FEMINISM, WOMEN AND SITCOMS… OH MY!:
FEMINIST REPRESENTATION ON THE DONNA REED SHOW AND ROSEANNE

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by
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This study aims to illuminate the relationship between feminism and the main female characters on primetime sitcoms (*The Donna Reed Show* and *Roseanne*) when the star is also the producer. Through textual analysis and historical research, this thesis analyses plot lines, family interactions and the main female character’s role to answer four research questions: (1) How is a main female character represented on the prime time sitcoms, *The Donna Reed Show* and *Roseanne*? (2) How does the main female character’s role compare to the assumed gender roles of the time? (3) How do the main characters and shows depict feminist ideas? (4) How does *The Donna Reed Show*’s female representation and feminist ideas compare to *Roseanne*’s? The resulting comparison sheds light on female representation on television, specifically motherhood. Findings illustrate the consequences of a male dominated industry, the successful use of comedy and wit to illustrate feminist ideals and push the boundaries of traditional domestic sitcoms and the complexities of feminist texts.
Chapter 1: Introduction

This research is focused on the representation of women on family sitcoms in a feminist context. Through a textual analysis and later comparison of two prime time family sitcoms, *The Donna Reed Show* and *Roseanne*, this study examines how primetime television shows represent the female gender, specifically motherhood and their version of femininity. Within the analysis and comparison of these two shows, this research answers the questions: How is a main female character represented on the prime time sitcoms, *The Donna Reed Show* and *Roseanne*? How does the main female character’s role compare to the assumed gender roles of the time? How do the main characters and shows depict feminist ideas? How does *The Donna Reed Show’s* female representation and feminist ideas compare to *Roseanne’s*?

The purpose of this study is to analyze, deconstruct and compare the emergence of the domestic female role on the 1950s and 1980s primetime television in relation to feminist ideas. Using a historical research approach and textual analysis of *The Donna Reed Show* and *Roseanne*, this study examines the plot lines, family interactions and the main female character’s role. This study qualitatively explores how two prime time television shows represent the female gender and femininity, how they interact with liberal feminism and how they are their own feminist texts.

In a world where powerful women are analyzed for what they wear and how they balance family life versus the job they are actually doing, there is a conversation to be had in how women are portrayed in everyday media.¹ On television shows, the “reality”

portrayed can either be related to or rejected by viewers, but they will always have an 
experience with it. Television creates its own version of gender, normally universalizing 
its female characters. Sitcom academic Gerard Jones claimed “he accepted what he saw 
on television as someone else’s truth” even if the true reality is almost never seen on 
television comedies. While somewhat cynical, Stephen Wizenburg’s opinion that 
entertainment programs are puppets to promote a social agenda rings somewhat true.² 
USA Today columnist Robert Bianco wrote, “TV creates its own reality.”³ This study 
questions if that is true and if so, what is that text saying.

This study was inspired by a single episode of Gilmore Girls and the question of 
who these women were. What did viewers see during their evening watching TV? Who 
were these women and what ideas did they represent? During the episode, Lorelai, Rory 
and Dean are watching an episode of The Donna Reed Show and decide they cannot stand 
the sickly sweet dialogue and provide their own.

RORY: Mother-daughter window washing. We should try that. 
LORELAI: Yeah, right after mother-daughter shock treatments. "You know, 
Daughter, there's nothing more satisfying than washing windows-oh no!" 
RORY "What? Did I miss a spot?"
LORELAI: "No, I just had an impure thought about your father, Alex. Funny-I 
don't know why I had it. It isn't the second Saturday of the month." 
RORY: (in a deeper voice) "Hey, I heard you had an impure thought." 
LORELAI: "I must now sublimate all my impure thoughts by going into the 
kitchen and making an endless string of perfect casseroles." 
DEAN: You're not even listening to the dialogue. 
RORY Ours is better.⁴

10.htm. 
In the end, Rory does a little research and discovers that there is more that meets the eye in regards to Donna Reed. This study takes it one step further.

The beginning of critically understanding the representation of women on television begins with questioning what and who is illustrative of femininity and during what time. While the concept of what makes a woman is broad, ever changing and cannot be pinned down, this study looks at the representation of femininity through family sitcoms and a feminist lens. This study and this literature must be regarded with the assumption that “we experience our reality through systems of representation that construct, or at least influence our worlds, with the television screen being an important source of such representation.” The journey begins with the examination of gender research on television. Then, the discussion shifts to historically contextualizing the women’s role in the family, the feminist ideals of the time and the sitcoms themselves. These insights are followed by the author’s concluding thoughts and arguments for the study of women’s roles in the family sphere on television.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

Feminist Theory As A Base

This research stems from a base of feminist theory. Feminist theory is the extension of feminism into a theoretical or philosophical conversation. It focuses on analyzing the nature of gender inequality. While this research does not focus specifically on gender inequality, feminist theory assesses women’s social roles, politics and experiences, all of which contribute to the representation of women. Past research has focused on discrimination, objectification, oppression, patriarchy, stereotyping, intersectionality, and many more.6 Understanding the historical roots of feminist theory allows for a more concrete knowledge of how feminist theory can be applied to mass media research on representation.

Feminist theory emerged in the 18th century and began popping up in publications to address women’s rights. In 1794, British feminist Mary Wollstonecraft argued for the right to an education, claiming women need an education so they can play an educated

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role as wife and mother. Approximately 60 years later, Sojourner Truth addressed men’s perception of women and how this flawed view impacts rights. Arguing if a black woman could perform duties regulated to the male form, then any woman of any color should have equal rights and opportunities as men.

Another 60 years later, “feminism” began to emerge. Feminists were now focusing on social change. A feminist scholar, Nancy Cott, separated feminism into a before and after phenomenon. She used the right to vote as the turning point for changing the universal idea of where a woman belongs in society to a movement. This was the change from theoretical practice to feminist movements.

One of the first patriarchal analyses came from Simone de Beauvoir, who asked the question, “What is a woman?” She comes to the conclusion that woman is the “other” and is always kept within the context of a man. Theory continued to bloom and researchers began to combine feminist theoretical analysis with already established theories. Jean Baker Miller proved that "there was nothing wrong with women, but rather with the way modern culture viewed them." 

Both in activism and theory, feminism has not been absent from society. However, Elaine Showalter has categorized the development of feminist literary theory

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into phases. The first labeled as a “feminist critique” and encapsulates feminists’ “struggle to equal men's achievements.” Second comes in the form of “Gynocritics,” which Showalter describes as a “female framework for the analysis of women’s literature,” which would allow for the development of new female theoretical models. The last and current model is “gender theory” where the effects of a gendered system are explored. This categorization has garnered much criticism, claiming the theoretical model is essentialist, deterministic and excludes any non-western experiences. While the categorization needs more analysis and there is no substitute for “close and extensive knowledge of women’s text,” it is noteworthy. Showalter is another feminist theorist who wants to “free women from the male dominated literary tradition.”

In general, feminist theory is broad. By analyzing female experiences with the patriarchy, sexuality, objectivity, individuality, and more, it lacks a depth at times into intersectionality. There is a history of accepting the dominant white ideology, which

16 Intersectionality in its most simplified form identifies “the ways in which social positions and group membership overlap and change the experience of social identity.” The overlap of identities burdens the more marginalized individuals with a greater
includes discrimination.\textsuperscript{17} In the case of this research, intersectionality is not overly prevalent as a result of the subject material—sitcom television in the 1950s and 80s. The casts are white washed and the subject matter not wholly focused on issues of race.\textsuperscript{18} However, this is a criticism of the applied theory and therefore it is relevant to consider its’ potential faults.

Overall, feminist theory is used to think analytically about the world, not systematically.\textsuperscript{19} This allows for researchers to question the way things are or how things could be different. In the case of communication and media, feminist theory questions how women are represented in the media and how the media relays the ideology about “women, gender, and feminism.” While research methods and subjects vary, feminist media research recognizes gender as a communicative process and understands the capacity for multiple meanings of media’s representation of women, femininity and feminism.\textsuperscript{20}


What’s in a wave?

There is some argument of how many feminist “waves” there are. Some say there are three, while others claim we have had three and have moved on to a post-feminist world. The turn of the twentieth century captured first wave feminism. Focusing on suffrage and the legal hurdles to gender equality, the first wave paved the path for the challenge of societal pressures. During WWII, there was a call for women in the workplace to pick up the slack the men had left by going to war. However, when the war ended the “Rosie the Riveter” character lost its place and women were no longer needed.21 The second wave tackled a large scope of problems, ranging from family to reproductive rights.22 During the early 1960s, a period of feminist activity began. Lasting until the early 80s, the second wave of feminism strived to “challenge received wisdoms and hierarchical authorities.”23 Many times women would realize that their individual problems about appearance or abuse stemmed from discrimination in society and were not their fault. These outside forces had been revealed and women were not backing down on their drive to change them.24 The second women’s movement began with equal


opportunity and control over their lives on an institutional level.\textsuperscript{25} They focused on sexuality, family, the workplace, reproductive rights, equality legislation, and rethinking women's roles in nuclear family households. The goals of this movement partially cut “housewives” down by contradicting that housewives were content to serve their families.\textsuperscript{26} Third wave feminism developed as a Band-Aid to the supposed failures of second wave feminism and as a backlash against their initiatives. Some even call it “Second Wave, Part Two.”\textsuperscript{27} This wave focused on changing the internal structure of who women are by breaking stereotypes, changing media portrayals and restructuring language.\textsuperscript{28}

Others claim something entirely different. Feminist scholar Ednie Kaeh Garrison claims there are two different types of “waves,” radio or ocean, and argues that both are naturally occurring despite human intervention. However, while ocean waves can move specific information, radio waves can communicate information such as ideas, words, narrative, consciousness and knowledge. Garrison classifies the third wave or post feminism as a wave about how the term feminism is understood and how feminists choose to practice feminist politics. Garrison also critiques the “wave” theory and believes one of these limitations is a causation of post feminism or third wave

feminism. If it claims to be a wave, it has to be a “new full-fledged movement” and that anything in between is a point of no activity, limiting the scope of feminism.29

**Feminism(S)**

Before summarizing the various theories of feminism applicable to this research, it is necessary to point out that feminism does not refer to a single theory. All feminists do not think alike and to lump them together is misleading. There are multiple perspectives, ideals, and theories that fall under the term feminism. All of which have different ideas of gender inequality and women’s oppression. Whether that is the origin, effect or solution, they all fall under the umbrella of feminism, or rather feminisms. In this study, liberal feminism is used for analysis.

**Liberal Feminism, The Individual And The Equal**

An individualistic and early form of feminist theory comes in the form of liberal feminism, which argues that in society women are considered less intellectually and physically capable than men. There is a belief that “female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that blocks women’s entrance to and success in the so-called public world” and that women can gain equality through their own actions.30

Rearing its’ head in the nineteenth-century women’s suffrage movement, this type of feminism resurfaced during the Civil Rights Movement. Bringing light to systematic discrimination in regards to race and sex, groups such as the National Organization for

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Women, the National Women’s Political Caucus and the Women’s Equity Action League were created to bring changes in society and the law.

One such change was the authorization of the Equal Rights Amendment, a constitutional amendment designed to guarantee equal rights for women. It created quite a bit of strife between feminists, pitting working class against middle class women, who claimed it disenfranchised housewives. After passing in both the house and the senate, the amendment was on its way to success until the literary efforts of Phyllis Schlafly and her newsletter. In this publication, Schlafly claimed “a man’s first significant purchase (after a car) is a diamond for his bride. The great heroes of women’s liberation are not the straggly haired women on television talk shows and picket lines…[but] geniuses [like] Clarence Birdseye, who invented the process for freezing foods.” She said women should not “lower” themselves by striving for equal rights, “when we already have the status of special privilege?” This was just one such instance of a legal ratification for equal rights.

Early liberal feminist, Mary Wollstonecraft preached that intellect above all else would win out and strove “to persuade women to endeavor to acquire strength, both of mind and body, and to convince them that the soft phrases, susceptibility of heart, delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of taste, are almost synonymous with epithets of

weakness.” Over its’ lengthy evolution, liberal feminism endeavors for change centered around reproductive and abortion rights, sexual harassment, voting, education, fair compensation for work, affordable childcare, affordable health care, education and termination of sexual, physical and domestic abuse against women. According to liberal feminism, these problems are not due to fundamental differences between men and women, just societies framing of them.

Wollstonecraft’s writings eloquently reason that if men and women “were confined to the same cages that trap women, men would develop the same flawed characters.” John Stuart Mill, another liberal feminist, comes at this type of feminism from a similar yet different perspective. Mill agrees there should be equality amongst the sexes under the law. Yet his argument for this equality blatantly contradicts Wollstonecraft’s. Until equality exists, Mill believed the natural differences between men and women would be distorted. He felt natural men and women’s true natures could only be discovered when allowed to develop and with free “use [of] their faculties.”

This debate continued into the 20th and 21st centuries. Critics of liberal feminism point out the narrowed approach disregards basic social values and structures that disadvantage women. While women could be reliant on a wonderfully supportive and pro-feminist man, the patriarchy will always be present and influencing equality of the

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Historically, liberal feminism errs on the side of racist, classist and heterosexist. Black and postcolonial feminists find that liberal feminism is mainstream, reflecting middle-class white women values that disregard race, culture and class.

Catherine MacKinnon, a radical feminist and scholar known for her critiques on liberal feminism, sees feminism and liberalism as incompatible forces, stating liberal feminism is a “piece of the pie as currently and poisonously baked.” It relies too heavily on the individual and that takes away the impact society has on feminism.

**Television and Its Complicated Ways**

It is just recently that studies on gender representation have begun to question how media breaks the rigid guidelines of normal in media. Numerous articles discuss how primetime television depicts the father’s role in the 1950s, many jump on the single mother bandwagon of the 1970s, and others find the non-sexualized mothers and gay

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Grossberg, Lawrence. “‘I’d Rather Feel Bad than Feel Nothing at All’: Rock and Roll, Pleasure and Power.” *Dancing in Spite of Myself Essays on Popular Culture*, 2012, 64-88.
male presence of the 1990s fascinating. Overall, “television is a mythmaker,” providing viewers with socially produced discourses on the shifting systems of the time. Its power rests in the fact that television is an institution, and what viewers interpret from it depends on their experiences and personal situation.

Television can also present a distorted view of society by over or under representing certain demographic groups, professions and institutions. Generally, women are grossly under-represented on television in “all areas of programming.” However, this representation does not just stem from quantity, but also quality. The roles, personalities and stories they inhabit are criticized for focusing on the female’s youth, beauty, and sexuality. During the 1980s, there has been an increase in the quality of female representation in factual programs and some entertainment television. Situation comedies were one genre that underwent a rehaul. Female characters became leads and male characters have either been categorized as villains or a “dope, dork or doofus.”

One researcher noted this change came as a result of a multitude of reasons: trying to appeal to a dominantly female audience, the growing number of female executives in the TV industry or as a result of experimentation by executives to compete with a growing network after the introduction of the VCR, cable and satellite.48

All in all, gender roles shifted a great deal from the 1950s housewife to the working woman of the 1990s. Husband and wife relationships became more equal, with men seeming more willing to participate in childcare and housework.49 As a reflection of society, the media began to reflect the shifting gender roles present in the 1980s culture.50 Producers would have to acknowledge this societal shift in order to garner audience attention.51 If not, they would be left behind.

Situation comedy (sitcom) is one of the “most basic” television formats.52 However, there is some debate over the genre it follows. Some claim it is the most conservative genre, creating stability and maintenance of the status quo.53 However, others argue sitcoms’ humor recognizes “the potential to challenge our perceived norms and values,” and provides more opportunities for women due to the nature of the

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50 Schwarzbaum, Lisa. "'We’re Gonna’ Make It after All'" Working Woman, October 1, 1995, 30-36.


sitcom.\textsuperscript{54} This allows for new messages to be snuck in, and new roles to be viewed.

Overall, pop culture fortifies the prevailing interests of the elite and creates a definition for what is dominant in society.\textsuperscript{55}


Chapter 3: Historical Background

Women Of The Small Screen: A Brief History Of The Women Of Popular Prime Time Television, 1950s–1990s

Popular television arrived in the 1950s bringing with it fictional tales of everyday life. With more than 60 years under its belt, television has been a “key image-maker” and developed mainstream ideas of what life should be. Categorizing the roles, lifestyles and stories of their shows, this paper is a concise historical timeline of the evolution of female characters on primetime television from the 1950s to the end of the 20th century.

There have been many theories around gender and television. One of the first came from feminist scholar Berry Friedan in a 1964 TV Guide article. Friedan felt television has represented the American woman as a “stupid, unattractive, insecure little household drudge who spends her martyred, mindless, boring days dreaming of love—and plotting nasty revenge against her husband.” Twenty years later, communications scholar Joshua Meyrowitz contradicted that claim with his blended gender theory. He finds television breaks down gender distinctions between men and women, which has resulted in "more career-oriented women and more family-oriented men, toward more work-oriented homes and more family-oriented workplaces," quintessentially blending

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the genders. Another contradicting theory and one of the most used theories in mass communication research adds that the “more time people spend 'living' in the television world, the more likely they are to believe social reality portrayed on television.”

Gerbner and Gross’s cultivation theory finds the perceptions of the world are influenced by these images and messages seen on popular television. These are three of many theories about television and its relationship with gender. However, all three find television to be one of the most pervasive ways in which social norms are communicated and therefore, the way women are portrayed is of great importance.

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non-sexualized mothers and gay male presence of the 1990s fascinating. Overall, “television is a mythmaker,” providing viewers with socially produced discourses on the shifting systems of the time. Its power rests in the fact that television is an institution, and what viewers interpret from it depends on their experiences and personal situation.

1950s Life: Returning To “Normalcy”, TV And The Family

The United States adapted to a recovering world. This was no longer the climate of the post-Great Depression era. With the conflicting ideologies of where a woman’s place is, the change from women in the work force to women needing to be in the home was even harder to adapt to. The job of the woman was to “defend the home front against” communism and any “disruption” to the domestic ideal. Culturally, America was changing and turning to family life, where they were comforted by a tranquil environment, materialism and consumerism.

The end of the 1950s presented women with fewer barriers in the workforce, and the number of women working and attending school was higher by 1960 than in 1940. From 1940 to 1950, there was a 16 percent increase in the number of women workers.

By 1960, 40 percent of women had full or part-time jobs. Yet, the lack of advocacy and gratitude towards women workers created a history of discrimination and dissatisfaction, which led to the feminist movements of the 1960s and 70s. Images in magazines and on television promoted a “white, middle-class, suburban ideal where an at-home mother dutifully managed home and family, fully supporting her husband’s preeminent role.”

These were expected roles and there was a value assigned in fulfilling that responsibility.

After World War II, there was a rush of technological innovations, changing middle-class daily life at an exceptional rate. Media technology was one such case. The percentage of households with at least one television skyrocketed from less than one percent to almost 90 percent from 1948 to 1960. With a television set in almost every household, it quickly became the “key image-maker” for the ideal family and developed mainstream ideas of what life should be like. Feminist scholars tackle the 1950s with zeal about stifled women in the home as seen through magazines and other media, while later decades become more diversified due to the small presence of intersectionality on screen.

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Often research views the 1950s as the peak of gender inequality.\textsuperscript{76} Due to biases and agendas, some claim mass media, such as advertising or television, disseminated the belittling of women, portraying them as “stupid, submissive, purely domestic creatures.”\textsuperscript{77} The “gender base” for what a woman or man is like is found on 1950s television; classifying men as “sports and news” and woman as “cooking and fashion shows.”\textsuperscript{78}

The popular primetime depictions paint an untrue portrait of the role of women in the post-war United States. Women did not suddenly abandon their posts in the workforce and return willingly to the home front. In fact, the number of women in the workforce rose by 16 percent between 1940 and 1950. Therefore, why the turn towards a domestic ideal? Did the pop culture iconography of the perfect domestic woman simply rise in popularity and prominence?

The reality of the late 1950s and early 1960s were different from what was portrayed on television and the silver screen. In magazines and on television, white, middle-class families reflected post-war ideal roles and values, appearing at a high frequency, which was not reflective of all realities. In these fictional families, women did not work outside of the household; their daily activities consisted of cooking, cleaning and caring for their children. Their role was wife and mother. It took over ten years for this ideal to arise; early television depicted families with varying ethnic and


socioeconomic differences. Shows such as *I Remember Mama* (1949-1957) and *The Goldbergs* (1949-1956) were based on a Swedish and a Jewish family respectively, while *The Honeymooners* (1952-1956) captured the working-class family. *I Love Lucy* (1951-1957) was the first show to cast a Latino actor (Desi Arnaz) in a lead role. *Our Miss Brooks* (1952-1956), *My Little Margie* (1952-1955) and *Private Secretary* (1953-1957) focused on single, working women.79

Situation comedies chronicled the pitfalls of everyday domesticity.80 Ranging from interactions in the P.T.A. to the adventures of pets and children, these events were treated with humor to illustrate the concept of a delightful, if not chaotic, domestic reality. When humorous, these characters garnered loyalty and likeability from viewers.81

**Television’s Birth And The Nuclear Family**

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_I Love Lucy_ was one show to really step out of the box. Airing from 1951-1957 on CBS, this show featured the one of the first interracial couple and first pregnant woman.88

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This show did not shy away and in fact celebrated the first pregnant woman on television. Among its production innovations, this show’s story content was one of the first to feature and focus on a woman. Featuring wife and husband duo, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, *I Love Lucy* tells the story of a somewhat daffy woman striving to become a star along with her bandleader husband, who finds herself in some strange situations.\(^{89}\) While the show had a lot of firsts, it also had mixed reactions on Lucy’s character. Middle-class women drew strength from Lucy Ricardo’s subversion of her husband’s dominance and Lucille Ball’s performing talents, while working-class women tended to find Ball as Lucy Ricardo funny, but thought the character was silly, unrealistic, and manipulative.\(^{90}\)

Shows like *The Donna Reed Show* (1958-1966), *Bewitched* (1964-1972), *I Dream of Jeannie* (1965-1970), and others followed *I Love Lucy*’s female driven model. As seen in the end of *I Love Lucy*’s reign and into the 60s, a restlessness with the idea of domesticity appeared. The last two shows mentioned had the characters literally use magic to escape their roles of housewife. This transition led to new female roles gracing the networks.

**Donna Reed, Person/Director/Producer**

Archetypal sweetheart. Motherhood icon. Fallen woman and prostitute. These are just some of the roles Donna Reed played. However, what of her behind the scenes work or her political activism? How far did Donna Reed branch from Donna Stone and what role did she have in creating that? This section answers some of those questions and

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expands on the woman that began as an Iowa farm girl and ended as a loved and scorned cultural icon.

Reed’s background did not branch far from her onscreen persona. Born and raised on a farm near Denison, Iowa, Donna Belle Mullenger was the oldest of five siblings in the Great Depression era. “It may have been good training for life, but we had few good times and very little money,” Donna Reed said. After graduating from Denison High School in 1938, Reed planned to become a teacher but was unable to pay for college so instead moved to Los Angeles on the advice of her aunt to attend Los Angeles City College. There, she enrolled for a secretarial degree but instead took classes in theatre and drama. Reed also performed in various stage productions but still had no plans to become an actress.

It was not until her face was plastered on the front page of the *Los Angeles Times* after being crowned Campus Queen in a beauty contest that she entered the film industry. The movie studios perked up, and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) offered her a screen test. Upon changing her name from Mullenger to Reed, she signed with the Feldman-Blum agency and signed a studio contract with MGM but insisted on finishing her education first.

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Soon she was featured in B movies like *The Getaway* (where she was originally billed Donna Adams), *Shadow of the Thin Man* and *Babes on Broadway* in 1941, *The Courtship of Andy Hardy* in 1942. 1945 brought about her first mainstream movie and box office success, *The Picture of Dorian Grey*. She wanted the racier part of the tavern singer but was cast in a secondary role. Donna Reed had “girl-next-door” looks and a warm onstage personality; to the GIs of World War II she was the perfect pinup. It did not hurt that she responded to many letters from soldiers overseas.

Her personal life did not escape the Hollywood circle. In 1943, she met and married makeup artist William Tuttle and divorced in 1945, the same year she met future husband Tony Owen. When her contract with MGM expired, Donna free-lanced and raised her family (daughter Penny adopted in 1946, son Anthony adopted in 1947, natural born son Timothy in 1949 and natural born daughter Mary Anne in 1957).

1946 brought the release of *It's a Wonderful Life* and while it barely got off the ground at the box office, this film would become one of the 100 best American films ever made. MGM lent her to Frank Capra's Liberty Films to play the role of Mary Bailey,

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the wife of costar Jimmy Stewart. She later appeared in Green Dolphin Street among other things, but then in 1949, she began to express a desire for better roles. Studio executives viewed Reed as the quintessential "nice girl: sympathetic, soft-spoken, and supportive, her beauty softened by a gentle affect that radiated sincerity rather than glamour." However, many saw her as "ambitious and career-driven," striving for a "breakthrough role that would move her to the A list."

Reed left the free-lancing world and signed a contract with Columbia Pictures in 1950, but that did not last long, as they failed to bring in newer roles and continued to typecast her. She left Columbia Pictures and moved to Universal, but ended up suing for breach of contract when they only brought her supporting roles and failed to deliver the starring parts they promised.

In 1953, Reed’s newest role, Alma “Lorene” Burke, took a detour from her expected on-screen persona and landed her an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress as a dancehall prostitute in the drama From Here to Eternity. The film swept the Oscars that year with eight wins. However, this shift in roles did not continue as directors followed Fred Zinnemann’s (From Here to Eternity director) apprehensive

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opinion and were convinced she was only right for “good girl” parts. While Reed continued to be type cast and currently lives as an ideal mother in the minds of pop culture, she was more complicated than that onscreen persona. Early in her career, she posed topless for a glamour magazine and had aborted an untimely pregnancy when married to her first husband.

After her Oscar win, Reed was cast in nine more films during the 1950s, before fully diving into the world of television. Reed had her television debut earlier with an appearance on The Ford Television Theatre in 1954 but did not hold a recurring role until American Broadcasting Company (ABC) signed her to a starring role in her own series, The Donna Reed Show, co-produced by Columbia Picture’s television branch Screen Gems. With a lack of good female film roles and the need for financial and familial stability (Owen was currently pursuing a career in film producing) this marked her departure from film.

At the time, westerns and sitcoms reigned supreme. Typically, westerns did not have women in leading roles, so Tony Owen and Donna Reed began their plans for a sitcom produced by their own production company, Todon Productions. (The first parts of their first names; something probably inspired by Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz’s company, Desilu). Productions The Donna Reed Show aired in 1958 and starred Donna Stone, Hilldale resident, mother of two children and pediatrician’s wife. They had toyed

with the idea of making her a single secretary or diplomat’s wife (two common tropes at the time), but decided to cast her as a version of herself after a Screen Gems executive saw a family photo of Reed.\footnote{Fultz, Jay. \textit{In Search of Donna Reed}, 117. IA City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 1998.}

While Reed was the star of the show, she was also an uncredited producer and director. Reed’s on-screen daughter, Shelley Fabares, said Reed oversaw every aspect of the show’s production, including casting and story ideas. Fabares pointed out, “Today, on a credit, we’d list her as co-producer. Everybody always put Lucy as the only woman who ever did that. That, of course, is not true. Reed, in her quiet way, was very much a producer and a writer and a real force behind the show. She was that show.”\footnote{Fultz, Jay. \textit{In Search of Donna Reed}. IA City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 1998.}

It was said she was a “steel fist in the velvet glove” and could fix what needed to be fixed without actually appearing to fix it. Andrew McCullough, a director of the show, noticed Reed would “play the part of a (stereotypical) woman.” By rephrasing her critiques into light suggestions or ponderings, her voice was heard and the changes were made.\footnote{Fultz, Jay. \textit{In Search of Donna Reed}. IA City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 1998.} Screen Gems executive William Dozier remarked that while “Donna is one of the brightest gals in Hollywood, you couldn’t have her that way on the show. No one would watch.”\footnote{Dern, Marian. "Donna Reed: Sweet-Sincere-Solvent." \textit{TV Guide}, June 20-26, 1963: 10-13.}

Following Gertrude Berg of \textit{The Goldbergs} (1949 to 1955) and Lucille Ball of \textit{I Love Lucy} (1951 to 1957), Reed was the third woman to have the dual role of star and producer. Like Berg, Reed played a version of herself and was the “axial character” of...
Reed never considered herself a comedian and the few times she participated in vaudeville-like comedy on the show were few and far between. This show was a little outside of her comfort zone, and she worried about playing comedy. However, this humor was about character and the relationships they had, not physical comedy. Donna Reed and Stone (her character) had strong opinions and like her character counterpart, she always got her way.

