they have kept it really weird on this show. That girl that is the twin story that I didn’t like supposedly that is his sister, his long lost brother of an affair of whatever I don’t even know what it was, so he was on this show but he is like a mystery kid. He rarely ever talks. Interesting.

EH: So what do you usually do during the commercials? Flip around.

RACHEL: I usually mute it and I rarely ever sit and watch this show, I pick up or vacuum or if my husband is home I barely get to watch it. Sometimes I will be doing checkbook.

EH: Does he not like the show?
RACHEL: No, well he will sit and watch it and he will be interested in what is going on, and he will say what happened with this but he gives me a bad time. He gives me a bad time because you know we are not supposed to watch daytime soap operas. But I do better things during it, but now this is nice because I can sit and watch it. I am actually sit and watch without doing something at the same time except for talking about it. I don’t normally talk about it with many people cause not many people watch it you know. If you admit you watch it…..You know when Marsha called me and she says EmmaLee is doing this thing and she is wondering if you know any LDS women who watch soap operas? And I said yes, I was like how could she not know, she has to know that I watch this and maybe that is why she called me I don’t know. She asked like she didn’t know. But I have done it off and on so….I mean I have done it mostly on but like I said probably in the last year it has been less.

EH: Is the storyline less interesting to you and that is part of why, or is it total busyness or a combo of both things.

RACHEL: You know it is probably both. You know I taped it last week, but I never tape it anymore I just miss it. But now I am watching it because I want to see Jack Scalia, like I said I am sad cause he has aged because I thought he was so beautiful before, and he still is pretty cute guy, but I think you can’t erase charisma, but like I said I think charisma makes him even better looking….so it is like whooo.

[kids talking]

RACHEL: Lot of times I don’t get to watch it cause I have to pick up my daughter at 12:30 from gymnastics. Yeah, in the summer my schedule is pretty messed up. But in fall if Jack Scalia is still on it then I probably watch it when I get back from picking my son up from preschool or something. It all depends on what is going on it is pretty, If I really want to see it then I will tape it. A lot of times I have taped them and haven’t watched them.

EH: Is it taping mostly on Mondays and Fridays?

RACHEL: No it depends what is going on in the storyline.

EH: Well, just because they have the most exciting things happen on Monday and Friday.

RACHEL: Yeah, supposedly, but there have been a few Wednesdays, when I video tape it I fast forward course through commercials and I will fast forward through the characters that I am not interested in. Like this who cares? If it was the original Dmitri….and the original character that she used to play, now she plays her sister who used to be on General Hospital. I think the whole, her whole storyline I just didn’t really like. So I am disinterested in so I just don’t pay attention. So I will make phone calls or whatever. I will talk you know while the show is on and keep a second ear out for when an interesting part comes on. So but there was a point in time when it was don’t you dare talk to me when the show is on. Don’t you dare call, I will let the phone ring and the answering machine get it. It was like noooo.

EH: It was your time.

RACHEL: Yeah, and they were all good storylines. But that was a couple of children, four children ago. I had two then and then my third and I went to college and my babysitter would tape it for me when I went back to college and I would come watch it at night. And my husband would tape Star Trek.

[talking to kids]
EH: Oh so is one of them evil, of the twins?
RACHEL: Um, no, neither one is evil, but there was a lot, their mother was evil and trying to kill both of them. Dumb storyline and this is when my husband would always make comments, turn this soap off. But at night let me tell you. If he could zoom he would, it is just like everything. [love scene] Of course if I hear a show that has a lot of swearing I am like turn that off and he is like that is better than the filth you watch during the day, and I am like I don’t watch the filth part and I rarely ever hear a swear word, yes you see some scenes and sometimes you see them and sometimes you don’t look. I mean it doesn’t do much for me to watch some kind of love scene. But the romance does, it fills a void [laughs].
[talks to kids]
EH: What do you think of there clothes?
RACHEL: Some of them I like. In honesty when I am feeling fit and trim sometimes I wish I could wear stuff like that but they would look really ugly with garments. [laughs] But you know it is not like a big deal to me. You know some of the stuff I am just like wow. But this is for a little more mature audience that Britney Spears and Christina Agulera those are too far out.
[talks to kids]
EH: Does he love the woman he is married to? The woman who got the implant? Is he in love with Laura?
RACHEL: Laura is the one who got the implant. Gillian is the one that died. Um, there might be some twists to the Gillian story, depending if Gillian renews her contract or not. She got shot. They were trying to shoot Anna, the twin thing, somebody from her mother’s evil thing was trying to shot her and supposedly they mistook Gillian for her and shot her in the head. I didn’t see that whole week and I was dying that happened that week I wasn’t able to see it.
[talking to kids]
RACHEL: What did he say?
EH: I love Maui, I think.
RACHEL: I just don’t, I cling to everything. I could cling to him. Um back when they had Erica Kane’s mother die on the show the actress really died, she was in a storyline so they all of a sudden had to have her die in the show, she went away all of a sudden and then she died and that actually was pretty moving.
EH: Was it?
RACHEL: Yeah, because Erica she was always so confident and arrogant and everything, but she was that way with her mother, but her mother was one person that she could not be that way with. That she would listen to. She would never ever listen to anyone else. So that was pretty touching cause Erica took it pretty hard and there were some pretty neat stuff. There is some stuff that is pretty good and I eman most of it, being creative. For me, it was um, the reason I would be interested in watching, right now it is just because I am clinging to that one storyline, um if some more come up that would be great. When Tad got killed when he fell off the bridge and died, and came back and he was Ted Orsini.
EH: Yeah, and what’s the name of the wife he has like married 4 times?
RACHEL: Dixie. Yeah, it took them a long time. I remember I started watching it just before and they were getting remarried and he was on his way and Billy Clyde or
something. And blew him up. And Billy Clyde died and Tad supposedly died and we all saw that he got up and walked down by the river and then never knew what happened. And I said I am going to watch this show until he comes back.

EH: And how did he come back?

RACHEL: He came back as Tad Orsini.

EH: Oh that is right.

RACHEL: And then the real Tad showed up. It is the twin story, you know that is what happened with Adam and Stuart and this Anna and this whatever Alex.

EH: What is going on with Adam and Liza?

RACHEL: You know I haven’t, I have been on the move too much to really see. But what I read was that they are having a little bit of a tiff because he is handling the JR drug problem one way and she is thinking he is wrong. They are still married.

[talking to kids]

EH: Cause Tad had an affair with the one red-headed girl that works at the hospital, or who is Laura’s mom.

RACHEL: Oh, Brooke, that is right.

EH: He had an affair with Brooke and then had an affair with Liza, and he keeps getting married after every one.

RACHEL: The way they had her leave the show last time was totally lame.

EH: Liza?

RACHEL: No Dixie. First of all Dixie was looking really bad I was glad they got her off the show she had her hair in some pixie style her bangs were straight across and really short. His name is Chris Cam. He was Sue Ellen’s affair.

EH: Oh yeah? I bet JR made in pay.

RACHEL: I think he ended up getting killed in the end. There is a fire and there are kids stuck in it. Oh man I fell in love with him. And my husband was always like Jack Scalia huh. Even after all these years if someone asks me who is your favorite actor I am like Jack Scalia. I can watch a show with dumb storylines, I don’t even care about it anymore. Then I read one day that Jack Scalia was coming on. And I can’t stop watching now.

EH: Oh, Erica is so dumb sometimes.

RACHEL: It is too storyline driven. You know Edmund?

EH: Yeah I know Edmund. I remember when he was with Maria. I always thought he was so hot.

RACHEL: Maria was really pretty too.

EH: But she died a long time ago. Did she come back?

RACHEL: Did she die though? They never found her body in the plane crash.

EH: Oh well, then she will be back.

RACHEL: And she is pregnant in real life now. You know they are married. And she is pregnant now. A first child for them. I don’t know how far along she is now, they just barely announced it.

EH: and they had kid they adopted together on the show.

RACHEL: Yeah, actually, and then she had one that was supposedly Dmitri’s because of that moment at the airport that threw her off so bad. That was a good scene, I wish I had some of those on video tape. If I feel like having a tear jerker moment, that was incredible. One thing I don’t like, is they take these characters and they rewrite their
histories when the viewer knows what the history is that really ticks them off. I mean I read on the bulletin board too. What a minute they never talk about Emily Ann or fake pregnancy she had. Did you know that storyline? Are you Emily Ann too?

EH: No I am EmmaLee Elizabeth.

[talking to kids, telling to leave]

[a lot of silence, storyline she likes]

EH: So he married Laura not because he loves her or because she loves him, but because she was dying?

RACHEL: Well, the way I understood it, he is on the rebound from Greenlee and Laura always had a crush on him and was trying to get him, and he was on the rebound and she was supposedly dying and I think that it was more of a compassion thing. I think he wasn’t, I think that they are trying to put some clues in so that some other people might read it like he was trying to get it for money, and actually Brooke offered to pay him and he said no.

EH: How long did it take to marry her? Did they even have like a honeymoon?

RACHEL: Nope. She was in the hospital.

EH: That is crazy why would you want to marry? Just to know that person was yours or something?

RACHEL: I think he was doing so that she would have some happiness before she died. That is what I think it was. And he is confusing the compassion and the right type of compassion with the love that you have to marry somebody. That is what I think is going on.

EH: Did it hurt Greenlee’s feelings?

RACHEL: Yeah, she got jealous, she had moments. I didn’t see a whole lot of that time.

EH: Do you like Greenlee? I can’t remember.

RACHEL: I don’t know, she is a young version of Erica Cane. That is the best way to put it.

EH: Who is your favorite character?

RACHEL: Well, Jack Scalia is my favorite actor, I don’t know his character yet, but I am sure I will like it, just because it is him and because of what he will bring to the character. I always liked Jackson Montgomery and I always liked Dmitri. I probably liked Dmitri the most when it was the original actor. Just because that actor, he had the humor, he had the count look, and he had all that stuff the whole mix. When he rescued Natalia, as he would call her, out of the well. Talk about my favorite moments, that was like wow, it was so romantic, that it just takes you in and keeps you for a while. And so it was Dmitri, but it isn’t anymore. IT could be Ryan. It probably was Natalie for a while too. Never was Janet, never was the actress that played Janet.

EH: Whatever happened to Trevor?

RACHEL: He moved, cause he I think he killed some girl that was stalking Janet that she had met in prison and so he was on the run because they were trying to pin it on Janet and then they found out it was Pam so he was on the run. Then I think he got cleared.

EH: And what about his two kids?

RACHEL: No she had the kids still. And then Timmy moved away. And then she moved with Harold the dog and the little girl. That little girl was the greatest actress. She was so good. Did you ever see her?

EH: No.
RACHEL: I can’t even remember her name, but wow that girl was so good. She was probably like 6 years old and she was didn’t just say lines. They did a good cast on that one. I really hated the Scott rewrites too. When they had the character of Scott. When they have a normal looking guy wasn’t tall and handsome just okay looking normal guy and then they recast him with a tall good-looking guy and the storyline that went with that character just didn’t work.

EH: Is he going to beat her?

RACHEL: I think he is going to try and give her dmg. Looks like she left some kind of drugs back there.

EH: There have been a lot of different Biancas'? Sarah Michelle Gellar was a Bianca?

RACHEL: No she was Kendall. I didn’t like Kendall. I didn’t mind the character, I really didn’t like the actress. I just thought she was whiny kind of, and she won an Emmy for it and she was the one I didn’t like on the show. Lacy Talbert, girl that was on Party of Five, she was my favorite. The younger girl. That girl is a good actress and she actually looked liked her and stuff, this girl, I don’t know. I didn’t like her at all to begin with but I have gotten used to her. She was bad, way bad.

[long time quiet]

RACHEL: Okay, this is Alex, this is Anna.

EH: And is she hooked up with Edmund?

RACHEL: Sort of, Alex was hooked up with Edmund for a long time, when Dmitri was dead, then he came back.

[talking to cousins, planning out day for long time] storyline she doesn’t care about.

RACHEL: She just loved him so much.

EH: And he loved her so much?

RACHEL: Yeah. Greenlee just hates Laura. When you stoop to that level. I think she said something to that effect. Oh dear. I have watched this show for a lot of years, I mean if I actually sit and start thinking about storylines. Natalie and Trevor, probably one of my very favorite moments is when they got married, and they have this song playing when he is trying on different ties and stuff, “I am too sexy for my shirt.” And they used to just have light fun times and it was so fun to watch it then. And when you have Mateo and Jackson, and Jackson Walt Willy the actor he is an actual stand-up comedian. He goes around and still does stand-up. And Dmitri, I don’t know about whether he was a comedian but he was funny. That guy was a good comedic actor, when you had those three, I think it was Mateo getting married, and they were having a bachelor party, and so that was hilarious, and I just enjoyed that so much. Sometimes there is just funny stuff and I am sure I have just some funny things in it, but you know now the show just isn’t doing it for me. There is nothing on the show that has really grabbed me.

EH: If Erica ends up marrying Jack Scalia...

RACHEL: Which I think is the plan.

EH: Would that irritate you because obviously she is going to divorce him within like 6 months of marrying him.

RACHEL: No, I would just get to watch Jack Scalia, now this is the non-good stuff about watching these show, I get to watch Jack Scalia in all situations like romance parts. I am obviously missing something in my life right? And I will get to see him in some heated battles with and Erica is so off the handle that it is fun to watch someone act with her.
Yeah she will just fly off the handle and he is more like Jackson. And did I tell you what the first few moments were? Where he is vacuuming, he is supposedly a janitor, I know there is more to the storyline though, and went in her office while she is making phone calls and trying to do business and she is like sir excuse and he has his earplugs in and she keeps trying to get his attention you listen to me or I am going to have you removed and just going on and on like that and it was so funny and I knew it was going to be him because I have been reading the scoops to know when he was going to be on and so right before and right after scoops with soap operas I need to talk about that to you also. So finally she walks up to him and taps him on the back and says do you have any sense and that type of stuff.

