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Abstract: Television instructional cooking shows provide a platform for discussion around the performance of self, with bloopers and backstage scenes revealing the best qualities of the celebrity chef's personality despite the risk of face loss. Bloopers are short clips of mistakes that are typically removed from the media narrative. Often embarrassing and humorous, bloopers are moments when the celebrity chef's performance is flawed with cooking errors or misspoken words. Drawing on Goffman's concepts of 'backstage' and 'frontstage,' this paper analyzes bloopers on five American instructional cooking shows: *The French Chef* with Julia Child, considered one of the first celebrity chefs on television, and four contemporary how-to cooking shows from *Food Network*. These shows present cases of bloopers that occur in live and edited scenes, during the cooking demonstration, and pre- and post-filming. While a form of backstage discourse, bloopers support frontstage performance by heightening the celebrity chef's unique attributes. Bloopers provide an outlet for play on frontstage as well.

Keywords: backstage, frontstage, bloopers, celebrity TV cooking shows, Goffman, self-presentation

1 Introduction

Television cooking shows occasionally contain bloopers, short sequences with embarrassing mistakes made during the filming that viewers are allowed to see. Bloopers are humorous because they reveal the show production and the 'true' persona of the celebrity chef. Examples of bloopers are forgotten lines, uncontrollable laughter, and cooking mishaps. Further, bloopers aired during the final credits place them at the fringe of the cooking show narrative and the real world.

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Both its marginal placement and humorous content signal the shift in arenas from the frontstage, public space to the backstage, private space.

This paper draws on Goffman's (1959, 1981) metaphors of 'frontstage' and 'backstage' to explore the ways in which celebrity chefs deal with aspects of the self that do not accord with conventional norms of media discourse. While 'frontstage' performance is carefully controlled and prevails norms of politeness and decorum, 'backstage' activity is informal and more relaxed conversation. While there is performing in interactions with friends, the distinction between performer and audience is blurred: there is a sense of ingroup solidarity and failures of performance cease to be a worry. Indeed, the sharing of such performance failures backstage makes up the informality of the talk, and the sense of ease and intimacy that accompanies it. Stumbling on the set or burning toast in the middle of a cooking show, for example, actually underlines the approachability and ordinariness of the viewing (and of the cooking).

This study seeks to explore more fully the role of bloopers and asks:

1. What are the characteristics of bloopers on cooking shows?
2. How do bloopers support the performance in the backstage and frontstage?

To study bloopers in television cooking shows, the paper will note how bloopers are shaped by the nature of the cooking show event itself and the performance in the backstage and the frontstage. The discourse is not 'ordinary' in comparison to other speech events that are mediated, controlled, and guarded; yet, the discourse is made 'natural' with humor arising during cooking errors and mis-spoken words. Bloopers, usually backstage conduct, include: cooking mistakes, behind-the-scenes clips, meta-production effects, personal stories, and linguistic errors, making the discourse distinct from frontstage talk in media. To distinguish bloopers from performance, distinctive linguistic strategies are used, which will be explored below.

2 Literature review

Contemporary media discourse is characterized with increased openness and familiarity between hosts and viewers, particularly for television genres centering on a personality (Haarman 2001). Media personalities create an illusion of spontaneity and realness in unrestrained moments of performance, in gestures and voice, in discourse and conduct. Television show hosts exhibit Fairclough's (2001 [1989]) "synthetic personalization" or "the simulation of private face-to-face discourse in public mass-audience discourse" (p. 98). Hosts display an

appearance of direct concern for the individual en masse, using popular speech that has resulted in a “conversationalization of public discourse” (Fairclough 1994: 136). This increased informality and greater person-to-person interaction include colloquial vocabulary, topic, and sentence structure (Fairclough 1994: 260–261). Further, conversationalization has led to “cultural democratization” with the rise of ‘popular’ values and practices (Fairclough 1994: 263). As a result of the language and cultural shift to more informal speech and popular culture, hosts and viewers have an increased symmetrical relationship, contrasting with the hierarchical and traditional institutional discourse.