Through the show, Reed became an icon of American motherhood. She was awarded a special citation from the American Mother’s Committee for her portrayal in 1959 and even had a cake recipe printed in a magazine inspired by herself, “Bundt Cake a la Donna Reed.” Before going off the air in 1966, Reed was nominated for four Emmy’s and won a Golden Globe.

Soon after, Todon Productions also dissolved; she divorced her husband Tony Owen and Reed had to decide what her next move was. Headlining another television show was not an option. She once described being on a sitcom as “about as glamorous as working on a chain gang.” Reed proceeded to take a long sabbatical from acting. She traveled, worked on photography and became a strong activist. In 1967, she cofounded

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Another Mother for Peace in protest of the Vietnam War and was strongly against nuclear weapons.\(^{119}\)

She briefly rejoined the fictional world of television with a few straight to TV movies and a short-lived role on *Dallas*.\(^{120}\) However, these roles were few and far between because "[She] just wouldn't do the junk [she] was offered. [She] didn't like the way films were treating women. Most of the roles were extremely passive--women in jeopardy, poor stupid souls who couldn't help themselves."\(^{121}\) A main memory of the forty or so films produced by men she acted in was “What kind of bra will you be wearing today, honey?” That was always the area of big decision - from the neck to the navel.”\(^{122}\)

Around the same time as *Dallas*, she also married her last husband Grover Asmus, an army colonel, who she was married to until she passed away from pancreatic cancer in January 1986, two weeks before her 65\(^{th}\) birthday.\(^{123}\)

While Donna Reed never proclaimed herself a feminist, her daughter saw her mother as “an early feminist who was never afraid to speak her mind” and Reed’s actions


reflect it. Her producing actions specifically ring true of liberal feminism by doing her job, trying to get other women into the field and when creating this character to combat the sexual objectification of women. She wanted to show a different side of women, a truer side.

Donna Reed did not just leave a film and television legacy. She impacted the lives of her cast mates, created a character that lives on today and was one of the first (albeit uncredited) female producers in Hollywood. Her on-screen children, Shelly Fabares and Paul Peterson, have said multiple times that she was like their second mother. Like her on-screen counter part, Reed taught them life lessons, helped them navigate show business and made sure they were home for dinner. Shelly Fabares described Reed as “…who she seemed to be! Child of the Midwest… Bedrock decency… Hardworking. Adamant that it [The Donna Reed Show] stayed grounded in reality. Reed was a burgeoning feminist. People don’t remember that from the show. People remember Donna and her pearls and vacuuming.”

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The Donna Reed Show, Featuring A ‘Quintessential Housewife’

“We started breaking rules left and right. We had a female lead, for one thing, a strong, healthy woman. We had a storyline told from a woman’s point of view that wasn’t soap opera.”

Donna Reed [on The Donna Reed Show]127

The Donna Reed Show portrays a familiar visage to 1950s viewers. It is a “prototype of bemused but knowledgeable father, devoted mother, and mischievous but good-hearted children.”128 This depiction is also illustrated by The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet, Father Knows Best and Leave it to Beaver.129 These shows have become synonymous with the ideas of the perfect 1950s family model, echoing the post-war emphasis on the father’s role and the at-home mother’s support.

On September 24, 1958, The Donna Reed Show popped onto television sets, kicking off 275 episodes and eight years of airtime on ABC.130 This primetime family sitcom follows Donna Stone, “the quintessential housewife and perfect mother,” her pediatrician husband (Alex) and their two teenage children (Jeff and Mary) through half-hour portrayals of everyday life in post World War II America.131 She is the perfect American housewife, doing it all with her hair coifed and heels on. For this, she earned four Emmy nominations and a Golden Globe Award for best female television

star in 1963.

Originally, the show did not fare so well. After making its way from radio to television, ratings were low as it was up against Milton Berle’s *Texaco Star Theater*. American Broadcasting Company (ABC) nearly cancelled it after the first year but instead it moved from Wednesday to Thursday nights and flourished. However, the content didn’t change. There was really no reason for this popularity, but Donna Reed had a theory. “The only thing I can say is that we were a little late in persuading the sponsor to let us lose our tempers on the show. I mean the sponsor didn’t want Donna Stone, my character, to ever be mean. Tony and I have a family of our own, and there is no such thing as a family where arguments don’t occur. Keep it goody-goody and you lose the effectiveness.”

*The Donna Reed Show* is classified as a Hollywood sitcom, emerging as the film industry breached into television, the show’s cinematography is similar to that of film. There is a connection between “form and content” to accentuate the story or feeling the episodes is supposed to transfer. It did remain true to some aspects of classic Hollywood filmmaking.

The show was filmed with a single-camera and no live audience. The aesthetic allied more closely with films, westerns and dramas of the time, versus *I Love Lucy* or *The Honeymooners*. It had close-up shots, deep-focus photography and low-key lighting.

The entire scene could be captured or a specific point or face was be shown, allowing the

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director to control what and who the audience pays attention to. *The Donna Reed Show* also utilized montage editing at times. This allowed the audience to grasp large batches of information in a short period of time. With only a half-hour block of time to tell an entire story, the show provided more context for the audience and the story.

Donna Reed was not a fan of the situation comedies that decorated the TV sets of her era. While her show fits into the domestic 1950s sitcom genre, it does it in an unconventional way. Reed said, “I don’t portray the All-American Mom, and Carl Betz is not the All-American Daddy, either. So help me, if we had to do that type of TV mother and father every week, I’d go off my rocker. Our stories do not revolve only around the kids.”

Housewives, such as the fictional Donna Stone, were the backbones of the household. While keeping the home beautiful, clean and functioning, they also held the responsibility for raising children, taking care of their husband and having their own life. They held the power. The family in *The Donna Reed Show* is a prime example of this type of family life.

Unlike most 1950s’ family sitcoms such as *Father Knows Best*, *The Honeymooners*, *Leave it to Beaver* and *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriett*, *The Donna Reed Show* "established the primacy of the mother on the domestic front." Most shows about the American family focused on the father with the mother in a supporting role. Originally, the show was even titled *Mother Knows Best*.

William Roberts created the show, which Reed and her then husband, Tony

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Owen, developed. Roberts wanted this family sitcom to properly show the reality stay-at-home women face everyday. It was to detail the many demanding roles they were supposed to conquer—wife, mom, housekeeper, laundress, seamstress, cook, scout leader, entertainer—all while being "effervescent, immaculate, and pretty."

Donna Stone was supposed to be a complicated character with a somewhat busy husband. William Roberts, MGM screenwriter, helped develop these characters and wrote several episodes of the show. To him, Donna Stone was supposed to show the many sides to her stay-at-home mom title and the demands it can have.\textsuperscript{136} She was written as “a strong character that reacted to situations dynamically, and her views did not need to always coincide with her husband’s.”\textsuperscript{137} Married to a pediatrician husband (Alex Stone), Donna was at the forefront of the show, and his occupation was a deliberate choice.\textsuperscript{138} With him constantly gone on house calls, Donna took hold of the domestic territory. The fact this had to be the pretense on the show to allow the mother the prevailing role is disappointing in today’s standards. However, in the 1950s and 60s, having the mother as the main character in a domestic sitcom was unheard of and it allowed the show to maintain this public approval without sacrificing either characters’ authority.

Season six aired with a new family on the block, the Kelseys. These new neighbors were Midge and Dr. Dave Kelsey, the best friends and co-conspirators of the Stones. Played by Ann McCrea and Bob Crane, their characters became so popular that

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\textsuperscript{138} Fultz, Jay. \textit{In Search of Donna Reed}, 118. IA City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 1998.
\end{flushright}
they received billing and face time in the opening credits of *The Donna Reed Show* by fall 1964.

The show was not the norm. When speaking about the show’s assembly, Reed said, "We started breaking rules right and left. We had a female lead, for one thing, a strong, healthy woman. We had a story line told from a woman's point of view that wasn't soap opera." Overall, Reed considered *The Donna Reed Show* to be "a realistic picture of small town life - with an often humorous twist. Our plots revolve around the most important thing in America — a loving family."\(^{139}\)

However, all did not love the show. Some feminists criticized the show and stated it promoted the submissiveness of housewives. Donna Reed had two responses to that criticism. In a 1979 Reed said, "I played a strong woman who could manage her family. That was offensive to a lot of people."\(^{140}\) Again in 1984 Reed stated, "I felt that I was making, for women, a statement. This mother was not stupid. She wasn't domineering, but she was bright and I thought rather forward-thinking, happily married."\(^{141}\) Others compare it to the other shows of the time. Variety managing editor Cynthia Littleton said *The Donna Reed Show* had an earthiness to it. There were “stories of a teenage daughter, a preteen son, and a mother and father who were not perfect.” It was different from other

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domestic sitcoms. It was not as “goofy” as *Leave It to Beaver* or *Ozzie and Harriet*. To Littleton, it seems “timeless.”\(^{142}\)

After initially struggling in its’ first year, *The Donna Reed Show* thrived the next seven years it aired. It made televisions top 25 chart in 1964. In an interview that same year, Reed stated, ”We have proved on our show that the public really does want to see a healthy woman, not a girl, not a neurotic, not a sexpot...I am so fed up with immature 'sex' and stories about kooky, amoral, sick women.”\(^{143}\) This was not a show to demoralize women or cut down the housewife. Using dialogue, plot and character interaction, *The Donna Reed Show* gave woman credit for a job that does not monetarily pay.

**Dialogue By Design: Wit And Smarts In One Pretty Package**

Episodes of *The Donna Reed Show* usually revolve around the frothy and amusing situations the Stone’s typical middle-class family experience in the town of Hilldale. The plot of each episode usually entails someone getting into trouble. Whether it is boy problems for Mary, friend trouble for Jeff or work issues for Alex, Donna Stone is the family member that can save the day. Through witty commentary and logical wisdom, Donna and her family work out their daily problems in a nice 22-and-a-half-minute show.

The opening credits begin with Donna gliding down the stairs to answer the ringing telephone, which she hands off to Alex before heading to the front door to give her kids their lunches and schoolbooks. These last few seconds changed every so often. At first, Alex would kiss Donna goodbye and head off to work. Another season, he forgot


and then came back to kiss her goodbye just as she was about to close the door. Later, their neighbors had roles in this segment, Midge needed a cup of sugar and Dave hustled Alex out the door. During the last season, Donna’s role changed a bit more. After the gang left and before she finally shut the door, Donna heads out as well, departing the homestead and presenting possibilities to the audience.

Focused around the Stone family home, an episode will always feature a scene in the kitchen and in the living room. This is where the family gathered and where the show was centered. The kitchen features their family table, a stove, cabinets filled with matching dishes and whether in use or not, the counters are clean and the appliances gleaming. Sharp corners, clean lines and nothing out of place; the Stone household is a smooth running machine.

Donna Stone (Donna Reed) is the matriarch of the Stone clan and her character’s plot line is the primary female character in this television show. She plays the ideal middle class housewife to Alex and is mother to Mary and Jeff. Raised on a farm, Donna grew up to become a nurse, which she sporadically works as on the show. After marrying Alex at the age of 18, they moved to Hilldale where she participates actively in the community. From charity bazaars to amateur theatre, Donna does it all while wearing heels, pearls and a fashionable outfit to do the housework. This description is familiar to 1950s sitcom viewers. Typical of television housewives, Donna seems to do it all and then some, all while looking spectacular. However, like any human being, life does not always go according to plan.

Dr. Alex Stone (Paul Petersen) is a pediatrician, father and husband. As the rock of the family, Alex is the voice to the Dad-determined logic, but often his hotheaded
nature gets ahead of him. Like many 1950s’ couples on the small and silver screen, Alex and Donna sleep in twin beds, but they show a slightly more intense physical affection for each other than other couples of the period.

In the episode “One of Those Days,” nothing goes right. From the moment he wakes up, Alex is faced with problem after problem: the bathroom doorknob keeps locking him in, he steps on a screw, the faucet is leaking, etcetera. After a short tirade from Alex about selling their house and moving away, Donna suggests they take the day off and get out of the city. Throughout the episode, Donna keeps him from going off the rails with witty comebacks, which allow him to vent but remind him of his manners. When they run out of gas on their way out to the country, they stumble upon a farm and Alex tries to explain how they ran out of gas because his “wife forgot to fill the tank.” However, instead of leaving it there, Donna simply states, “My husband forgot to check it,” shutting down any sense of blame. It takes about half of the episode before Alex’s attitude begins to change from sour to sweet. By then, the audience truly sees how much he values Donna. One of the last lines Alex says out in the country is, “Do you know how beautiful you are? Do you know how wonderful a wife you are? How understanding you are? Just doing this because I wanted to.”

When the show began, Mary Stone (Shelley Fabares) is a fifteen year-old freshman in high school. During the course of the show, she juggles through boyfriends and one sticks around—Scotty played by Jimmy Hawkins. When Mary has problems juggling boyfriends or decides to take on running the entire household at the age of 16, Donna is the one to help her find the answer she needs. Neither overbearing or absent,

144 "One of Those Days," The Donna Reed Show. Performed by Donna Reed, Carl Betz, Shelley Fabares, Paul Peterson, Reba Waters, John Graham. United States, 1961. TV.
Donna offers advice and places things in the realm of logic to put everything into perspective. In one episode, Mary gets a taste of the fancy life and returns from a weekend sleepover at her friend’s mansion in a mood. She thinks they need to elevate their lifestyle because she is ashamed of their middleclass-ness. Alex does not take kindly to this and even threatens, “she is not too old for me to put over my knee.” Donna on the other hand talks to Mary. Instead of telling her she should be happy with what she has (like Alex did), she uses dry wit and has Mary put herself in her rich friend Ginny’s shoes.\textsuperscript{145} This snaps Mary back to reality and makes her appreciate her life and her new friendship more.

The show begins with an almost twelve year-old Jeff Stone (Paul Peterson) who signifies the typical American kid. While not teasing his older sister, he plays sports and eats his weight in food. At the time, Jeff is one of the more complicated kids on television. He roots for the underdog, but also cheats at Scrabble. In addition, both Mary and Jeff talk back to their parents, something not seen from fictional American kids. Jeff brings his own situations to the show and is the typical sitcom little brother, a little antagonistic but loveable all the same.

One episode focuses on the father-son dynamic of the show. Both need to collect money they have lent out to friends or did not charge patients. Donna has told both of them to stand strong and firmly ask for it back. Alex somewhat follows through but Donna accepts him as her “pigeon” claiming he is “as tough as tapioca.” Jeff has followed through with it, collecting back the items he has lent out and accepting items as payment for money owed. While that does not quite go to plan, spurred by Donna’s

\textsuperscript{145} "How the Other Side Lives," The Donna Reed Show. Performed by Donna Reed, Carl Betz, Shelley Fabares, Paul Peterson, Reba Waters, John Graham. United States, 1960. TV.
advice Jeff’s actions inspire Alex to take action. The reigning moment from this episode is when Alex tells Jeff, “Just know that your mother has a remarkable way of getting her point across.”

Occasionally, eccentric relatives, neighbors and associates come into the Stone household and complicate things even further. These individuals usually create some level of friction in the Stone household. They have voiced opinions on child rearing, the concept of marriage and gender roles. When Alex goes to a friend’s bachelor party in “The Fatal Leap,” Donna’s friend Madeline Richards (Florence MacMichael) comes over and they discuss their husband’s views on marriage, which they previously described as putting “blinders” on the man, and men’s’ actions in general. Madeline voices her frustration, “Men have all the fun! Whooping around like Indians, when we had to keep our dresses clean. If it sounds like I’m bitter, well I am!” By questioning the gender norms attached to the bachelor party, marriage and even childhood, Donna’s neighbor brought up issues often pushed aside as inconsequential, not relating to everyday life or not fitting the typical 1950s television family. Her questions and challenges brought ideas from liberal feminism mentioned previously and is reminiscent of the idea of consciousness raising, which was heavily used in during second wave feminism.

Housewife Transitions And The Working Girl

Television in the late 1960s and 70s began the transition from family sitcom and rural-oriented programs to more contemporary shows to appeal to a younger demographic. CBS was one of the original three broadcast networks and is a prime

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example of this trend. It had been classified as the “Hillbilly Network.” CBS’s The Andy Griffith Show (1960-1968) met such success it inspired shows like The Beverly Hillbillies (1962-1971), Hee Haw (1969-1997), Green Acres (1965-1971) and Mayberry R.F.D. (1968-1971), all of which contributed to the “rural revolution.” However, in 1971, CBS decided to re-haul their programing, substituting more “relevant” content.

All in the Family (1971-1979) and M*A*S*H (1972-1983) were two shows that CBS specifically replaced their rural sitcoms with. All in the Family presented Americans with the words "fag," "jigaboo," and "spic" on national television programming for the first time when the series premiered in 1971. While All in the Family had greater success satirizing the male stereotypes, the spinoffs Maude and One Day at a Time were two shows that pushed back against early portrayals of wives and mothers. They were married more than once. They raised their children and stood up for their ideas and rights. The main character on Maude, Maude Findlay, even had an

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abortion on prime time television, a controversial moment at the time and one year prior to Roe v. Wade.153

Another type of woman began to crop up on prime time television, the single working girl. The Mary Tyler Moore Show (1970-1977) featured one of these single, working women. It was part of CBS’s Saturday night line up along with All in the Family, M*A*S*H, The Bob Newhart Show (1972-1978) and The Carol Burnett Show (1967-1978), and has been labeled “one of the strongest nights of programing ever presented by a network.”154 The show features Mary Richards a newly single woman who moves to Minneapolis to work as an associate producer in a small TV newsroom after her relationship went south. Alongside the characters Lou Grant, Murray and Ted Baxter, Mary works and looks for love, but instead finds friendship more dependable.155 Critiqued for her stereotypical feminine looks and submissive attitude to her boss, the character Mary was a change from the mothers and wives of the 1950s and 60s sitcoms.

While new mother figures and single working women graced the small screen, there was also a rise in what NBC executive Paul Klein likes to call “jiggle television.”\textsuperscript{157} Charlie’s Angels (1976-1981), Wonder Woman (1975-1979), The Love Boat (1977-1987), The Bionic Woman (1976-1978) and Three’s Company (1977-1984) fall under this label as they used female sexuality to appeal to the masses. In every show, the female leads would most likely be wearing a bikini, bathing suit, negligee, underwear, or naked under a towel.\textsuperscript{158} Under this loose clothing or very tight clothing their breasts and buttocks would move, or “jiggle.” Combined with sexual innuendo, suggestive language, unrealistic story lines and sexist plots, this “jiggle television” continued to raise ratings and social debate on sex.\textsuperscript{159} This trend continued into the 1980s and 1990s with Beverly Hills 90210 (1999-2000), Melrose Place (1992-1999), Charmed (1996-2006).\textsuperscript{160}

**New Space, New Place**

Television in the 1980s and 90s grew with the advent of cable and the three major networks lost their monopoly on what people watched.\textsuperscript{161} In 1986, 82\% of American adults watched television daily, and the number of television sets in a household grew.

\textsuperscript{158} Knight, Gladys L. "Charlie's Angels." In Female Action Heroes a Guide to Women in Comics, Video Games, Film, and Television, 44. Santa Barbara, California: Greenwood, 2010.
Gone were the days where the family gathered around one set.\textsuperscript{162} The sphere of television in the 1980s changed quite a bit from that of the 50s and 60s.

During the 1980s, there was a drop in the “conventionality” on screen. From a high of 79% in the 1950s, to a low of 58% in the 1980s, the number of conventional or traditional families on television decreased.\textsuperscript{163} The quality of female representation in factual programs and some entertainment television increased as well. Female characters in sitcoms became leads and male characters were either categorized as villains or a “dope, dork or doofus.”\textsuperscript{164} One researcher noted this change came as a result of a multitude of reasons: trying to appeal to a dominantly female audience, the growing number of female executives in the TV industry or as a result of experimentation by executives to compete with a growing number of viewing options after the introduction of the VCR, cable and satellite.\textsuperscript{165}

\begin{footnotesize}
\bibitem{167} Kloer, P. "Women on Tv: Exploitation or Empowerment." \textit{Atlanta Journal Constitution}, May 13, 1996.
\end{footnotesize}
From the 1970s to 1980s, the shift in gender roles on family sitcoms was not as drastic as the previous shift from housewife to single woman or sex object shift of the 60s. As seen in *Golden Girls* (1985-1992), *Roseanne* (1988-1997), *Grace Under Fire* (1993-1998), *Kate and Allie* (1984-1989), there were still television shows featuring working women, non-traditional families and female friendships. However, there was an increase in the number of shows that exiled the female figure, specifically the mother.\(^{166}\) Shows like *Full House* (1987-1995), *My Two Dads* (1987-1990), *The Nanny* (1993-1999) became popular with the men acting as both mother and father, sometimes with a nanny at their side.

1990s female television characters became diverse and absent, garnering critiques of being too much towards one side of the womanhood spectrum. In regards to family sitcoms, Claire from *The Cosby Show* (1984-1992) was critiqued for being around too much.\(^{167}\) As a full-time attorney and mother of five, her character was labeled as “post-feminist,” as she was free from the “tensions of demanding career vs. motherhood.”\(^{168}\) *The Cosby Show* was something new for viewers. Unlike other black families on television, the Huxtables were solidly upper-middle class. *The Cosby Show* also comes

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Schwarzbaum, Lisa. ""We’re Gonna’ Make It after All"" *Working Woman*, October 1, 1995, 30-36.


under fire in these regards as well. This show became a middle ground of racial inequality in America. White viewers were absolved of societal racism by watching the show, and black viewers embraced the positive portrayals, but were concerned with the Huxtables ability to associate with lower or middle class blacks.169

Shows like *Roseanne* and *Murphy Brown* (1988-1998) fell at the other end of the spectrum and were critiqued for their too non-traditional mothering ways. They gave the example of the imperfect wife and mother. Roseanne herself declared she was a “domestic goddess” and provided child rearing advice, such as “I figure by the time my husband comes home at night, if those kids are still alive, I’ve done my job.”170 This was a show that tested the network’s boundaries and the public’s. Plot lines included her son’s masturbation practices, birth control with her daughter and the decision to have breast reduction surgery. Compared to *The Cosby Show*, *Roseanne* presented a working class, contradictory family spearheaded by a no holds barred mother.171

All in all, women’s roles in popular prime time shows shifted a great deal from the 1950s housewife to the non-traditional woman of the 1990s. Husband and wife relationships became more equal, with men seeming more willing to participate in childcare and housework.172 As a reflection of society, the media began to reflect the


shifting gender roles present in the 1980s culture.\textsuperscript{173} Producers would have to acknowledge this societal shift in order to garner audience attention.\textsuperscript{174} If not, they would be left behind.

When watching television, there is a “collective viewing experience.” Specific plots and character actions resonate and become significant to viewers and studies have shown that “exposure” can change viewers’ ideas and impact their actions in everyday life, especially about family and marriage.\textsuperscript{175} In a current world where powerful women are analyzed for what they wear and how they balance family life versus the job they are actually doing, there is a conversation to be had in how women are portrayed in everyday media.\textsuperscript{176}

On television shows, the “reality” portrayed can either be related to or rejected by viewers, but they will always have an experience with it. Sitcom academic Gerard Jones claimed “he accepted what he saw on television as someone else’s truth” even if the true reality is almost never seen on television comedies. While somewhat cynical, Stephen Wizenburg’s opinion that entertainment programs are puppets to promote a social agenda rings somewhat true.\textsuperscript{177}

These were a few of the female images seen on television throughout the decades. In a pre-streaming world, the variations of women on television were different to an

extent and their roles shifted over time, but they were by no means diverse. Today, the images are even more varied. With streaming services, new content is being produced away from the watchful eye of the networks. However, these depictions are not anymore heartening than the women of the 1950s sitcom. With the evolution of television, questions need to be asked about how women were and are being presented on the small and silver screens of the world. The images projected on to a flat surface and viewed by many are creating the ideas of who women are. That is a cause for concern, further research and change.

**Roseanne Barr, Person/Director/Producer**

Complicated does not even begin to describe it. Roseanne Barr is a woman with an opinion and no fear of sharing it. From working-class sister of three to millionaire comedy actress, Barr fights for what she believes in, pulls no punches, and is proud to have written the jokes for a woman who changed TV and culture, Roseanne Conner.178

Born into a working-class Jewish family in Salt Lake City, Utah, Roseanne Barr is the oldest of four children, and their family had a rough upbringing. With a unique religious history, a child up for adoption at the age of 17 and numerous medical issues, Barr did not grow up in a typical environment.179

While her religious upbringing was strongly influenced by her Orthodox Jewish grandmother, her parents, Helen and Jerome, kept this heritage a secret from surrounding

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neighbors and even participated in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.\footnote{Tugend, Tom. "Roseanne Shares Secrets and Jibes | L.A. Woman." Jewish Journal News. March 23, 2006. Accessed March 21, 2016. \url{http://www.jewishjournal.com/la_woman/article/roseanne_shares_secrets_and_jibes_20060324/}.} According to Barr, "Friday, Saturday, and Sunday morning I was a Jew; Sunday afternoon, Tuesday afternoon, and Wednesday afternoon we were Mormons."\footnote{"Roseanne: Jewish Latter-day Saint Actress and Entertainer." Roseanne: Jewish Latter-day Saint Actress and Entertainer. Accessed March 21, 2016. \url{http://www.ldsfilm.com/actors/Roseanne.html}.} Their religion was further solidified when Barr had Bell’s palsy on the left side of her face and the Jewish rabbi could not perform the miracle the Mormon preacher did. This miraculous cure led to Barr’s first stage appearance where she lectured at Latter-day Saints’ churches.

Barr grew up a bit but suffered a traumatic brain injury when a car hit her at the age of 16. She was institutionalized for eight months at Utah State Hospital. At the age of 17, Barr had a daughter and gave her up for adoption. After this series of events and at the age of 18, Barr told her parents she was visiting a friend in Colorado but never returned to her parents home.\footnote{Gallagher, Maria. "Thin Roseanne? That's No Joke Barr's Story in 'My Life As a Woman'" \textit{Philadelphia Daily News}, September 26, 1989.}

Her personal life was always something of a confusing mystery, and the media was all over it. After multiple interviews or autobiographical articles in magazines, details of Barr’s life came out to the public and threw parts of her professional life out of whack. In a 1991 article in \textit{People}, Barr described herself as an “incest survivor.” Over the course of 10 years, she went through legal proceedings, therapy and estrangement.
from her sister/manager, Geraldine. In 2011, Barr and her sister went onto *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and she addressed that statement. That previous decade was a dark time in her life, filled with a mental illness being treated by psychiatric drugs and being in a horribly unhappy relationship. While she retracted her statements of incest, Barr said that not everything was “made up” and said “Nobody accuses their parents of abusing them without justification.” During that time, Barr divorced her second husband Tom Arnold and began another relationship where she had her son, Buck. In 2002, she married one more time and lives with her husband Johnny Argent on a 46-acre macadamia nut farm in Hawaii.

Barr’s professional life was as tumultuous as her personal life. She began her comedy career in Colorado by doing stand-up in Denver and other towns. Barr appeared on *The Tonight Show* in 1985 and performed on *Late Night with David Letterman* in 1986. Things quickly progressed and HBO aired a special called *The Roseanne Barr Show* the following year, which earned her an American Comedy Award for ‘Funniest Female Performer in a TV Special.’ In this routine, her popular phrase “domestic goddess” came to be and her housewife persona was born.