[show comes on stops in the middle of sentence]
RACHEL: So he takes his earplugs out and he says can I help you? And she is like I can not hear turn that thing off and he says I have work to do and so they go back and forth. I am going to call security. And he turns to her and says for such a short little woman you have a mighty big mouth. [laughs]
RACHEL: Good thing they don’t talk about insurance deductibles there is so much unreality in here you know.
EH: Yeah.

[shhhs daughter]
RACHEL: Supposedly somewhere along the line, people think he owns a cosmetic company and he is trying to get the goods on what is going on. And is coming in the back door. I did like this couple together, cause they were like the same way and then they humbled themselves and got together. And you know that she is doing that on purpose cause you saw that look in her eye she is just like if I can just do this....
EH: Is that where she got shot, in the turret?
RACHEL: In the turret, is when she was married to Jake, that doctor, Gillian was and did you ever see it when he would meet with her and that would be their secret place to....that was their love nest. But oh my gosh, it was so romantic, and I got watch that. It’s not that there was any sexual stuff that you saw but it was the chemistry between those two actors and you were just live with it and I do feel it. And of course if you don’t have that kind of chemistry in your own marriage or life you know I wish I had. In reality most people may not have what they show on TV cause it is really overdone, but if it were so that would be great.
EH: Is Gillian related to the Dmitri’s?
RACHEL: Dimitri’s cousin that is how she came on the show. I like her character better, but I never really liked either character very much. But you know I end up liking everybody, but some sooner than others.

[kid talking]
RACHEL: You just want to go around and watch soap operas more, huh?
EH: Actually I was addicted to all of the soap operas, I would watch every single one of them, flipping between each.
RACHEL: I said I am never going to watch another show, I mean I have been hooked on one and I thought I don’t need to watch other TV. And I watched a couple episodes of Friends like reruns one time and I watched half a Seinfeld one time. And I just don’t have time for it in my life and this would be the one thing I would take my time for. And I used to just sit like this and watch it and cry and bawl and laugh and.....I do think Haley
was a fun story to watch. Some of the stuff was little overdone this last year. They had her going like wacko...
EH: Didn’t she kill her mom?
RACHEL: Yeah. And I think about it, whatever happened to Arlene. I liked the first Arlene the best. The second one was a better actress, if they had just brought her in in the first place but you know the first one and you develop something. And it is the whole story when she finds out Adam is her dad and it is the whole story. Actually I was in an acting class one time at college and we had to pick a scene from something and do it and I had taped the scene when Arlene tells her the story of how Harry is not her father and Adam is and there is all this crying and all this stuff going on and this girl and I did it and it was really good, it was pretty fun because I was all wrapped up in the show and everything like I said I taped it when I went to college. I think I got my babysitter hooked. My daughters they enjoy watching All My Children, I am sure Julia wishes she was watching All my Children right now but she doesn’t get home from gym just yet. She takes gymnastics. She does it 5 hours a day 4 days a week.
EH: Is that just for the summer?
RACHEL: She does 20 hours a week all the time but only in the mornings during the summer and then she does it when we take her out of school, I take her out about....
EH: Is she training for something? Like college?
RACHEL: Yeah that is something. She is going into 6th grade so that is a few years away, we will see what happens, that is her focus. Just completed level 7 there is 10 levels and then there is Elite level which is where the Olympics come from and they are actually saying they want her to do level 9 this year, this coming January. She has to acquire a few more skills. She won state this year, she won Summer Games and we are most likely heading back to state games of America next month. It is in SW Illinois and Louisville and St. Louis. And so they are a month a part but it is such a big deal, it is like the Olympics that they have it in two areas of the state. Gillian wasn’t my favorite character but she was a fun character.
EH: Where was her accent from?
RACHEL: Hungary. I would read on websites about her broken English and they would compare it to Ricky Ricardo. I just loved all the romance and love they shared.

VIEWING #2 WITH RACHEL: ALL MY CHILDREN

[talking to kids]
EH: How old is JR?
RACHEL: I don’t know, 14, something like that.
[long time no talking, very dramatic scene]
[no talking during Jack Scalia scene]
EH: Like that would ever happen.
RACHEL: He just has such flair. You can come sit over here.
[long time quiet]
EH: He does have great arm muscles. They look great in tight shirts.
RACHEL: How come more guys can’t look like him?
EH: I don’t know.
RACHEL: Wow.
[commercials]
RACHEL: The commercials don’t do anything for me during soap operas. I just turn them off.
EH: What do you think of these back from the dead storylines? Do you think that there is anyway they can resolve it?
RACHEL: Oh, you know if I hadn’t read scoops then I would be more one way or the other. The scoops say that is until her contract is resolved....
EH: Oh you don’t which way it will go.
[talking to kids]
RACHEL: We have two sets of cousins here today. We have a family reunion this weekend and they are from California their vehicle just broke down and they just got it back, just finished this morning, and the other one Julia wanted to stay with her for the week in Delta but Julia has gymnastics every day but today and so she couldn’t so she came her instead. But sometimes it just gets......you probably never have that in your family though.
EH: No, not with cousins. It is funny sometimes kids will just click and sometimes they just don’t.
RACHEL: One on one they do but when you have three usually someone will have a problem that’s bad.
EH: Usually there is one that is left out and the other two that hook up.
RACHEL: Yeah, but it can work it just depends. I am just kinda really tired. Last night was the first night, I can’t even remember how long that I went to bed before midnight I mean I didn’t even really go to be I just laid in my bed waiting for my husband to phone from Logan and I heard the older kids and my in law cousin and they went to a movie and they came here and put on Tarzan, and I fell asleep. I mean I finished talking to him but I fell asleep and I woke up at 12:50 or something like that and most of the cousins were all gone and I had my door open and my light on in my room and I was just laying on my bed. But I didn’t have to get up at 6 or 6:30 I just had to get up at 9:00 and that was rough and I worked out at the gym yesterday and I used heavier weights than normal and so I was just and I have been starving because I haven’t eaten. So I was starving and tired and I was like oh no. I am crabby if I don’t eat. I have been in the shower but I didn’t do my hair or my make-up. Ran.
[show on]
[kids talking in the background]
EH: Do you like this storyline?
RACHEL: Probably, I haven’t thought much about it. It makes Adam actually be a daddy so....Whatever his name is he is great actor. He does Stuart and he does Stuart playing Adam and Adam playing Stuart.
[long silence, dramatic scene]
[shushes kids]
EH: Are they divorced now?
RACHEL: I don’t know I think they are separated. It makes me mad when they tear apart Tad and Dixie, so I kinda stop watching when they do it. So then they had Gillian and Ryan you know that it was so fun to watch the romance and they kind of take all the...
fun couples and…..but now they have the new romance in another corner with Erica and…..

[long silence during Ryan and Gillian scene]
EH: Did they go to the beach or something?
RACHEL: I don’t know. I am not exactly sure what it is at all. There is too much to remember it all. Without my three little ones it is a lot quieter around here.
EH: How long are their cousins here for?
RACHEL: One girl is leaving Friday and another one I think they leave today cause their van got fixed. They are supposed to be home by today.
EH: Marsha got home from girls’ camp last night to go to Randy’s office party. And then she is going back tonight. I bet she is excited to take a midweek shower. Do they have showers up there?
RACHEL: I don’t know, I don’t think they do. I have never been there, I took Heidi up there last year so she could go to the State Track Meet. But they told us this year there is no coming or going. So can’t pick them up early and can’t drop them off late, so Heidi didn’t go. This time it interfered with cheerleading practice. She went to EFY and I figured that was just as good. 39 cent cheeseburger today.
EH: I know I saw that. I couldn’t believe it. I bet every McDonald’s is so packed. They have their Big Mac’s for 99 cents too.
RACHEL: Do you know how many calories there are in that thing?
EH: Is there a ton? They are really really good. I had no idea how good they were.
RACHEL: Big and tasty’s are worse offenders. That is the absolutely the worse thing you can get for calories.
EH: I have never had one of those. Are they good?
RACHEL: I haven’t had one. My kids really like it. I always buy things with chicken.
EH: I really like the fried chicken fillets with cheese I haven’t eaten at McDonalds a lot.
RACHEL: I worked there for a lot of years. But that was um….19 years ago and things have changed so much. It is all machines. I used to toaster the buns and everything was timed and I had to run the whole grill myself sometimes when I would get busy and cook you know 24 Big Mac and 16 cheeseburgers and quarter pounders with cheese some without cheese some with onions and some without salt and then you are cooking all this stuff in the back in the fryers. Oh it was challenging for just a 3.30$ I made an hour.
EH: Do you have more sympathy now with people who work fast food, you know are you more patient?
RACHEL: Oh yeah, I am patient.
EH: I worked at Taco Time and we had so many rude customers that were just complaining about the price.
[show on]
RACHEL: That would just cause more pain wouldn’t it?
EH: That is what I am thinking. [referring to the show]
[tells kids she is busy]
RACHEL: I am in a munchies mood.
EH: I can understand that.
RACHEL: That is when I get fat.
[commercial]
EH: I think it is so funny cause their kids are...they are not involved in their kids’ lives until their kids get raped or become a prostitute or I don’t know if they have those storylines on here but....

RACHEL: They do, but Tad and Dixie usually are though, yeah they do a lot of stuff they do family activities, not Family Home Evening or anything, but do family activities. You do see them more than anyone else on this show do stuff with their kids. But I mean all of a sudden Brooke has a daughter and I don’t know....

EH: I know that was puzzling me too. Was she just off traveling or something?

RACHEL: Yeah, she happens to look like Brooke now. The one before her didn’t look like Brooke. So it actually works better. But this girl often looks like Brook and she has the same first name as Brooke’s daughter that was killed by a drunk driver many years ago and her name was Laura. So it is just weird. But it is just a show.

EH: Yeah.

RACHEL: Chris Stamp has had as many cosmetic surgeries as Erica has. You know real people.

EH: Oh not looking his age? He is pretty cute. He has that construction worker attraction and stuff like that when he talks just like tough guy.

RACHEL: He just looks so adorable, I wish I had videos of him on Dallas. I think it is on cable or something. I knew him in his Nicholas Pierce era and I would have to watch him. More time taken from my life, but it is my time to take once or twice. I started watching Dallas on re-runs at noon and that is how I learned a lot of the storylines from the very beginning and it was still going on at night. So I would watch both.

EH: Did they stay true to the characters and stuff like that, or did they make stuff up too?

RACHEL: Well when Bobby Ewing died and then they talked him into coming back and everything was a dream. That is what I am hoping happens from this except Chris Stamp [Jack Scalia’s character]. Gillian has got to be stashed somewhere we are hoping.

EH: Without a heart.

[show on]

EH: He took her key.

RACHEL: Really I missed that one.

[cousins come in and she says she is being interviewed, brushing them off]

[discussing plans for later with cousins]

EH: I think that it will be a big thing when her heart gets better that then they will be able to you know, consummate their marriage.

[talking to cousins]

[lets the phone ring]
[commercial]

EH: How did Natalie die?

RACHEL: I have a hard time remembering.

[talking to cousin]

[talking on phone]

[show back on]

RACHEL: I promise I won’t eat anything else, I am full.

[long silence]

RACHEL: Let him have it. [characters fighting on the show] Yeah....you knew that was coming didn’t you?
EH: Yeah.
[commercial]
RACHEL: I feel better.
EH: Does this hour go by so quick for you?
RACHEL: It did today. I was free of all the distractions today. I talked a lot less this time than I did last time. It was more interesting this time.
[talking to kids]
EH: I am so excited I am going to stop and get Krispy Kreme donuts on the way home.
RACHEL: Oh are you?
EH: Yeah. Have you had some?
RACHEL: No I stay away from that kind of thing.
EH: they are so good.
RACHEL: I don’t want to gain any weight
EH: Well you should try at least one.
RACHEL: Well maybe someday I will. I could just go to sleep and sleep the whole day long.
EH: I can understand that.
RACHEL: Does your baby get up at nights?
EH: Yeah he is having a really hard time. We have been trying to let him cry to sleep but that has been too traumatic for both of us. Both baby and me.
[kids talking]
[show over]
RACHEL: I read on Scoops that Sweeny is found dead.
EH: And Tad is a suspect.
RACHEL: I didn’t read that far ahead but that what we saw here makes me think that will be the case.
EH: Do you like the trials that they have?
RACHEL: Um yeah, even though it is not realistic. You know that Adam always stands up in the middle of it and they go to jail.
EH: So that is very unrealistic.
RACHEL: I think so, but I don’t go into court that often.
EH: But it is not Law and Order, but you probably have never seen that show.
RACHEL: No, I haven’t I don’t watch those things cause I know that I will get hooked into something else and I don’t want to so I don’t.