Conversational language in media discourse has been observed across television genres: news reporting (Scannell 1996; Montgomery 2007), daytime talk shows (Lorenzo-Dus 2009), documentaries (Tolson 2001), and in food media including cooking shows (Chiaro 2013), cookbooks (Matwick and Matwick 2017), food radio phone-in (Matwick and Matwick 2018), and food blogs (Diemer and Frobenius 2013), where this informality promotes the media talk as authentic discourse and the cultivation of a likable celebrity personality. On cooking shows, hosts use colloquial and idiomatic speech, conversational discourse markers, and the use of inclusive pronouns (“we” to include television viewers) that provide a level of genuineness (Matwick and Matwick 2014).

Arising as mistakes, bloopers shift talk from formal and rehearsed to informal and authentic. Speech mistakes were first noted on TV’s predecessor, the radio. Goffman’s (1981) analysis of bloopers made on radio talk is helpful for identifying speech mistakes on television cooking shows. Goffman (1981) defines two broad classes of faults: “knows better” and “doesn’t know better,” which in turn influence whether speakers will remedy their errors. In the case of cooking show talk, we find the “knows better” faults characterized with “influencies,” what Goffman (1981: 209) defines as “hitches in the smooth flow of syntactically connected words, as with restarts, filled pauses, stuttering.” We also identify the “doesn’t know better” faults in cooking shows as related to Goffman’s (1981: 210) “gaffes,” that is, “unintended and unknowing breaches in ‘manners’ or some norm of ‘good’ conduct – breaches of the kind that are here realized in speech, but can also be perpetrated through other modes of activity. Thus: indiscretions, tactlessness, indelicacy, irreverence, immodesty, intrusiveness, etc.” Goffman’s (1981) classification is based on what the speaker understands or does not understand about the audience and standards of politeness. While Goffman’s (1981) example refers to radio listeners, how TV hosts make bloopers in speech and action and their effect are of interest here. We further understand that the rules of politeness function for speech and actions alike.

Backstage activity can be described as “performers’ shop talk” (Collins 1988: 56). Chefs talk with their filming crew, family, and friends about their

performance frontstage, describing their feelings that accompanied the performance. Such talk and actions can contradict the polite front maintained during the performance. Such contradictions are an essential part of backstage talk: “A back region or backstage may be defined as a place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course” (Goffman 1959: 112). On cooking shows, we will see how backstage talk in the form of bloopers blurs the layering between the front- and back regions of the studio filming.

The relevance for the production and treatment of such “incidents,” or “major forms of performance disruption – unmeant gestures, inopportune intrusions, faux pas, and scenes” (Goffman 1959: 134–135), in cooking shows’ spoken and cooking mishaps, is the indices of relaxed, unguarded, and spontaneous interaction between celebrity chefs and viewers. The use of such bloopers demonstrates a performer’s understanding or treatment of the backstage talk as informal and intimate and can be used to initiate a move into intimacy. According to Butler and Fitzgerald’s (2011) analysis of swearing on live television and breaches in performance can be used as a resource for establishing intimacy but also for indicating boundaries for the interactions. From this perspective, we suggest that mistakes in the backstage region create a sense of informality and authenticity as well as an aura of distance and awe between the celebrity and audience, a reminder to viewers that what is being shown is exclusive and a privilege.

It also needs to be acknowledged that celebrity chef discourse helps to maintain gender hierarchy in the domestic kitchen (Johnston and Baumann 2010; Swenson 2009). The traditional television cooking show, dominated by female hosts, suggests that its message – the women at home cooking for the family – maintains the constraints of conventional femininity. When men cook at home, it is for leisure more than necessity, more for special occasions and weekends than for weekday meals, a rhetoric observed in Hollow’s (2003) review of British celebrity chef Jamie Oliver’s cookbooks and cooking shows that echo Adler’s (1981) observation of images of a distinct male cookery in mass-media advertising almost four decades ago.¹ The ideal of femininity is still one where women do the majority of childcare and housework even though they also work outside the home (Hochschild and Machung 2012). The backstage talk of the kitchen illustrates how female celebrity chefs engage in ‘doing women,’ or performing norms of femininity, while ‘doing cooking’ (cf. Swenson 2009).