Two years after her TV debut, the executive producers of *The Cosby Show*, Marcy Carsey and Tom Werner, contacted Barr about bringing a “no-perks family comedy” to

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the small screen.\textsuperscript{187} Carsey approached Barr as a “sister in arms,” who wanted to do a show about a strong mother who did not fall prey to “Patriarchal Consumerist Bullshit.” The premiere episode aired on October 18, 1988. It was watched by 21.4 million households (highest-rated debut of the season), and outraged Barr. Specifically, it was the lack of credit she received in the first round of credits. Writer Matt Williams was credited as the creator of the series in the first episode, even though the show was built around her “actual life,” kids and the whole “domestic goddess… thing.”\textsuperscript{188} However, this was a cycle of the Writer’s Guild rules and Werner thought Barr never understood that part of TV production.

Barr confronted Carsey about this lack of credit, nothing came of this and Barr continued up the chain of command to meet with Brandon Stoddard (ABC Entertainment president). His reaction left much to be desired. Barr thought his reaction mimicked a look he would give to an “arrogant waitress run amok.”\textsuperscript{189} She continued through the rounds.

Reaching out to her agent, the Writers Guild and even the William Morris Agency to get to the root of the problem. Only to find out, the executive producers had “bullshitted” Matt Williams into thinking Barr was his star and that this was entirely his creation, while at the same time telling Barr that it was her show and Williams was her


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“scribe.” People suggested she walk away and start over, but to Barr this was a one time gig and she would probably never get another show with this reach (a true guess).

That first season sparked conflict through the show; Barr would not say certain lines and walked off the set. To her, it seemed no one but her cared about the show and that she was enemy No. 1 to Williams, Carsey and ABC because she would not defer to their wishes and “didn’t keep her mouth shut” or “do what she was told.” At one point, Williams went behind her back and asked co-star John Goodman if he would do the show without her. He refused, and that did not happen.190

Barr says this subterfuge continued into wardrobe choices and into the actors’ dialogue. After a four-hour long hold on filming because the writer would not change one line, Barr had the proof she needed to change things. The line was a phrase that was supposed to be from a “feminist” perspective. To her husband Dan, Roseanne was supposed to let him know that he is her “equal in bed, but that is it,” a wild and sexist misinterpretation of “what a feminist thinks.” When she did not say it convincingly enough, the director corrected her on it in an unprofessional manner and she requested a line change. She explained her character’s view and knew that it did not align with anything she would do in real life, and when that did not work, lawyers were called in related to the heated atmosphere. It wasted four hours of production budget, and that was her argument for Williams’ termination. This logic brought the company to her side and American Broadcast Company (ABC) fired Williams after the thirteenth episode. Her character, presence and creativity were an integral part of the show. She had to use other reasoning to get what she wanted and deserved.

The next writer was not much better, but with the support of her management team and the production staff she continued on and in 1989, the show went No. 1.\textsuperscript{191} In congratulations, ABC sent her a large chocolate bar in the shape of a ‘1,’ which George Clooney (her boss on the show) proceeded to play baseball with. She sent a picture of him smashing it with a bat to ABC. Her promise to herself was if they hit No. 1, she would clean house and she did. According to Barr, many of them went to Tim Allen’s new sitcom, \textit{Home Improvement}. This was the beginning of her credit. She hired female comics she had worked with, promoted female assistants to full writers and gave untried writers a try. On the show, she also gave voices to woman writers coming into Hollywood. Amy Sherman-Palladino, creator and writer of \textit{Gilmore Girls}, got her first writing job on \textit{Roseanne}.\textsuperscript{192} However, their reception did not hold up to the opportunity. Barr made them wear numbered T-shirts so she did not have to learn their names. She would ask which number wrote which joke and then give them a small compliment. Sherman-Palladino found that this diminished their worth and Joss Whedon (another writer and the creator of \textit{Buffy the Vampire Slayer}) considered it “brutal.”\textsuperscript{193}

The first season was the first of many conflicts around the show. Another came from firing her manager, Geraldine, who was also her sister. In 1991, Geraldine was fired, then turned around and sued Roseanne Barr for $70.3 million in a breach of contract lawsuit. Geraldine insisted that Barr promised her half of the earnings from the

sitcom for her assistance in creating the “domestic goddess” character, while she served as “writer, organizer, accountant, bookkeeper and confidante.” However, the suit was thrown out because it was outside the statute of limitations. This also aligned with the start of their separation.

The seventh season of the show saw a dramatic change in public reception. It completely dropped from the top 10, landed at No. 16 and Barr began her fame detox. She tried to completely separate herself from the “hostile work environment” ABC and Carsey-Warner had created. Through the course of Roseanne’s nine season run (1988-1997), Barr won an Emmy, a Golden Globe, a Kids Choice Award and three American Comedy Awards in relation to the show. She also made $40 million in the last two seasons of the show, making her the second highest paid woman in show business after Oprah Winfrey. Barr and Roseanne’s presence and popularity in society brought a working class family and woman to the table. She was the representation of “the hopeless underclass of the female sex: polyester-clad, overweight occupants of the slow track; fast-food waitresses, factory workers, housewives, members of the invisible pink-collar army; the despised, the jilted, the underpaid.”

After the first few years of the show, Barr began to publish other projects. In 1989, she wrote and released her autobiography *Roseanne—My Life As a Woman* and made her film debut in *She-Devil* where she starred opposite Meryl Streep and received praise for going outside of the anticipated “predictable and dumb comedy.” Over the next 10 years, she ventured into many new projects, including animation, theatre and her own talk show.

During that time, she became the first female comedian to host the MTV Video Music Awards, a title that held until Chelsea Handler hosted in 2010. In the 2000s, Barr ventured into reality television with *Domestic Goddess*, a cooking show, and *The Real Roseanne Show*, a reality show about hosting a cooking show, which both ended early due to medical issue. 2005 brought about the return of Roseanne Barr to stand-up comedy. She toured the world, filmed another HBO special, guest starred on a few shows and has developed and ended many prime time television shows. *Roseanne* seems to be

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Barr’s crowning glory; everything else seems to last for a few seasons, or not even get off the ground. Barr attributes this lack of creative focus and series of events to being treated as a “commodity,” a commodity that is supposed to speak, exemplify or be a product of the downtrodden.204

Similar to Donna Reed’s unhappiness with the Hollywood film industry and traditional sitcoms, to Barr “fame is a bitch.” Barr is never afraid to speak her mind and used her crowning glory show as a platform for liberal feminist ideas. Individually, she came to great fame and power in her position, always fighting for what she believed to be right.

Roseanne, Featuring An Unruly ‘Domestic Goddess’

“TV family sitcoms have always been about fathers who know best and mothers who are so enchanted with everything they do. I wanted to be the first mom to be a mom on TV. I wanted to send out a message about how us women really feel.”

Roseanne Barr205

First airing on October 18, 1988, Roseanne consists of an outspoken mother (Roseanne), an easy-going partially employed husband (Dan), and three children (Becky, Darlene, and D.J.) living in (fictional) Lanford, Illinois. In a world of soap operas (Dallas and Falcon Crest) or sitcoms featuring upper middle class families like the Cosbys, Roseanne was reality knocking on the metaphorical door.

Similar to *The Donna Reed Show*, the Conner family home centers around the living room and kitchen, but everything is a tad bit droopy. Equipped with a couch, two love seats and a television set, the living room is a beat up collection of fabric and wood well-used and -loved by its occupants. Never without the multi-colored crocheted afghan blanket, a muted plaid couch is the focal point of the room and is framed by two mismatched love seats. Roseanne, Dan and the kids can be found screaming at the television during a football game or gathered around while Roseanne convinces Darlene to finish her book report and not rely on a snow day. When there is food involved, the Conner family can be found around the kitchen table. Again, it has a tired quality to it. Nothing is brand new and everything has been used, a reflection of their socioeconomic status. With bright colors and patterned wallpaper, the kitchen (like the living room) is a gathering place and is featured regularly in every episode and the first eight seasons’ title sequence.

*Roseanne* was one the first sitcoms to feature a lower-middle class working family. Both parents work outside of the home and are overweight. They are not the stereotypical sitcom parents.\(^{206}\) The show was also unique for its portrayal of feminist messages and consistent focus on what a woman can be. One reviewer said *Roseanne* became “the most culturally open-minded series” on television.\(^{207}\) To Barr, the timing

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was perfect. In 1987, the public was ready for a sitcom that did not have the “rosy glow of middle-class confidence and comfort, and didn’t try to fake it.”

Producers paired Barr, an inexperienced actor, with John Goodman (her husband Dan), who was experienced enough for the management to feel like their main characters were balanced. When Goodman first walked into a reading, “he looked at Roseanne, and said, ‘Scoot over.’ She said, ‘Shut up,’ he plopped down, and it was like they had been married for 16 years.”

Barr knew that he was the key. When they met, he felt it was right and the Conner marriage began. Laurie Metcalf (her sister Aunt Jackie) was a steal for the team, coming right off of Steppenwolf Theatre Company and Sara Gilbert (her daughter Darlene) knew and loved that she could bring some serious angst to the part. Lecy Goranson (her daughter Becky) went through the casting process and Michael Fishman (her son D.J.) was one of the first creative control wins for Barr. The producers wanted someone else, she wanted him and the network wanted someone else entirely.

Brian Stoddard, ABC president of entertainment, said they were desperately looking for a hit and once cast, the pressure built. The director of the first season, Ellen Gittelsohn, felt that they had a hit during the filming of the pilot. So in 1988, a story of a working-class heroine graced the small screen. It presented a woman who raised her kids, kept her marriage strong and worked full-time.

Roseanne Conner: Wife, Mother & Queen Of Sarcasm

Roseanne Barr bulldozed onto the scene with a brash mother character in charge of a brood of three, a husband and a sister. In a raw and realistic depiction of life, it was

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something that had not been seen since *The Honeymooners* in 1970.\(^{210}\) Roseanne was “empathetic and wise” covered in a brutal sarcastic coating.\(^{211}\) Her relationship with Dan was effortlessly argumentative, but not malicious, and her parenting style was an athletic pursuit in zingers. The Conners were a family of misfits and that was refreshing. It was normal, and the public was hook, line and sinker.\(^{212}\)

Their interactions consisted of mini comedy sketches, with Roseanne landing her one liner. However, the moments that shined were a full cast effort where the constant bouncing back and forth between characters was a challenge to just see who would come out top dog. In most cases, it was Roseanne. In various episodes the viewer hears:

DARLENE: “Mom, where’s my English book?”
ROSEANNE: “I sold it.”

D.J.: “Can I have pie for breakfast?”
ROSEANNE: “No. That’s contaminated.”

ROSEANNE: “Go clean up your room.”
DARLENE: “It’s clean.”
ROSEANNE: “Then go clean *my* room.”

DARLENE: “Why are you so mean?”
ROSEANNE: “Because I hate kids. And I’m not your real mom.”

ROSEANNE: (to Dan after the kids leave for school) “Quick! They’re gone! Change the locks!”

DAN: “If you had an extra 50 bucks, what would you blow it on?”


ROSEANNE: “Buy new kids.”

ROSEANNE: (when D.J. had trouble untangling his sneakers) “Wear loafers.”

DARLENE: (to Dan and Roseanne) “You guys think we don’t get your corny little sex jokes.”

ROSEANNE: “Hey, you guys are our corny little sex jokes.”

The oldest of the brood is Becky (Lecy Goranson and Sarah Chalke), a straight-A student and goodie two-shoes daughter who shrieks when Roseanne does not buy her designer jeans with the extra $500 bonus they received. Becky stands up for what she believes in. This resulted in her running away and eloping during the third season, which fractures her relationship with Roseanne and Dan. Later in the series, this relationship is repaired and Roseanne helps her acclimate to her family’s new trailer. However, the trust Roseanne had in Becky during her adolescence was shattered, and their relationship never fully recovers. Becky is stubborn and looks out for herself. These traits are a reflection of Roseanne. While that does not do Roseanne any favors, Becky is loyal to those she loves and is very confident in herself as a woman. Overall, Becky is a bookworm who enjoys experimenting with makeup, clothes and boys, but is also a feminist similar to her mother and is never afraid to speak her mind.

A middle child with attitude, Darlene (Sara Gilbert) is an epic tomboy who thought she would suck at baseball as soon as she got her period. A bit lazy and smart enough to avoid things requiring a lot of energy, Darlene is never one to miss an

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216 See Appendix. Roseanne, Season one and Episode two.
opportunity for a joke or a quick quip. That is something she probably inherited from her mother. More adversarial than the other two children, Roseanne and Darlene’s relationship was often heated and conversations were had in another volume level. She is almost Roseanne junior. Taking after her sarcastic nature, writing ability and romantic relationship style, Darlene and Roseanne communicates in their own loud way but with a sense of respect. She would never do anything maliciously, but is not afraid to stand her ground or push those boundaries. One critic said she would have been the daughter to drive Donna Reed to drink.217

David Jacob (D.J.) is the third and last child of Roseanne (until she had a baby in season eight). Often joked about and indulged, D.J. was the baby of the family and is spoiled by Roseanne and Dan. He did not get into trouble like his older sisters, so the serious plot points often do not involve him (unless the episode where he is caught masturbating is counted).218 He is very mischievous, often getting into some sort of trouble that is laughed at and resolved by Roseanne. She tries to preserve his innocence, but with his two sisters that is not about to happen. In the end, he grew up with a love of film and Roseanne suggests he turn the basement into a studio to pursue his passion.

To many viewers these one-liners and abrupt conversations posed the question—Is Roseanne a good mother? They could be viewed as dysfunctional. Many thought that while these parenting skills are not the most advanced, her compassion and love can never be doubted. They just like to bug each other on a fairly regular basis. Roseanne and Dan’s love mimicked the same note. They argue in front of their kids, laugh at their screw-ups and do not try to be anything other than what they are. Roseanne and Dan are

free to be themselves and therefore, their kids are as well. They set limits for their kids with no guilt and the term “family values’ isn’t a catchphrase. It’s just the way they live.”

Roseanne’s partner in crime is Dan Conner, a loveable, teddy bear-like, hardworking man played by John Goodman. A contractor and failed drywall worker, Dan is the other half of Roseanne. He would come home from work and actually interact with the wife and kids. If he was watching television, his three children were hollering on the couch next to him. When they come back from shopping, he is putting purchases away with her and he helps with the dishes without being asked. In all of these instances, his actions are not the focus of the scene or even related to the plot line. It is a normal event for the Conner family. When they were able to get a moment alone with each other, they did not immediately hop into bed. Instead, they plop onto the couch and watch some television in each other’s arms, to which Roseanne asks “Was it good for you?”

A majority of their relationship involved their children. During the beginning of the show, Dan was an easygoing man. Never one to fully raise his voice, Roseanne was the vocal one of the two. She could talk him out of stubborn opinion in a second. When he did ‘lay down the law,’ it was usually as the talking head of Roseanne. When handling a difficult situation, he would stumble along a bit until finally consulting with Roseanne. In season five, a new Dan came to the forefront. He was paranoid and suspicious of his children’s actions. This all followed Becky’s elopement and Darlene’s relationship with Dan suffered. These moments were difficult for the family, but it stemmed from Dan.

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220 See Appendix. Roseanne, Season three and Episode eight.
Roseanne had her own opinion and sometimes they would overlap, but not always. While Dan and Roseanne’s relationship had its sharp edges and very rocky moments (infidelity in season nine), it also had intimacy. That was something not truly seen on television. It showed a side of married life that did not involved one person ‘loving and obeying’ the other. All in all, Roseanne and Dan communicate a grudging respect through witty, biting banter and jokes. Over the series, viewers heard:

ROSEANNE: (when Dan offers to cook) “Aw, but honey, you just fixed dinner three years ago.”

DAN: “Are you ever sorry we got married?”
ROSEANNE: “Every second of my life.”

DAN: “I was a stud wasn’t I?”
ROSEANNE: “Yeah, what happened?”
DAN: “So, I married this woman…”

Last but not least is Roseanne’s sister, Jackie Harris. Never far from Roseanne’s side, Jackie is neurotic, often single and childless (until the later seasons). Both raised in an abusive household, Jackie and Roseanne have a strong relationship with each other. When problems tried to knock them down, they met them head on and supported one another. Whether Jackie was in an abusive relationship or Roseanne had a pregnancy-scare, they always had each other’s back. During lighter times, they were never far apart and seemed to work at the same establishments. However, Jackie had a tendency to choose professions that are traditionally male-only, which further strengthens the gender bending and politics present in the show.

224 See Appendix. Roseanne, Season 1 and Episode eight.
During the non-work times, Roseanne constantly tries to fix Jackie up with a man. The irony is not lost though. Roseanne calls men ‘pigs’ multiple times and still she tries to hook her sister up with a man. There is a cognitive dissonance present in this relationship. Jackie is constantly worrying that something is wrong with her because she cannot find a man. Jackie has a few major relationships on the show, each one of them with an abuser of some kind: a physically abusive boyfriend (Fisher); a sexually harassing boss (Booker), and a controlling husband who tries to sue her for custody of her unborn child (Frank).\textsuperscript{225} Even though Roseanne contradicts her statements on this matter, she blames Jackie’s inability to keep a man on their father’s abuse. However, Jackie is not the problem, and the abuse they suffered did not happen in a vacuum. Unfortunately, they do not relay this on television. It seems that their relationship is based on a mutually beneficial support system with Roseanne carrying a little more of the load. Through these moments, Roseanne is there often with a shoulder to cry on and a choice curse word or two.

Roseanne used traditional themes found in television to make comedy, which in turn created a revolutionary version of satire.\textsuperscript{226} Roseanne is “a mother who cares about her children and fights fiercely for them.”\textsuperscript{227} Humor is there to keep them from killing each other and provide a nice laugh for the audience, especially when issues are not typical for primetime television. Roseanne is not just a domestic sitcom. It is a show about motherhood and specifically mother-daughter relationships. Viewers watch the Conner kids develop and grow into young adults under the watchful eyes of Roseanne

\textsuperscript{225} See Appendix. Roseanne, Season 5 and Episode 13.
\textsuperscript{227} Wolf, Jeanne. "The Freshman." People, June 8, 1992, 105-06.
and Dan, but the woman pulling the strings and trying to keep these small humans alive is Roseanne. This is a show about motherhood and about family. They are a real family with real issues that might be foreign to the TV screen, but are found in everyday life.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Through a textual analysis of *The Donna Reed Show* and *Roseanne*, this study examines the representation of the main character of two mother-centric family sitcoms created and starred by the same women within a feminist perspective. While the shows are visual and they are literally moving pictures, a textual analysis is the best method for analyzing this because a textual analysis can capture an interpretation of something’s meaning. McKee said it best with textual analysis “try and obtain a sense of the ways in which, in particular cultures at particular times, people make sense of the world around them.” Textual analysis allows for this study to look for the deep structures in the shows and not just the basic words characters spew.

This research looks to answer the questions: How is a main female character represented on the prime time sitcoms, *The Donna Reed Show* and *Roseanne*? How does the main female character’s role compare to the assumed gender roles of the time? How do the main characters and shows depict feminist ideas? How does *The Donna Reed Show’s* female representation and feminist ideas compare to *Roseanne*’s?

Through analysis and then comparison, this study examines how two prime time television icons represent the female gender within the context of history and feminism to discover if these ideals impacted the content and underlying messages of these two popular family sitcoms. Overall, this research looks into the gender roles evident on prime time television. There has been research conducted on pre World War II advertising and getting women into the workforce and on 1980s/90s television, but this

delves into the pop culture world and takes a deeper look at what message could be influencing viewers.\textsuperscript{229}

\textbf{The Study: How And What Is Happening}

Through a textual analysis of the family sitcom series \textit{The Donna Reed Show} (September 24, 1958 - March 19, 1966) and \textit{Roseanne} (October 18, 1988 - May 20, 1997), this study examines the underlying messages present on screen with a background of feminism. By re-examining popular television in a historical context, feminist theory allows for the exploration and illumination of the female viewpoint of history and, in this case, television.

These two shows were chosen due to the popularity of the shows, characters present and the fact that the women who stared in the shows were integral in the creation and production process. \textit{The Donna Reed Show} is a Golden Globe winner and four-time Emmy nominee. Airing from 1958 to 1966, the show was one of television’s top 25 shows in 1963-1964 and is a prime example of a 1950s family comedy.\textsuperscript{230} \textit{Roseanne} reached No. 1 in the Nielsen ratings becoming the most watched television show in the United States from 1989 to 1990. It was in the top four most watched television shows for six of its’ nine seasons, and in the top twenty for eight seasons. Overall, TV Guide rated \textit{Roseanne} as one of the greatest shows of all time.\textsuperscript{231}

Each sitcom is examined in the same way with a similar number of episodes analyzed to develop a consistent method of analysis. Each show is watched from start to


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finish with four episodes from the odd seasons of the show being watched. The first two odd seasons (1958 - 1963) of *The Donna Reed Show* were watched from the streaming service Hulu and the last two odd seasons (1963 - 1966) have been acquired from The Paley Center for Media. *Roseanne* (1988 - 1997) was found in its entirety on YouTube. All of the episodes were streamed and analyzed for their content from this platform. Four episodes from each season were selected based on the original airdate, which are all approximately seven episodes apart. Overall, 16 *The Donna Reed Show* episodes and 20 *Roseanne* episodes were watched for a total of 36 episodes analyzed. The Appendix specifies which episodes were analyzed from each series and season.

During analysis, there were a series of items watched for to garner a complete analysis of the gender representation on the show. First, the plotlines and story content of the show. When examining the plot of each episode, the subject matter was considered along with its cultural context. It was examined in the context of that time period to give an accurate analysis of the cultural significance of the story. Questions asked are:

- At the time this aired, is the subject matter taboo?
- Is it normal to talk about? Based on media literature on this time period, is this content featured in other media?
- What did publications think of plotlines? How were these episodes received?

Next, the main female character’s interaction with others, her family and secondary characters were analyzed. Through this, the female characters own identity as a person separate from the family and in society will be gained. Based on how she interacts with others shows the hierarchical structure of the family dynamic and how she is perceived in society. It also provides the characters own representation in the show’s universe. Questions asked are:
Lastly, the main female character as a character was examined. Her character outside of the family is vastly important for a study based in feminist ideals. It shows where her identity as a person stems from and what that character’s ideas, goals and personality are. If the female character’s existence is constantly connected to other characters, specifically men, there might be an issue with them as their own person. Questions asked are:

- Is she always placed in the context of another person?
- Is there a defining characteristic about her?
- What activities does she do outside of the role of “mother” or “wife”?
- Is she always the ‘mother’ or ‘wife’? Is there another role she constantly takes on?
- What is she passionate about? What is a common topic for her to address?

While watching the episodes, trends will be documented. A trend is an evolving pattern over time and, when analyzing the episodes, the storyline and character growth was taken into account. Patterns are stagnant and television stories evolve. Shifting plot line themes, character identities and interactions result in a new trend developing. The underlying messages were compared to the previous feminist waves, the following wave(s) and then to overarching feminist messages, especially in the case of The Donna Reed Show. There was an entire wave that was documented after the show went off the air, but that does not mean those messages were not present in the show. Lastly, the shows were analyzed in relation to the wave that came through.

This study does not aim to just analyze one show. Instead, it strives to find the similarities and differences between two shows set on the same nuclear family, from two
different periods but both created by a woman for the purpose of change. Therefore, they were compared to each other. The similarities in trends and differences were categorized. If there is a similarity or difference, that factor needs to be challenged by the historical context so it can be clarified further and the feminist implications found.
Chapter 5: Findings

**Donna Stone, Not The Typical Housewife**

Donna Stone is not the typical 1950s housewife. When compared to other television shows of the time, she mirrors reality more than she does the other fictional characters on the small screen. Her life is glamourized and evokes a sense of wonder about how she gets everything done, and in heels.

However, her relationships with her family and children, the way she voices her mind and the active role she plays in her own life seriously branch away from the housewives belittled in *The Feminine Mystique*. To completely disregard this book is ridiculous. Nevertheless, while it disregards any happy housewife, every American housewife was not as happy as the Donna Stone character portrayed. It’s fiction for a reason. Without something as sweeping as *The Feminine Mystique*, that second wave feminist movement might not have occurred. However, it shoves aside anything that remotely represents the repressive lives of a housewife and *The Donna Reed Show* is lumped along with it. Instead, *The Donna Reed Show* shared many of these second wave ideals as the producer and lead actress, Donna Reed, wanted to break away from the female housewife mold and show how women can and will lead their own lives.

Viewers encounter these feminist ideals through *The Donna Reed Show’s* plot, character interaction and dialogue. Donna is a strong woman who takes the good health and happiness of her family seriously. She takes pride in her work, but still expresses the sometimes less than wonderful emotions that come along with working at home.

Most episodes revolve around a light issue, which is usually solved with Donna’s
help. However, some episodes focus on taboo topics normally not seen on television such as women’s rights, freedom of the press and drug addiction. While this show is a family sitcom, it was not afraid to push the envelope. This was one of the stipulations Reed had. She did not want her character and the lives of these individuals to be idiotic and unrealistic. They were real people with real problems and while it was sometimes dressed up in hoop skirts and pearls, the issues were brought to the table.

However, Donna Stone is not the only character in this show and the interactions she has with her children, husband and neighbors add to the argument of The Donna Reed Show’s atypical nature. When overbearing characters dismiss Donna as “just a housewife” or “just a woman,” she and her family stand up to that classification. In the show, Donna and even Mary are treated as valid individuals, with separate thoughts and opinions that do not always circle around stereotypical female topics. Any interaction between characters has gender equality in mind or at least addresses or acknowledges the absence of it. By addressing the not-so-peachy moments of the show with a dry and witty sense of humor, the point is made and tempers are not raised, allowing the message to actually resonate with the viewer.

The Donna Reed Show falls at a strange cross roads. While not exactly representative of American society in the 1960s, where 40 percent of women had full or part-time jobs, the show stands apart from other family sitcoms. The lead character is a woman and that female character has a voice. This dynamic was not seen on the small screen. It was something new and different. The family sitcom plot lines and characters

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could even be classified as a type of diffuser used to get the message across. It positioned a powerful leading lady into the minds of the public, which allowed feminist ideals to germinate. While the show did not pack a big enough punch to set off an international women’s movement, the ideas and messages aired had the ability to reverberate in audiences and potentially had some of the most stringent minds into friendly territory.

If *The Donna Reed Show* was pigeon holed into one feminist movement, it aligns strongly with the liberal feminist movement. Liberal feminism comes from the perspective that society thinks women are less intellectually and physically capable than men. To break this mold, women have to individually strive to be better and for better. In the show, there was slight push back on traditional gender norms and that desire for change came from Donna Stone and the actions she took.

While finances and socioeconomic status were not addressed on *The Donna Reed Show* (losing the economic component of this feminism), the show did speak to the cultural aspect. Donna’s husband, Alex, never held the family financial situation (where he was the sole breadwinner) over her head. Throughout the show, Donna’s economic dependence on Alex was never truly addressed on the show. Unfortunately, it was just their reality and the audience was swept along for the ride. Cultural changes are where *The Donna Reed Show* stretched its legs. A large component of the show was seeing Donna Stone as more than just a mother. The audience saw her relationship with Alex and her other interests outside of the home front. Donna Stone was a suburban mother who tried to break the societally structured mold of motherhood with jabs at cultural and societal norms.

When Donna is in the wrong, her family does not take advantage or rub it in her
face. Just like her family, her mistakes are amusing and a nice plot line. This can be seen in “The Fortune Teller” episode. Donna is roped into being a fortuneteller for a charity bazaar. After stumbling through her predictions of the future, they begin to come true the next day, and Donna starts to believe she has the talent of precognition. This humorous exchange happens, when Alex tries to tell her she does not have the gift.