VIEWING #3 WITH RACHEL: ALL MY CHILDREN JULY 27, 2001

EH: Have you been able to watch it recently?
RACHEL: I watched it yesterday, and I saw most of it like 95% then my old neighbor called and so I talked to her. I am going to get something to eat.
[storyline she isn’t interested in]
EH: Did that girl get raped by him?
RACHEL: I am not sure, I don’t know.
[talking to kids]
RACHEL: If Ryan is on I come walking back in the room. Did you notice that? [laughs]
EH: What is that?
RACHEL: I don’t know.
EH: Who is she?
RACHEL: Some new character. She just saw Gillian’s ghost and so she fainted.
[commercial]
EH: Has she discovered what her mission is?
RACHEL: I am not sure. I wish I knew. When my husband is here he doesn’t like me to watch it. He’s like what is going on in the world, to watch the news. So I don’t get to watch it much while he is here, but I’ll sneak. Like I will go downstairs to work on laundry and while that is going I will watch the show.
EH: Is he here today?
RACHEL: No, he was then he had to go run do some things. I wasn’t here when he left.
EH: Now what is it that he does? He installs lighting systems?
RACHEL: He does lights for commercials. We have our own lights.
EH: What commercials has he done?
RACHEL: He did a UTA commercial and is doing a big NU SKIN still shoot and that is quite profitable and that will be really good. And then he has done Karl Malone. UTA and IHC Blue Cross and Blue Shield and I am like grasping because there are so many it is hard to think of who they all are. There was this 94.9 one that was really controversial and it is a cook and he is stirring a pot of spaghetti sauce and his sweat that drips into the sauce and it was just something to get your attention and then at the end it says 94.9 and they actually made them pull it from the air. Another one they used our house and it was homemade bottling water bottling manufacturing place. And it was pretty disgusting.
EH: Oh yeah I remember that one.
RACHEL: That was another 94.9 one, that one didn’t get pulled and the other one was actually sold on lots of other markets so they have just gotten some residuals from that one because that was a promo type one because the company didn’t make money until that one actually sold. WE have gotten some checks for it. Actually that one won a whole bunch of commercial awards and it got pulled from the air in this market.
[show on]
EH: What happened?
RACHEL: Oh....
[phone ringing]
[long silence]
RACHEL: Look at his arms. They are so buff.
EH: Yeah.
EH: What is he going to do?
RACHEL: I don’t know. Yeah, he did make a stupid mistake, he did drugs [referring to onscreen]. After he got drugs he just started making the same mistakes over and over.
EH: Did he do it again?
RACHEL: Yeah.
[phone rings]
RACHEL: Quick phone call. Actually I had more stuff to talk to her about, but not when it starts. It was Tonya.
EH: Oh yeah, she was over at Marsha’s house. Well she was.
[talking to kids]
EH: So you look on the internet? I was actually on the internet and I was looking at the Scoops part and I looked up All my Children. So how often do you look at that.
RACHEL: You know it varies, sometimes I will look at it everyday, just to see if there is anything new, and then sometimes longer. Usually about twice a week.
EH: So what do they have on there?
RACHEL: There is different sites and I go to Pine Valley Bulletin a lot. It has a little editorial that the writer writes and then it has pictures and links to all the websites and it has spoilers and ins and outs but I call it news it just tells who is joining the crew or the cast. That is how I found out about Jack Scalia.
EH: Has he been on that you have seen at all?
RACHEL: No, if he has then I have missed most of it. I have seen a few of them. A cute, he is the perfect guy in this character, he could get away with anything he is so cute. I am in love with his personality. Anybody else watching All my Children that you are doing this with?
RACHEL: I don’t think I have ever watched that nor do I want to start.
EH: It is very interesting to see the differences between the soap operas cause some have such unbelievable plot lines and others have more socially relevant stuff like drug abuse and abusive spouses and all that kind of stuff. And Days of Our Lives gets into the supernatural stuff.
RACHEL: Kind of like All My Children has been doing lately. Sometimes they have some really good stuff and sometimes they are really irresponsible like when they did the heart transplant I think it was really irresponsible and I never thought about it till I read what other people wrote and I was like yeah. I remember thinking that it was too quick and you know there was like hardly any blood match types and you just don’t do it as quickly as they were doing it. So some of the stuff if pretty irresponsible.
[show on]
RACHEL: Did she say pathetic?
EH: Sympathetic. [laugh]
RACHEL: That is not what they are dressed like at the gym. Her she would have less on.
[kids talking]
EH: What does she have?
RACHEL: I don’t know.
EH: Do you know what he was asked to do?
RACHEL: Yeah, the judge that is over JR’s case or David Heyward’s case likes Adam. So now David is blackmailing him so now he is trying to make things right. She is like an old girlfriend of his. And she wants to renew.
EH: So that is the judge and she wants to sleep with him.
[kids talking]
[commercial on]
[talking to kids]
[son sneaking a root beer]
[talking to him]
RACHEL: I am not getting a refund check.
EH: Oh you aren’t?
RACHEL: No, I don’t know why.
EH: But you have kids.
RACHEL: I know lots of them.
[Answers phone]
RACHEL: I like that, I love it when credit card places call you and say did you authorize this?
EH: I know we have had that too, it is nice.
RACHEL: One time we did a 10,000$ transaction on our credit card and they did this call and it was really weird, and then we had to confirm that we did. One time I was heading out of town right after I did the transaction and so I called them and said that their would be a charge coming through that is this much money, and this is my pass code and this is everything and I am not going to be here and make sure you let that go through because if it doesn’t go through then I am in a heap of trouble I am in a tight spot. Have you seen O Brother Where Art Thou, that is where I am in a tight spot comes from.
EH: Oh yeah.
[Show on]
RACHEL: She will probably video tape him.
EH: Oh don’t do it. See I think he should wait until after the case is done and then be like okay.
RACHEL: Yeah.
[Kids talking]
RACHEL: She doesn’t have a heart. [referring to a storyline]
RACHEL: She just walked away. I wouldn’t end a conversation with a ghost like that.
EH: What is that?
RACHEL: I don’t know. I saw it but I don’t know what it is. Maybe a locket. Why is she looking around with her. They have bags under their eyes.
EH: Yeah they have all that black eyeliner.
RACHEL: She has total bags and is total puffy too. Bad make-up.
[Long silence]
RACHEL: Oh she can hear that far away.
EH: Oh no, she is going to do something to the cappuccino machine.
[Commercial]
[Talking to son]
RACHEL: My kids are so weird.
[Talking to other kids]
RACHEL: I will be so glad when they are gone.
EH: Oh all the root beers?
RACHEL: I won’t buy anymore.
[Talking to kids]
RACHEL: I am so tired today. I went to bed at like 3 o’clock last night. We were so busy working over there laying tile and we were just busy busy and then we came home and it was 2 o’clock and we came home and I was kinda wired and couldn’t go to sleep.
[Talking to kids]
RACHEL: So Dan Stout is your…
EH: He is my advisor. I heard he got back from New York.
RACHEL: Yeah, [ talking to kids who are yelling]
[show on]
[kids talking loudly in the background]
[phone ringing, answered and gets off quickly]
RACHEL: He has dyed hair I never noticed that before.
EH: What is that?
RACHEL: The cappuccino machine I think.
[kids screaming in the background]
[commercial]
RACHEL: That is what a soap opera life it like. Yeah we all have access to walk behind
something and turn up the temperature.
EH: So Ryan is your favorite character and who is your next favorite? Jack Scalia’s
character.
RACHEL: Probably, yeah it will probably be that. Um I always like Dmitri but they’re
gone now.
EH: Oh they are gone for good?
RACHEL: Yeah they like moved his character back to Hungary, wherever he is from.
My favorite, I would have to think about it. Cause I have favorites for different reasons
you know. Like Ryan cause he is a really good actor and so is Dmitri and I don’t know
female wise who it is. The storyline is just so lame sometimes.
[went to discipline children]
[telling to go to their rooms]
RACHEL: I didn’t get to go to the gym yet today. Probably because I stayed up so late.
EH: I can’t ever do that it would kill me cause I know that my son is going to be up so
early.
RACHEL: See my kids adapt to my schedule when it comes time to go to school early in
the morning and stuff they have to really adjust.
[talking to kids]
RACHEL: One thing is good when summer is over.....
[kids yelling, talking to them]
[show on]
[talking to kids, who are screaming]
[discipline them]
RACHEL: I feel a bit nauseous now.
EH: I Know, ick.
[talking to kids]
[show over, but staying tuned for next days events]
RACHEL: Oh the dumb writers. You know they have had a bunch of trouble having
writers on this one.
EH: Oh really do they keep quitting? Would you ever want to write for a soap opera? Do
you think you could write better?
RACHEL: No, I wouldn’t want to. I don’t know you would have to get really pretty
creative. Look at a lot of issues and try to derive from that. Could I write better? I don’t
know maybe probably more responsible. How are they going to have Gillian come back?
EH: They would have to change actresses anyway because she would have to come in
someone else’s body cause she can’t magically have her body back again.
RACHEL: Well I am hoping that the heart really wasn’t Gillian’s that she is hidden somewhere.
[talking to kids]
RACHEL: Yeah the head writer has been changed several times in the last few months. So they are lacking direction like Rosa and Marcus who cares? I don’t care. Give me Gillian and Ryan on the show. I wish Adam and Liza would stay together. I think when they got rid of Ruth, Ruth was Joe Martin’s wife, that was probably like the dumbest decision cause they would like a stable couple that was great. The original actress retired and they got a new one who used to be Ms. America a long time ago and then they wrote her off. And then when they have weddings and stuff then they have the original Actress come back, Mary Smith I think her name is, and you can’t really replace her cause she has been there 30 years and so that is kind of, I think they should have recast her and kept the character. Sometimes the recast obviously don’t work.
EH: Did they have her die or just leave?
RACHEL: I think she is on vacation off visiting her sister or something like that. She just never shows up or anything.
EH: Opal and her husband have been married a long time haven’t they?
RACHEL: Opal is divorced. Palmer is married to someone who is a con woman her name is Vanessa who is Leo’s mom and he got into that somehow. Actually it has been a year or two years like that.
EH: Is Opal with anyone?
RACHEL: I don’t think that anyone on the show would want to be with her.