ALEX: “I’m still skeptical.”
DONNA: “That’s because you’re a man.”
ALEX: “What’s that supposed to mean?”
DONNA: “Women have more perception than men.”
ALEX: “Where did you ever get that idea?”
DONNA: “It’s common knowledge. Some have the qualities and some don’t. That’s all.”
ALEX: “Honey, are you seriously trying to tell me that you have that quality.”
DONNA: “I wouldn’t try to tell you anything with that closed mind of yours.”
ALEX: “My mind closed?”
DONNA: “Like a trap.”
ALEX: “Okay, I’m listening.” 234

In the same episode, Alex is trying to get Donna to offer an opinion on an oil stock option. For the majority of the episode she tries to tell him it is his decision to make, but he persists in asking her because it is not “his decision” and it is their money. She finally tells him he should not do it and then, he still cannot make up his mind. After he talks in circles and promptly confuses himself, Donna comes back with “I like a man who knows his mind.” The end of episode reveals the stock was a scam and it was a good thing Alex took her advice.

This episode uses a humorous exchange between husband and wife to show an equal playing field between them. He pokes fun at her psychic “quality,” which is the soft gimmick of the episode. In the end, Alex wants Donna’s opinion on monetary matters.

Finances were not a normal topic on the episodes but when they are mentioned, both

Alex and Donna are key players in the decision making process. Donna had access to key financial decisions for her family, something liberal feminism strives for (equal access). This episode does reinforce deference to a male opinion in financial decisions. Donna gives her opinion but he does not take that as the final decision. To him, it is more of a suggestion even though he does not act on it. Even though it is not taken at face value, this scene displays a new concept—women making blatant financial decisions on television. It complicates the gender norms present on the show. Donna is making a complicated financial decision (something not seen and very much in line with liberal feminism), but Alex takes it as more of a suggestion versus the final decision. The episode reinforces the idea of a man making the final decision in regards to a family’s finances with the liberal feminist idea of equal access (in this case, to large financial decisions).

Just like feminist ideals in the media today, not all are met with open arms. However, pop culture changes minds. With the media feedback loop in place, ideas circulate from actors and celebrities on television and in movies to people’s minds. At the start of *The Donna Reed Show* television was a hot commodity. It was new and it was something people had not been able to fully take advantage of. The ideas and the content people watched on TV stayed with them and created the ideals they wanted to achieve. In Donna Stone’s case, it was a respected role in her household, community and society. The same concept applies today. With the development of the Apple Watch, streaming services and the continued development of the Internet, media is everywhere and influencing everyone. An enormous amount of content is continuously influencing the world and it is no longer just a television and the few primetime shows on every night.
Airing over 57 years ago, *The Donna Reed Show* was 22-and-a-half-minutes of family sitcom fun with the hint of feminism. Breaking from the typical TV housewife role, Donna Stone ran her home with grace and dignity, never afraid to stand up and let her voice be heard. *The Donna Reed Show* predates the emergence of second wave feminism and fights against the negative implications of being “just a housewife.” With witty dialogue and smart acting, television shows can change minds and perspectives to advance new ideals and impact the world.

**Edgier Television For The 1950s**

Issues outside of the typical sitcom realm made their way into *The Donna Reed Show* in big ways. While most episodes focused on various household and family issues, the show also addressed edgier issues such as women’s rights, freedom of the press and drug addiction. *The Donna Reed Show* was not overtly political but some of the writers’ tried to sneak in social ideas that were not always congruent with what was accepted at that time. Due to the tie sitcoms had with their commercial sponsors, many were either reluctant or unable to do this.

Barbara Avedon was one of the writers on the show and wrote her episodes with a feminist slant. She was also the writer of the 1980s show *Cagney and Lacey*, which was one of the first television dramas to star two independent women. While *The Donna Reed Show* was the predecessor to this work, it shared the same ideal. Avedon was just one of the female writers that got a start in Hollywood through Donna. Apparently, “you didn’t hire women writers in that day. They got their starts through the office of Donna.”

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Donna Stone was always a strong character, but in Avedon’s episodes the topics centered on her connection and resistance to gender inequality. Some of these episodes were: “Rebel with a Cause,” where Donna goes undercover as a journalist to get the scoop on being classified as a housewife; “Pioneer Woman,” where Donna tells Mary they are going camping with the guys to prove Jeff’s friend wrong about woman being too soft; and “Author, Author,” where Donna takes up a career in writing and plays a trick on her family. Reed’s character was not someone who caused problems, but one who resolved them.

One episode that exemplifies liberal feminism and was analyzed during the research process was the 1960 episode “Just a Housewife.” It aired in the second season and took on the issue of the saying “I’m just a housewife.” The first full line out of Donna is in reaction to a woman saying she is one and Donna asks, “Have you ever noticed that women seem to apologize when they say that?” The episode continues to show Alex saying “housewife” is just a word, not an occupation, like “mother, moon, antidisestablishmentarianism, chair, and book.” The episode tackles the societal implications of being a housewife, the possibility of a female president and even talks about the suffrage movement. Donna is compared to Abraham Lincoln, and her speech to the Emancipation Proclamation.

This was the beginning of the outright female liberation on The Donna Reed Show.

237 ”Just a Housewife,” The Donna Reed Show. Performed by Donna Reed, Carl Betz, Shelley Fabares, Paul Peterson, Jerry Hausner, Elaine Riley, Wallace Earl, C. Lindsay Workman, Virginia Stefan. United States of America: Virgil Films, 1960. TV. (See Appendix. The Donna Reed Show, Season 2 and Episode 19.)
Show. When a radio host degrades housewives on the air, Donna uses her opportunity as one of his unsuspecting guests to set the record straight. She points out society’s view of a housewife is flawed. While they do not receive a monetary wage, the things they do and the impact they have is as strong as any number of paying occupations. She does not fight for equal opportunity in the job field but she does fight for equal respect from her occupation. This rousing bought for the housewife occupation does reinforce the traditional role of femininity at the time. It praises the women who stay at home and take care of the household and family. With a feminist movement striving for equal access, this story does pigeon hole a women’s occupation to housework or related to her family. However, the conversation around taking pride in what one’s occupation is and fighting for equal representation is feminist in nature. Once again, The Donna Reed Show complicates the issue of feminist messages on television, a key image-maker and norm enforcer.

“All Women Are Dangerous” aired in April of 1963 and depicted numerous high school girls fighting for the chance to have Jeff Stone take them to the dance. While this premise is catty and does not picture women in the best light, the episode focused on the girls having all the power in who wins the date. While the goal is not the most inspiring depiction of feminism, the ability to fight for what they want and have an equal role in the construction of a relationship is liberating. Women’s empowerment came through in this episode. While “The Editorial” and “The Big League Shock” did not overtly address women’s issues, the content was not the norm for prime time television. Freedom of the press and drug addiction were not in the typical family sitcom repertoire. These edgy
topics were ahead of its time and are just another example of why *The Donna Reed Show* was different from its television counterparts.

Most of the episodes chronicled the daily lives of the Stone family. Filled with frothy content and witty humor, the episodes display a new kind of family not always seen on prime time television. Sprinkled in throughout the seasons are episodes with hard-hitting points and more witty commentary. The compelling and familiar plot lines, character interactions and the witty dialogue make *The Donna Reed Show* stand out from the pack and categorize it as feminist-friendly television. By airing edgier plotlines, these episodes address issues like gender discrimination, women’s rights and political intervention or oppression. There are all matters brought up in the second wave feminist movement, as well as liberal feminism.

**Roseanne Conner, “The Unruly Woman”**

In 1990, the show boomed. Episodes featured story lines around D.J.’s masturbation obsession, Roseanne’s PMS, Becky wanting birth control and Darlene’s first period. Goranson said there have been multiple women her age that had the ‘birth control’ talk with their mothers after the episode aired. The episodes had stories from their own lives and because they showed reality, it was going to air. *Roseanne* did not sweep issues under the rug; it devoted an entire episode to it and that is not something seen today.  

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Halfway through the first season Darlene faces an embarrassing development. In “Nightmare on Oak Street,” Darlene has her first period.\textsuperscript{239} At the time, the actress playing Darlene, Sarah Gilbert, was mortified about the storyline, but now considers it perfect. This is a natural female moment and represents a coming-of-age scenario. By showing that on TV, it made a great advance towards showing real people in real moments.\textsuperscript{240} It begins with Darlene not wanting to tell Roseanne about her new development. Instead, she tells her mom she cannot sleep. Roseanne believes it is a result of the scary movies she watched before bed. In a blurted out comment, Roseanne discovers the truth about her daughter’s new puberty development. When talking about it later with Jackie, she and Roseanne talk about Darlene’s reaction to it and how their mother first handled their periods.

\textbf{JACKIE} (about Darlene's first period): “The poor kid's just been sentenced to 35 years of monthly inconvenience.”
\textbf{ROSEANNE}: “Gee Jackie, I only hope I can find a way to impart that enlightened viewpoint on to my daughter.”
\textbf{JACKIE}: “You will, just tell her about all those famous athletic women types and how they all get their periods too.”\textsuperscript{241}

Later, Roseanne discovers the root of the issue and finds Darlene throwing away her sporting equipment and anything she deems not ‘girl things.’ Like Darlene and Roseanne typically do, they get into a screaming match about why she can or cannot keep certain items. In their resulting fight, Darlene basically argues in favor of the constructed

\textsuperscript{239} "Nightmare on Oak Street." IMDb. Accessed March 24, 2016. 
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0762983/?ref_=ttqt_tt 
http://www.ew.com/article/2008/10/24/roseanne-family-reunion
gender norms seen on television at that time. She is growing out of her tomboy stage and
now has to act like a proper ‘girl’ (or what she thinks a girl is). One bit of wisdom
departed by Roseanne comes from this conversation…

ROSEANNE: “Oh, I understand. You think you have to leave all this stuff behind
now. Women have to stop wearing baseball gloves and start wearing aprons and
stuff.”
DARLENE: “All I know is I’m not shaving my legs or wearing panty hose like
Becky!”
ROSEANNE: “You think I make Becky put on makeup and wear perfume?”
DARLENE: “(pause) No.”
ROSEANNE: “She does it cause she has always liked that kind of stuff. She does
it because that is the type of woman she wants to be
DARLENE: “Well that is not the type of woman, I want to be!”
ROSEANNE: “Well then, what are you throwing your stuff away for? These are
girl’s things, Darlene, as long as girls continue to use them. You love all this stuff.
That’s reason enough to keep it.”
DARLENE: “I’m probably going to start throwing like a girl anyway.”
ROSEANNE: “Definitely. And since you got your period, you’ll be throwing a lot
farther.”

Not only does Roseanne get the point across of being your own woman, but she also does
not criticize her other daughter (Becky) for her interest in beauty and more traditionally
female gender role specific practices. Instead, she empowers both of her daughters to be
whoever they want to be and to not let societal standards of womanhood dictate their
decisions. This was one of the first glimpses into outright feminism, as well as the blatant
discussion of the menstrual cycle on primetime television.

However, to the creative team it was never about breaking new ground and doing
something shocking. Writer Amy Sherman-Palladino felt that the show (early on) tried to

242 See Appendix – Roseanne, Season 1 and Episode 15.
keep “true to those characters and true to life.”\textsuperscript{243} This truth really displayed a spark of feminism on the show. The truth of these characters was carried from liberal feminism and not abiding by society’s or television’s idea of the perfect woman or what femininity is supposed to look like. Just because Darlene ‘became a woman’ that day, it does not mean she gives up the traditionally masculine activities she enjoys. She had every right to play sports and Roseanne made that extremely evident to her. The idea of equal access or opportunity was not new in the 1990s but it does reiterate the liberal feminist nature of this episode.

In season three, “Trick or Treat” aired and gender politics became a topic of discussion on \textit{Roseanne}. In this episode, the Conner family is going to Dan’s club Fright Fest, but on the way they come across some bumps in the road. The first of which is D.J. wanting to dress up as a witch for Halloween. In Dan’s perspective, “boys shouldn’t dress up like girls.” Through the entire interchange between Dan and Roseanne, she constantly points out the double standards this holiday has for men and women (or in this case, boy and girl).

\begin{verbatim}
DAN: “He’s dressed like a witch. Witches are girls.”
ROSEANNE: “This is the 90s now. Witches are women.”
DAN: “Boys shouldn’t dress up like girls.”
ROSEANNE: “Darlene dressed up like a pirate for three years.”
DAN: “That was cute. If he goes out like this, he is going to come home with a bloody nose.”
ROSEANNE: “That’s stupid.”\textsuperscript{244}
\end{verbatim}

Dan tries to convince D.J. to be a warlock because that is at least a male witch, but D.J. wants to have a broom and therefore wants to be a witch. In the end, he gets to be


\textsuperscript{244} See Appendix. \textit{Roseanne}, Season 3 and Episode 7.
a witch. Roseanne tries to take the discussion one step further and plans to show up at the
haunted house dressed as a man. As in any sitcom, things do not go according to plan.
Instead, Roseanne and Jackie’s car breaks down. They are forced to go into the Lobo
Lounge (a local bar they frequent) and call Dan to come pick them up. Again in
traditional sitcom fashion, Dan cannot be found and they have to hang around the bar
while they wait. Roseanne decides to take advantage of this interlude and test out her
disguise. She tries to hang with the boys to figure out their mentality and way of life. She
wanders into the men’s restroom, plays pool with some of the locals and even hits on a
lady at the bar (who happens to be one of her best friends Crystal). Through a series of
conversations, Roseanne discusses sex, men paying for things and expecting a form of
‘payment’ in return, and even gender equality related to peeing standing up.245 The
Roseanne and Dan plot line ends in a kiss and a hug in the Lobo Lounge. D.J. and Dan’s
story ends with a quick heart-to-heart and a “let’s go get you a broom.” Through this
entire episode, Roseanne takes on gender norms. While it is disguised by wit, it makes
the viewer bend their perception. It is a bit ham-handed, but funny, and Barr was
anything but subtle with her comedy and cultural critiques.246

Episodes with interactions between Roseanne’s friends and daughters brought
liberal feminist ideals to the forefront of the show. Her coaching and ideas she wanted to
pass down to them ring a feminist bell of equal access and opportunity among all. She
wanted them to be better than she was and create their own kind of womanhood, one that

245 “Every time my old lady gives me crap about men and women being equal. I say
you’re so equal? Well let’s see you pee on a campfire.” (See Appendix).
246 "10 Episodes That Show the Heart and Soul behind Roseanne's Cynical Exterior." ·
was spared society’s manipulation. The show’s characters were able to express their feminism within their specific means. Becky is the ambitious one, who is striving for excellence and maintaining traditional beauty norms. Darlene comes from an opposite direction. The sarcastic tomboy of the family, she calls out anything she does not agree with. While these two characters with the support of Roseanne try to change their circumstances, they are limited by their social and economic opportunities (which is acknowledged in the show).

ROSEANNE: (when Darlene does not want to go to school without David, her boyfriend) “Sometimes life just gives you one chance and if you don’t grab it… Listen you’ve got to go because I want you to go. If you don’t go you’re going to regret it… I love you, Darlene and I want you to get the hell out of here.”

This moment on the show reflected Roseanne’s regrets, her dreams for her daughters future and her frustration with how important a man is in her daughter’s decision-making process. Roseanne iterates the struggle associated with getting out of their town and out of their financial situation. When Darlene gets that chance, she does not understand how she can pass it up. She has the ability to even the unfair playing field and Roseanne thinks she should take it. In a world of unfair advantages related to gender, this is a chance for Darlene to break that barrier and rise to the platform she should be playing on (something liberal feminism also strived for).

Season seven marked a turning point for the show; writers broke the fourth wall and acknowledged recasting Becky after Goranson left the show, Roseanne became pregnant with her fourth child and Dan had a heart attack (in season eight). In the ninth season, the Conners won a $108 million lottery prize, Jackie met a prince, Darlene gives

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birth and reality left the show. This was also the point in time that John Goodman left the show and signed a contract for only 12 episodes. The show became surreal and began to mimic Barr’s real life, according to Sarah Gilbert. Barr considered this her right. After working on the show for eight seasons, she felt she had earned the right to do what she wanted and say exactly what she wanted, so “F— critics, f— the network, f— the viewers, f— everybody but [her] and God. It was very personally rewarding. It pissed everybody off, so that was awesome.”

To end a strange ending, the season finale blew the minds of viewers when they watched Roseanne narrate a last family dinner of sorts. Audiences discovered Becky and Darlene’s romantic relationships were actually flip flopped (Darlene with Mark and Becky with David), Jackie was a lesbian (not Beverly), they family did not actually win the lottery and the biggest blow of all, Dan’s heart attack was fatal and he did not survive. The entire last season of the show was the fictional dreams of a widowed, blue-collar mother. These were her fantasies. One critic said this version of Roseanne was “a Bizarro-world parody of Dynasty, with the crass, nouveau-riche Conners hobnobbing with royalty and indulging every gaudy whim.” However, others felt it was a testament

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to true grief and the tragedy real life can bring. Roseanne’s ending monologue could either be a strangely poetic reflection of Barr’s life or a self-indulgent ‘ha-ha’ to the network which she finally got control over. However, when the monologue is read through, there are glimpses of the feminist and blue-collar mentality that Roseanne had spoken for.

ROSEANNE (voiceover): “So in my writing, I did what any good mother would do. I fixed it... Dan and I always felt that it was our responsibility as parents to improve the lives of our children by 50 percent over our own. And we did. We didn't hit our children as we were hit, we didn't demand their unquestioning silence, and we didn't teach our daughters to sacrifice more than our sons. As a modern wife, I walked a tight rope between tradition and progress, and usually, I failed, by one outsider's standards or another's. But I figured out that neither winning nor losing count for women like they do for men. We women are the one's who transform everything we touch. And nothing on earth is higher than that. My writing’s really what got me through the last year after Dan died. I mean at first I felt so betrayed as if he had left me for another women. When you’re a blue-collar woman and your husband dies it takes away your whole sense of security. So I began writing about having all the money in the world and I imagined myself going to spas and swanky New York parties just like the people on TV, where nobody has any real problems and everything’s solved within 30 minutes. I tried to imagine myself as Mary Richards, Jeannie, That Girl. But I was so angry I was more like a female Steven Segal wanting to fight the whole world.”

It brings to light the fictional worlds people create for themselves and the fantasies that television programming created at that time. It also slightly addresses the financial situation of lower-middle class families. It poked at the financial instability women face by mentioning the fact that many women had to have two incomes to provide for their families because a woman’s salary could not cover it. While it is

clouded in run-on sentences and a need for a strong-handed editor, it does make one think (if you can get past the shock and the 23 episodes preceding it).

When Roseanne talks about how winning or losing count differently for men and women, it brings the overall message of liberal feminism through. Society and the television universe *Roseanne* is in, view women as less than men. Instead of having equal access, being a woman skews the balance, making it more difficult to succeed and easier to fail. With this sense of women, the show does reinforce the concept of femininity and motherhood, and motherhood and invisibility. Television gender norms strike again; Roseanne’s initial regretful thoughts stem from her children and her husband but she acknowledges the place she resides in society. By not arguing for structural change, Roseanne’s final monologue brings to light liberal feminism’s idea of female equality through their actions and choices.

It was successful from the start. The show hit No. 1 on the Nielsen ratings and replaced *The Cosby Show* as the top show in America. It spent six seasons among the top 5 highest-rated shows and the finale garnered 16 million viewers. One NBC senior executive reacted to *Roseanne* with “…How raw, how rude - how real. Since [the beginning], for better or worse, television has come around to Roseanne's view of the world.”

**A Boundary Of Feminism**

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Once a week, the lives of the Conners are played out in sometimes-painful detail. *Roseanne* shows the limitations of lower class women’s lives in her small town. While raising three children, she hopes for new experiences and better opportunities. However, as the season progresses, hope fades and reality digs in. Her children’s opportunities are tied to her own economic status and ability, which unfortunately is not high.

This comparison stretches into Roseanne Barr’s own reality. In the process of making this show, she faced the intense discrimination found in the male dominated television industry. Throughout the show, Barr finds a greater autonomy in herself and it is reflected in her character and in the plot lines of the later seasons.\(^{258}\) The first season of the show was during the debacle with writer Williams and it is reflected in some of the plot lines and character interactions. Roseanne is a bit more submissive to Dan and in one episode she even buys a perfume called “Submission.”\(^{259}\)

*Roseanne* brought the conversation of economic independence to the table. Having a television show that showed a family in a lower social class, allowed the concept of money to come up often and fluidly within the show. The Conner family could not be dependent on one income. When Dan or Roseanne did not have extra cash, their money went to bills and the children. Neither person solely held the purse strings. Due to Roseanne’s run of the household, one could argue that she controlled the Conner family money. The challenged economic dependence ended once they won the lottery and it became a non-issue to the family.


\(^{259}\) See Appendix. *Roseanne*, Season 1 and Episode 2.
From her interactions with her numerous bosses to the actions of male bar inhabitants, a lot of Roseanne’s comedic material came from this topic (cross dressing on Halloween and acting like a man). When the subject became more serious (domestic abuse), she did not shy away from it and used it as a platform to criticize the absolute power some men hold in relationships. There were no issues too taboo for Roseanne to cover. Roseanne Conner is a mother, wife, sister, business owner and feminist with specific ideals she bestowed to her friends, family and audience.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

Feminism And Family Sitcoms

When watching television, there is a “collective viewing experience.” Specific plots and character actions resonate and become significant to viewers and studies have shown that “exposure” can change viewers’ ideas and impact their actions in everyday life, especially in regards to family and marriage.260 Keeping in mind the culture of the time, this research went one step further and looked at the role of the lead female character in family sitcoms. By examining 1950s and 1980s television, questions emerge regarding how primetime television depicted women, the domestic family ideal and the interaction between feminist ideals and television gender norms.

Overall, there has been separate research on television’s role and how females are portrayed in magazines and on screen in the 1950s and getting women into the workforce and on 1980s/90s television.261 However, there is not much research on what those images are actually implying.

In addition, most research has been focused on looking back and not within the context of the time. This study interprets history and its pop culture with a feminist frame of mind to discover what female representations were present on television (specifically sitcoms), how they portrayed feminist ideas (if any) and how the feminist movements might have changed their message. This study focuses on *The Donna Reed Show*, a Golden Globe winner and four-time Emmy nominee, and *Roseanne*, the most watched show on television from 1989 to 1990.262

**40 Years Apart… Did Anything Change?**

*The Donna Reed Show* (1958-1966) features typical mother, father, son and daughter in Hilldale, a suburban town in middle America. Wait for it, there is a twist. Is the main character the father? No! Instead it is Donna Stone, the matriarch of the family, who headlines the story. The Stones are an upper-middle class family who live a pretty splendid life. Similar to other shows of the time, it showed a glamourized version of reality and evoked a sense of fantasy.

*Roseanne* (1988-1997) depicts the same mother and father pair, but with three children in Lanford, Illinois, a similar suburban town outside of big city Chicago. The Conners were one of television’s first blue-collar families with both parents in the working world. Unlike Donna Reed, Roseanne can be found in a large flannel shirt with uncombed hair, laughing with her mouth full of pizza at her kids’ crazy antics. There was


a roughness to the Conners not seen on television before. They were a family with issues and were not afraid to get down and dirty to fix them.

Besides the fact they are domestic sitcoms taking place in Midwestern towns, *Roseanne* and *The Donna Reed Show* are very different. However, they do share some commonalities and ideals. Both of these shows can be considered feminist texts. Both stem from varying times creating two separate shows and their corresponding classification of feminist text. The shows present the leading ladies as fully realized characters complete with faculties, desires, conflicts and problems. The woman are treated as humans that are interesting and worthy of being a story (or in this case a full show). Therefore, they can be labeled as feminist texts.

Unlike many television shows, their leading ladies produced their corresponding domestic sitcoms. While both were uncredited originally, Roseanne Barr fought for and won producer credit on her show. After the series ended, her cast mates and other executives credited Donna Reed as a producer on *The Donna Reed Show*. These women had a character in mind they wanted to bring to the public.

While the version of motherhood they focused on is separated by 40 years, they were fiercely loyal to their children, ready to stand up for women and never afraid to voice their opinions. Both women were strong depictions of traditional gender normed female characters. Barr and Reed had ideas and thoughts about what version of womanhood, motherhood and domestic life should be on television and brought it to Hollywood.

In Donna Reed’s picture perfect and fairytale world, there are discrepancies that present viewers with a perspective not found on shows like *Father Knows Best* and *Leave
It To Beaver. She held an active role in her life. It is not entirely dictated by a man and her voice is not shut down when she decides to express it. She enjoys her life, but if it is not hunky-dory, she fixes that. However, she is a mother and a wife. Until the last season of the show, she did not have an outside occupation. The show kept her within the boundaries of traditional television femininity and reinforced the gender norm of a woman always being a wife and mother. She shared these character traits with Roseanne.

Barr carried the same gender norms but jacked everything else way up. Leading her household with a sharp tongue, Roseanne constantly challenged her present life. Always striving for something better, *Roseanne* brought the intersectionality of gender and class to the crowded kitchen table.

A majority of the episodes revolve around a light, fluffy topic. In *The Donna Reed Show*, Mary wants a boy to ask her out or Jeff is filming a movie. In *Roseanne*, it took a bit of a dramatic twist, but it featured Jackie meeting her prince or D.J. being caught masturbating. It was the 90s and plotlines evolved slightly. However, each show brought a not-so-hidden agenda with it. Within the overall plot of the season or series, they would bring important issues up, almost as if the soft stories were a front for the real issues. *The Donna Reed Show* brought women’s rights and gender roles, freedom of the press and drug addiction to the 1950s primetime line up. *Roseanne* brought severe financial struggles, unplanned pregnancy, domestic abuse and gender politics.

*The Donna Reed Show* featured the division of power and authority by physical household space and traditional gender roles. Alex was in charge of his practice, which included the office and his study, while Donna had authority in the rest of the house. Even the conversations were split. Alex took the physical sciences (money, math and
history), while Donna took everything else (personal care, basic day-to-day living and gender and social norms). Roseanne tackled this a bit differently. There were no off limit zones; snooping in your child’s room was not even considered snooping because as a mother this would be considered ‘cleaning.’ Roseanne embodied the ‘unruly woman’ mode and nothing was off the table. Donna reinforced a traditional television gender norm of focusing on the ‘softer’ and stereotypically feminine subjects, but tried to break the rules. Roseanne tried to smash them and refused to be tamed.

Donna Reed was the anti-thesis to Roseanne. She is remembered as calm, collected and able to do everything. To an extent, that is true. However, there were episodes that everything did not go according to plan. Those were the episodes where Donna (her character, but probably the producer as well) was trying to prove the point that not everything is perfect in real life. She just had to get the majority of the episodes past the network.

Roseanne was on the opposite end of the spectrum, thrived on chaos. That was part of the comedy and the charm. Her life was in constant upheaval, but she loved her family. Whether brutally sarcastic or delightfully witty, the comedic portrayal of a traditional family brought together two conversations: one on “traditional liberalism and

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the other on feminism and social class. Overall, these were shows about family and motherhood. They succeeded in that role, but complicated the discussion of feminism.

Roseanne, more so than Donna Reed, broke the traditional gender roles television constructed for women. While Donna Reed was a universalization of womanhood in the 1950s and 1960s, Roseanne brought a new edge to the metaphorical table. They are both about very traditional nuclear families with unique mothers (the traditional version of reality on television). However, within the context of the time and what was allowed on television, prove how complicated the discussion of femininity and feminism is.

Due to the nature of the television industry and an increase in technology, the world is becoming a more fragmented place with images and messages lunging out from any screen available. In their times, Roseanne Barr and Donna Reed did the best they could to give women a voice in television. With wit and comedy, these feminist texts produced a female character on television that gave a voice to the typically non-existent lower class women (Roseanne) and a meek housewife an edge and platform for gaining credit for a job that typically had none.

Overall, neither show fully encapsulated liberal feminism, but they added to the discussion of it. Both had overarching feminist messages related to empowerment and gender norms. The Donna Reed Show and Donna Reed aligned most closely with liberal feminism, striving to gain equal access and opportunity for women. It mainly focuses on social and cultural changes. However, once again, The Donna Reed Show did this within the television-constructed box of femininity, reinforcing the traditional gender norms of the time and the TV platform. Roseanne embodied the liberal feminist movement in

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spades (especially in regards to raising her daughters) and within her somewhat traditional gender normed box. It took feminism one step further and used the economic status of the family to bring a conversation about money to the forefront, as well as Barr’s comedic personality to address patriarchy and more brutal forms of oppression.