Final Interview with LS

EH: Where do you live?
RACHEL: Provo, Utah.
EH: How many kids do you have?
RACHEL: Six.
EH: And their ages?
RACHEL: Just about 17 in a few weeks, 14, 12, 8, and 6 and 4.
EH: Wonderful, and what is your age?
RACHEL: 38.
EH: And where were you born?
RACHEL: Milwaukee, WI
EH: And is that where you grew up.
RACHEL: I did.
EH: And what is your husband’s occupation?
RACHEL: He is a gaffer. That is a lighting director. For movies and commercials.
EH: Your income bracket?
RACHEL: Depends what year it is because we are self-employed. Over 100,000.
EH: What is your education level?
RACHEL: Associates degree in business.
EH: What is your previous work experience before you became a stay at home mom?
RACHEL: I worked at Signetics. I was a material planner, I ordered things made sure they got there on time, things like that. And then I did a fun little part time job at Shopko one time. And I have done a little bit of casting for commercials and stuff. But that is not full-time.
EH: Okay, this is stuff just about the soap operas now. So how do you differentiate or how do you think about the actors/characters/writers? Like who do you think about when you watch?
RACHEL: I think about the characters, unless it is really stupid then I think how could they write something like that.
EH: Okay. Has there ever been a time in your life where you watched or relied on the soap opera more. When you were watching it everyday without fail.
RACHEL: Yeah, that would probably been about three years ago probably for about four or five years.
EH: Was there anything around that four or five year period that ....
RACHEL: That would make me want to watch it? Yeah, well, it makes it feel like you, you know when you are at home and not out in the business world it is almost like they are your friends and you are watching someone’s life and you root for them and but sometimes the writing is so stupid and unrealistic and sometimes in life situations I noticed that I would think about this is what they did on that which is totally unreal, they are not real people and it is not the values or lifestyle that I live but I would tend to...I would definitely say that it would influence your life.
EH: Yeah, okay. Do you feel like it is a coping or relaxation technique in your life?
RACHEL: Relaxation definitely. It was just like an hour to myself.
EH: Have you ever used other media to find out about the show or the characters or the actors?
RACHEL: Yeah, I go on the internet to a website, and they don’t really have anything else on TV on the shows that are on any channels that I can get with my cable.
EH: Have you ever subscribed to any of the magazines?
RACHEL: No, every once in a while I will look at the ones in the stores. I do do ABC scoops. I do do that.
EH: Are you interested in the characters or the actors? Which holds your interest more?
RACHEL: Well, if it is Cameron Mathison, I think that is how you say his name, it would be the actor because he is so good-looking.
EH: Oh, which one is that again?
RACHEL: I am blank, Ryan. Wow, he is beautiful. You know probably the characters. Most of the actors are just people, so cause they are your friends like what I said before. When I think of Marsha, I think of her like I know her, and I don’t know most of these guys from any other way.
EH: Do you ever like to find out about the actors lives?
RACHEL: Um hum.
EH: Do you think that changes the way you feel about them when you find out about their personal life? Changes the way you feel about the character?
RACHEL: There would be more times that I would get more interested in the character because of that.
[phone rings, she answers, it is daughter]
EH: Do you ever feel like you need to justify the time watching the soap opera?
RACHEL: No, I didn’t, no, because that was a time for me but um...
EH: Do you think that being a Mormon affects the way that you watch the soap opera at all?
RACHEL: Yeah I probably laugh at it more because it is so unrealistic and the values are so bad. Morals, there just aren’t any. Although I am a woman and when I watch the scenes between Ryan and Gillian I still, (heaves a sigh). I am not blind. I still like romance. I probably feel the way my spouse is is he not a romance person, doesn’t send me flowers just because or write me little loves notes or he is just a guy, you know totally non-romantic. And I am completely just the opposite I crave that, so probably watching it takes care of some of that too. It takes care of ohhhhh.
EH: It is vicarious basically.
RACHEL: Yeah.
EH: Which soap opera do you watch?
RACHEL: I have watched All my Children. And I am not going to start another.
EH: Good. I am just going to ask you some questions about the history of watching the show. When do you first remember watching it?
RACHEL: I watched All my Children just a little bit in high school. Because some people would tell me that you look like Susan Lucci. So that was the first time. But really watching it was probably about 13 years ago. Yeah, 13 and a half years ago.
EH: And did you watch it with anyone?
RACHEL: When I was in high school I watched it with a friend of mine that was a guy just couple times. But then I would watch by myself. Cause my husband would get mad if I watched it while he was in the room.
EH: How much time do you spend watching it compared to 13 years ago to now?
RACHEL: I always watched it then and I haven’t watched it in a while. I actually watched it today. Once in a while I will turn it on when my husband isn’t home. Just between the house and everything (they are building a new house).
EH: Too crazy? Okay, so what caught your eye about this particular soap opera? What made you decide to go back to it 13 years ago?
RACHEL: Cause I just saw it one day. And I thought oh that is interesting. I watched it again and the storylines and then it would be like someone would die and I would say I am not going to watch this show anymore until this person comes back. Or I am going to watch the show until they come back, just the opposite. I kind of started getting pretty disgusted and not as interested more when they kept getting rid of main characters and bringing on a bunch of new characters. Where it was like a friendship thing where you had the old actors that were there that you had watched for five years and then they just for no reason all of a sudden the actor is not there anymore. And they change the actor and change the character and then it would be like the producers.
EH: And then you get mad at the writers.
RACHEL: Well, it is the producers then I would be like ohhh.
[talking to son to go downstairs and watch a tape instead of in the front room]
EH: So who is your favorite characters and why? You can go back through the years starting at the very beginning any of them that you can remember that really made an impression on you that you liked.
RACHEL: Dimitri and Natalie and Trevor I liked all the old characters.
EH: And Cameron Mathison.
RACHEL: yeah, but as far as the character itself probably Dimitri and Natalie and Trevor.
EH: And you had said something about maybe Erica? And did you like Dimitri for his sense of humor?
RACHEL: Oh I loved how the actor that played the original Dimitri that he could turn it on and he was hilarious but they didn’t let Dimitri do that very often and so when they did it just endeared him even more and um, as far as I can’t think straight anymore. The guy we were just talking about Dimitri what I liked about him was his charm charisma and his warmth and how he was such a prince yet very normal and he endeared you and he was someone that you would want to be around probably because he had the sense of taking care of everything. Trevor you know I can’t even really remember why I liked Trevor except maybe the same type of thing. He had some funny stuff too. Especially I liked his he was a detective, I am really having a hard time figuring out why I liked Trevor. I think it was the whole feeling....
EH: Maybe it was he and Natalie together?
RACHEL: Um, yeah, but I liked him after Natalie wasn’t on the show anymore but I really liked he and Natalie together and every time I hear the song How am I supposed to live without you. Every single time I think of that because they played that song when Natalie died or when they broke up or one of the things it was. I just cried when I heard that song and um Natalie because she had the same type things that Dimitri did that she was classy but very real and very vulnerable and that’s all about her. She seemed like she would be a good friend. Cameron Mathison just because he is gorgeous, I mean how can you help. But that guy, that character what they have done to him just up and down and up and down and I get sick of watching it because of it. You don’t want to sit. I don’t want to see my friends go through that. And if you watch a show everyday they are like your friends. Like Ally McBeal now. I don’t like it when bad things happen all the time. So not that I sit around and watch shows all the time cause I don’t.
EH: So if your favorite character isn’t on the show the day you watch it how do you feel? Or are you interested in enough of the storylines that it doesn’t matter?
RACHEL: Usually I was and sometimes I would get mad if they did dumb stuff like I got real sick of the Janet story and it just drug on forever and ever like when she threw Natalie in the well and stuff like that. And of course you wanted to watch it then but you know I just just got sick of it because of Dimitri that is when he came on the show too. A lot of times I did change the channel.
EH: During specific parts or during the whole thing?
RACHEL: Um huh. During when those characters were on. A lot of times I taped it and fast forward through that part.
EH: Have the teasers for the next day affected whether you watch or not?
RACHEL: At that point in time sometimes I would watch it no matter what. But watched the last five minutes of it today cause my husband doesn’t want me to watch it. And then I watched for the teasers just to basically to see what is coming up and sometimes it has definitely affected it and sometimes I would have watched it no matter what the teasers showed.
EH: Do you see any similarities or differences between yourself and any of your fav characters?
RACHEL: No. [laughs] people used to tell me I acted like Erica Kane and now that I know what Erica is like I think that was a slam cause I was a flirt. I really don't think so because it is so far fetched. How many times does a women go back to the same guy. And how many guys, and some of the guys on the show treat the women really well and I don't know from my own experiences that if guys do compliment women as much as that or maybe....maybe I just got a bad seed or I don't know what it is but.....
EH: How much other TV do you watch on average?
RACHEL: I really don't watch much TV at all. I watch the news and then after 11 I will have the TV on I will be working on invoices or checking email and I'Il have the TV on and I have it on a lot less then when my husband is not here except when I sneak all my children on and if I am doing this kind of stuff then I will have it on home matters or Christopher Lowe kind of stuff. I really don't have the kind of time to sit and watch TV.
EH: Do you have it on while you are just doing stuff or do you turn it off if no one is watching it?
RACHEL: I turn it off if nobody is watching it. The habit of my husband is to have it on all the time, and I am I don't want background noise some people need that and I don't like it.
EH: How do you feel about your current social situation? Is it where you would like it to be?
RACHEL: Yeah, I think. Everything seems fine that way.
EH: No complaints there?
RACHEL: I don't remember how I answered it before but today is a different day.
EH: When you first started to watch it, 13 years ago, do you remember what your social situation was like?
RACHEL: I was working full-time, no it was just after I stopped working full-time, I had been working full time and then I had stopped and I was pregnant with my third child and just started going to school full time all at the same time.
EH: So what was it like to watch the show then?
RACHEL: Oh, it was a total release, it just kept my interest up outside from reality and so I would you know, and sometimes it would almost seem like it would become reality, because you are so focused on that and no one could talk during the show that was so long ago, so long ago.
EH: Do you ever like to think about like when you are doing your stuff think about your favorite storyline or your favorite characters and what is going to happen next on the show?
RACHEL: I did do that back then, I would think about it a lot and I would almost think of what it would be like if I was out here and Adam Chandler came walking up you know. And you would just like to punch him you know.
EH: But you don't do that anymore?
RACHEL: You know what? What I really think about the show is that it has made me lose interest because of how garbagy it is.
EH: Have you ever felt guilty about the time content or whatever about watching your soap opera?
LS. How do I answer that one today?
EH: Do you ever feel like you have to justify it?
RACHEL: Um, you know my answer today will be no. And the reason why was that was it that would be the one hour that I would watch TV and I would watch news because it was on always and... no. I figure I am allowed to have my time too just like anybody else in the world. Although now I do stuff if I watch it and before I would just sit there and watch it and I would nurse my babies so they would be quiet.

EH: Do you think if it got better that you would go back to that kind of watching?

RACHEL: I hope not. The reason is that I am so busy. I mean it is good that the storylines getting to where it doesn't interest me. And I think the final straw was when they killed Gillian and that was it and I was like boring. You take away the most, and that is probably a lot of the reasons why the guy and woman would fall in love and get married and it was so romantic and it is not the romantic of the sex part but it is how the actors were able to create the emotional bond and everything else and so at that point I would seek that and it replaced what my husband is not that way so it replaced and so I would have the attempt to replace that so I would feel that romance in my life. Dumb thing to have to feel, huh?

EH: Do you ever talk to your husband about watching it? I get from that he just thinks it's stupid.

RACHEL: Yeah, he thinks it is stupid but I think I mentioned last time too, that there would be sometimes he would be sitting there and he would put it on and he would be like what is this boloney you aren't supposed to be watching this stuff and then something and he would be like what happened. So he got a little involved every once in a while. But not very often.

EH: And you had said that nobody in your family watches soap operas that you know of?

RACHEL: I think she watches General Hospital. I was never around when she watched it. And the whole reason that I started to watch it was that people thought that I looked like Erica Kane.

EH: Do you think it would be more fun to watch the show if you had a close friend to talk about it with?

RACHEL: You know that was really fun. I think I would want to watch it alone but to talk about it afterwards cause then it would be like oh, can you believe that or else that was great. And I think I would go on the internet and I would go to some of the groups, posting messages where I would post a message and read everybody else's post and you could read what everybody else thought and felt about it. So I think that really kind of replaced it.

EH: Doing the messages was really fun?

LS: Yeah, I was get on there all the time and always read the scoops and then I decided it kind of ruined it for me when I would read the scoops and so I would know what was coming up and so it wasn't as fun. And so then I stopped doing that and you know I tried to get interested in the show, but they killed Gillian. It is not so much that I loved her, it was just I really loved the two of them together and it was just enough. I spend too much time. Like today I put it on for a few minutes and maybe tomorrow I will put it on if I
have the time and, but before I was here or that recorder was going and I never missed
nam then sometimes I would record it while I was watching in case I missed a sentence.
EH: Do you feel that any of the soaps or characters are reality based at all?
RACHEL: No.
EH: Have you thought about a character ever and used their actions to help you in an
unfamiliar situation?
RACHEL: Oh, yes, Janet. [laughs] I may have at one point in time, I may have thought
of things you know I should act more like Natalie would because she has class and I want
that. So I think I have taken some positive you know, but they are just what someone's
interpretation is and it is just a character and but when you are so into it it is hard to
remember it is just a character and not people.
EH: I thought I remembered you saying something like you being in a situation and you
would know how they would deal with it on the soap opera but that wasn't real life and
that is not realistic of how they would deal with it because you would have to deal with it
in a totally separate manner. Do you remember that?
RACHEL: Yeah, I do remember that and you did a good job saying it for me.
EH: Do you ever feel frustration at the writers of the show?
RACHEL: Yes, because they do dumb things. They ruin the show They take the show
that was great, and I think one of the worst things and I doubt it is the writers probably
the producers but they take some of the old stable characters of the show that have been
on there for 10 or 15 years and they just put them on the back burner and it would be
more interesting to keep pursuing that storyline. Over the years you have watched their
lives and you know it would be like me trying to keep tabs on Marsha after I moved away
and.... so I think that is one of the biggest frustrations that I have had that they do that.
Like they got rid of Dimitri you know, I know the reasons they got rid of Dimitri
nevertheless.... [he was using drugs]. They shouldn't have, that just destroyed the show.
And then the Dixie and Tad things and you know she is leaving again. So she is
supposedly secretly, I read on scoops because I haven't watched the show, pregnant and
doesn't want Tad to know, and you know what I am talking about.
EH: I watched it and thought wow and woman that has one kidney, has major heart
problems....
RACHEL: And Gillian had major heart problems because that was the storyline that tied
her into David and I think that one was and the kidney of course for Del to tie that
storyline in so And now what is Tad going to do? Are they going to find a new Dixie for
Tad, not the character but a new person? You know they are past thing because they can't
keep going back to the old Tad and Dixie thing, it was great you know when they did and
they were good together but..
EH: Now that they are back and forth so many times They have been married 4 or 5
times haven't they?
RACHEL: Yeah, I am sick of it.
EH: Because they each cheat on each other every other time...
RACHEL: And they get really mad and upset at each other. Dixie, she is a hypocrite and
I can't stand it. Well, if you are going to cheat on each other they just shouldn't be
together so... You know my mother's life reminds me of this storyline.
EH: Really? Is it your real mother or adoptive mother?
RACHEL: Yeah, actually both of them could. My mother and her husband were just cheating on each other like crazy back and forth and back and forth and I don't think either one of them cared and each knew about it. She is so different, I don't know.
EH: How do you feel when your favorite character makes a mistake?
RACHEL: It is just a story.
EH: Do you ever feel like you are part of the town?
RACHEL: I have probably 2 years ago, but it hasn't for a couple of years. I would feel like, a no it all because I would know all their secrets. And I don't want to, I don't want to know people's things that go on, I have enough in my own life to live.
EH: Do you ever compare your actions, beliefs, or relationships with those of the characters?
RACHEL: My relationships, we mentioned that already. Um, beliefs I don't know that anything could ever have a concept, they try to portray that is what goes on in the world and we have a gay storyline too and I think they are trying to make it acceptable, and I think outside of my community I think probably a lot of people try to make it so acceptable except the president, I think he tries to put the world or country back to where it should have been or stayed before Clinton. My political views there. Actions, it is just so far-fetched. And it is like you know Ryan all of a sudden he has this billion dollar company Dreams, or whatever it was called. And it is just not realistic, people just don't make a bunch of money and Greenlee all of a sudden she is like one of the top honchos at Enchantment and of course Enchantment is always so afloat and they are stealing companies from each other.
EH: And you would know that because you run your own company that you can't make a million dollars overnight necessarily.
RACHEL: Well, maybe they could but in reality and they are always some shady little deals behind some of these and maybe that is real, who knows, maybe that is what really happens and they are portraying honest life but it is not much of real life, I haven't seen that so....
EH: If you were transported to Pine Valley, would you feel as though you were friends?
RACHEL: It would seem like I knew them some of them I would tell off You know, you are.... I would feel like I know them but that doesn't mean they would know me. And, but I would know who to trust and who not to trust and I know who I would go be friends with and in reality I don't really like Brooke but she would probably be one of the only ones to be friends with.
EH: Only stable one?
RACHEL: Yeah, really that is way out there itself all the dumb storylines they have had with that. I like Pierce too. But um, yeah.
EH: Do you ever feel like the characters are real to life in some instances? Like their emotions or stuff like that?
RACHEL: You see glimpses of it. I just think it is so far-fetched, it is unrealistic. And maybe that is why it is good or why I enjoyed watching it is because it probably wouldn't be true that kind of a thing. And then we had Janet from another planet as they called her, it was so unreal.
EH: And how it ended up with her getting together with Trevor?
RACHEL: It is just so weird.
EH: Would you ever like to have your favorite character over for dinner? Not the actor.
RACHEL: Yeah, that would be fun. Although not until I am in my new house. Cause boy would they look down, say well, you don't know what it is like to have 6 kids. Not a one of them. And I don't know have 6 maids and 4 caretakers and a landscaper.

EH: Do you miss the characters if you haven't watched in a while?
RACHEL: The ones they haven't destroyed. I used to like Ruth and Joe because they were the very stable ones, and of course they had to destroy that too. Opal I don't know if I could be friends with her but, I don't like her I would just get her to change her clothes and put her hair down a little bit.

EH: If the character or actor switched shows would follow them to the new show?
RACHEL: You know I kind of wanted to watch crossovers because it would be interesting to see them in another setting, but I didn't... and see if Dixie, Katie Maclan is going to another soap and but if it were Dixie I would if I had nothing else to do but I made myself a promise that I am not going to do that, I am not going to get into another show at all like that, so I probably wouldn't for that reason.

EH: Have you ever talked to the screen?
RACHEL: Yeah.

EH: Would you like to meet the actor in person?
RACHEL: Yeah.

EH: Would you rather meet the actor or character?
RACHEL: I think it would be fun to meet the character. They would be eccentric unnormal people that would be entertaining.

EH: If you met the actor and he didn't act like the character would that be disappointing to you?
RACHEL: Probably not because of the industry that we are in and I have done some acting and I know how you can turn it on and turn it off and it is fun, it is fun to do that. It is fun to be sitting in a conversation and then talking as yourself, and I have done this at auditions, and I am talking like this and I just break into my lines and people can't tell the difference and that is really fun and they are like what and they pause there and they say their line and they are like okay. So for that aspect I probably wouldn't be. Although if Micheal Nadar were a total dork in person but he is awesome as Dimitri then I probably would be......

EH: Would that change your opinion of Dimitri at all?
RACHEL: I think it would have to taint your view. Cause you would see the same person. Yeah, like Adam Chandler and if I really saw David Canary and I talked him and he is so not Adam I would be so impressed with his acting abilities at that point in time like I am already but that is a good question.

EH: Have you read articles in magazines when they have featured your favorite characters and stuff?
RACHEL: Yeah. Look at it while I am in line.

EH: But you have never taken a subscription to any of them?
RACHEL: No. I have read on the internet but that is about it.

EH: What attracts you to the character more, the personality the looks or the storyline they are in? What sequence does it happen in? Like I really like this person I wish they were in a good storyline.
RACHEL: More that. Probably the person, the personality is the.... I would guess because they don't have too many good storylines anymore, in my opinion, they have all these triangles and the Greenlee thing now and you know I am just sick of it.

EH: Are you happy or content in your life right now in the majority of areas?
RACHEL: Yeah, majority I guess.
EH: Are things going the way that you want them to go? Are they heading in a good direction?
RACHEL: Could be. I don't know how to answer that question.
EH: What do you want to do later on in your life after your youngest is in school or even after you have kids go to college?
RACHEL: I have a couple different things I am thinking. I am thinking about going back to school and be an attorney that is kind of what I want to do I think, and if I don't do that then I will probably be just the opposite and just try to be a good grandma. It depends what happens in my life between now and then you know if I but I think it would be really fun to litigate. I want to be a judge and tell them to sit down and be quiet. I want to be like Ally McBeal and have John Cage as my business partner, have you ever watched that, oh, what a character. And what is the other guy? Richard Fish. He cracks me up, of course I have only watched one of this seasons shows, it was last week and just realized what it was and it was like but I don't watch I don't have time at that time of night.

EH: Are your relationships with your husband and children satisfactory?
RACHEL: No. you always strive for better ones, but I would say there is room for improvement in all areas.
EH: If you could change anything about your life, like if you had a wish about your life right now, do you know what it would be?
RACHEL: Did I answer this question last time?
EH: No, you said it was too personal.
RACHEL: Really, boy, you should have told me about that question and I would have been thinking about it.
EH: One type of a thing that would make all other areas better. You know what I mean, it would take the stress off of you or it would....
RACHEL: You know there is probably never a perfect match, um, but there could be a closer one and when I think about....[her son came up] and I would change that one key thing of who. But you don't know what, have you ever seen that film Frequency?
EH: You don't know what is going to happen.
RACHEL: Wow, it is just a split second decision of whether you administer the antibiotics or not and all so if even if things are like they are right now and as comfortable as some aspects are, I would go back and change that.

EH: The last question is, when you were younger is this how you thought your life would be?
RACHEL: Yeah, I don't remember really, I don't remember what I thought it would be like I am trying to decide when I was in Jr high, high school years if this is what I thought life would be like, but I wasn't a Mormon and things are really different if you are a Mormon or not if you live in Utah County or if you live in Milwaukee. And....
EH: You joined the church when you were 18 then right.
RACHEL: Yeah, I did, and even when I moved back here when I was single, no, probably not because I had the disillusion that everything is perfect you know when you
are married in the temple and if you have a large family and that everything would be as it is supposed to be but it is not. I am sure there are families that are like that but mine isn't. Yeah, we are all human but did I think that I would be having a house that looks like this right now, never. Yeah, well but not being able to keep it as clean as when we were first married and I just have to give up because of too many things. No probably not, I probably thought that I would be a much cooler mom, I am not a bad mom, I am not a horrible mom, but I probably, that is a hard question.
Appendix E

Transcripts from CARLY
1ST VIEWING WITH CARLY: GUIDING LIGHT

EH: So is this a storyline that you are interested in right here? This marriage thing?
CARLY: Well, yeah. Somebody is going to come break it up. I can’t talk very good now. [referring to braces]. Mara is supposed to come break it up.
EH: Who is this?
CARLY: I have forgotten what her name is. Yeah she is a new one since the last time. This guy thinks she is carrying his baby but she has had a miscarriage and so she didn’t tell him the truth. So he would still marry her.
EH: Would he?
CARLY: Well, no, he wouldn’t if he knew she wasn’t having a baby.
EH: Those days when it was crazy did you still watch the show?
CARLY: Well, I had the tv on while I was doing stuff around the house some of the time. But I haven’t seen it everyday all the time.
EH: Yeah.
CARLY: But it has kinda just drug on and on and on.
EH: So does it still have the stories that you don’t care about still going on?
CARLY: Yeah, they changed some of them and some of them they have resolved. Like REva going through the stupid picture and stuff like that. That was dumb. That is all over.
[talking to kid]
CARLY: Now maybe she will tell him that she is not pregnant. That is Mara Lewis.
EH: Does she love him?
CARLY: She did one time but now she doesn’t. Now she just cares for him a lot but they were going to get together until Mara found out that girl, whatever her name is I forgot.
EH: There is nobody at the ceremony?
CARLY: It was just family.
EH: Is he a gangster?
CARLY: Yeah he is one of the family members.
[talking to kids]
CARLY: That other guy got out of the mob.
EH: Oh, the one that thats her name was in love with?
CARLY: Yeah.
EH: She snuck into the FBI to steal evidence and stuff.
CARLY: Yeah. She isn’t in love with him, she just wants to tell him. I thought she was going to do something like that.
EH: So are you still kinda disgusted with the stories or are you getting more interested in them now?
CARLY: There are a few on here that are okay, like Blake and Ross. There is a girl that came and interfered with them and Ross slept with her but didn’t tell Blake and the girl ended up being psycho. And supposedly the girl is dead but you know she will come back cause there was never any body. The girl that was stalking Ross she was married before and her husband died and Harley went in and found that the girl had pictures of she thought it was Ross but it was her first husband but they looked just like each other so it is kinda a dumb line that way. Ross probably has a twin somewhere.
EH: How about the overthrow of the govt is that resolved.
CARLY: That went on forever. I don’t even know where that one went. I don’t know who is in charge now at all. They are both back here in this city here now. I don’t know who ended up. There was a baby they were adopting or something and the birth mother of the baby said if you don’t let the birth father be the president of the country and have this birthright then you can’t have the baby or something stupid like that. So I don’t know what is going on with it now. Just something dumb. Well, they are all dumb.

EH: But some are more interesting then others.

CARLY: Well, the only interesting one on this one would be more Ross and Blake and their story. They get together and then break up after Blake found out that Ross lied to her and didn’t tell her about the fling with that girl. There are interesting stories going on.

[talking to kids]

CARLY: Where is your little boy?

EH: He is at home with my husband right now. My husband took the day off of work so and I know I totally forgot. I was fixing him lunch and we had just gotten back from the park over in the other neighborhood, and all of a sudden I was like it is one o’clock.

CARLY: Oh, he looks hesitant.

EH: It is amazing how willing soap opera women are to marry men who aren’t so excited to marry them.

CARLY: Oh, now they have to get it annulled.

EH: Well, they haven’t signed the wedding certificate yet right?

CARLY: Does she have the heart to break it up?

EH: She found out that she had miscarried. What is that guy’s name again?

CARLY: let me think it is kind of a weird name. I can’t remember his name.

EH: Oh, he is the head of FBI guy.

CARLY: Yeah he is the one that is trying to bring down the Santos’s. I can’t remember his first name. And then Harley.

EH: How did they get….Oh that is right you said they were going to get together cause they hated each other.

CARLY: What is his name I can’t think. Ross and Her have three kids and you hardly ever see the kids.

EH: They have three kids!!

CARLY: What is so dumb with their storyline all the time is that Blake, they have a set of twins and one of the twins is Ross’s and the other one is the doctor Rick Bauers and then Ross has an affair later later with someone and yet they leave them for it and they aren’t married and they don’t forgive each other.

EH: Has her hair always been red?

CARLY: No, it was a lighter brown it is more red now. It was hard to get up this morning.

EH: Because of the whole stupid time change. It messes up the kids so much, it drives me crazy.

CARLY: Well, I woke these guys up at 8, they come at 6:30 and they go right to bed and I woke them up close to 8 which is a little bit later then I usually do but it was only 7 in there heads. I don’t know how long they are going to sleep today. They went to bed at 12 which felt like one.

EH: I don’t know why they do that anymore. I have schedule and then it gets messed up.

CARLY: It takes a week or so just to get them back on one.

[talking to kid]
CARLY: So that is why he had sex with someone else. Cause he wasn’t dissatisfied with her.
EH: Yeah.
CARLY: See that is what is so silly.
EH: Cause she has cheated on him so many times and the kid comes out from somebody else. I wonder why they never bring up stuff like that. You know you cheated on me three times and why can’t you forgive me this once.
CARLY: He looks so happy.
EH: Yeah. Oh it is Michele and that one guy right.
CARLY: Those two are brothers, or um cousins, Danny and that guy she just married, I can’t think of his name, Antonio
EH: Why won’t anyone listen?
CARLY: Oh now she is going to say she is going to fake it like she lost the baby now.
EH: Yeah, but she can’t do it now. There are things you can do to tell.
CARLY: He is kinda stupid, he didn’t know the first time. She told Antonio’s brother, the priest that she lost the baby, but he couldn’t tell his brother Tony cause he wasn’t allowed to say anything.
EH: Is that the one that married him?
CARLY: Yeah. Oh wait no I think they got a different one because he refused to marry them.
EH: Her headband thing that she is wearing with her veil is so pretty.
CARLY: I was more interested in the party one. What is that guys name? That Harley is with. There is an o with it.
EH: How long ago did they get together?
CARLY: Well, she was with Philip and they got divorced and then she got pregnant with Rick’s baby and then she and Rick were going to get married but they decided not to because they really weren’t in love and then she ended up with this guy and he ended up delivering Rick and Harley’s baby.
EH: How long ago did they have the baby?
CARLY: It has been a few months. I am trying to think.
EH: So that is why she left her baby going on that trip?
CARLY: They are going to find evidence for Blake on that girl. They went looking for stuff on that girl that was following Ross around and that is why they are out of town. Do you ever watch that CSI? I like that.
EH: Yeah.
CARLY: This one here is a pretty good cop show. But the CSI one I like that show it is kind of interesting.
EH: It is really, it seems like Law and Order in its prime. Years ago when it was really interesting when they had all that breakthrough in technologies and stuff like that. It was really cool.
CARLY: It is interesting to find out who did what and all that junk. Some of it is pretty graphic and gross.
EH: Oh, yeah.
CARLY: They have fat commercials all day long during the day. And Laundry stuff. And so who is supposed to be home.
EH: Oh, especially during soap opera’s everything is so geared to women. Does he know?
CARLY: I think a little bit.
EH: Why doesn’t she just yell it out. I think that tiara is pretty.
CARLY: Why don’t they show him their ID?
EH: Is that who is watching her kids?
CARLY: No, she is calling Ross.
EH: Why doesn’t she just say I am in jail?
CARLY: That would be too easy. Then the show wouldn’t last as long.
EH: Are you guys going on any fun family vacations this summer?
CARLY: We go up to Estes park this summer but that is all we have planned.
EH: Is that in Idaho?
CARLY: Colorado. There is a KOA camp up in Estes and then you go down and it is like a college town and there are all these stores and you go and walk in it. At the park they have lots to do for the kids and stuff. We have gone there for family reunions for about 10 years. So that is all right now. WE haven’t really planned anything.
EH: Have you ever watched your soap opera on vacation?
CARLY: No. In fact I don’t think there is a TV up there anyhow. I think we have taken one for kids to watch movies at night. I don’t know if anyone is going to do that this year or not. They usually have a big room that they reserve for the family so you gather in those spots and that is where the kids do the movies. But the kids are all getting older. I think the youngest one is 6 now so now they can find things to do now and activities. It was more for the little kids to have something to do. But I don’t think that is until the fourth of July.
CARLY: I guess they are staying there for the night. Where is his shirt? I guess he has left it in the car.
EH: Who does she leave her kids with?
CARLY: I don’t know. That grandmother knows the truth.
EH: Oh, she does. But she just doesn’t want him to marry Mara.
CARLY: Yeah so she let her lie about it because she is from their background and stuff. Even if I don’t have a baby in 9 months. I don’t know how she is going to explain the fact that she doesn’t get big for 9 months.
EH: That seems like a mean lady. I think these toilet paper commercials are funny. Like the one with the bear. Kinda gross.
CARLY: Isn’t that how soaps got there name?
EH: Yeah, soaps.
CARLY: No autopart commercials or lawn mower commercials
EH: Or beer. There is a striking lack of beer commercials. Have they slept together before?
CARLY: I haven’t seen them. I don’t know. So they have to go to the bathroom together.
EH: People in the soaps never have to go to the bathroom. So why is he such a cranky guy now?
CARLY: He plays this macho character and then does this little wimpy thing to Harley all the time. She is falling right into his trap.
EH: DO you like him?
CARLY: No not really. She just needs to find some nice guy. Now she will run back to that other guy. Everyone else there is married. [referring to throwing the bouquet] Mara will be there and catch it. She will come running in. No.
EH: I was going to say really? What about her family?
CARLY: We never see any of them.
EH: Did you like Tony and Mara together?
CARLY: Yeah they were better. I don’t know why she doesn’t. That Catalina girl threatened that Grandma. She threatened to do something or tell someone something but it was just something stupid. I don’t know why.
EH: Those little containers are really good.
CARLY: Those ones have held up pretty good.
EH: We just got Luke a big chest to throw things into.
CARLY: I have had some different ones and I like to separate them out. I have different toys for different ones. Where are these stores at?
EH: I have never heard of these stores. I don’t think they could have lower prices then at Wal-Mart.
CARLY: I think Macey’s did lower some of there prices. Sometimes I can find them cheaper at Sam’s or Macey’s and Wal-Mart.