The back-and-forth from depicting liberal feminist ideals to reinforcing gender norms just goes to show that these feminist texts and their television platform complicate issue. Media and television are tools for the transference of these ideas. By having women in positions of power in the industry, it allows for feminist ideals to sneak through and create great television. They just have to get there and that is another struggle entirely.

What needs to be remembered is the contexts they came from. Donna Reed and Roseanne Barr were not creating these shows in a world of Netflix and feminist campaigns spanning social media. These were television shows that were developed in an industry with no female power and no female main characters. Yes, they are in a domestic setting. Yes, they are mothers and wives. However, they are the captain and run the ship. They tried to bring ideas to the forefront and the messages present are ones that align with feminist ideals.

In the 1950s and 1990s, Donna Reed and Roseanne Conner can be considered strong traditional female leads and actresses like them are seen today in 2016. However, these feminist texts are far from tapped out. Some aspects of feminism in The Donna Reed Show and Roseanne to study further could branch from the behind the scenes process (producing, network politics, the writing room) to a deeper analysis of female characters on the show and the intersectionality present or not on these shows. This
further research will probably complicate the issue further, but strengthen the understanding of television’s construction and interaction with society.

The Results: Why Should We Accept These?

Other methods were considered in the beginning of this project. Content analysis summarizes the content based on the impressions of the viewer or listener. However, it documents a specific count of the aspects present, offering an objective perspective but no room for change. This is one of the reasons a textual analysis approach was chosen.

However, textual analysis is not the end-all and be-all. This methodology does not produce any information about the audience of the show. Through a textual analysis, the number of people who watched the show cannot be found, the reaction they had to the show or the lessons they took away cannot be discovered and the basic impact of the show cannot be learned. However, those limitations are ones that can be dealt with because statistics on television network data can be acquired through empirical historical research methods and the relation to the audience is not something analyzed in this study. Textual analysis was the study with the fewest limitations to the questions being asked. In addition, these limitations do not compromise the overall analysis of the study.

Due to this study being conducted by a single individual, there are certain guidelines that were established to maintain credibility. In this study, credibility is along the ground of self-reflexivity and transparency. Throughout the entire research process, the date, time and location were documented. This is to establish a trail of when and how each episode was watched to weed out any other extraneous factors that could impact the

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conclusions of this researcher.\textsuperscript{269} In addition, an audit trail was developed to establish all of the steps taken and to show when, where and how conclusions were developed. Through the careful documentation of the research process and the transparency with which the study is conducted, the credibility of this study is not in question and the findings provide ample information for analysis and comparison.


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"How the Other Side Lives," The Donna Reed Show. Performed by Donna Reed, Carl Betz, Shelley Fabares, Paul Peterson, Reba Waters, John Graham. United States, 1960. TV.


"One of Those Days," The Donna Reed Show. Performed by Donna Reed, Carl Betz, Shelley Fabares, Paul Peterson, Reba Waters, John Graham. United States, 1961. TV.

http://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/person/159134|40401/Donna-Reed/.


Schwarzbaum, Lisa. ""We’re Gonna’ Make It after All"" Working Woman, October 1, 1995, 30-36.


## The Donna Reed Show

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<tr>
<th>Season/Ep. Air Date</th>
<th>Ep. Title Description</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
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| 1.6 Oct. 29, 1958   | *The Foundling* A man abandons his child at the Stone's doorstep. Donna starts looking for who may have left the child, but begins to bond closely with the infant, while Jeff frets over having to have another sibling. | - Donna is the matriarch of the family  
- Mother and daughter go back and forth to see who gets to hold the baby... daughter Mary loves the baby and really wants to take care of it (she’s 16)  
- The women of the group circle the wagons to keep the child at the home instead of letting him go into police custody  
- Overtly and perpetually exasperated husband with wife  
- Donna cries 3 times in the show... related to the child  
- Quotes:  
  - Donna - “deprive yourself of that pleasure” (to see her blush by saying inappropriate things)  
  - Jeff - “you can’t lose Mom... she works for nothing! You have to pay Kathleen (housekeeper)”  
  - Jeff - “can’t even get a decent breakfast anymore... This place is going to pot!”  
  - Donna - “I’m not telling you how to run your business, I’m just telling you what you ought to do.” (keep the baby and have the police look for Mom... against husband’s orders)  
  - Alex - “The officer and I are the only rational people in this house.” Officer - “Isn’t that the truth.”  
- OVERALL: A baby is left on the porch of the Stones. They discover the baby (Willie) belongs to their milkman (Tony). Finally, they get Tony and Kathleen together (almost) to take care of the baby and be together. |
| 1.14 Dec. 24, 1958  | *A Very Merry Christmas* Donna is upset that the Christmas spirit has been lost to the mighty | - Opens with Donna dressed in a housework outfit  
- She is in a frenzy over Christmas preparations  
- Get’s calendar from dry cleaner with women on it...  
- Makes fruit cakes to give out and no one likes them  
- Finds out that Christmas will not be happening in the children’s hospital wing so she takes up the organizing and planning the Christmas party |

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>Love Thy Neighbor</td>
<td>Donna and Alex are throwing a 20th anniversary party for the Wilgus' unaware that Celia has left Wilbur.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>The Hero</td>
<td>College friend comes in to town and they think he’s down on his luck</td>
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<td>At his company, he goes and schmoozes people</td>
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- Cash register, until she pays a visit to the hospital and discovers that the lonely janitor, Charlie, has been secretly playing Santa for the children's ward for over twenty years now.

- She finds the person who always does it and shows him how appreciated he is
- Changes the entire Christmas spirit
- **QUOTES:**
  - Alex - “She gets looks better than March.”
  - Donna - “Do you know that girl was practically my size?” Alex - “Could anyone ask for anything better?!?”
- **OVERALL:** With her family rushing around concerned with the money value of Christmas, Donna finds the “real Christmas” and brings the true giving spirit back with a party for the Children’s ward of the hospital and the hold janitor (Charlie).

1.22
Feb. 18, 1959
*Love Thy Neighbor*
Donna and Alex are throwing a 20th anniversary party for the Wilgus' unaware that Celia has left Wilbur.

- Stones are throwing a 20th wedding anniversary for their neighbors, who consider them their best friends
- Celia is the loud and paranoid wife and Wilbur is the docile husband, who might be cheating with his secretary
- Donna when playing cards is a little overwhelmed
- Donna gets involved with figuring out if Wilbur is cheating on Celia. However, when Donna and Wilbur go out to lunch so she can talk to him, he takes it the wrong way and thinks she is coming on to him because she is so vague with her statements
- Wilbur goes to confront Alex about Donna’s feelings and Alex finds it very funny... He tells Donna by describing her but not telling her... the clue to Donna is that she is very pretty and would be the last woman she’d suspect. She just can’t believe it. Wilbur is the one who breaks the silence and Alex finds it funny. Almost like a good natured prank
- **QUOTES:**
  - (Opener) Donna - “How do I look, dear?” Alex - “(Not looking) Very nice... Oh very nice! (Looking) I can’t believe that you are mine.”
  - Donna - “You had your chance dear.”
  - Wilbur - “One minute she’s (Celia) like... and the next...”
  - Donna - “Well I’ll tell you, on our 20th anniversary don’t you dare bring home tool chest.”
- **OVERALL:** Donna and Alex help sort out a marital dispute with their neighbors.

1.30
April 15, 1959
*The Hero*
- College friend comes in to town and they think he’s down on his luck
- At his company, he goes and schmoozes people
Alex's former college roommate Biff Jameson, is coming for a visit. But as hard as they try, neither Donna nor Alex can find out what he does for a living.

- Donna gets him to truly open up about his feelings and his life.
- He ends up playing football in the backyard with the kids and messes up his knee
- Biff goes to work to schmooze and his “boss” drags him over the rails
- Instead of going back to his job, he tells the client exactly what he thinks and explains things to them what they should do about the bond issue
- When he gets back to the Stones, Donna comes up with the idea of him working with kids... Alex knows of a job the Biff could succeed at.
- One of the things standing in his way is his wife Martha... He doesn't think she will come with him. After Biff kind of botches the phone call, Donna gets on the phone and the wife changes her mind
- OVERALL: Alex’s college friend (a big football star) comes into town and they are worried. He is not happy and doesn’t like the way his life has gone. Donna and Alex fix that.

| 2.2 Oct. 1, 1959  
Sleep No More My Lady |
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<tr>
<td>Alex gives an excited Donna a tranquilizer while on a flight to the convention where he is scheduled to give a speech. But now she is groggy and is in danger of embarrassing him for his big day.</td>
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<td>- Donna and Alex take a trip to a convention. She’s very energetic and excited, but won’t go to sleep. Alex says she has nervous exhaustion because she is so busy and hasn’t gotten any sleep.</td>
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<td>- She fakes going to sleep and stays awake. This happens multiple times. Alex, thinking its “best” for her, gives her a sedative in a glass of warm milk without telling her. She decides to steal two sedatives out of his pocket. Taking it out of his control, she has triple dosed herself.</td>
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<td>- When they arrive in New York, she is still drugged.</td>
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<td>- While giving his speech, they place Donna on stage with the other wife. She proceeds to fall asleep on stage multiple times.</td>
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<td>- Though she is flabbergasted by her behavior, he tries to help her forget the whole thing happened.</td>
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<td>- Trying to make sure nothing was in the newspaper, she goes outside to get it and is proceeded to be locked out of their room in a nightgown and robe, which she promptly rips once it was stuck in the door. She ends up trying to get into the room, which she goes into Dr. Spalding’s room.</td>
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<td>- She proceeds to lock Dr. Spalding out of his room, just like she did and proceeds to explain everything to him.</td>
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<td>- Dr. Spalding then changes the speech to have Alex give his speech that he was not able to finish.</td>
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**QUOTES:**
- Donna - “Don’t try to talk to me. I’m trying to go to sleep.” In response to Alex trying to make her go to sleep.
- Alex - “Smile, and keep smiling.” in response to her freaking out about the presentation.
- Dr. Spalding - “Her conduct can only be described as frivolous. Her conduct is most unbecoming.”
- Alex - “Now dear, don’t apologize here. Dr. Spalding, if you had your attitude, I wouldn’t even trying explaining.”
*He somewhat manhandles her out of the room and keeps smiling, but he doesn’t blame her for her activity.*

**OVERALL:** While in this episode Donna does cause most of the problems with the help of Alex’s sedatives, she revives in the end and fixes the issue.

| 2.10 Nov. 26, 1959 | Jeff’s friend, Phillip, tries out for the football team. Donna finds out and wants Jeff to figure out that hiding something is wrong. |
| **All Mothers Worry** | Jeff’s mother finds out. The LA Rams come to town and the Jeff is sent to get tickets for the family and Phillip. Alex gets passes from a friend of his to the game. When Jeff goes to get tickets, they are all sold out. When he finds out about the tickets, he gets pumped! |
| Phillip, a friend of Jeff, wants to play football, but his mother is afraid her little boy will get hurt in the games. | Phil quits the team to help his mother not get headaches. |
| The boys go with Alex to see the team practice and the players decide to help him build up his confidence. He gets so excited that he runs into the goal post and hurts his shoulder. | The Rams come by and they join the Stones for dinner. |
| He can no longer go to the game. But the Rams decide to give the winning game ball to him. He gets so overwhelmed he begins to cry. This moment convinces his mother to change her opinions. | QUOTES: |
| The Rams come by and they join the Stones for dinner. | o Jeff - “Oh, all mother’s worry! It makes them happy. Let’s wash up! Your mother expects you on time, Phil.” |
| The Rams come by and they join the Stones for dinner. | o Donna - “Oh, what should I wear?” (jokingly) Alex - “I think it’s been called informal.” |
| The Rams come by and they join the Stones for dinner. | o Donna - “Honey, why doesn’t a man ever forget the girl he takes to his senior prom?” Alex - “Because his wife doesn’t let him.” Donna - “Well you have my permission. Forget her!” |
| The Rams come by and they join the Stones for dinner. | OVERALL: An overprotective mother doesn’t allow her son to play sports because he thinks it worries her too |
much. Without overtly interfering, Donna is able to show her the light and she changes her outlook on parenting.

| 2.18  | Jan. 21, 1960  
|       | *The New Mother*  
| David Barker is disappointed after his father gets remarried, having hoped that this would mean he could leave military school and come back home. |
|       | - Jeff is taking care of a friend’s dog. However, he really isn’t. Dog duty has fallen on his mother who calls him out on what he is doing and how he doesn’t take responsibility. |
|       | - Now, his friend David has run away from military school and he has become Jeff’s responsibility. He’s using the dog to cover his tracks. However, Donna is not buying it. |
|       | - When a Colonel from the academy calls her suspicions are confirmed. However, when Alex gets home, she doesn’t tell him. Instead, she assists Jeff and tries to pull the wool over his eyes. |
|       | - At one point, David has a bad dream and tells Donna about military school and how he is getting a new mother and thinks he is going home. However, he doesn’t get to go home with his new mother. She thinks he should stay at school because she wants him to be more settled. |
|       | - Donna tells him that is not going to happen and that they are going to fix this situation! Alex finds out though and calls the school. |
|       | - When his father shows up the next day, Donna tells him he can be open about the situation. The father and him bond again and the father finds out that Helen dumped the father. |
|       | - **QUOTES:**  
|       |   o Donna - “Have I got to do it!?” After the duty of taking care of the dog gets passed down. “What about the money?”  
|       |   o David - “You can't tell. Women are funny sometimes.” (about the shrunken head)  
|       |   o Donna - “David, there are times when you don't ask questions and you do as you're told.” Alex - “When did you find that out and when did you do it.”  
|       | - OVERALL: After finding out that david has run away from military school, Donna takes it upon herself to make sure he is okay and gets his father to open up and things right themselves. |

| 2.19  | Jan. 28, 1960  
|       | *Just a Housewife*  
| In 1960, “Just a Housewife” aired in the second season and took on the issue of the saying “I’m just a housewife.” The first full line out of Donna is in reaction to a woman saying she is one and Donna asks, “Have
you ever noticed that women seem to apologize when they say that?” The episode continues on to show Alex saying “housewife” is just a word, not an occupation, like “mother, moon, antidisestablishmentarianism, chair, and book.” They tackle the societal implications of being a housewife, the possibility of a female president and even talk about the suffrage movement. Donna is compared to Abraham Lincoln, and her speech to the Emancipation Proclamation. This was the beginning of the emancipation of women on The Donna Reed Show.

| 2.26 March 17, 1960 The Fatal Leap | • A college roommate of Alex’s is getting married. They were wild back then. Now, Alex is going to his bachelor party but he has kept it from Donna.  
• She’s upset that he kept it from her and she’s appearing to be the over concerned housewife and he has something to hide. Donna aggressively insists that he attend and have a wonderful time!  
• She gives him the cold shoulder when he is leaving and he tries to reverse psychology her by saying he does want to go... She simply states that he should not take off his tie because he’s late already and he runs off!  
• The other wife comes over and they decide to “live a little” and play 2 hand solitaire... they complain about growing up with restrictions.  
• However, Alex gets quite the surprise and Moose has changed. He is now an insurance agent and is crazy health conscious.  
• “The Bachelor’s Last Fling” is the source of what happens at these parties.  
• They were going to invite people over, however it would be all women and they say it needs men to be fun!  
• At the bachelor party, his father-in-law shows up and disrupts the fun.  
• Donna sits at home reading the book that fills her head with crazy ideas of what happens. She ends up falling asleep and having a crazy dream that is reminiscent of Moulin Rouge. He comes home and Alex points out that he would much rather be with her... “the most fun is girls and boys”  
• QUOTES:  
  o Friend of Alex’s - “She’ll put the blinders on old Moose.” about the new wife Alex - “Poor old Moose.”  
  o Donna - “You think there is something wrong with marriage!” Alex - “Men always say those things!” Donna - “Well is our marriage any
different!” Alex - “Yes!” Donna - “How? Men are basically opposed to marriage.”
- Donna - “How many girls were there in the student print?” Alex - “23... All fat!” (in relation to his college days with girls)
- Donna’s friend - “I can just imagine how they would react if we went to one of these things. We’re supposed to sit at home.” (in relation to bachelor parties)
- Donna - “Men should be with men every once in a while.”
- Donna’s friend - “Men have all the fun! Whooping around like Indians, when we had to keep our dresses clean! If it sounds like, I’m bitter well I am!”

• OVERALL: A college friend of Alex’s is having a bachelor party and he is known for his crazy days. Donna gets perturbed that Alex is rooting back to college days and acting like marriage is bad. She begins to have crazy ideas of what is happening, but it is not true. He comes home and things are resolved when he tells her that nothing happened.

3.5 Oct. 20, 1960
How the Other Side Lives
After seeing the palatial residence of her pal Ginnie, Mary is ashamed of the Stones' living quarters.

• (Opener) Alex helps Donna with the dishes.
• Mary has a wonderful time at her friends house. Except the family is very wealthy and now she is ashamed of her own house.
• In preparation for Ginnie coming over, Mary runs around the house straightening everything and making everything “look nice as possible.” She gets her mother to make a ruffled dressing table because Ginnie has one and borrows candlesticks and napkins from others to make their house nicer.
• Ginnie’s first impression of the family is hanging out with Jeff in the front of the house. She really gets along with him.
• Mary comes home and catches Ginnie getting a lesson from Jeff on how to throw a football. Mary is not a fan.
• Donna has a conversation with Mary about why she feels this way and uses logic and a bit of humor to convince her
• QUOTES:
  - Alex - “So what does this guy do?” Mary - “Who?” Alex - “Ginnie’s father!” (when talking about wealth and who makes the money in the family)
  - Donna - “I took the easy way out for dinner...
Cold cuts.” (Mary is not happy about it but Alex is excited... sniffed each area to determine what was in it)
  - Alex - “She’s (Mary) not too old for me to put over my knee.”

**OVERALL:** Mary has a rich friend over after she stays at her house. Except she is ashamed of their living situation. Donna speaks logically and uses humor to show Mary the error of her thinking.

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| 3.14 Dec. 22, 1960 | **Someone is Watching**  
Jeff’s pal Gordie fakes an injury to his leg and then pulls a *Man Who Came to Dinner* act so that he can stay with the Stones due to problems at home. |

- A friend of Jeff’s gets injured using his new motorscooter.
- His mother comes over to get him and based on her behavior, Donna asks for Gordie to stay over to make sure he’s actually better because Alex is a doctor. Apparently, his mother is inadequate and his mother says he’s acting.
- Donna is truly worried about Gordie because he says he’s in pain. Gordie says he feels so much better when she is around!
- Donna learns that the mother that stopped by was his stepmother.
- Alex is not happy with this situation because Donna thinks something is wrong with Gordie, but Alex knows medically nothing is wrong.
- Jeff thinks that he caused the accident and is really torn up about it. Even prays to God that he’ll do all these things to fix it.
- Finally, Jeff catches Gordie and so does Donna. Apparently, Gordie guilts people into buying him things. Donna is pissed.
- Donna tells his stepmother and she voices that she tries to win Gordie’s love.
- Gordie and his stepmother go home and the stepmom is going to handle the situation... and then Gordie call her “Mom.”
- **QUOTES:**
  - Donna - “Oh Alex, don’t be so insufferable when you’re right.”
- **OVERALL:** Jeff is jealous of his friend who has a scooter. That friend gets hurt on the scooter after Jeff wishes he would run into a tree. Gordie fakes he is hurt to get to stay at the house and not have to deal with his stepmom. After catching on that he is not hurt, Donna speaks to his stepmom and she talks to Gordie about guilting people into things.
- **SPONSORSHIP AD** at the end of the Christmas special
from Campbell’s Soup Company, Johnson and Johnson, American Broadcasting Company and Todon Productions.

3.21
Feb. 9, 1961
*Trip to Nowhere*
Since Alex is away at a conference, and Jeff wants to go camping, Donna decides to step into the breach.

- Jeff and his friend Ricky don’t get along... They always argue and this conversation leads to Jeff being jealous of Ricky’s relationship with his dad. He wants to go hunting and have those “manly” experiences of hunting and killing “innocent animals.”
- Donna talks to Alex on the phone and all he asks about at first is housework (the chair, the repairman, and the fertilizer).
- Jeff feels that he never gets to do anything with his father because he’s so busy or they’ll push off doing stuff.
- Jeff exaggerates and tells Ricky all of this stuff that he’ll be doing... it makes Ricky feel kind of bad. Donna overhears and says that the three of them (Donna, Jeff and Mary) can go camping in the park. It reminds her of her “girl scout days.”
- Mary only cares about getting her tan with her friend.
- Ricky and his dad come over to get a tetanus shot before going camping in the same park as Donna and family. The scheme comes out that both just tried to one up the other.

**QUOTES:**
- Donna - “Jeff, wait... I haven't even spoken to your father about it!” Jeff -“I know, but dad will do anything you say.”
- Jeff - “Camping is for guys! Just me and three woman. I know how its going to be... Ganging up on me all the time.”
- Pete - “Who else is going, besides your dad?” (in relation to the camping trip)
- Jeff - “Girls... Reading on a camping trip.”
- Donna - “You told Babs we’d pick her up at 9 a.m.?” Mary - “I’d told her 8:30 a.m., so she’d be ready.” Jeff - “She’ll still be late.”
- Mary - “I’d love to see a movie when the monster was innocent and it turned out the poor, innocent girl was the monster.” Jeff - “Oh you mean like in real life.”

**OVERALL:** Ricky and Jeff try to one up each other about going camping with their fires. Accommodating them, Donna organizes a trip with Mary and Babs as well. In the end, Jeff and Ricky go to the movies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>April 6, 1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Merry Month of April</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alex decides to do his own income taxes and discovers that he owes money to the government because of Donna.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• (Opener) Donna and Alex make the same joke about Jeff’s math joke.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Alex ends up forgetting to submit his income tax till the last day and he’s very perturbed about everything because of the “stress.” He’s going to do them. Donna says he should turn them over to Harvey Parker who did them last year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Donna watches an episode of TV (courtroom drama) in which she takes the place of the lead character (a hysterical woman who’s upset with her husband for not being kind or considerate).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Apparently, Donna has already given the forms to Harvey to do the taxes. Donna needs to get the papers back to give to Alex.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Alex finishes the tax return and is in a great mood, but then everything starts to unravel... Donna gets a hat for a friend, Jeff needs new handle bars, the furnace is broken.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• OVERALL: Alex needs to finish his income tax because it is due that night. He’s stressed and angry, and finally finishes them. However, Donna has already had someone do them. When he comes over and the Alex finds out, he finds out he did his taxes wrong and is getting a huge refund! This is after a bunch of things start to wrong in the house too (heater, hat, handlebars).</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Oct. 26, 1961</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>One of Those Days</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>After a day where nothing goes right, Donna suggests that Alex take her on a picnic in the country.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• First sponsorship seen in this study. Campbell’s Soup Company. (10 second ad placed after the opening credits) Then, again after the opening scene (30 second jingle).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Alex is on a warpath because nothing is going right--Locked in the bathroom, light switch doesn’t work, steps on a screw, faucet is leaking, running out of gas when they are on the highway.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Alex talks about how the whole world needs a change. So Donna says they should take the day off and live like Jeff (doing what he wants to do when it occurs to them.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Donna forgets to fill the gas tank and so they have to walk to a gas station. All of a sudden it starts to rain and he wants to go back to the car. She wants to seize the day and she convinces him to stay in the rain.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Another Campbell’s Soup commercial (30 seconds jingle “Soup and Sandwich” go together like Mr. and Mrs)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• The kids come home to find out their parents have taken the day off and they start to feel a little guilty about not helping out more.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Witty banter galor on their car ride.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Johnson and johnson commercial... for arrestin</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• When the parents get home, they find Jeff and Mary</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
have cleaned the house and are making dinner. Campbell’s Soup Company... Franco American Spaghettis... and next week Johnson and Johnson

Instead of Donna it has the cans during the credits

- **QUOTES:**
  - Donna - “Let’s just take the day off... You can always make excuses. Let’s just do it.”
  - Alex - “We ran out of gas up the road. My wife forgot to fill the tank.” Donna - “My husband forgot to check it.”
  - Little kid - “Are scared of eels?” Alex - “Well I don’t like them very much.” Little kid - “Yeah, me neither. I bet she’s terrified of eels.” Donna - “Oh, I’m terrified.”
  - Alex - “The world doesn’t change we do. We just rediscover it.”
  - Alex - “Do you know how beautiful you are? Do you know how wonderful a wife you are? How understanding you are? Just doing this because I wanted to.”

- **OVERALL:** Alex gets tired of all the problems with the house and the way his life is going. To fix his attitude, Donna suggests they take the day off. They go off to the countryside where he remembers his childhood and he is restored. They come home see the kids and life is once again good for the Stones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.15</th>
<th>Dec. 21, 1961</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Very Bright Boy</td>
<td>to find out why a bright boy's grades aren't so hot.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Donna’s roommate from college’s son comes to stay at the Stone household.
- Based on a letter from her, they think Victor has an extremely low IQ. However, it’s actually about 180.
- He doesn’t quite get off to the best start. Dr Stone has a conversation with him late at night about families.
- The Stones go off on a picnic and Victor decides not to go. He ends up doing all of the work the rest of the family has to do (term papers, geometry homework, etc.). He listens to them react and once it starts to go south and he is called a “weirdo” he decides to leave.
- They find him and Donna decides to talk to him.
- She is the beacon of hope and wisdom.

- **QUOTES:**
  - Donna - “It’s a lot easier to learn than Greek. (loving and caring)”

- **OVERALL:** The son of Donna’s friend comes to stay. His brain annoys some of the Stones and he decides to run away. Donna brings him home and teaches him about learning to love and do things with others.
### 4.23
**Feb. 22, 1962**
*The Golden Trap*
With Alex and Donna away, Mary invites a friend over to the Stone house for a little get together that somehow turns into a huge party.

- Donna and Alex go on a medical conference trip and are going to be gone for a night.
- Mary convinces them to let her run the house for the day/night instead of having someone watch them. Mary thinks this is her time to convince them she’s “mature.”
- Mary runs all over the house cleaning things up. While she’s cleaning, a friend calls and she invites them over to listen to some records. However, that friend invites a friend and they invite a friend, and so on. It goes from playing records to a open house party.
- Jeff and his friend go fishing and end up putting the fish they caught in the bathtub.
- Anytime Scotty, a romantic interest, calls Mary has to fix her hair and primp.
- Side plot... Scotty wants to go out but Mary has to watch the house, but someone told him about the party and now he’s mad, thinking she is lying to him.
- The plumber keeps calling Mary “little lady.”
- Alex finishes his stuff early and they’ve decided to head home that night instead of that morning.
- As soon as Mary finds out that they are coming home, everyone shows up for the party! She tries to tell them that there is no party, but it doesn’t work. She ends up going around to all of them while dancing to tell them, but it still doesn’t work. Finally, someone gets the message and they dance out of the house.
- Scotty decides to come over to get his stuff back and she fixes that relationship.
- Her parents arrive home as the kids play chess. They think everything is wonderful, except for Jeff’s fish.

**QUOTES:**
- Mary - “Mother, here I am nearly 18 years old. A lot of girls my age are married and running their own homes by now.”

**OVERALL:** Mary tries to prove she’s older and mature enough to take care of everything. Nothing truly goes well for the whole thing, until the end. The basement floods and there is a party that shows up. Finally, she gets things together and buys a new water heater, fixes things with Scotty, all before her parents get home.

### 4.31
**April 19, 1962**
*The Fortune Teller*
After playing the role of a fortune teller at a bazaar, some of

- Donna gets roped into being the Gypsy Fortuneteller at a bazaar.
- She’s not happy and begins to complain about the number of bazaar’s and benefits they have in their town.
- Alex invites her out to lunch because she “showed signs
Donna's predictions amazingly begin coming true.