2ND TIME VIEWING WITH CARLY: GUIDING LIGHT

CARLY: I love the little kiddie stage. It is the teenage mouthy stage that I don’t like.
EH: That is what my sister said. She holds a little baby and it brings her peace and makes her happy but when she deals with her 16, 17 and 15 year old she is just.....
CARLY: Some people don’t like the needed thing and sure you get tired and all that stuff and think do I have to get up again. But they need you, and whatever you do makes them happy.
EH: And they love you so much.
CARLY: And they get mad they are back kissing you in 2 seconds. Teenagers are a little different. And in the next 6 years they will all be through school and ......I hate that captioning stuff. Josh puts it on because he can’t hear, but I don’t know how to get it off. I remember when this guy was born. Same with Mara and her brother. They were born not too many years ago. My biggest gap between my kids are two years. There are two years between my 14 and 16 that is my biggest gap.
EH: Did you guys wait awhile after you got married?
CARLY: Joey was born 9 months and 16 days after I got married. See Joe was 24 and I was 23 when I had Joey. We were a little bit older and knew we wanted to have a bunch. What is she going to do on the beach. Here he won’t even go to bed with her on her honeymoon and now they are going on a trip. I have dranken sugar free Koolaid for so many years that when I drink regular koolaid it is just way too sweet. I don’t know if that is bad or not.
EH: Does it leave a bad aftertaste in your mouth?
CARLY: Not to me, cause I have drank it for so long. But you know when yo make it, there is a film and you can wipe it off. Usually in the summertime I will make it and put it out on the back washer and porch so they aren’t in the fridge all day and it doesn’t make that same film thing and so someday I will be the first one to die of some weird something or other. I hate drinking water which is too bad. And I don’t drink unless I am eating. So it is no big deal.
EH: My sister-in-law is always getting bladder infections because she doesn’t drink enough water.

CARLY: When we grew up we were never allowed to have anything but water. And then Lemonade sometimes at meals, but that was it. Milk in your cereal that is it. So I like to drink KoolAid, but I drink the sugar free. But it comes out to about 1.75 a gallon.

EH: That is a lot cheaper than milk.

CARLY: My boys drink about 11 gallons of milk a week. My boys are into working out and stuff so they need their protein drinks and stuff so they guzzle the milk down. So I have gotten to writing dates on them. Like Monday, Tuesday and whatever because I end up going to the store and I spend a couple hundred dollars more going back to the store everytime.

EH: Because you don’t just come back with milk.

CARLY: Uh-uh. Never. Gus Santuro that was his name. Have you guys set a number in your head of how many you want?

EH: Well, before I got pregnant, we wanted a big family. But I had a baby 10 months after we got married. That was not intentional. I don’t know, probably 4 or 5. I really have a lot of fun with my son right now.

CARLY: Joey and Tami are 18 months apart and I remember thinking that there is no way that I can ever love another baby as much as him that he will be specialer than all the others and thinking that I just want to do stuff with him. But then you have the next one and you realize that it is the same feeling that you have for the first one. I remember thinking that with Joey. And he probably has been my hardest. He was my hardest so far. But he needed to be an only child he just demanded a lot of attention.

EH: And see pregnancy for me is really horrible. I just throw up and throw up.

CARLY: So you are not available like you want to be then?

EH: Yeah. And so I have, and I don’t know if my next one will be so intensive as this past one was. But I need Luke to achieve some level of self-sufficiency because I couldn’t cook and everything.

CARLY: My sister gets like that. Also Angela McMorris.

EH: And see there are things that I am going to do this time that I am going to do this time to help. I had an RH factor.

CARLY: I had 3 of them that had that. I think my negatives are my two girls and one of my younger girls.

EH: And if the next pregnancy was as horrible as the first one then I would be fine, but I want my husband to be done with school and I want to have reliable insurance and....

CARLY: We had 3 years left. He had one year undergrad and 2 years of his Masters to do. But his parents supported us the whole time.

EH: See Scott’s parents have paid for his schooling up until this last semester because he is retaking classes to build up his GPA.

CARLY: Yeah, so I don’t know how kids do it the other way. So when we graduated he just went into a job and we didn’t have a debt or anything. They just sent us a check every month to pay for everything. So it was really nice. His parents said that if the kids maintained a certain grade level that they would pay for his schooling and they didn’t say anything about anybody getting married and he was the first son to get married. But they only have 2 that are active in the church. This girl here, Marina she was a little tiny kid when she left and when she came back.....her mom plays on Providence now. Marina came back a couple months ago and she is a teenager. Oh sure they are all in the same
house, now she is all private. She comes out in her lingerie like no one is supposed to see her.

[answers phone]
EH: Is that his mom or grandma?
CARLY: It is his grandmother.
[she left to see about a bang because the kids are asleep]
EH: so what did she threaten her with?
CARLY: I don’t know I must have missed that one. I don’t know what she had over her. I can’t imagine what it would be. Unless that women just doesn’t like Mara Lewis.
EH: It seems like she likes Mara while the other girl doesn’t.
CARLY: The young girl or the aunt.
EH: The aunt the one that made her cry.
CARLY: Danny Santos’s mom.
EH: Oh that is his mom.
CARLY: Yeah. So how long does your husband have left of school.
EH: He has one more class after this semester he is taking a two week intensive course in May then he will graduate in August.
CARLY: Then what are you guys going to do?
EH: Well we are going to stay living at my parents house. He wants to buy a house because interest rates are so low. But he needs to get a full-time job because we need to save money. So I don’t know.
CARLY: What is his degree in?
EH: Political Science with an emphasis in Public Administration. Right now he works for the state in the unemployment office. And he is applying for several jobs.
CARLY: Where do you guys want to live at?
EH: He wants to live closer to downtown or closer to the U so that it will be easier to rent out the apartment. Even out here if there was a good deal with a beautiful home. He really likes the idea of trees likes tons of big trees.
CARLY: Yeah you got to have a little bit older to have those.
EH: And the way they build the houses it is like the split level you have here and that is not conducive to a basement apartment. Rick is a good guy. You like Rick right?
CARLY: He has done some trashy things on this show really but his character has always been a sweet guy. Like he got Harley pregnant and other half of the twin and then he was with Beth at one time when they were younger. And he really didn’t pass his medical exams or something they said he had cheated or something on them. But he has this angelic look or something. And that guy back there always has an arrogant look on his face. And the two of these they look more nice. Danny just looks like trouble on his face.
EH: He just looks like he is not very bright. How come he doesn’t like his brother?
CARLY: That is his cousin. Cause he has kinda been a pain to Danny. The last few years, and his cousin wouldn’t quit working for the mob and Danny wanted him too.
EH: Is this a good guy or a bad guy?
CARLY: Originally when he came back to town he made a bet for 5,000 that he could get Mara to sleep with him the first week or something. So then he turned out liking her so now he is supposed to be this sweet guy that likes her. Someday down the road she will find out there was a bet.
EH: Is she Buzz’s daughter?
CARLY: No that is REva and Josh Lewis’s daughter.
EH: No wonder she has problems.
CARLY: And the girl in the background Marina is Eleni and Franks and she has been in
trouble since she got back on the show, runaway and stuff like that. She ran away from
her mom so she could come stay with Frank.
EH: So where is Eleni?
CARLY: She broke up with Frank and left the show, and they never showed her again.
EH: Did you like Frank and Eleni?
CARLY: Yeah the first Eleni when they first were together years ago. I did. And they
struggled to get together to begin with then they started having fights or something I can’t
remember now.

she went upstairs]
CARLY: She has four kids from 4 different guys.
EH: She has four kids!!
CARLY: She has a kid with Phillip and a kid with Rick a girl she gave up for adoption
and I am thinking there is one more somewhere.
EH: What about the one guy that was crippled did she have a kid with him?
CARLY: I don’t remember that.
EH: He is such an idiot.
CARLY: She is supposed to be about 2 or 3 months pregnant supposedly.
EH: She is going to have the baby 2 months overdue.
CARLY: Or steal one or something.
EH: So how do you think it will turn out?
CARLY: Well, he has got to find out before she gets pregnant or something. They will
get together somehow unless Ben gets hold of her first. If Ben sleeps with her then he
won’t want her.
EH: Really?
CARLY: He was already jealous of them anyway.
EH: What was the lie she told about Ray?
CARLY: She told Tony because Tony caught Catalina and Ray talking and the priest
guy said she had to tell Tony or he was going to. And then right before Tony walked in
she said that this priest guy tried to attack her so that Tony would get mad. Then the
priest guy said that he couldn’t tell Tony what really happened that it was up to her as she
said it in a confessional thing. So the priest guy got sent to a place because he was being
put on suspension until they checked out his story. But then later she said that it didn’t
happen.
EH: How did she explain that away?
CARLY: She was afraid that no one wanted them to get married and so she wanted him
to marry them and so she made up a lie.
EH: He fell for that? He is really not so bright.
CARLY: He is in the mob, that is retarded. Next thing you know she will be practicing
medicine.
EH: Because they all have college degrees and so...
CARLY: She has her undergraduate and masters and so it would only be another 6
months until she is a doctor. I hate his hair.
EH: What does your husband do for a living? What did he get his master’s in?
CARLY: Business. But he works for the church the past couple of years. I don’t know
the name but he developed a program for deciding who qualifies for buildings throughout
the world. Just the buildings. He developed the criteria like that. He has this certain area
that he is over. In fact he is in Canada today. Or all week. So when people want buildings they go to talk to the general authority who is over their area and the stake presidents call him a lot because they want their building s. I think outside of Utah it is more, it is a thing if the stake president gets a building while he is in. Ego I think. So he goes out there with a realtor and they look for the land and he talks to the people to see what they want to see if they qualify. A lot of it is done over the phone if they have to have a certain membership or certain growth. He just went to new York with some people from Africa and England and some other countries that want buildings and they are training them how to do the same program done in the United States and stuff.

EH: So he travels a lot then?
CARLY: He has more this last year.
EH: Do you ever get to go with him?
CARLY: I can but I have to pay for everything. So I haven’t I found that it was easier to leave the kids when they were younger.
EH: Because you don’t know what is going to happen.
CARLY: When they are little you don’t want to leave them because you think they are going to miss mommy and going to cry.
EH: But at least they are contained in the house and they can’t go off in with friends.
CARLY: It is too late now but I learned that I might as well do things when they are small and you have opportunities. We paid my brother and his wife to watch the kids two years ago. And it was a nightmare.
EH: We tended for my sister who has 7 kids 18, 16, 15 all the way down to a 4 and ½ year old. And it was so much fun.
CARLY: They didn’t do anything and then she is just so different anyways. The kids came home my boys brought an R-rated in the house and watched it and were out and running around doing things they weren’t supposed to be doing. Here we paid for them to do this. Could’ve taken care of them.
EH: I just told them, don’t put me in a bad position, because I love you guys so much and it is so fun to be here with you and I am so excited to be here with you but don’t put me in a position where I am going to have to be like mean and harsh with you.

CARLY: One of the kids that spoke at your mom and dad’s farewell?
EH: Yeah, he is 18 now. He has a lot of problems. But he is really brilliant. He reads so much stuff but he can’t focus himself. But he finally got an eagle scout so that is great. oNe of them always likes to sneak out of the house to meet boys. And use the phone and they are just gross 15 and 16 year old boys.
CARLY: One way I stopped my boys, but my boys haven’t been crazy about girls, but my one who just turned 16 has been crazy about girls since he was about 3. I make them talk on the wall.
EH: Yeah there are no phones downstairs and she always makes sure and listening to the phone to see if they are on.
CARLY: It is totally babysitting constantly. I don’t know how some people get kids that are ok. My kids are actually pretty good they haven’t given us anything, not in trouble with the law or drugs or anything that we are aware of. But I really have had to keep on top of them. A couple of steps ahead all the time and you think you have them figured out and then they throw one at you.
EH: My 16 year old niece she doesn’t think that she needs to follow the rules because she is so responsible they were made for her brother and not for her. She doesn’t need to follow curfew because she is not going to do anything stupid.
CARLY: They think they know it all and can control everything. And Nothing will ever happen to them.
EH: It just cracks me up.
CARLY: Even after they are graduated I told them if they are going to live here they are going to need to have a curfew. Because we can’t be staying up all night waiting for kids. I baby-sit at 6:30 in the morning and Joe gets up at quarter to 6 everyday so even during the school days they have to be in by 10 and on the weekends they can stay out till 12 but we still have to know where they are at and all that stuff but I don’t know how parents do it if kids don’t have curfews it is a nightmare.
EH: Also another thing my sister has noticed that she will tell her daughter not to go someplace and when she calls home that she is going to be late so she calls from a cell phone and she makes her go back in the house and call her so she can know where she is at. They are such stinkers that way.
CARLY: It is even funny that even Tami she got married young and David is a good kid and I know what kind of kid he was and what are you going to say and so it was like before she met him she couldn’t stay home I got to go do this a Friday night at home was horrible. And then she met David and he is not a real social person and they would go out and do a lot but now she is married and now he is gone and she is saying mom I am going to bed and it is 8 o’clock. And stuff like that.
EH: How is that going having her here?
CARLY: It has been fine. She doesn’t have a job yet and I think she just wants to have a family and if David said yes I think she would want to just stay at home and take care of kids. And I can’t really say that because in the church and she has been out of school over a year and we have been trying to get her to go to school saying we would pay for her to go anywhere and she had no interest at all. See I worked from the time I got out of high school until I got married and I never would have dreamt of not working and just staying home and doing nothing, but when she graduated we couldn’t get her to get a job and what do you do threaten them I don’t know what we did or what happened, she likes to scrapbook and do homemaking stuff.
EH: That is so great.
CARLY: I can’t discourage her from that. And now David is gone for 8 more weeks and they are not really sure about when he is getting intelligence training and don’t know when or that is exactly going to happen and she hasn’t heard from him yet.
EH: Because he can only write letters.
CARLY: And he has to do the first one because she needs the address. And they sent back the scriptures and stuff.
3RD VIEWING WITH CARLY: GUIDING LIGHT

EH: Are they back together?
CARLY: Yeah, that is probably her baby she had with that husband that died. They did this stupid thing where they had a person that looked alike and then they changed it where it was just her with a split personality or something.
EH: Who is this lady?
CARLY: Alan Spaulding likes her. Josh was married to her for a little while. I can’t remember her name. She was married to Josh for like 6 months.
EH: Who is that little girl?
CARLY: That is Philip’s girl with Beth. Now she wants him to do something. What made you decide to do your thesis on this?
EH: On soap operas? I really like soap operas. Like even watching the past two days I am like I want to know what happens, she has to stop Catalina. How did she commit suicide?
CARLY: That is what they think I don’t know what happened but that is what they think she dead. But she is really around somewhere. I don’t know why they had that happen and she had this sister and that is probably her sister. Or it is Tori and she dyed her hair or something stupid.
EH: And they can’t tell. I was going to bring my son today but he was sleeping when I needed to leave. So I had my sister in law watch him. Yeah he barfed last night and like had diarrhea last night and this morning and he wasn’t acting sick or anything all of sudden he just started coughing and barfed and so much food came out and it was really horrible and then he barfed in the middle of the night and he hadn’t eaten anything, between barfing but he went back to sleep because he didn’t cry or anything but it was all dried on the sheet. And he had a fever this morning.
CARLY: Is the child downstairs sick?
EH: No. Not yet.
CARLY: He will be in 24 hours. Do you have to see each other to do downstairs or is it a separate entrance?
EH: There are separate entrances. There is one in the garage that goes downstairs and we see each other a lot because my son loves to go downstairs and her son loves to come upstairs.
CARLY: Well does you brother come upstairs all the time?
EH: Yeah, we go upstairs and downstairs. I mean the door is shut and we always knock and say hello and we know each others schedules and after our husbands come home at night we don’t intermingle but my sister in law goes to school two nights a week and my brother just tends his son and he is at a loss of what to do with him sometimes and so he comes upstairs.
CARLY: So what is downstairs? I mean is it a whole.....
EH: It is a whole kitchen and front room and whole big long area the length of the house and then there are two bedrooms and a bathroom.
CARLY: Is that the way it was when you were kids?
EH: Yeah, when we moved in it was just cement but then my uncle helped us finish it.
CARLY: Now what made your parents decide that for the future or what?
EH: It had hook ups for it. I don’t know. I think my mom thought it would be good for Thanksgivings and stuff like that to have two ovens and two sinks and she wanted to do her canning downstairs cause they didn’t have air conditioning they just had that put in like a year and a half ago.
CARLY: We did a year ago. That was convenient then for that. You might even have grandkids live there sometime.
EH: I think my parents might sell the house after they get home. Just because it is so big and they don’t need that much space.
CARLY: Those are all pictures of Ross. I wonder why Harley is not with her. Somebody just died on here. Ida Mae, I remember seeing the tribute to her.
EH: Are they basically together so that she could get.
CARLY: She have before with him when she wanted something so I don’t know why he does it again. Course he doesn’t have anything any money anymore or anything. So I don’t know how he pays his bills. Did your mom ever watch soapiest?
EH: No, no. They didn’t have a tv.
CARLY: Really? While you were growing up you didn’t. Really?
EH: She really like morning news shows and my dad and her loved to watch Matlock every single day at one o’clock. Even though it was one they had seen before every time.
CARLY: Well there probably was some good to that not having one. You guys probably played more did more of the creative things.
EH: I read a lot of books. But I snuck over every chance I got to my friend’s house who had a TV.
CARLY: I get mad, I told my kids, they can’t do anything unless they are watching TV or playing games and that is it. They are bored they only read books if they have to. We had a TV but we didn’t have a color tv until after I left home, they just couldn’t buy one.
EH: Really.
CARLY: My mother used to watch soaps. I don’t know what she watched but she used to watch soaps when I was a kid all the time. She always had us out of the house during the summertime and she would watch her soap opera. But I kinda started watching them right after high school. I worked at a day care in someone’s home and when we would put the kids down for naps every afternoon for a couple of hours we would sit and watch them. A quarter a page to pick up. One dollar, thirteen dollars off the floor.
EH: Is she sleeping with Alan or something?
CARLY: She was married to Josh and then Alan kinda blackmailed her and stuff and she wanted to run have this business and slept with Alan and then down the road Josh found out, but she still loved Josh all the time and then it all turned bad and then Josh ended up divorcing her. And she ended up back with Alan again. You can make that yourself a lot cheaper just buy yourself a box of bisquick...
EH: A bag of frozen vegetables and a can of chicken. I bet it would taste better.
CARLY: I finally got to use my oven again after 3 weeks but then he brought the wrong panel for it and I don’t know what Joe is going to say. But the inside of it is a newer color called bisque or something like that. It is not almond it is a little bit lighter but he brought almond panel and we spent a thousand $ on this oven, at least 1000. So I don’t know if he is going to be real thrilled that they brought the wrong panel.
EH: Was it nice to have your oven back? Be able to bake something?
CARLY: Well I didn’t do anything. We went to Arby’s. He is out of town so I went over and got some at Arby’s. If I don’t plan what I am going to make in the morning then in the afternoon.....
EH: IT is just too much.
CARLY: Well, the afternoon gets too hectic when the kids get home and then the daycare kids I have to get them ready to leave and the kids are coming and going are mine and so I have to have it all ready.
EH: If I don’t make the meal during Luke’s nap then we are having grilled cheese sandwiches for dinner and that is it. Because it is too hard to cook with him because he wants to see what is in the pan and be up there with me. And my hands if I am working with meat at all and it grosses me out and I don’t want to get it all over....Scott’s parents bought us a ¼ of a cow and we have all this hamburger and I don’t know how to cook with it. I know how to cook with chicken I really like chicken. And I don’t know what I am going to do with it. We have hamburgers.
CARLY: Mostly we have tacos or probably stroganoff with hamburger in it all the time.
EH: And see that is what we did.
CARLY: I just put hamburger in spaghetti sauce and Joe likes it.
EH: And Scott doesn’t like hamburger and I like homemade spaghetti sauce with hamburger in it and he likes store-bought spaghetti sauce with no hamburger and he could eat that every night. He loves spaghetti so much.

CARLY: Yeah that is Joe’s favorite stuff is spaghetti. I do make a taco soup sometimes with hamburger in it.

EH: And I make stew but it gives me heartburn and so I don’t like to eat it.

CARLY: Ross Marler is supposed to be this big lawyer over the years and yet in there house that is the only room I have ever seen in there house and that is the only thing I have seen in there house ever over all the year on the whole show. That is just there living room I guess but it is so small.

EH: It is not like the Santos’s house.

CARLY: Yeah and Spauldings you see the front and different rooms in the house but all I ever seen is that. And I have seen Bauers house the living room and the kitchen.

EH: Yeah, the kitchen is nice doesn’t it have like a big bar.

CARLY: But Marlers have this small little room, cottage-like and they have three little kids and it is really small. He is sure starting to look quite a bit older since I started watching this over 20, 21, 23 years ago.

EH: He has been on here that long?

CARLY: He had a brother that was on the show and his brother Mike was a doctor. Now she is going to know it was here that wrote on the back of that picture. Where do you think your parents would want to move? Do they want to move out this time in their life?

EH: That is the thing too, they have lived in this ward for so long...

CARLY: Joe’s parents did that and they moved out of the state after they retired and what was too bad that who all their social and every one they knew and they all moved to new places and your kids are what kinda connected you to begin with and that is what we are trying to decide to do because I don’t want to stay here forever but this isn’t the house that I want to have.

EH: Did you build this house or...

CARLY: It was 4 years old when we bought it. I want a rambler or whatever.

EH: See that is what my parents want.

CARLY: And then a full basement. I want that kinda stuff.

EH: That is what my parents need too, cause the steps up to their house and that is a lot of steps when it is icy and then in the house there is a step to go in the front room. And my parents want a house that maybe you walk up one or two steps to get in the front door and it is all nice and flat.

CARLY: I want everything on my main floor and only if I want to go downstairs for something I don’t want to have to go up and down stairs unless I choose too.

EH: That is the problem with these kind of houses because everything is up and down and the bedrooms are upstairs and downstairs.

CARLY: We do have a bedroom right here and a bath room in there. And 1 bedroom downstairs and a big storage and a big family room basically.

EH: I think it would be great if they would go through their stuff and get rid of a lot of it because then there would be less things to mess up their house. Cause they have tons of stuff.

CARLY: Did they go through any of their stuff before they left or anything?

EH: Yeah they went through all their pictures and they put them in boxes for each of us and they want to keep them at their house in case there was a fire at any of the other
people houses that there would be some pictures of their family. I don’t know my mom gets crazy ideas like that just in case.

CARLY: Scan them all and put them on a disk.

EH: Yeah. And my parents don’t understand technology, but now they are learning because they got a digital camera before they went on their mission. And they are learning to send pictures via e-mail and stuff. And that is something they never would have been able to do before.

CARLY: If Tori comes in she will just kidnap both of them, tie them up. Since they have all this information she has got to show up now. It won’t serve any purpose to just have Blake go home and say I’m sorry Ross and let’s get back together. Something dramatic has to happen. Tori has got to show up. But today is only Wednesday and so on Friday somebody has to show up. That would be good to send myself flowers. Is that the same as last week too.

EH: But she changed.

CARLY: That is right, that is because she was in that outfit all night in the jail. Carmen coming in to seduce Edmund.

EH: Now who is Lorilei?

CARLY: Lorilei is Beth’s other personality. Her split you know she had a psychotic episode or something. She was traumatized and she came back as Lorilei. See this front room is the whole families. Its Tony’s and Catalina and all those guys that were always in the front room. They are outside that can’t be the end of it. See I think she has a couple, two little kids, little ones cause I think her babies are only a year apart but you never see them.

[phone rings]

[show on, commercial]

EH: That was your husband.

CARLY: It is a little awkward to call when you are in a car with your partner driving around. He is in Canada. What are you going to talk about? Anything private. Besides the weather that is about it. And they look like they eat so many of them.

[phone not talking]

EH: So she is wearing a big huge wedding ring. Is she married?

CARLY: No, her husband died a long time ago. Okay, this is the living room that everyone walks into. This is the family’s house. And they are going to make out on the couch. She does have a ring on. I think on this show I think what his name Harley’s dad is the oldest guy on the show. Someone scary will come on. Oh, there she is. Oh dear. Well, they have another day and a half. I should go on the internet and see where one of those is [referring to a commercial for a Save-A-Lot grocery store].

EH: Do your kids eat a ton of food or do they.....

CARLY: Yeah, from the time they get home. The boys always have to have a peanut butter sandwich as soon as they get home.

EH: Then they have to have dinner and a midnight snack?

CARLY: Yeah, then before they go to bed they usually go work out and then when they get back and then they want to eat and a lot of times they want something different but they will grab a bowl of cereal before bed.

EH: My sister says she never has leftovers. They eat everything.

CARLY: It depends if I say don’t eat because we are eating early. The three boys eat quite a bit. Joey left a year ago and I am spending more since he left because the three of
them are all really, where a year ago my 13 year old wasn’t into working out and Joey wasn’t into working out. So they eat a lot more.

INTERVIEW WITH CARLY

EH: Address.
CARLY: West Jordan
EH: How many kids? Ages?
CARLY: Seven. 20, 18, 17, 16, 14, 13, 11.
EH: Her age?
CARLY: Goll, 43.
EH: Where were you born? Where did you grow up?
EH: Husband’s occupation?
CARLY: He is a facility manager for the LDS church.
EH: Income Bracket?
CARLY: 70,-80,000.
EH: What is your education level? In what?
CARLY: High School.
EH: Previous work experience?
CARLY: Shoe sales manager.
EH: What do you think about the writers, actors and characters?
CARLY: The only thing about the writers is that I just think sometimes the storyline is stupid or just that they forget or bring dead people back and I wished they would pay attention. And stuff like that. The actors I think they do, there is some stuff I like. And you know if you watch them all the time you start thinking of them different than that and get angry that they do stupid things.
EH: Has there been anytime in your life when you watched/relied on it more? (moved/lonely?)
CARLY: Yeah when the kids were smaller I probably watched them more because of naptime. Until I started watching daycare and then I have it on more since I have had them again.
EH: Oh, so you kinda stopped when your kids were all in school?
CARLY: Yeah cause I would go do things but now that I am back home again watching these two little kids I tend to watch it more and do it during their nap time.
EH: Is it a coping or relaxation technique?
CARLY: It is more relaxing to me.
EH: Have you ever used other media to find out about the show/characters/actors? How often and which media?
CARLY: I used to always get TV Guide to read you know what was going on and stuff and um, I have looked on the internet a few times when I haven’t seen them on the regular soap opera, you know CBS.com or whatever and it tells you different things about them.
EH: But that is only a few times.
CARLY: Yeah, I don’t do that very often. Mostly it is just, every now and then I will buy a soap opera digest just to see what their personal lives really are.

EH: Oh, so you like to find out about the actors personal lives.

CARLY: Yeah.

EH: Are you interested in the characters or the actors? Which came first?

CARLY: Yeah, I like, something appeals to that about how they just their personality, to me it seems like the scripts are written towards a lot of their personality on the ones I watch. But no, if I see them on another show it is always neat to watch them on a different setting. Like even Meg Ryan stared on one that I watched and to see her she always plays the same person from years ago.

EH: Do you like to find out about the actors lives? Does that change the way you feel about them?

CARLY: Yeah, there is this one on that is a member of the church, it is Margo on As The World Turns’ mother. She is a member of the church and so when I found out that she was it made it neater to watch her and stuff and I would watch her and see if she was doing anything inappropriate, but she never did.

EH: Do you feel like you need to justify the time in watching?

CARLY: No, I just never cared what anyone thought about it. That is how I found out, when your mom asked a long time ago does anybody watch them and nobody raised their hand I couldn’t believe it and I thought oh, come on. They were embarrassed.