- She gets ready to give fortunes and is in a gypsy costume. However, Mary adds a wrap around her middle to cover it. (1960s television practices)
- One of her customers just keeps coming on to her, very aggressively, until Alex pops in. He calls her a kewpie doll and then makes sexual innuendos.
- All of a sudden things start to happen like her fortunes said, a bike for the birthday boy and Ethel getting engaged.
- Donna begins to think she has some sort of power.
- FYI in their discussion in their bedroom they are in two beds.
- When she starts to have feelings about the oil stuff, she says to do it and then Alex jumps to do it! She keeps saying that she wants him to do it because he wants to, not because she said to.
- Then, he decides that all of a sudden, it’s not her decision, it’s his decision.
- Then, Alex finds out via the paper that the oil stock was a bad decision. He tries to claim he knew all along, and then Donna hits him with a newspaper and they start laughing.
- **QUOTES:**
  - Jeff - “Hey Mom, I hear you're going to be a fortune teller! Hey that'll be neat! We can get you a snake in a basket and one of those flutes.” Donna - “Wrong country, dear.”
  - Alex - “You know what your trouble is. You put off making decisions. Know why don’t you make it a practice so that when someone asks you a question, you give them an answer, a direct out and out answer on the spot.” Donna - “You mean a plain yes or no. No in between?” Alex - “You going to do that from now on?” Donna - “Well maybe.”
  - Donna - “Well honey, It’s very hard for me to say. I don’t want to say anything to influence you one way or the other.” Alex - “Well honey, you have a stake in this. It’s our money we’re investing.” ... Alex - “It’s not up to me. It’s up to us.” ... “Do you remember what we talked about last night. Saying yes or no?” Donna - “The answer is yes. I’m going to be that gypsy.”
  - Alex - “Like a woman she wouldn’t commit herself.” Donna narrows her eyes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alex - “I’m still skeptical.” Donna - “That’s because you are a man.” Alex - “What’s that supposed to mean?” Donna - “Women have more perception than men.” Alex - “Where did you ever get that idea?” Donna - “It’s common knowledge. Some have the qualities and some don’t. That’s all.” Alex - “Honey are you seriously trying to tell me that you have that quality.” Donna - “I wouldn’t try to tell you anything with your closed mind yours.” Alex - “My mind closed.” Donna - “Like a trap.” Alex - “Okay, I’m listening.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Alex - “Women have their ways.”
Donna-  “I like a man who knows his mind.”  
(after he talks in circles and can’t come to a solid decision)

- **OVERALL:** Donna can’t make up her mind. She becomes the gypsy at a charity bazaar and then all of a sudden her predictions start coming true. Alex wants her to make a decision about the oil stock and she can’t. Then she does, he goes for it and then changes his mind, because she said she didn’t like it. Come to find out in the end, Donna was right.

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5.6 Oct. 25, 1962

**My Dad**

Dr. Stone tries to spend the day with Jeff at the Father and Son Golf Tournament, but emergency calls keep interrupting. Jeff still loves his father despite them, proving it with a song.

- “I just didn’t think Mother’s counted during Father and Son Week?” –Sarcasm
- “Jeff is so nervous I hope he remembers which end of the golf club to use.” –Sally “I hope his father does too!” –Donna
- Kids help donna create donut and Jeff has to sugar them.
- Jeff loses faith a bit in his father and his attendance at the event. Donna tries to console him.
- All disappointed in in Alex’s job hours, except Donna.
- “Cupid doesn’t work that way.” – Donna
- “I used to be angry when you were late for dinner… But now, you are no longer late for dinner, extremely early for breakfast!” –Donna
- “I’m expecting a phone call!” –Mary “Well you can look near the phone.” –Donna
- Donna is not at home because she wen to a meeting.
- “Aren’t you interested in who I go out with?” –Mary “Of Course I am!” –Alex
- “I guess I’ve struck out in the father department…” – Alex “On, I’m just kidding, Daddy.” –Mary
- “Oh we never get anything done at those meetings! The girls just talk, talk and talk.” –Donna
Father and son luncheon… Alex got there just in time for dessert.

“The biggest part of being a parent these days is worrying about how you’re ruining your children.” – Donna

“Mother, do you have a handkerchief” – Mary “For heavens sake Mary, this is supposed to be a happy moment!” – Donna (after the My Dad song)

| 5.14 Dec. 20, 1962 | Jeff is trying to go on a boat trip with friends of his but he doesn’t have the money to pay for it. Mary and Alex think he should get his friends to pay him back the money that they owe him.

- Donna says that Jeff gets this generous nature from Alex. He has a bunch of unpaid medical bills. When Jeff somewhat steps up and asks his friend for his racquet, he talks about how you just have to be a little firm to get it back.

- Alex tries to backtrack because now his son is reiterating what his mother said.

- They decide to stay in tonight to write Alex’s collection letters. However, he just keeps reading the bills and going down memory lane, and he keeps putting off writing the letters.

- The first one that gets him going is his friend that might have taken advantage of him! In the case of the one they are going to make pay, Donna sarcastically makes excuses for the man. But then he backs out again.

- Jeff begins to get his money back from his friends and plays hard ball, but realizes that some people just gave him random stuff to pay him back. Alex and Jeff just have so much trouble getting stuff paid back.

- In the end, Alex sends the letters but still worries he was too rough. He worries about his friend Ed, but then proceeds to take a house call from him.

QUOTES:

- Alex - “Just know that your mother has a remarkable way of getting her point across.”
- Donna - “Honey, I guess that’s as firm as you can get.”
- Donna - “Whatever you want dear. It’s up to you dear.” (Getting him to stay home to do his work)
- Alex - “You’re right darling.” Donna - “I didn’t say a thing.” Alex - “But I heard you thinking.”
- Donna - “Honey, you’re about as tough as tapioca.” “Yes you are, but you’re my pigeon.”

The Soft Touch

Jeff has generously loaned money to several friends, leaving him unable to afford an outing unless he can get them to repay him. That reminds Donna that her husband has several patients in arrears, so she asks him to ask them to pay up.
OVERALL: When Jeff can’t go to the movies because he lent too much money to his friends, it reminds Donna that Alex has a bunch of outstanding bills. Jeff follows through and gets all of his stuff back and so. Alex has not.

5.18
Jan. 17, 1963
The Chinese Horse
Donna attends an auction of unclaimed freight and an unknown woman asks Donna to bid on a Chinese horse. Donna wins the auction but the woman disappears. Donna brings the item home, but then strange things begin to happen.

Donna is in a tizzy this morning! Mary doesn’t know why she’s acting erratic…but Alex says… “Today they auction off the unclaimed freight!”

“But she forgot something, In about 6 seconds she’ll remember.” “ALEEXXX, I need some money!” –Alex

She buys the horse for $50.

Jeff concocts this crazy plan in his head of a crazy story about how the horse holds something inside and she’s running

“Looks around for the most harmless woman in the place.” –Jeff “Oh well thanks loads!” –Donna “Am I right?” –Jeff Jeff continues with the story. Then, pulls the joke over Donna’s head.

Alex is sorry about the story worrying Donna. “I’m not worried… Scared stiff!” –Donna

“There’s a guy walking outside of our house… just our house.” –Jeff “Jeff stop frightening your mother!” –Alex

Donna keeps blaming her reactions on a hotdog!

Creepy man looks right at the horse and freaks the whole family out.

Donna wants Alex to take it back to the freight station now! The battery in the car is dead and someone broke it.

CAMPBELLS SOUP COMMERCIAL! North, south, east or west, it’s all good

Donna keeps freaking out but keeps blaming it on the hot dog. Alex keeps trying to come up with new reasons things could be happening.

Police officer comes by and Donna and Mary make him come in to the house to watch things. She tells him the story about the woman and the horse. He is not a police man…but he wants all of this information about the woman. Mary notices that he has no patch on his sleeve. Jeff notices no patrol car anywhere. He asks questions about the layout of the house and the phone. Jeff notices he messes with the lock. Donna is very assured by his assurances. Until the kids tell her this stuff.

The power goes out. The phone is filled Someone is at the door.

The “original owner” comes to pick it up. And he buys it
off of them. Says it belonged to his father in china and he’s been out of town for a while.
- Now they make excuses for their behavior! Make fun of Alex’s “Who’s there?” When answering the door!
- Alex and Donna are at dinner later with the money from the lady with the dark glasses. Donna sees the lady with the dark glasses at dinner staring at them.
- Donna asks her about the money and she denies it. All of the guys from the night before show up and Donna and Alex can’t hear what they are saying but it’s explaining everything, but they both kind of freak out.

5.19
Jan. 24, 1963
*The New Look*
Mary returns from a date feeling a bit miffed when her boyfriend calls her wholesome. She decides to change her looks to be more exciting.

- “I’m wholesome. Wholesome a word they used to describe baby food.” –Mary “They think I’m durable, dependable…reliable, stable… feels very drab, lacking color”
- He suggests she asks her friends directly… Originally, she says no and that she couldn’t possible do that. But they she decides to do exactly that!
- She goes out pretending to write a paper about the average co-ed and asks a guy who dates a lot of girls about her personality. He says she is wholesome too.
- She then asks her psychology friend… she says that this friend actually is bright, vivacious, people are jealous of her…. Speaking of someone else
- Does a word association test with a friend and gets “wholesome” again.
- Donna finds out she is doing this and has to explain things to Alex… “To Mary, wholesome means drab.” – Donna
- “You trade your car in every so often to get a new look…Mary is window shopping.” –Donna
- “Are you hating yourself?”-Donna to Mary
- “What is the opposite of wholesome?” –Mary “Cold, calculating, devious.” –Donna… Mary tries cold out and Donna shoots that down…
- She them thinks about trying flamboyant! And she day dreams about all these guys wanting to date her and she has a southern accent, white small strap dress with a chiffon wrap, diamond earrings. Begins to dance around with all of them to a song that matches her personality. All the guys begin to faint, all of the girls don’t quite like it. One turns away from her…
- She decides flamboyant is not good for her. She then tries smoldering. But finds it ridiculous… Donna talks about “discovering who you are, what you can be and
who you can never be.”

- Mary tries out turbulent/smoldering/Vesuvius and Fujiyama (volcanoes) in a sparkly long dress, opera gloves, hair up and diamond earrings on. The girls are even more standoffish and leave when she arrives. She talks about the inner conflict people experience. She wants her partner and her to “suffer together.”
- The boys keep saying she has made them miserable… (Tumultuously miserable.)
- Donna says they need to work on the balance sheet… Look at friends, number of dates, school and her marks…She couldn’t handle any more dates! What could she add to this to make more? “The important thing is to be an individual and have a personality that is strictly your own.” –Donna “Mary Stone, one of a kind. Don’t you prefer that to being a carbon copy.”
- “You’re the most mother, the living most.” –Mary
- Her last date said that Mary puts a zip into everything that she does! Same guy who said she was wholesome, now is saying she is bright, etc. He’s “hooked.”
- Beads o bleach commercial… Rice o Roni commercial… Love Yourself (hair dye commercial)… Peyton Place (soap opera) commercial

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5.30
April 11, 1963
*Boys and Girls*

Jeff is dating Joanne, and Mary is dating Scotty. But at a college dance, Jeff and Mary discover that Joanne and Scotty would rather date each other!

- Mary is in college and is feeling a little high and mighty. Jeff is feeling the brunt of it because he is the little brother and in high school.
- Jerry is coming over and Mary wants to make a good impression.
- Joanne is coming over to study with Mary.
- Jerry and Joanne meet each other and start making eyes at each other.
- Jeff asks Joanne to go to the charity dance at the college. Mary does not know and when she finds out that, she thinks that Jeff just wants to embarrass her.
- When they get to the dance, the first thing to happen is Jerry asking Joanne to dance. They just keep on dancing.
- Jeff tries to keep Joanne by buying her a gift, an “identification bracelet” to go steady.
- Joanne goes to a dance with Jerry and Mary and Jeff won’t have it. They decide to go together to keep an eye on the two of them.
- When they get there, they see Joanne and Jerry heading off to “walk the line.”
- Jeff ends up leaving and goes home. After a while he walks around and around a tree by his house. Joanne
comes to find him. She didn’t know what “walking the line” meant... So she left and Jerry went back to dancing with Mary. She came to find him and now they are walking around the tree together.

- Ending line... first Joanne, “aren't the stars beautiful tonight?” and then Donna... Then Alex draws the shades and kisses her.

- QUOTES:
  - Donna - “Well maybe, Joanne wasn’t ready to be owned.” Jeff - “Mom, I don’t want to own her. I can’t afford that. I just don’t want her going out with older guys and making a fool of herself.” Donna- “You can’t stop that by putting your name on her.” ... “Jeff, men no longer drag women by the hair then carry them off to their cave and stand guard at the entrance. Thank goodness.”
  - Donna - “Joanne is pretty. Worth fighting for.”

- OVERALL: Jeff and Mary have love interests who end up liking each other. After finding out that they really don’t want to be together (through the dance and “walking the line”, Joanne ends up back with Jeff and Jerry with Mary.

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7.2
Sept. 24, 1964
_Dad Drops By_
Alex’s father drops by for a visit, terrorizing the population of Hilldale by driving recklessly in his antique Duesenberg. Now Donna needs to find a tactful way of getting him to agree to give up driving.

- Brought to you by the Campbells soup company
- Jeff is filming a movie on his own and Donna is going to be his star
- “Woman of the world. Talk of London!” –Jeff in reference to Donna
- Donna’s reaction to her father-in-law is the same reaction that Jeff wanted to his script where her husband went down with the titanic
- Alex goes through this long list of difficulties that he feels his father brings... Donna tries to turn it around before admitting he is a “difficult man.”
- Alex is practicing fishing in the kitchen... almost hits donna and she says “wives are out of season.” –Donna “I was going to throw you back anyway.” –Alex
- Alex has to leave for a trip up to help with a flu epidemic.
- Donna has her friend over who apparently had her car hit by Alex’s father in law... Who runs into the woman’s husband and then they claim that “women drivers are the worst.”
- Singer (sewing) commercial
- Donna starts listing off qualities of the car and the man from the car museum is amazed... Donna then says that
Dad made her write it 50 times for homework.

- Father-in-law talks about how the kids are undernourished and that Donna hasn’t put on an inch in years… Suggests “groupes?” Molasses etc… because carbohydrates, protein is not good enough and that is what Alex and the kids have been eating all week… He is condescending to her.
- Have breakfast prepared for by grandpa and they all hate it but Donna says it’s delicious
- Grandpa works out and makes the kitchen go crazy and things start falling out
- He says they are not getting good enough fresh air and she “settles” instead of a tent, she’ll open the window
- Her and Jeff decide to try and show grandpa that he shouldn’t be driving. Donna comes up with a scheme to film him in action and have Jeff make a candid adventure film
- Father in law starts shifting all over the place in fear and tries to back seat drive while watching the film
- Father in law asks to have the film as a remembrance of the “old Doozy” because he is going to sell the car to the museum… he says he is going to “retire from the road” because of the “Bad drivers”
- Donna asks Alex to talk with his Dad because he is giving up his car and needs some cheering up
- Complains to Alex about Donna coming to close to a maniac driver (himself)… “You wouldn’t believe how people are driving these days! Especially the women!”
- He decides to take one more drive around the block but then decides at the last minute to have the museum man (Mr. Mason) drive him home.

Hand signals to Jeff about where his missing swim trunks are when she is on the phone with Myrtle (a person on her committee) who is trying to foist some of her duties off on Donna

- Have a woman delivered in a cab who is having quadruplets
- When they are being born, they utilize the kitchen cabinets for new baby beds
- “Where is the father in this combo?” –Dave “Don’t know… Cab driver is trying to find him.” –Alex “If you ask me, he’s hiding.” – Dr. Dave Kelsey (Alex’s friend)
- “Awfully good looking nurses in this household.” Dave seems to be arrogant.
- Myrtle keeps calling about the reservation…Tells her
she just had quadruplets “Let her figure that one out.”

- Mother has all the babies named after the husband and wife pairs
- The father shows up and Donna tries to break the news about having quadruplets!
- Donna breaks it to him and he faints.
- Donna is running a tight ship even though Alex is the father.
- Jeff sells his story (the quadruplets) to the paper!
- The father gets excited because they are “famous”
- He keeps saying “I” am 1 in 620,000. He wants the key to the city. The wife wants a key to a nice apartment. “Don’t worry you’re married to the father of quadruplets.” –The Dad
- The wife talks about clothing them, feeding them and how much that will cost
- Jeff and her daughter start to market the quads and make money to send the babies to school. He lets them look and even the father takes part. But instead of going into the room he just looks at them through binoculars. He asks to see all 4 babies by holding up his fingers.
- But when Donna is offered a new stove because of the quads, she asks “Well what has Hilldale done for the quads?” and then all this stuff starts being delivered and the dad just says they can store it in the Stones house… overwhelming Donna a bit. It takes over the entire Stone house!
- The dad asks to have breakfast in the room with his wife. She asks him if he “wants a menu?” (sarcastically) – Donna
- A councilman stops by and says he has a house for the Gailey family!
- Donna keeps asking him when he is going to run for mayor and then governor and then president because she is so excited! He says he is just doing his job. Now the council is starting a new fundraising job for a new maternity wing after they shot it down originally The councilman asks for a “Tireless worker, leader in the community” to organize it all and he wants Donna. She turns it down by saying she might not even vote for his reelection! And tells him to call Myrtle.
- Alex gets a visit from Dr. Edward Anis (AMA) and comes to congratulate the two doctors
- Alex says that a lot of the credit must go to their nurses (Donna and friend)… Donna resembles a woman in a
film on accident prevention… they plug the video and it is Donna… A built in PSA in the show about preventable accidents. It’s a very blunt PSA about keeping medicine, electronics, etc. out of reach. Donna turns to the camera at the end after the doctor says she would want to remain anonymous and winks at the camera (breaking the fourth wall and bringing it together)

7.20
Jan 28, 1965
Home
Wreckonomics
As a Home Economics project, Karen takes over the running of the Kelsey household for a week, much to Dave's chagrin.

- Karen (Jeff’s girlfriend)
- “You know how hard she works everyday. Cooking, cleaning, ironing… Making women delicate, and then making them work as hard as men.” –Jeff “Jeff are you going to help me.” –Donna “No, that’s women’s work.” –Jeff “You lost me.” –Donna “But Karen can.” –Jeff
- Alex and Donna find this kind of funny. Jeff’s sudden turn of thought and his desire to compliment Donna about her house skills…
- The Kelsey’s are woken up by Karen cooking and singing at 5:30 am
- Karen has everything sectioned out by specific time, but the wife says “She is a student.” And that they should let her go about it.
- Karen rearranged everything in the house in accordance to “home economics principles… lighting, ventilation, convenience, etc.”
- Mrs. Kelsey tries to get Dave to work with them, but it is very exasperating
- Dave keeps making sarcastic jokes about the arrangements of his life. “I’m a prisoner in my own house.” –Dave
- He adjusts and starts counting down the days
- “Have I ever told you how you are the most beautiful woman in the world?” –Alex “Not since the last time I made pot roast.” –Donna
- The Kelsey’s try to give Karen back to the Stones, but they tell her that “they are putting her through college” – Donna and decide to give her the night off and pay for a dinner out with Jeff so they can watch the game
- Unfortunately, Karen’s economic teacher comes by for a surprise visit!
- Dave tries to save face and play the teacher! Talks all about how great Karen is! While his wife tries to prepare the dinner that Karen planned
- “I want to die!” –Mrs. Kelsey
- Karen confesses to the teacher that the food came from
the restaurant and instead of failing her the teacher gives her an A because part of managing a household is quick thinking when a problem occurs
• End with watching the game! “Saved a seat for you honey!” –Alex

7.30 April 8, 1965
*Indoor Outing*
Trisha's outbreak of measles will keep her from attending a family trip, so Donna plans an indoor outing.

• Donna is packing everything up and almost forgot the calamine lotion for the mosquitoes
• Trisha hasn’t come down yet, so Donna asks Jeff to check on Trisha
• Trisha comes out in a rain coat with band aids on her face to hide her measles
• Donna says that the girls will do fine at home and Jeff and Alex can go fishing
• Donna tries to make her feel better because she can’t go now. She sets up a picnic and even has her pretend that she is there.
• Donna reminisces about their trip to Lake Mead (with Alex, Mary and Jeff)… its tight quarters and Donna keeps trying to make it seem great! Talks about how magnificent everything is! “Navigator to pilot, the ignition switch is on.” –Donna
• Decide to roast something and then the rain starts coming. Jeff doesn’t think it is going to rain so he gets stuck outside. Donna tries cooking at 50 mph. Mary has boys over after a dance. Alex gets stuck in his sleeping bag and this guy tries to get him out but keeps whacking his head on the bench.
• Trisha falls asleep to the story and then immediately wakes up to hear the rest of the story
• Continued to Lake Mead and rents a boat called the Big Daddy! Originally had bad luck at fishing until Donna grabs hold of the rod. And she “is gonna get him! I’ll get him!... It’s my fish! My fish!” –Donna They didn’t get him
• Then, Donna got stuck in her sleeping bag…”Don’t struggle, dear. I’ll get you out in the morning.” –Alex
• Playing Old Main… “Oh Old Maid again… Don’t tell your father, he thinks I’m married.” –Donna
• Cabin on the lake when they went duck hunting. The friend kept saying “Women weren’t good at roughing it.” –Donna “Weren’t you mad?” –Trisha “Yes, I was!” –Donna
• So they go and end up running out of gas, having to hike in the woods, and then they arrive at the cabin where there are “creatures.” They end up tidying up the place!
They fix it all up and no one comes. “The only thing we proved is that we have strong backs and weak minds.” – Mary after they find out they are in the wrong cabin

• They hear voices outside and Donna begins to have them barricade the door. People try to break in and Donna and Mary start attacking them! It was Alex and the guy. He never said again that “females were helpless creatures.” – Donna “Why not?” – Trisha “He married one.” – Donna

• Reminisce about Mary’s singing days. “Johnny Angel”

• Alex comes home and he regales Trisha of his failed trip… He wasn’t kidding about the fishing not being good, poison ivy, lunch basket going overboard, flat tire.

• Singer commercial with Donna and Trisha

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A SALUTE TO THE CLASSIC SERIES’ CAST & CREATIVE TEAM: The Donna Reed Show Reunion
Tuesday, December 6, 2011
7:00 pm PT
Los Angeles, California

IN PERSON
Shelley Fabares, "Mary Stone"
Paul Petersen, "Jeff Stone"
Patti Petersen, "Trisha Stone"
Stu Phillips, Music Producer, "Johnny Angel," "My Dad"
Eddie Foy III, Screen Gems Casting Director
James Darren, Entertainer & Series Guest Star
Jimmy Hawkins, “Scotty”
Ann McCrea, “Midge”

When The Donna Reed Show made its TV debut in 1958, Donna Reed was a major movie star having already secured her place in entertainment history in classic films including It’s A Wonderful Life and From Here to Eternity, for which she won an Academy Award as Best Supporting Actress in 1954. Though uncredited, Reed played a major role behind-the-scenes, helping to fashion a family comedy which put the Mom front and center, unlike its popular contemporaries including The Adventures of Ozzie & Harriet and Father Knows Best. In doing so, she became an icon for millions at the center of a series that throughout the course of its 275 episode run presented a family ideal which generations aspired to, while from time to time dealing with challenging subject matter including drug addiction, women’s rights, and freedom of the press. Reed also received four Emmy nominations and a Golden Globe Award for her performance as “Donna Stone.”

Blessed with a gifted ensemble cast including Carl Betz (Dr. Alex Stone), Shelley Fabares (Mary Stone) and Paul Petersen (Jeff Stone), both of whom would establish burgeoning pop music careers during the series’ run, The Donna Reed Show endures for generations of fans who grew up with the Stone family during its initial run and as a Nick-At-Nite favorite. Now forty-five years after airing its last episode, and on the
occasion of its official Season Four - The Lost Episodes DVD release, the Paley Center is pleased to welcome members of the iconic series cast and creative team for a fond look back at this true TV classic, including the screening of highlights and rare footage from unsyndicated episodes not seen anywhere in decades.

My Notes:

- Renee Jan 25, 1959 – Premiere… “Donna reed went into TV without about everything against her…but they made the mistake of underestimating that woman.”
- Cynthia Littleton – “Not iconic as some of the other shows of the 50s but so well produced, so evergreen, timeless.”
  - Earthiness to the Donna Reed show… “different from domestic sitcoms… stories of a teenage daughter and preteen son and a mother/father who are not perfect… less on the goofy side compared to Leave it to beaver or Ozzie and Harriet.. It looked timeless.”
- Paul Peterson— “when a family cares about each other, you get through the day. Sometimes it is really funny sometimes its really sad
- Shelly.. “Donna was who she seemed to be! Child of the Midwest… Bedrock decency… Hardworking. Adamant that it stayed grounded in reality. Donna was a burgeoning feminist. People don’t remember that from the show. People remember Donna and her pearls and vacuuming.”
- Paul— “Not a lot of actresses have spaghetti splashed across their face…. .”
  - Cynthia… “Oscar winning actresses!”
  - “When people were around, I called her Mrs. Reed. I think I was 26 when I stopped… When I got to work in the morning, I called her mom.”
- Ann—“From the beginning, she became my boss, but she also became a friend and trough the years ever more so a friend…. She was my matron of honor.”
- Ed Foy—“In my mind, what we call a family comedy… today they are garbage comedies. What standout in my mind was the cohesiveness. I had two bosses that were the nicest people I worked with…” Cynthia—“That was Donna and tony.”
  - Ed—“There was nothing ever so pleasant as being with these people and that cast and Tony Own and a truly major motion picture star who was a lovely woman with a lot of talent.”
- Jimmy—“The first ay we were about to read around the table… My name is Jimmy Hawkins and I played your son on It’s a Wonderful Life.” Donna— “Yes I know.. We used to call you Rup van winkle. Well because you would sleep any place any time. … She set that mood. She wanted it to be light and funny. It wasn’t like going to work, it was going to fun. You felt very comfortable there….It was like an extended family. Believe me, no one would be there the second week if she didn’t like them.”
- Cynthia—“Intimately hands on creative in setting the show.”
- Jimmy—“Everything was set before she came on the show.”
- Paul—“So deft at looking at little pieces of dialogue.”
- Shelly—“I had been a tap dancer all my life. It was the only thing I thought I could do. Suddenly there was a show where Mary was trying out for the school play. Mary was hysterical about doing this. I was in a coma. I worked myself into
a frenzy. Donna said, come here. Let's just talk." She told her about a movie she did many years ago. “There are three things I cannot do. Swim. Sing. Dance. In the opening scene of the movie I had to swim. Sing. Dance. I thought I was going to die. But I knew I had to do it and get through it. It was the best thing I ever did. The film is called It's a Wonderful Life.”

- Shelly—“She looked up at Jerry the assistant director and said Lunch. Jerry—What do mean Donna its 10:30? Shelly—She looked up at him and said Lunch. Walked me around the lot and talked about 1st loves and connected with me on such a level. As you guess, I cannot say enough about this woman.”

- Stu, same guy who did music for Battle star Galactica
- Tony Owen was a real producer.
- Writing staff… Paul West, Phil Sharp, Barbara Avadon, Helen August
- Phil—“You didn’t hire women writers in that day. They got theirs start through the office of donna.” Ida Lapino (female director)
- Ed—“Tony set the tone upstairs as much as Donna set the tone downstairs.”
- Carl Betz from Paul “He is a Carnegie Medalist, knew Shakespeare cold, gifted swordsman when he practiced. To work with him is a delight once we figured out a little extra delight.”
- Donna—“There would not have been a Donna Reed Show without a Carl Betz. He kept the show together.”
- Donna Reed on film and would film for 5 days.
- Paul—“I was always home for dinner… Cynthia—“No 3 am shooting.” Paul—“Oh no, Donna had children!”
- Paul—“Imagine being on a show for 8 years with Roseanne Barr as my mother! I never had to defend Donna Reed. She was a lady. I’m proud of these episodes! I can show my kids any of these episodes!”
- Columbia Pictures on Goyer Screen 1 with Screen Gems.
- Paul West was the show runner
- Boxing lesson with donna was Paul’s favorite episode. My Dad is another. Chinese Carousel Horse… Campbells soup made them redo the ending!!! Because it was too scary.
- Paul—Donna wasn’t there once because she had a stomach virus from India. “Where’s Donna Reed we have to work.” Director—“First of all it’s the Donna Reed show. Second of all we have insurance.”
- Shelly—“Once a month at 12 at the Bistro we (Carl, Donna, Shelly, Paul) would meet for lunch. It was sacred. Just to give you a closeness of the group.”
- Paul—“On Stage 7, it was father knows best which didn’t have that closeness or uniqueness. Donna and Cal promised us they were our friends for life.”
- Jimmy—Donna Reed’s finest hour @ a rap party sitting in the living room of the show “Donna Reed just sat there with him for hours and listened patiently to Paul tell us all sorts of stories. He was so moved by the end of this show that Donna Reed was so patient with the him (Tony Own kept coming in an she would hold up a finger to him to tell him to wait).”

Donna Reed: Intimate Portrait Lifetime
### Analysis

- **1.2 Oct. 25, 1988**
  - *We’re in the Money*
  - When Dan receives a $500 advance on a drywall job, everyone hopes there will be money left over for something extra for themselves. When it turns out that, after the bills are paid, there will barely be enough left to buy one thing, Dan and Roseanne each buy themselves a luxury item on the sly. Darlene is scolded for lying, but they each ask her to hide the truth about something.

- Credit scene… Everyone around the table. Lots of gesticulation. Hugging her son. Dan hugging both of them.
- Opening scene… starts with “Wasn’t me” “why don’t you ask Darlene” Darlene runs away chasing sister. Roseanne yells for Darlene to get back there
- He asks Dan if he is “gonna hit her” “Nobody is gonna hit nobody” “I did”
- “Look me in the eye Darlene. You did it didn’t you” I caught you because you were lying. She thought she would get away with it. ”Well you’re never going to get away with it because I am the all seeing all knowing mother.” - Roseanne
- Phone call for Roseanne and she asks Darlene to lie for her. And she does in a way… she tells the woman on the phone that Roseanne told her to tell her she is not here. She hangs up and proceeds to run into the other room. “I should wring your neck.” - Roseanne
- “Dan, I am a woman on the edge.” = Roseanne, after Dan complains about the batteries. She says if he starts complaining about those it will move up to a whole bunch of other complainants and she doesn’t have time for that.
- Dan talks about a job he hopes to get and Roseanne berates him telling him he isn’t going to get it. It seems sarcastic because then he does a chant about how he is the dry wall champion of the world.
- Roseanne is making a casserole by pouring some sort of topping on to noodles. Very haphazardly but she is very proud of herself.
- “What did I tell you about killing your brother in the living room.” “Were just playing!” “Clean this up and go clean your room!” –Roseanne “ My room is clean.” “Well go clean mine!” – Roseanne
- He comes back in to the house with pork rinds and she goes “Dog gone, you got the job!”
- “When you want it done right, you go to Dan Dan the Drywall Man!” – Dan “The man behind the woman.” – Roseanne “The man who brought his woman the advance.” “Ahh, you deserve a kiss… Becky, kiss your dad!” – Roseanne Then the kids begin to debate what they want. Roseanne says there are a 5/10 chance for money for the

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kids. Because they have to pay bills first. If there is money leftover, they will buy the kids a swing set! With a 50 ft slide and a pet shark. Joy ensues

- “If you had an extra 50 bucks what would you blow it on.”
  “Buy new kids.”
- “You might share my bed, but you do not know me.” - Roseanne (sarcasm)
- Dan says she would buy it on perfume and he keeps kissing her! “Get away you’re making me puke!” – Roseanne
- Dan wants Roseanne to guess what he would buy. She won’t but Dan tells her he would buy a boat bell!
- They can pay everything off, but they would only have $11.70 left.
- Roseanne has a system for extra money. Send the bills to different companies, not sign the check. Dan says if they are responsible, they can catch back up on bills. Then, Dan and her bicker about what they have all bought that was worthless. Roseanne lists a bunch on things off and Dan can’t list one of hers off. He says they need to act like adults and she says “You can’t make me!”
- We’re always broke because we live with three little moochers that drain us dry”
- Jackie is going on about how they don’t manage their money right and every so often you need to treat yourself. “Take a vacation.” – Jackie “Spoken like a true single woman.”
- Roseanne talks about how Dan says they are not going to spend the money on anything frivolous. “And you do everything your husband tells you to do!?”- Jackie “Don’t start.” –Roseanne “You do, you’re just like mom.” – Jackie “I am not!” - Roseanne “You are exactly like her, whatever hubby says goes.” – Jackie
- Sales lady asks if she is married and she says no but she is shacking up with this one guy. That’s what she “lives for to excite that man!”
- Roseanne buys the perfume and Dan buys the bell, but they both try and hide it from each other. Calling each other pet names.
- Dan helps with putting the groceries away. Dan catches her with the perfume and then he guilts her about buying it. She says she will take it back and now he doesn’t want her to take it back. He says would it help if went out and bought the bell? She catches on and yells at him about buying the bell.
- Foot rubs on the couch... “I did you and now you do me!” - Dan “I thought you were doing it out of love!” - Roseanne
… “I’ve dedicated my whole life to you and all I get is a lousy five minute foot massage!” - Roseanne “Ok 3 more minutes.” - Dan “Deal” - Roseanne

1.8
Dec. 20, 1988
*Here’s to Good Friends*

Upset because she got dumped again, and certain she will never find a good man, Crystal turns to Roseanne and Jackie for support and advice. Booker turns down a date with Jackie because his "Mother" is in town, and turns up at the Lobo Lounge with another woman. Jackie decides not to turn the other cheek.

Praying for a snow day, Darlene procrastinates doing a book report she has to turn in the next day.

• “I was a stud wasn’t I?” - Dan “Yeah, what happened?” – Roseanne “I married this woman…” - Dan
• Slaps oatmeal into a bowl “Thanks, warden.” – Dan
• George Clooney is a guest star
• Offers advice with a sarcastic love in relation to Crystal’s guy problems. “Crystal’s freaking out again.” - Roseanne “Guys problems?” - Dan “No, she didn’t get into Law school!”
• “What are you going to tell her?” - Dan “To give up on romance and get married!” – Roseanne
• “Where’s your old man?” – Bartender “ At home with the kids” – Roseanne “You’re telling me you got him to babysit?” “Babysit? Hell! There his kids too!” – Roseanne
• “I don’t know how to tell you this, Crystal. You’re a doormat.” – Roseanne Jackie and Roseanne go into the self-esteem talk

• Roseanne pretends to be a man in a role-play with Crystal to build up her self esteem. Spitting and drinking and hiking up her leg. Asking if Crystal knows how to “fix a zipper in an old pair of blue jeans?” It doesn’t quite work and Jackie does it to Roseanne now. She spouts phrases and then says, “look it’s easy!”

• Dan is watching the game with the kids. Lets Darlene watch with them even though they haven’t finished her report and it’s past DJs bed time and Becky hasn’t done the dishes. He makes them all go do it then it gets exciting and he says “10 more minutes.”

• Jackie sees Booker with another woman and pretends that she is his wife and that he has kids at home. She runs his date away and then get him to buy her a drink.

• Talking about why she loves Dan… Roseanne loves his sense of humor and the way his pants kept falling down.
• “Man or no man, you are a great person. You are a great mother to Looney. First person to come running if anyone needs anything. Crystal you are a vital intelligent woman in the tie of her life… You buy any of that crap.” - Roseanne “Some of it.” - Dan “Good.”

• Booker asks Jackie to come back to his place to forgive him and Jackie says he should go home and forgive himself.
• Darlene worked really hard on the book report. Roseanne breaks it to her that it snowing really hard out there and there probably wont be any school tomorrow. Darlene is
1.15
Feb. 14, 1989
Nightmare on Oak Street
After Dan and the kids stay up late watching a horror movie, Roseanne must contend with a terrified Darlene keeping her up all night but soon learns there’s more going on with her growing daughter than simple night terrors.

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<td>- Dan is almost like a second kid and Roseanne is the ringleader of the brood. But then when he is with Roseanne, he explains his logic.</td>
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<td>- Roseanne is not a fan of the scary movie and jokes that maybe they should “introduce the kids to some culture.”</td>
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<td>- Darlene comes into their room that night and Roseanne finds out she had a nightmare. Roseanne says she might be a little old for this and that she is going to take her back up to her room. Roseanne reminds Dan that he said he would be responsible for whatever happened tonight. She explains everything he is going to do but she does it.</td>
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<td>- Darlene doesn’t want her mom to go and Roseanne says she might feel better if she told her what she dreamt but Darlene really doesn’t want to. Roseanne leaves and Darlene yells out for her. Roseanne ends up crawling into bed with her to get her to sleep</td>
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<td>- Dan had no idea that she was doing anything last night. He asks why she didn’t wake him? “Why didn’t I think of that?!” – Roseanne</td>
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<td>- Darlene doesn’t want to work on the boat either.</td>
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<td>- DJ knocked Becky’s makeup over and is demanding Roseanne come NOW and fix it.</td>
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<td>- They keep asking her things about what is wrong and then she blurts out that she got her period!</td>
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<td>- Jackie calls it “35 years of monthly inconvenience.” Said when she got hers she thought that this meant she couldn’t horse around with the boys anymore.</td>
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<td>- Dan keeps trying to talk to Darlene and then Darlene keeps trying to avoid the conversation. Dan asks if she is still going to play and that she doesn’t have to if she doesn’t feel like it. Dan says he needs to say something and he should say something. Then, DJ comes in with clips in her hair! Dan says “he looks beautiful” DJ says “guys aren’t supposed to look beautiful” - DJ “Damn beautiful” – Dan “That’s better!” –DJ Then, Darlene and Dan have a moment and say I love you before Dan says “good going” and pats her on the shoulder. Then, he gets grossed out.</td>
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<td>- Darlene freaks out because her life is over and he congratulated him</td>
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|   | - “Oh I understand. You think you have leave all this stuff behind now. Women have to stop wearing baseball gloves and start wearing aprons and stuff.” – Roseanne “All I know is I’m not shaving my legs or wearing panty hose like Becky!” - Darlene “You think I make Becky put on makeup
and wear perfume?” – Roseanne “No.” – Darlene “She does it cause she has always liked that kind of stuff. She does it because that is the type of woman she wants to be.” – Roseanne “Well that is not the type of woman, I want to be!” – Darlene “Well then what are you throwing your stuff away for. These are girls things as long as a girl uses them. You love all this stuff that’s reason enough to keep it.” – Roseanne “I’m probably going to start throwing like a girl anyway.” – Darlene “Definitely. And since you got your period, you’ll be throwing a lot farther.” – Roseanne “Why me?” – Darlene ”You’re lucky. Now you get to be part of the whole cycle of things... It is almost magical Darlene. You should be really proud today because this is the start of some great things in your life.” – Rosanne “Yeah cramps.” – Darlene “I wont admit that is one of the highlights. But I’m talking about something that is better than that.” – Roseanne “Name one good thing that came out of this whole mess.” – Darlene “Ok, I’ll name three. Becky. DJ. And what’s the name of that bratty one…” – Roseanne “Mommmm.” – Darlene “No it’s not mom…” – Roseanne “Darlene” – Darlene “Yeah that’s it… Darlene.” – Roseanne “Thanks, Mom.” – Darlene

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<th>1.22 April 18, 1989</th>
<th>Dear Mom and Dad</th>
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<td>The Conner household is thrown into chaos with the arrival of Roseanne's parents who do nothing but criticize their daughters behind their backs.</td>
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- “You kids are our corny little sex jokes.” – Roseanne
- Roseanne’s parents come to visit and they foist the luggage onto Dan.
- “If he says pull my finger one more time…” – Darlene “Now you know where I get my smart, sophisticated sense of wit.” – Roseanne
- Roseanne’s Mom goes into Roseanne and starts going after Jackie and then that Dan might not be working. Her mom is a classic busy body mom and she wants Roseanne to tell her what she needs to do, then the mom goes after Jackie about Roseanne saying that her father worries and a mother knows. “Granted it was a different generation, but your father would have died before making me go out to work.” – Mom “Dan doesn’t make Roseanne work.” – Jackie “Behind the back conversations galore. Then they come back at their Mom and confront the situation, but Roseanne buckles.
- There’s a whole dilemma of who is suppose to sleep where and then the mother drops the bomb that they are looking for a place in Lambford. Roseanne solves the problem and then when they try and sleep Dan calls her out for not sticking up to her parents. She tries to storm out and but Dan apologizes and they go back to bed.
- Dan and Roseanne are bicker and Dan keeps coming for
Roseanne with out the sarcastic loving tone.

- Jackie calls out Roseanne about losing her backbone and turning into “Rosy too shoes.” Roseanne calls out Jackie on her life. Dan then goes after Jackie. All of them are screaming at each other!
- Roseanne then stands up to her parents and starts yelling at her parents. Then, they tell her that they aren’t moving. Then, they get sentimental saying they are going to miss each other and Roseanne starts crying because she is going to miss them.

3.1
Sept. 18, 1990
*The Test*

The entire family clusters around Roseanne for the longest ten minutes of their lives as they await the results of a pregnancy test.

- Same title credits but updated family members and the kids are at the table now and she is no longer hugging DJ at the end. The “chips” they use are pretzels and marshmallows
- Jackie is a cop
- Roseanne is going to clean the house
- Becky wonders why Roseanne has no sarcastic comments about her driving. She says “didn’t Darlene take care of that.”
- She keeps trying to kick everyone out of the house but they won’t leave. She won’t tell Dan yet. When she told him about the other kids, she told him that he had to get a job, then a better job.
- Dan comes in on them and his response is “ahh…” then thinks that the pregnancy test is for Jackie. Roseanne lets him continue. Dan says that don’t tell the guy until after you take the test. She then kind of tells him and he gets pissy and asks her how late she is.
- The kids overhear and start bickering at each other
- Roseanne comes out and they all have to waste 10 minutes
- DJ keeps announcing the time
- Roseanne is upset that Dan doesn’t want to talk about it.
- Darlene doesn’t want to take care of the baby at all and she tells her mom that she doesn’t want to clean or wash or watch the baby and that three kids is enough. Roseanne says that she would miss Darlene. Becky starts yelling about how she has to do without things because of all the kids.
- Roseanne is annoyed with the selfishness of the kids. Jackie says that if she doesn’t have a baby she can always have an abortion. “Some say that’s murder.” —Crystal “Some say you have a choice.” —Roseanne
- “Everyone is saying that it’s my fault.” —Roseanne “That’s not what I am saying.” —Dan They all don’t want to go through it again. “Well maybe if WE all pull together, WE can make this pregnancy thing easier on us.” —Roseanne
• “Accidents are something if you did it over again you wouldn’t. A surprise is something that you would.” – Roseanne to DJ’s question about being an accident
• Roseanne doesn’t want this to happen again so she wants to get her tubes tied and then she mentions that it’s only a little bit more complicated than a vasectomy.
• “If this test is positive. I expect all of your support. I’m not going to ask for it. You’re just going to give it. I know you can do it. Just pretend like you are some other family.” – Roseanne Agreement around
• Darlene and Becky celebrate, but Crystal says sorry
• Darlene says she is sorry for the things she said before and Becky just looks at her mom as if she is sorry and Roseanne gets everyone back on schedule
• Dan asks Roseanne what she would have named it… Jack for a boy and Priscilla for a girl
• DJ spills stuff everywhere and Dan volunteers to clean it up, but then Becky honks the horn and he needs to leave. But then he comes back and says that she shouldn’t tie her tubes

| 3.7 Oct. 30, 1960 | Men… “The only animal on the planet that would wear black socks and Bermuda shorts.” –Roseanne
| Trick or Treat | DJ is dressed-up as a witch for Halloween and Dan is not happy about it. “He’s dressed like a witch. Witches are girls.” –Dan “This is the 90s now. Witches are women.” – Roseanne
| Gender bending | “Boys shouldn’t dress up like girls.” –Dan “Darlene dressed up like a pirate for three years.” –Roseanne “That was cute. If he goes out like this he is going to come home with a bloody nose.” –Dan “That’s stupid.” –Roseanne
| abounds with the annual Conner fright-fest that finds Roseanne in drag and Dan worrying about DJ dressing up as a witch. | Roseanne is at work still and Dan has to take care of things. He tries to convince DJ to be a warlock instead because Warlocks are guys, but then he says he can’t have a broom and DJ wants to be a witch.
| | Roseanne is embarrassed about her costume as a lumberjack because she is the only one in the bar in a costume. So she pretends to be a guy. Jackie says to not do it because she will just embarrass herself.
| | “Well why should I pay. You’re the man!” –Jackie “You know I left my purse in the car!” –Roseanne
| | Roseanne goes to fraternize with the boys at the poker table. The boys are talking all about their sex lives, but Roseanne keeps making comments like “Yeah right.” And “what does she need with you with a whole suitcase of sex toys.” And then has to recover because the guys take
offense. Roseanne is loving it! Then, she goes back to Jackie and tells her about it and why “if one of them is having sex then that means the others could too. It is a sense of hope!” –Roseanne

- She goes into the men’s room too and ends up going to the bathroom by another bar patron
- Darlene and Becky are not scared at all from the haunted house
- “Every time my old lady gives me crap about men and women being equal. I say you’re so equal? Well let’s see you pee on a campfire.” –Roseanne
- Crystal comes into the bar, depressed about a guy and a bad date because he tried to make a move because she ordered a larger meal. Roseanne (dressed as a man) says “you are a quality woman and you have to stop judging yourself according to what men think.” –Roseanne and then Crystal proceeds to hit on Roseanne because she is so refreshed by the things she is saying
- The man making a hubbub in the bar demands Crystal dances and when she says no he tries to fight Roseanne. All of a sudden Dan comes in and says for him to get “his hands of his husband.” –Dan “Well that’s a real man.” -Roseanne

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<tr>
<th>3.12</th>
<th>Dec. 18, 1990</th>
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| Confessions | Roseanne's mother, Beverly, visits for the weekend, much to the dismay of the family. Roseanne tricks Jackie into coming over to help keep her from being alone with her mother. While confessing youthful transgressions to their Mom for fun, Jackie discovers that her parents always thought she had potential to make something out of herself; while Roseanne discovers that they
| Dan asks what she wants to do this weekend and Roseanne proceeds to plead with Dan to drink beer and watch football games! (Sarcastically) |
| Grandma is in town and is letting Becky go out on a date with a boy, but says Darlene is not a “big girl” yet and is going to stay there with them |
| Roseanne pulls Darlene out into the laundry room to talk and says she hates her grandmother. Dan pops in asking how it is going, and Roseanne makes a face at him. He proceeds to leave very quickly |
| Roseanne tricks Jackie to come over with the grandmother. She tries to runaway but then their mother proceeds to compliment them. |
| While making dinner and drinking wine, Jackie and her begin to confess childhood craziness. |
| Roseanne used to go to a girl named Genie’s house, but it was actually Dan. |
| Then, Jackie talks about not wanting to go to this one school she got into and goes into how she has squandered her life and that Jackie is a “screw up.” |
| Mom always thought that Jackie would do big things because she argued and had a spark |
| But they knew what Roseanne was going to be and they |
always knew that she would "just" be an ordinary housewife and mother. Roseanne finds this revelation hurtful, and wonders if she treats her own daughters that differently.

never had to worry... “safe and comfortable and a good Mommy... just like you are now.” –Mom “All you’re saying is that I could just be an ordinary housewife.” –Roseanne “Oh Roseanne you have a beautiful house, children, a husband. There’s nothing wrong with being ordinary.” –Mom

• Roseanne vents to Dan about it and he watches TV, which she turns off because he is not listening
• Darlene wants to go to dinner at a friend’s house... “I don’t appreciate you going over my head to ask your father. If I say No, he is going to say No too!” –Roseanne
• “I don’t know how you manage it... With your job and your house and all the other stuff you do.” –Jackie “I must be a fine renaissance woman.” –Roseanne
• Roseanne is fixated on the word “ordinary.” “My problem is I’ve got no spark.” –Roseanne
• “She should have treated us the same” –Roseanne “Do you treat Darlene and Becky the same?” –Jackie “Yes I do” –Roseanne “She made the decision a long time ago that I screwed up my life and you were the mud pie making queen. That’s the way mothers are.” –Jackie “Well not this one.” –Roseanne
• Roseanne goes upstairs and has a heart to heart conversation with Darlene. Darlene thinks that Roseanne expects Becky things from Becky and different things from her. She thinks that because Roseanne is a better Mom than her grandmother, then when she has kids she will be an awesome mom.

3.19  
Feb. 26, 1991  
*Vegas Interruptus*  
Roseanne and Dan are off to Vegas for the weekend, leaving the kids home alone, but Roseanne's new boss and a snowstorm may have other ideas.

• Roseanne is working at the diner moving ketchup from one bottle to another.
• The boss asks her if there is something menial they could do because it is slow. Roseanne responds with “well we are talking to you” in a sarcastic tone
• Dan comes in and Roseanne wants to knock off early to do something special with Dan (go grocery shopping while Dan sits out in the car)
• The boss is not a fan of Roseanne leaving from work without checking for with the boss. He waves her over, gives the ‘one second’ finger to Dan who nods in manly understanding. He questions Roseanne’s desire to have this job because she always leaves or changes the schedule around.
• Dan and Roseanne are going to Las Vegas. Roseanne bought sunglasses and Dan asks her why she bought them because she’s never going to leave the casino! She says it’s
so people cannot tell if she is bluffing

• They debate the merits of craps and slots and then decide the best odds for them are at the buffet table.

• Becky comes down and “subtly” (not really) asks what time they are leaving tomorrow. Roseanne loudly asks Dan what time the party Becky is going to throw starts.

• Roseanne and Dan put food away with each other.

• Roseanne jokes that they try to get away every 15 or 16 years to relate to each other and a man and woman.

• Aunt Jackie is coming over tonight to hang with the girls… which freaks the girls out and they finally fess up that they are having a party and Dan lays out some basic party rules… Everyone out by 12:30, no sex below the neck, no rap music.

• DJ is staying with Crystal while they are out of town

• Roseanne didn’t tell her new boss that she is going out of town. He’s pissed because she keeps doing this and ends up yelling at her that she shouldn’t come back to work if she doesn’t come in this weekend. Even though she has no refundable plane tickets. He doesn’t care and gets very worked up. She’s hurt by this.

• Jackie is policing things at the party (making people stay downstairs and sniffing people’s drinks). Some boy begins to hit on her. He’s a senior in high school and she says she is a former senior.

• Darlene and Becky have conflicting boy trouble. Barry asked Becky out even though Darlene liked him. Barry says that Becky is popular and that he thought he might have a chance with her and he was going to go for the gold. Darlene’s ex-boyfriend comes out and starts punching Barry. Becky is shocked that they were fighting over her. Jackie looks like she is going to yell at Darlene but just says “excellent.”

• Roseanne and Dan get on the subject of her job when their plane is stuck. She says that while it wasn’t a career, she enjoyed the job she had and hates losing it. Dan suggests that she go in and talk to Leon (her boss). She thinks that’s groveling and he asks if she wants him to talk to Leon. She says no and that she wants to fight her own battles.

• Dan starts to get people to place bets on if they are going to leave or not.

• They don’t fly out… Roseanne goes back to the diner and finds Leon working and he is rushed and annoyed. He is a bad waiter…

• Leon is high and mighty when he thinks that Roseanne “came crawling back” She says that if he doesn’t give her
her job back, her husband will beat the crap out of him. Leon puts her in her place and laughs about her “dignity.” Leon says that she has to say “I want my job back” to get it back. He gives her her job back and then says to take the ice tea to table 4 and she says “Hell no. I’m on my break.”

- Because they couldn’t see
- Roseanne tells Dan that Leon begged her for her to come back to work. Dan tells her that their was an earthquake and sucked the hotel they were going to stay in down to the ground. Then Roseanne tells him all the kids met really rich guys. He asks “Even DJ?” and she says yes. His response “far out.”

5.6 Oct. 20, 1961
*Looking for Loans in All the Wrong Ways*

Intent on opening a loose meat restaurant, Roseanne and Jackie are forced to turn to Bev for financial assistance.

- Same opening scene except they are eating pizza around the table, not playing poker/cards
- Opens on DJ playing Super Nintendo with the babysitter. Darlene has been saying a bunch of stuff about the babysitter to DJ and it might be because Darlene’s crush, David, is nice to her.
- Darlene starts to complain about all the cute, flirty, Barbie stuff that she is pulling on David. He says that it might make a guy feel like a man when that happens. She says she can make him feel like a man, gets real up close and personal and then tells him to take out the trash.
- Darlene comes in and asks what reeks. Roseanne says her future. They talk about the popularity of loose meat and Darlene goes off on Roseanne and then Roseanne says to not kill her buzz. Darlene is a vegetarian.
- Darlene goes upstairs to ask DJ something and finds DJ with a telescope looking at the naked babysitter next doors. She tells him that if he does it again, she will tell mom and they will send him to jail.
- Jackie and Roseanne have tested out the loose meat sandwich recipe on the guys and Jackie is all excited about being in the kitchen and feeding her man. Roseanne says “If you are lucky enough, you get to do it three times a day everyday until you die.”
- DJ is upset that he doesn’t get to do anything in regards to the restaurant and Roseanne tells him he can do anything that he wants to and he assumes that he can name it. And it really works because he names it The Lunch Box.
- They have $30,000 but according to the realtor, they wont have enough money. But she tells them about this government loan place that gives loans to people “like them” for startups.
- When they go down to the place, Roseanne is kind of wrangling Jackie and Nancy.
• Roseanne reads that they give special treatment to people of minority groups, including women. Jackie declares that that is their angle… they are women!
• When the guy walks in and thanks them for waiting, Roseanne goes on about how it’s okay because they are really patient because they are women.
• He asks about previous restaurant experience… Roseanne has it because she was a waitress and should have been appointed to management but she was held back because she was a woman. He talks about the special stuff for minorities and the handicapped. Roseanne says she has three kids to that. Jackie is in therapy.
• The government changed their criteria and so now they work with banks not directly with customers. Roseanne doesn’t like this and goes off on him about how they should be helping people like them and the main difference between them and Roseanne and them is that they have jobs.
• Roseanne and Jackie are sad and complaining to Dan. He is massaging Roseanne’s shoulders and they are talking about how come they don’t get what they want, etc. Then, Dan rubs both of their shoulders. Roseanne then turns on Jackie about how she brought “this damn ray of hope into this house.” They think about borrowing the money from someone they know and Roseanne says they need to get a new class of friends. They decide to ask their mom again for another $10,000.
• Roseanne keeps trying to calm Jackie down. Their mom wants to become a partner in everything.
• David is the one peeping on the babysitter.
• Deleted scene… Dan says hello to Carrie in a very suggestive way jokingly and Roseanne hits him with a frying pan.

5.13
Jan. 5, 1993
Crime and Punishment
Part 1 of 2: D.J. is busted at school for having obscene reading material. Dan meets with the principal, but dreads it, because he is certain that the reading material

• Dan and DJ are at the kitchen table and DJ is doing math homework. All of a sudden Darlene comes barging in after DJ. Dan sweeps him up and calls for Roseanne’s help. She holds Darlene back. DJ pulled a prank on Darlene and she wants him punished severely. Darlene complains to Roseanne about their punishments and that they should be better than this. They give Darlene the ability to punish him… She makes him wear a suit and tie to school. After a bit Roseanne says that she would have made him wear a dress… “Too late, you only get one wish” Roseanne to Darlene
• Dan is playing poker and gets a call about going down to the school because DJ was caught with obscene reading
D.J. brought to school is one of his porno magazines. He soon discovers that the reading material is far more sick and twisted than just a skin magazine; begging the question of where D.J. got it, and leaving him speechless by the answer. Roseanne and Dan discover that Jackie has been keeping a dark secret, and each of them try to help her by dealing with it in their own, unique, way.

- Roseanne tells their new worker to go take the order of a group of boys she thinks are cute. Roseanne tells her she will introduce her and that she is shy too. She goes off to talk to them about dating someone more mature and they think that she is hitting on them… They thank the girl for “rescuing them.”