EH: Does being a Mormon affect the way that you view soap operas?

CARLY: Well, when I watch some of the stuff I think about it and I think, no it more makes me angry cause of my standards that they do some of the stuff on there but I know it is just a show entertainment thing. No, I wish sometimes they wouldn’t. But to me when I would flip channels over the years mine don’t have as many bed scenes or they start them and then like they did today and go off to something else.

EH: What soap opera do you watch?

CARLY: Guiding Light, As the world Turns and Young and the Restless and Bold and Beautiful.

History of watching....

EH: Which shows would you say you watch the most or like the most?

CARLY: Guiding Light.

EH: So should we center the questions on that one or is that the one that you started watching the most and then moved onto the other ones?

CARLY: Well I started watching all three of them but the Bold and Beautiful didn’t come until later.

EH: When do you first remember watching it? Did you watch it with anyone?

CARLY: I was probably 18 when I started watching it.

EH: That is right you were working in a day care.

CARLY: Yeah, in someone’s house.

EH: And she would watch it right?

CARLY: Yeah.

EH: How much time do you spend watching it then and now? Has it stayed pretty constant?

CARLY: No, well back then because they took naps for 2 hours and we woke them up after. So I only get to watch 2 hours and then they weren’t all hour long. But no now if I got other things to do and mostly when the daycare is here which is Monday through Friday and I will have it on in the afternoon so I will mostly see from 1-2:30 because
sometimes during lunchtime every now and then I will see it from 11-12 but I miss those ones most of the time.

EH: So you don’t usually watch it when the kids are up then?

CARLY: If the kids are up then I don’t ever watch it just cause I am doing other things and most of the time when I watch them I am ironing and folding clothes or something.

EH: What caught your eye about this particular soap?

CARLY: Well, just because you can miss them and come back and follow them and it’s the same characters and it is just the daily thing, seeing and I guess the next day like today they ended it with that shadow so there has to be something coming up. I guess when you watch them this long you feel like you know them and you feel sorry for them and you know all that stuff.

EH: Who is your favorite character and why?

CARLY: Probably off the Guiding Light, I’ve liked Reva and Josh well, their storylines have gotten stupid over the years at different times. But Reva just because she is a bubbly personality and stuff and um, Josh and he hasn’t been on in a little bit but he has always been a nice guy. He has always been a nice guy. I have just liked watching him over the years because he has been the same character I mean the same person playing the part for so long. You know you see them get old and stuff. Those are probably my two favorites on the show and I do like Harley cause I have seen her for quite a few years cause she was supposed to be like 16 on the show. Probably Reva and Josh have been my favorites.

EH: How would you describe your first impression of him/her?

EH: If they weren’t on the show the day you watched it, did you feel as though it had been a waste?

CARLY: No but even like today, cause he wasn’t on there today I sit there and think I wonder what he was doing and why he is on a vacation and why isn’t he on instead of somebody else you know. It is okay but after a few days you start wondering if they went to another show or what they do kill them off or something. Yeah I wondered like today I haven’t seen him in a few days.

EH: How have the teasers for the next day affected if you watch or not?

EH: What are some similarities and difference you see between yourself and that character?

CARLY: Oh, she probably has more just more personality and stuff to have fun but as far as jumping from person to person I don’t do that.

EH: How much other television do you watch on average?

CARLY: Probably at least a couple of hours a day.

EH: Like nighttime television is that where you put in the time?

CARLY: Yeah.

EH: How do you feel about your current social situation? Is it where you want it to be?

CARLY: It is fine.

EH: Is it?

CARLY: Yeah I don’t feel....

EH: Isolated?

CARLY: If anything I probably stay in the house more by choice, I could be more involved if I chose to but I like to stay home. I am fine.

EH: What about when you first started to watch it, what was your social situation like? Were you ever lonely?
CARLY: I hung out and did stuff in the evenings and so I liked watching it at naptime just to see what is going to happen. But I did what most teenagers did in the evenings. I was definitely out more in the evenings.

EH: Do you like to sit and think about your favorite character/storyline and what could happen next?

EH: Have you ever felt guilty about the time, content, whatever about watching your soap? What did you do? How did/do you deal with it?

CARLY: Not the time, probably if the kids come in and there is some scene going on not so much now that they have gotten bigger and stuff and most, but if I am watching from 11-12 or something and the little kids come in I will say oh gross and change the channel cause they are 4 and 2 so I will do that, but my kids there is not, I guess I still do flick it, the channel. But they don’t even care.

EH: Do you ever talk to your husband about watching it? Does he care?

CARLY: I have said things a few times a few years back when the kids were all little and I was home and stuff and I didn’t get out or do a whole lot at night and I would tell him about something and then remember it was on the soapie. And not in real life cause I was thinking about a situation and you know we would be talking about something and then it was like gosh, so and so said today and then I would realize it was the soapie and I would have to stop and it hasn’t happened for a while.

EH: Does he care at all?

CARLY: No, well, the only time I talk to him about it is if I see somebody on a show and I will say they came from my soap opera and I have seen them for years and I will say that and otherwise no. If he stays home with me sometimes and I happen to be watching he will just sit there and he may say something but….like I don’t know how you watch this junk.

EH: Does anyone else in your family watch the soaps? What about close friends?

CARLY: Well, my mother stopped, well at least she said she did. Tammy will watch the ones I watch if she is scrapbooking and she will say what is this but I hate to waCarlyh them because then they want to know everything and why. She will if she is scrapbooking or something but mostly not, they will get up and leave it is boring to them.

EH: Do you feel that either the soap or any characters are reality-based? How much and what?

CARLY: For the setting of some of the situations I could see some of those but not really realistic as far as some of their relationships I can’t imagine even in big cities having the stuff that goes on. Even like on Bold and Beautiful they are into the fashion scene and I could see that some of the stuff could really happen in some of the situations if you were involved in that kind of a life. But most of the stuff I don’t really relate it to anything it is entertainment.

EH: Have you ever thought about a character and used their actions to help you in an unfamiliar situation?

EH: Do you ever feel frustration at the writers of the show? When and why?

CARLY: Yeah, just like, to me they come up with some real stupid ones like that one with her with having a look a like twin come back and even Reva’s line I feel sorry for her over the years because they have had her dead and gone for years and then they realize that she was the one that drew people to the show and so they bring her back and then have some other dumb thing.

These are questions that all must be answered:

EH: How do you feel when your favorite character makes a mistake?
CARLY: I guess I don’t sit there and think the dumb writers why did they do that I think why did that have to happen why is that being done. I don’t know if I in my mind think why the writers do that I just feel bad for the person.
EH: Do you feel like a part of the town of your soap?
CARLY: No.
EH: Do you ever compare your actions, beliefs and relationships to those of the character?
CARLY: Yeah, most of the time when I always think about kids or I think even those guys in that room I think oh please who is going to do that. But I just know it is entertainment.
EH: If you were transported to (city) would you feel as though you were with friends?
CARLY: No.
EH: Are the characters real to life in some instances? What have those been?
CARLY: I don’t know. I have seen a lot of them on different shows and you just see them like seeing Meg Ryan watching her from As The World Turns from there a lot of them they really are I don’t know if they actors will say they are stereotyped or stuff like things but a lot of them their personality comes out and so I can see them on different things and know that they got to be like that. Even in interviews I have seen them on they talk the same. I know they wouldn’t be sleeping with 17 people. I just think some of the characters are close to the person who they are. A lot of the shows I think they do a real good job putting somebody with the personality. Like that Carmen she looks like she would be that kind of more aggressive person. I don’t know I think they do a good job as far as putting someone as how they look, if they look rough and stuff
EH: Would you like to have your favorite character over for dinner?
CARLY: [laughs] No but I probably would go if I won some trip. I have gone to these shows that they have, I can’t think what they are.
EH: Oh, yeah, where they have a bunch of soap opera actors there.
CARLY: I can’t remember but they have for some different things and they have had some home show things like and stuff and have had someone be there and I have gone to see them and in fact one of them was this Brad Carlson off The Young and the Restless yeah, I saw him in Kansas at some kind of home show thing that they had and he was on stage so I would go for those but I if I won a contest and stuff I would go, but to have them over to the house that would be awkward [laughs] I like to look at them from a distance.
EH: Do you miss them if you haven’t watched for a while?
CARLY: No.
EH: If the character (or actor/ess) switched shows would you follow them to another show?
CARLY: Well, I have on if they have switched and gone to evening shows I have. To see if I like that and a few of them have switched from one soapie to another but it has always been the same. Most of mine have gone to some evening show and so I have watched to see. Like even I remember um, Designing Women used to have one of the women that I liked on the soap opera, they had an old Reva on one time and so I watched it then. If I knew and there is that show Providence she used to be Eleni and so I watched that for a while because I like her on that show. So yeah, I do, if I know. But I don’t if soap opera’s you would have to flip quite a bit because I know some of them have and even Alan Michael switched and he is on Bold and Beautiful now. And he was on
another show too he was on one other show after he was on Guiding Light maybe it started out as As The World Turns so I saw him.

EH: Do they act the same way or are you disappointed if they don’t act the same?

CARLY: He almost he seems like he has. There was back like they used to have Bold and Beautiful and As the World Turns um, okay, Young and the Restless and the Bold and Beautiful used to travel back and forth on the shows I mean they would go visit as part of the show so it was kind of interesting when they did that. See them on the other. Even Alan Michael his character is still the same kind of person on the other show that is on too. I think it was on the Young and Restless that he played a bad guy on there and then he was a bad guy on Guiding Light he is a sleaze bucket and then on Bold and Beautiful he is too. So he is type-casted. I don’t care for him, but yeah I have followed them but mostly to evening type things.

EH: Have you ever talked to the screen, perhaps giving advice to your favorite character?

CARLY: A few times. Yeah.

EH: Would you like to meet the actor/actress in person? What about the character, if he/she were real? If the actor didn’t act like the character would you be disappointed?

CARLY: Yeah but not at my house. Yeah, it was Reva who was on Designing Women a few years back. Yeah, I would go meet any of them if there was a situation like that. I wouldn’t spend my own money to follow them somewhere and stuff but if they came to malls or something I would go and see. IT would be fun.

EH: Have you read articles (soap opera digest, weeklies or others) when they have featured either your soap or your favorite character?

CARLY: Yeah.

EH: Do you feel as though the character/actor is attractive? (physically or personality?)

CARLY: No, I more like if their I just to me I look at it like they are good to each other. I don’t know if I look at him and think oh he’s a hunk and you know and drooled over him and things and mostly I just look at him and think I wish so and so would get together with so and so. But if someone is ugly I always think...I can’t think of any of them that I have really looked at and thought oh, he is some hunk or something. Mostly I pair them up with someone on the show.

EH: Do you have women that you think are attractive on the show or do you just think...Do you like their personality is that what you are looking at?

CARLY: More of personalities and the character and who they are supposed to be on the show because even Harley when she started she was kinda trampy but it has been fun, she has cleaned up her act on the show but no just watch them.

EH: If they are not on the show the day you watch it, how do you feel?

CARLY: I just wonder where they are at every now and then if I don’t see them, like today I just wondered. Sometimes if the storyline is drawing it long like me I just know that Tori girl is still on the show I know that she is still around and I just want to get it over with and you watch them so long you know that something and you are just like get this over with. And I would like to see Ross and Blake get it together and stay together because they have been back and forth for years.

Overall questions about the person:

EH: Are you content in your life? Happy?

Carly: Yeah, I would like to find something exciting to do more than watching kids but I don’t know, nothing else seems to go with teenagers so......[laughs]. Pretty much.

EH: Are things going the way that you want them to?
CARLY: Yeah, it is just if teenagers weren’t so hard. I am pretty much done what I have wanted and thought I was and wanted to do and so.....
EH: If you had a wish about your life what would it be?
CARLY: Have to be something with kids, that they would be....it would be a dream which would be that they teenagers would be easier but that is about all.
EH: What do you want to do later on in life?
CARLY: Nothing I am probably just looking forward to having grandkids and stuff. Spoil them into brats then send them home.
EH: Are your relationships with your husband and children satisfactory?
CARLY: Yeah.
EH: If you could change anything about your life what would it be?
CARLY: No, I don’t need a lot of excitement. Just um, it is just um all things have to do with the kids and it would just be more that it would be not as draining emotionally. Little kids are physically draining and teenagers are emotionally draining. If it was just that part was quickly over with. Then I would be all right.
EH: When you were younger, is this how you thought your life would be?
CARLY: I just wanted to get married and have kids and ....
EH: And so that is what you wanted.
CARLY: As soon as you leave I will be like this is really exciting let me think I am depressed now. I didn’t ever want to have a career, I didn’t dare want any of that. I am content as far as that goes. I just wish I could do the teenage part some more I was a good teenager and stuff I didn’t ever get in trouble or anything so I just assumed that if you did the right things that your kids would do all the right things and it would all be wonderful. But.....
EH: So was Joe kinda crazy when he was a kid?
CARLY: Yeah, he was more rebellious and stuff but he was clueless or something I don’t know if it is guys or not but he just never thought about things or thought that how hard it would be. I remember thinking being around other people’s kids that I want to this differently with my kids and blah blah and I don’t think he ever thought anything like that. He just did his own thing and I don’t think he ever thought what it would be like to have a bunch of teenagers or anything like that. I don’t think he thought about stuff like that. Just the way I was raised and stuff it was more of I was raised more around little kids and stuff and knowing how they were and what to expect and I was a watcher and observer and so I watched and picked up things from them and I don’t think he ever did that cause when the kids do stuff it floors him half the time and he doesn’t understand why they fight or do anything. And I grew up with five of us and he didn’t take care of babies or baby-sit or anything. And I don’t think he had a clue that it was going to be as much work all the time. And his dad wasn’t around a lot and so they did what they wanted. I don’t think he could handle being home everyday of the week. Because every time he takes some time off or something and he gets so stressed. Just a two day weekend is sufficient then send him back to work. He would really have a hard time if he had to stay home on a regular basis.
EH: So he would probably end up watching soap opera’s too.
CARLY: He would probably elect more to other things. He gets too bored.