- Roseanne wants to go bowling with Jackie. Jackie has a date with her boyfriend. Roseanne says she is probably doing something with Dan too but that doesn’t mean they can’t go bowling. Jackie then gets defensive about how now that she has a boyfriend, it takes up a lot of her time. Jackie says that it’s different because they live together. Roseanne says that she wouldn’t have moved in with a guy so fast. Jackie… Maybe you wouldn’t but this isn’t you it’s me (getting mad). Jackie storms out and she tries a guilt Jackie about spending time together. Jackie says that if she is so obsessed with her life, there must be something missing from hers. Roseanne “Did you just now figure that out??”

- “In all the years we’ve had Connor children, we always thought Mrs. Connor was widowed.” From the front desk person at the school

- DJ brought a comic book that Darlene made to school to read but its incredibly obscene. Dan says that they didn’t raise their kids that way. When Dan shows it to Roseanne, she laughs as she reads it. Roseanne says that there is worse stuff out there and that her depressive personality finally paid off.

- Jackie apologizes to Roseanne and Roseanne makes Jackie take her out to dinner instead of the movie that she originally wanted.

- Darlene accidently walks in on Jackie and she freaks out and yells at Darlene to close the door. Apparently, Jackie’s back is all bruised up. Roseanne wants to see and she makes Jackie show her. Roseanne gets worried and she makes Jackie tell her what happened. She freaks because she wants to know what happened and she asks if Fisher knows about this. Then, she figures out that Fisher was beating Jackie. Jackie says it was not his fault and that they got into an argument. Roseanne yells about “then whose fault is it!?” Then, Jackie starts offering reasons as to why he did it. Then, Jackie breaks down and Roseanne holds her. Dan walks in, finds out about it and when the girls...
leave, he goes after Fisher.

- Roseanne wants Jackie to go to the hospital and get it checked out. Jackie doesn’t want them to know about it. Dan brings Jackie dinner. Roseanne walks back into the kitchen and finds Dan wrapping up his hand. Cops come to the door and have to arrest Dan for assault and battery. Dan stops Roseanne from telling the cops what happened to Jackie. She asks if her can at least have some chicken because he hasn’t had dinner yet.

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*It was Twenty Years Ago Today*

Roseanne and Dan plan a romantic dinner date to celebrate their twentieth wedding anniversary, but struggle with what to give one another. Dan finds out that Roseanne has decided on something expensive for him, so in order to get Roseanne a nice gift too, he takes a temporary job at Maury’s Big and Tall store. His gift idea (and the job to pay for it), which seemed like a good idea at the time, soon blows up in his face.

- David is in the kitchen when Roseanne comes back from doing laundry. He says she doesn’t have to wash his laundry. She takes it back and says that it is okay because she is a “professional”.
- They poke fun at the acne cream he has on his face.
- Roseanne says the 20th anniversary is the meat and liquor anniversary. She says it is hard to surprise him when he gets a gift everyday, the “magical gift of me.” Jackie says “They’ve been waiting for that to run out.”
- Roseanne decides to get Dan a boudoir photo. She lost weight because she was working around food and lost her appetite. Saving up her money. Plus it will make him hot.
- Dan gets Roseanne a shoe rack for a present and Jackie tells him about the amount of money Roseanne is spending on Dan and he decides he needs to spend more
- Dan gets a second band and adds a few more stones to it for a wedding present.
- He convinces Roseanne that it is stuck in the drain
- At the boudoir place, Jackie picks up a maids outfit and Roseanne says “This is supposed to be fantasy, not reality.”
- Jackie buys Roseanne a red lacy lingerie set for her anniversary
- Roseanne has second thoughts about doing the photo shoot. She’s embarrassed and Jackie tells her to think about the man she loves, Dan.
- Dan breaks the news to Roseanne about having to work on their anniversary and Roseanne gets pissed. She says that this is a 20 year anniversary and this is a temporary job. She calls him selfish and little. He gets pissed again and slams the ring down on to the table and explains himself. She yells at him for changing the ring because she didn’t ask him to change it. She comes up with this convoluted story about how he changed the ring to cover his butt about having to work on their anniversary.
- Roseanne also gets pissed at Jackie and kicks her out of the house. Jackie is going to take the ring back and get it fixed.
<table>
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<th>5.25 May 18, 1993</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Daughters and Other Strangers</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Roseanne worries that Darlene may be planning to run away from home; new neighbor George befriends D.J.</td>
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- Roseanne shows up at Dan’s temporary job and she needs to talk to him and threatens to start screaming if he doesn’t come out and talk to her. She surprises him with dinner and music out in front of the store. She apologizes to him and says that after 20 years everyman deserves to hear this “I was wrong.”
- Then, she asks for the ring back and Dan has to tell her that he was going to get it fixed and then he freaks out about how she was mad at him about it and then she tells him she got the ring back from Jackie and loves it.
- He loves the picture and tells her that he can no longer love her because he has fallen for another.

- It opens on Roseanne and Jackie snooping through Darlene’s stuff.
- Roseanne find a black lock box in Darlene’s drawer and inside of it is cigarettes, condoms and a bankbook. Roseanne sees that she took out $300. Roseanne gets really upset and Jackie tells her it’s okay because she is here to help.
- Joseph Gordon Levitt (George) is the new neighbor and DJ doesn’t like him.
- Jackie makes Roseanne not smoke because she is stressed.
- Roseanne tampered with Darlene’s car so she won’t run away.
- Darlene spent all her money on a CD player for David and then Darlene finds out the Roseanne has been tampering with her stuff.
- Dan has to calm down Roseanne because she is going after Darlene. Dan says that the same thing is happening that happened with Becky (driving her out of the house). Roseanne agrees to calm down and apologizes to Darlene. She accepts and she’s sorry to because she was mean too and they make a truce. Dan asks her if she feels better and Roseanne yells at him that she doesn’t feel better and that she wont feel anything again and he will tell her what she feels.
- Roseanne went grocery shopping and saw Darlene. Roseanne thinks that she’s being mean but she’s worried about Darlene “vegetating” because Darlene can’t go to the writing school anymore. She says that she doesn’t want Darlene to be where she is in 10 years. She waxes on about how if she hadn’t gotten married or had kids too young that she might be in a different place. Dan takes it personally and he says that it was the smartest thing he did and she says yeah it was the smartest thing he did but they are talking about her now!
Dan makes Darlene come and sit down and he doesn’t “want two women to think he ruined her life.” They want to talk about the writing school and she gets confused about talking versus yelling (sarcasm)

Darlene decides that it is not right for her… Roseanne doesn’t like that she is choosing to stay here versus being forced to stay here. She thinks that Darlene is staying here because of David.

Roseanne talks to David about it… She refers to Dan as Mr. Connor with David. People call her Mrs. Connor too

She talks about how none of them want to go but that she needs to go… Roseanne tries to make David see this but he said that he told her that he would break up with her if she went.

“Look at you, Darlene. Doing things because a guy said to… Who raised you?” Roseanne

Roseanne talks to Darlene about how she thought she wanted something better than this (the room, the stuff in there, etc.)

Darlene is afraid of going and sucking… Roseanne discovers that it is not actually about David but instead is about a fear of failing… You have to tell me Darlene. Is this about David or is about something else? “You have to tell me which of the motherly speeches I’m supposed to use because I am totally off track.” Darlene shuts it down and Roseanne walks over to the closet to pack up her stuff.

“Why can’t I live at home like a normal kid?” “Because as I have told you your entire life… You are not normal. You are too smart for your own damn good. You’re something special and I think you could do something great.” Darlene talks about how she tried to leave last week, but she couldn’t do it. Roseanne talks about how it’s okay if she sucks when she gets there. “Sometimes life just gives you one chance and if you don’t grab it… Wait when were you in the car? I was watching you like a hawk… Listen you’ve got to go because I want you to go. If you don’t go you’re going to regret it… I love you Darlene and I want you to get the hell out of here.” *Hug*

Roseanne tempts Dan with chocolate cake, singing the snake charmer song… wants him to know that she doesn’t regret getting married. She asks him if he regrets anything, and he says nope and she takes the cake away.

DJ comes back from the party and talks about how they played 7 minutes in heaven. He “touched a boob. She’s my girlfriend now. She’s coming over to dinner tomorrow. She likes corn.”
Sept. 21, 1994
Nine is Enough

Feeling at the end of their "privacy" rope, Roseanne and Dan decide to throw Becky and Mark out of the house. Becky confides that she and Mark are trying to get pregnant, so the plan to ask them to leave gets thrown out the window. Jackie argues with Fred about how she wants the baby to sleep in bed with them, and he wants Andy to sleep in his own crib. Upset, Jackie takes the baby and heads for Roseanne's already over-crowded house to stay there herself. To top it all off, D.J. is having a friend of his own spend the weekend. The straw that breaks the camel's back...

- Opening scene the same again… but now Chinese and Becky is back and everyone fits at the table. No one is standing. Roseanne reads her fortune. Doesn’t want it and then steals Dan’s. Not as subtle or natural reaction as previous ones
- Dan comes in from the doctor’s office and Roseanne freaks because she thinks he has cancer. Then, he tells her it is basically a pimple and then she gets disgusted that he is 44 and has a pimple
- “Oh honey it is your first lady shaver. Soon you’ll be getting monthly visits from your friend.” -Roseanne “Cut it out. It’s bad enough to I have to shave under my arms like a woman.” –Dan He doesn’t want to tell anyone and he says that there are something’s you need to keep between a husband and wife. She asks him which one he wants to be and then screams for the kids dinner. DJ isn’t eating because she wants him to be hungry when he’s getting free food from a friends house.
- Roseanne organizes where everyone is supposed to sleep and then DJ brings his friend over to the house because he is supposed to come to the Connors not go to his friends. Roseanne is sarcastic and doesn’t want his friend to come over and when David offers the room he is in in favor of sleeping downstairs with Darlene, Roseanne cracks a joke about letting her know if he struggles getting Darlene’s bra off
- Roseanne then reorganizes everyone in the house and David ends up having to sleep with Mark
- Dan won’t show Roseanne his armpit hair and she makes a joke about how weight lifters shave theirs… but they also lift weights. Roseanne thinks it is sexy… “No wonder you get so excited when I shave my legs.”
- Roseanne and Dan start to flirt and she jokes with Dan about making love. Their bed squeaks and they are going to make love on the floor. He wants to try and make the floor squeak. But the boys are right next door and they can hear them. Dan wants mark and becky to move out. Roseanne makes a joke about wanting a TV show back. Dan says mark makes good money. Roseanne says he makes good money but he doesn’t live anywhere nice. Roseanne doesn’t want to make them struggle
- Roseanne thinks she caught the flu
- Dan is excited because he can still make farting noises
- “Jackie don’t you know anything. If you want to make the man suffer, you don’t leave you stay.” –Roseanne in reaction to Jackie coming over
- Dan acts like a kid on Christmas morning in getting to kick Mark and Becky out of the house. Roseanne makes sure that he cleaned his room before kicking them out.
- Becky announces that they are trying to have a baby and Roseanne loves it and tells them that they can stay here as long as possible. “I don’t want to argue in front of the kids.” –Dan “Why they’ve seen you loose before?” –Roseanne “I don’t want to appear to be the jerk.” –Dan “Why? You are the jerk?” –Roseanne
- Dan has logical arguments for everything and Roseanne is in caretaker mode and wants to take care of everyone “Becky is going to have a baby and she needs her mother.” –Roseanne “She’s not even pregnant!” –Dan
- Everyone piles into the bathroom and Dan storms out
- “When he thinks he’s right, it takes a bit to get him to apologize.” –Roseanne
- Jackie and Roseanne talk about kids and raising kids… Roseanne gets on Jackie about overprotecting her child… She talks about her kids growing up and them flying the nest… Jackie asks her what is her excuse… “I wonder what Dan thinks about that? Oh, I don’t see him anywhere.” –Jackie and then Roseanne gets really defensive
- Dan comes back to the house after Jackie goes back to Fred’s
- Roseanne wants to talk before he apologizes. He tells her that he is okay with them staying and then Roseanne tells him she kicked them out. He celebrates! But she blames him and gave them till May because she isn’t sick, she’s pregnant. Happy face from Dan.
- Roseanne almost appeared to be a pushover to her kids

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 24, 1994</td>
<td>7.7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Follow the Son</strong></td>
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<td>DJ wants out of his busboy job at the Lunch Box, and David wants to put the kibosh on Darlene's moving in with her new squeeze Jimmy—who misinterprets David's obsessive interest in him.</td>
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- DJ hates his busboy job and wants to hang out with this “hoodlum” friends who Roseanne doesn’t trust
- Her old boss works for them now and Roseanne screams at him for cleaning the grease trap.
- He tells everyone all these things (that are true) and Roseanne finally fires him, which he greatly appreciates
- Roseanne got tickets for George to wrestle mania so he can sell one of the tickets to DJ so he needs money from Roseanne… It backfires on Roseanne because he doesn’t need her job because he gets an allowance from Dan
- Roseanne makes Dan get the money back from DJ…Dan hides it by saying that he has been thinking and Roseanne tells DJ she is sorry and that if it was up to her, she would let him go in a second. Dan turns it around and gives Roseanne the ticket so she has to give it to DJ because she
says she is never in charge… and Dan wants her to feel like she is in charge at least once (sarcasm)

- David comes into the kitchen and Roseanne asks him where he was at dinner last night (everyone picked the cauliflower out of their mixed veggies and he wasn’t here to eat it)… He tries to make something up but Roseanne tells him to not lie to her
- Dan comes in and tells Roseanne that he hired DJ at the garage and Roseanne storms off and begins to fold laundry in their room… She gets jealous because DJ is not spending time with her… “He can mug old ladies as long as he comes back at night and tells me how it went.” –Roseanne
- “You’re going to be the buddy and I’m just going to be the mom.” –Roseanne
- Roseanne wants to hire this really busty, blonde woman because it would be great for business (“Wake up Jackie! I even have a woodie.” –Roseanne)
- DJ comes crawling back and Roseanne puts him through the paces to make him apologize to get his job back. “Tell me you love me or no job.” –Roseanne He also asks her to take him to the movies. Dan pays him outside.
- Closing extra scene… “Lunch Box Girls” fake porno “3 for 1 special”

7.13
Jan. 4, 1995
Rear Window

Dan and Roseanne are shocked, and amused, when they find out their new next door neighbors are a couple of geriatric nudists. Meanwhile, Darlene suspects David of cheating on her with Becky.

- “You watching alone is perverted. Us watching together is a date.” –Roseanne
- Dan keeps watching them… he can’t stop
- Mark tries to get into the house and he is drunk. Calls her Roseanne for the first time. “You want to tell me while you’re drunk?” –Roseanne “I don’t have to tell you why I’m drunk.” –Mark He asks if Becky is worried about him but she is out with David (8th time this week). Roseanne tells him to talk to her about it. He doesn’t want to upset her, but she says that Becky loves him. He says thanks and that she gets a free one (hit him). She caresses his cheek and when he questions the action, she tells him she is going to go get a bat
- Roseanne brings chicken for dinner
- Jackie and Fred think it is weird that they are watching them… Fred says it is sad and sick. Jackie is fascinated that they are old and completely naked all the time.
- She doesn’t admit that it is bad, until DJ asks for an air hockey table for his birthday (which is the running joke with the neighbors).
- Roseanne and Dan invite the neighbors over to meet and great. Roseanne serves sliced Twinkies and the Cornelli’s bring a Bundt cake. They were going to bring up the fact
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7.21 March 29, 1995 <em>Happy Trailers</em></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark and Becky find a tiny run-down trailer in a trailer park, and decide to make it home. Determined to fix up their home all on their own, they turn down offers of assistance from Dan and Roseanne, who in turn have to find covert way to help the kids out. Roseanne discovers that they will need to come up with $2,000 to prepay for the baby's doctor and hospital stay.</td>
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<td>- Roseanne gets back from her doctor’s office and says that she gained 30 pounds and she says that most of it is the fetus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The kids are putting away the groceries and asked where it went and Roseanne sarcastically explains frozen stuff goes in the freezer.</td>
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<td>- Becky and Mark are going to move into a trailer and Roseanne and Dan don’t quite know how to take it.</td>
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<td>- Roseanne won’t walk into the trailer. She just stays outside. Dan just figured Roseanne would be really sad. Dan talks about their first place and Roseanne says that it was a dump and asks when they are going to move out of it.</td>
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<td>- Roseanne says that they shouldn’t make fun of it because if it is good enough for carnival folk it is good enough for the Connors.</td>
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<td>- A neighbor comes over and they all start fighting. This neighbor is the welcome wagon and Roseanne does not take kindly to her. Roseanne says they never get to say they are better than someone else but this time they get to.</td>
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<td>- Roseanne and Dan offer to help them fix up the trailer and Becky and Mark refuse because they want to do it themselves.</td>
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<td>- “Good food great setting. Makes me wish our kitchen didn’t have some kind of house around it.” Becky thanks them for letting them stay with them. Roseanne says that was a good three years. Mark corrects her and says it was only one.</td>
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<td>- Roseanne tricks them into letting them buy the “antique” stuff around the trailer and paying for it right then and there.</td>
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<td>- “We are family.” –Roseanne</td>
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<td>- Roseanne is cleaning out Darlene and Becky’s old room. Darlene waxes on about how everything is changing and Roseanne tells her not everything is changing and Darlene makes sure Roseanne is okay with everyone moving out.</td>
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<td>- Roseanne asks Darlene if she feels like they didn’t give</td>
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them enough. Darlene has quick come backs and finally says that “they were great parents” and that kids are expensive and she understands that. Roseanne just wanted to make sure that everyone did better than they did. Darlene says that Becky is strong like Roseanne is and that she will make it. “It doesn’t really come up but we are proud of you.” –Roseanne “Even though I’m a high priced call girl.” –Darlene “Because you are a high prices call girl.” –Roseanne

9.5
Oct. 15, 1996
Someday My Prince Will Come
Prince Carlos Charmaine (Jim Varney) from Moldavia, visits Jackie, with whom he's enamored after seeing her on television. Roseanne warns Jackie to remain distant, until Leon discovers that he's really a prince. The family is invited on a trip to New York with Leon in place of Dan, who's still in California.

• Opening scene is no longer around the dinner table and instead are detailed shots of the house with a series of morphing portraits of the cast. Roseanne still laughs at the end
• (Dan is not in this episode)
• Jackie comes in pissed after dating… She says that it is “dating, hell, hell, dating” and it just goes over again
• Roseanne says dating is just like hunting. “You get lucky. You go home early.”
• Jackie says she no longer finds the ketchups as work. They are a challenge. Roseanne says that no, it is work and she is no longer up to that challenge.
• Leon confirms that he is an actual prince. Roseanne says that it can’t be real… except for the double stretch limo with flags on it. Jackie freaks because he came to see her and Rosanne freaks “What if you are supposed to be a virgin?!”
• Roseanne introduces herself and gets very choked up around him. He invites them to fly all to New York for dinner. Roseanne is going to get David and Darlene to watch the kids and that will make her happy.
• On the plane… “The only thing we are missing is people in coach to feel superior to.”
• Makes a joke about SNL skits not ending when they need to. Her and Leon are going to go down to the village to get something pierced.
• Roseanne asks Carlos about his family and what’s their dirty laundry
• “In my country the queen rules after the kings death.” –Carlos “Viva, Moldavia!” –Roseanne
• The mother talks about the prince’s irreparable reputation. His name has been linked to many women. Roseanne comes back with Jackie’s named has been linked with many as well.
• Leon asks Roseanne to dance and she says “Ahh, Leon I hope you would never ask.”
| 9.12 | Dec. 17, 1996  
Home for the Holidays  
Dan finally returns home after a long stay in California with his ill mother. He, Roseanne, and the entire family realize how much they have to be thankful for as one of the oddest and most trying years of their lives comes to an end. The only problem is how distant and uncomfortable Dan seems to be around Roseanne. |
|---|---|
| Leon wants to ride alone with Jackie, so he talks to Roseanne about being alone with Jackie. Roseanne asks him about how do we know that it is not one of his royal flings. She doesn’t care if he is a prince as long as she is good to her sister because she has been through enough. She screeches for the family to get out of the cab because that is for Jackie and Carlos.  
No final scene after first credit. No continuing scene or funny outtake. |
| New glass table in the kitchen with leather roll chairs around it  
Roseanne has her new baby, Jackie has her son and everyone else has signs  
Roseanne is pissed at Mark and makes him stay home because he messed up the arrival time but when Roseanne opens the door, Dan is standing right there. He comes in with big hugs for everyone  
“It was so weird doing Christmas shopping without you this year.” –Roseanne “No one to carry the heavy stuff or hold your purse.” –Dan  
Roseanne wants to go on a trip with Dan by themselves and Dan doesn’t really want to travel. He tries to change the topic of conversation. Roseanne is really genuine about being happy that he is home. Gives him a big hug but Dan is in a weird mood and claims he is tired and has jet lag. He decides to take her out to dinner in Chicago. He is going to shave so he doesn’t tear up the pillow case. She says “or her?” “I have an electric razor. You have moisturizer. I guess there is no going back.” –Dan he seems upset about the monetary things  
Jackie and Roseanne are making cookies in the kitchen and Jackie wants to know about the sex they had last night. She felt the familiar sag in the mattress and she just felt like she was home.  
Roseanne gets annoyed because Jackie squishes all the cookies. Roseanne custom fits them to fit in her mouth. Jackie picks up all the dough and rolls it into one big ball to fit in Roseanne’s mouth.  
They have to cut the tree because it is too tall for the house. Roseanne yells at Dan because she has all new furniture just for him to trim a tree in the living room.  
Jackie keeps asking about Dan’s mom because his behavior makes it seem like something is really wrong. Roseanne tells her everything is fine.  
Grandma is gay. They ask Santa in their letter if any of the reindeer are gay because their grandmother is. |
| 9.18 |  
| Feb 18, 1997 |
| *A Second Chance* |
| Dan is unnerved by rumors of Roseanne and Edgar so he makes a surprise trip to see her. They make some tentative steps to putting the pieces of their marriage back together. Their peace in interrupted when a frantic call comes in from Jackie: Darlene has unexpectedly been rushed to the hospital. |

| Roseanne found all the old Christmas decorations and Dan is getting ready to assemble the presents. Once Roseanne is gone, they all eat the cookies |
| “David, men don’t read instructions. We eye ball it. Think logically. Then, wing it.” –Dan |
| Roseanne is the drill sergeant! She keeps things moving swiftly. When Roseanne says go, they all jump to open their presents. |
| Roseanne gives Dan the mortgage and a Zippo. Dan gets really choked up about burning it because it is paid off! She tells him he doesn’t “have to say anything. Merry Christmas.” |
| Dan is on the phone with someone who is not his mom. He really misses her. He is stuck in Lamford for a while. Jackie hears him though. |
| Last comedy scene… Santa Claus is pissed that the fireplace is blocked off. |

| Roseanne is at home trying to meditate when Jackie walks in. Jackie doesn’t believe the stuff Roseanne is talking about. Roseanne wants to open up so she feels free. Take in a feeling of calm. Jackie then tells her that Dan is coming by to pick up Jerry. She then starts cursing and its bleeped out. |
| Roseanne has been seen around town with a guy named Edgar. |
| Roseanne answers the door and its Dan and Jerry. She slams it shut and then opens it, get jerry and then slams the door shut. She opens it again to get the diaper bag and then Dan talks his way into the house. They love each other and need to talk about things. They can’t find a place to talk though… DJ is filming a Claymation movie, Darlene is eating on the couch and they have to go outside to talk. |
| Dan says what he did was stupid. Roseanne says it was so stupid and more… He says it was because she was there and they would talk. She says that he could have called her. He says he was this close to making the biggest mistake of my life. She says it almost killed her. He is going to make it up to her. They decide to take a drive up to Lamford leap in the new car with heated seats. |
| Dan asks her about Edgar and she says that if she was squired around, she would have known it. |
| They get a call. Darlene had to be taken to the hospital. |
| Darlene is going into labor. They gave her drugs to make it stop and she is responding well and everything seems normal. |
Dan and Roseanne talk to Darlene and try to soothe her fears. Dan says they are going to make sure nothing happens to her. She talks about how sometimes you have to go through something’s to get to the end and its good.

Dan and Roseanne sit down and wait in the waiting room. She knows this place like the back of her hand. She was here 24 hours when he had his heart attack. He says this puts little problems into perspective. They talk and she invites him home. He says that he is not going home and she suggests he wrestle up enough candy for the both of them.

Darlene is going into labor again. There is a second drug that they can try but her says there are serious side effects for her and the baby. But there other might be a worse side effect. All Darlene wants to do “is save the baby.”

Dan and Darlene sleep and Roseanne watches on.

9.24
March 20, 1997

Into that Goodnight, Part II

Family and friends gather at the Conner house to celebrate baby Harris’ Homecoming and everyone takes a turn chatting with the new edition to the family. Mark and Becky have some exciting news, as do Leon and his husband Scott. During dinner, Roseanne takes time to reflect on each member of her family and reveals she has been writing a book; everything we see is Roseanne’s altered version of actual events. Roseanne

They get a Winnie the Pooh cake for the 2 month birthday of the baby.

Leon and husband come over and they have a tea set and dolls and then a football and GI Joe… He says that they are going to put them on opposite sides of the room and let her gender identify itself

Roseanne tells them they can only go up one at a time because they are scary enough by themselves

Leon and Scott calls themselves Aunt.

Jackie says that she is a good listener and not pushy like some members of the family.

Becky is pregnant too! They say Darlene is lucky and they are lucky too.

David says that I hope they didn’t frighten him. There is a lot of love in the house. Sometimes there are naughty words and yelling but it’s just because they love a lot and it’s hard to contain it.

Leon and Scott are going to adopt a baby and they have begun the adoption paper work already and will have a three-year-old girl. Make a joke about picking up a girl in San Francisco.

People congratulate them and Mark says they will be great mothers!

Darlene goes in to help Roseanne set the table and serve the food. Darlene says that she will move out in a couple of weeks versus months because the place is getting crowded and that Roseanne just said they could stay for now. Roseanne says they can stay forever and Darlene accepts. Someone yells for food and Roseanne yells for them to shut
reveals the true story and admits she changed whatever details she didn’t like about her life and the people in it. In truth, the Conners never won the lottery; it was all a fantasy Roseanne created in order to cope with a devastating reality. In the final moments, Roseanne sits alone in her basement writing room. She goes upstairs, passing through the old kitchen and the old living room. Roseanne sits on the old couch with the classic afghan on the back and silently takes in the warmth and comfort of the family home as the lights slowly fade.

- They have the Chinese food round the table shot like the normal opening credits. Roseanne even laughs.
- Then, a voice over starts with Roseanne’s voice. She talks about Leon and says that he is not as cool as she made him. Only gay guy to belong to the Elk’s Club. Scott is really a probate lawyer. Not too much creativity. Talk about nerds in regards to DJ. Grandmother… talks about a generation of being submissive and not being submissive to that. She made her gay, because she wanted some sense of herself as a woman. “It is the woman’s movement that has destroyed the family unit” –grandmother Roseanne says she made her nuts. Jackie is actually gay in real life and Roseanne has always pictured her with a man. Nancy is a hero to Roseanne because she got out of a terrible marriage. Becky is actually with David. Mark is with Darlene. But she made them flip flop the other way around in her writing. Dan died when he had a heart attack. It is the first and last thing she thinks about everyday.
- Scene changes to Roseanne’s writing room. Talks about how her and Dan tried to improve their children’s lives by 50%. Didn’t hit them like they were hit. Didn’t demand their unquestioning silence. Didn’t teach our daughters to sacrifice more than their sons. As a modern wife tight rope between tradition and progress. Failed by one outsider’s standards. Neither winning more losing counted for women like men. Women transform everything we touch and nothing is higher than that. When you are a blue collar woman and you loose your husband, it takes away your sense of security. So she imagined her self in parties or other things. Was depressed and needed to pull together for her family. Snapped out of her mourning for Darlene’s baby who almost died. When she wrote her book, she decided to change the things that she didn’t like. She learned that love is stronger than hate and that God does exist. He or she lives in everyone.
- Roseanne walks out into her old house and old couch and old furniture.
- Camera pans back and up from her as she sits on the couch.
- Ends with a TE Lawrence quote about those who dream by night.