¹ Thomas Adler (1981) notes in his essay on Making Pancakes on Sunday: The Male Cook in Family Tradition: “Dad’s cooking exists in evident contradistinction to Mom’s on every level: his is festal, hers ferial; his is socially and gastronomically experimental, hers mundane; his is dish-specific and temporally-marked, hers diversified and quotidian; his is play, hers is work” (p. 51).

Moreover, while women are obliged to avoid behaving ‘badly’ (Coates 1999) or lose self-control, men are less constrained and enjoy a positive association with badness. A mixture of bravado and directness accords with being masculine, while protective and intimate with being feminine. We understand self-presentation that is off-record and inappropriate as notions that are culturally constructed and culture-specific. In our study, both women and men make culinary disasters and display spontaneous feelings in the frontstage and backstage regions, but what is shown and what kind of backstage context are used differ. For the female hosts, backstage talk is intentional, whether out of necessity because of live filming or staged as behind-the-scenes series or as a meta-production effect; for the male hosts, the slips are unintended, humorous outcomes made during rehearsal and run as part of the original filming.

3 Data and methodology

This paper analyzes domestic-style instructional cooking shows that are “invitational” type shows in that the host seems to personally invite viewers into the home for an informal event, as opposed to strictly “instructional” shows that offer technical or professional chef instructions on how to cook things.² This distinction seems to allow greater flexibility in the production effects and freedom in the host’s performance. It also suggests the extension of the cooking show genre from its educational purposes to entertainment (de Solier 2005).

Specifically, this paper identifies and examines backstage talk on five different how-to cooking shows: *The French Chef* with Julia Child, one of the first cooking show hosts considered to be a celebrity chef, who makes French food accessible to the American home cook; *Giada at Home* with Giada de Laurentiis who provides everyday cooking ‘at home’ with an Italian-California spin; *Trisha’s Southern Kitchen* with Trisha Yearwood, a country music superstar, whose show is not just a geographical reference but also refers to her style of cooking; *Brunch @ Bobby’s* and *Bobby Flay’s BBQ Addiction* with Bobby Flay who presents food in a relaxed setting and impresses viewers with his grilling expertise (not addiction literally); and *The Pioneer Woman* with Ree Drummond who invites viewers to her home on a cattle ranch in the ‘middle of nowhere’ with her cowboy husband and children. With the exception of Julia’s show

² We thank the anonymous reviewer for making this insightful distinction between “invitational” and “instructional” type cooking shows.

(which was produced and broadcast by WGBH, a public television station, from 1963–73), the four cooking shows are produced by *Food Network*, the top American food channel founded in 1993 by Scripps Networks Interactive. The hosts are American, yet the argument and analysis are about a genre of programs rather than a particular country.

The transcription conventions seek to facilitate comprehension and to capture the multimodal representation of the bloopers and backstage scenes on the television cooking show. The transcriptions include paralinguistic descriptions that support the cooking discourse. Actions and visual scenes are a part of the bloopers, such as scooping up a fallen pancake and putting it back on the sauté pan, as the first example illustrates with Julia Child.

4 Analysis

This section concerns the analysis of five cooking shows and instances of bloopers and backstage performance. We begin with Julia Child and examples of “frontstage bloopers,” or what we call bloopers made during a live television show and kept.

4.1 Frontstage bloopers by Julia Child

The following extract is a cooking mistake made by the celebrity chef when making a potato pancake (Excerpt 1).

(1) Julia Child and the Potato Pancake Mistake

- 1 I'm going to try to flip this, which is rather a daring thing to do.
- 2 Now it looks flippable, now I want to try it anyway.
- 3 When you flip anything really, you just have to have the courage of your convictions.
- 4 Particularly if it's sort of a loose mess like this.
- 5 [flips the pancake but misses the pan] Well, that didn't go very well.
- 6 See, when I flipped - and I didn't - I didn't have the courage to do it the way I should have. [scoops up the fallen pancake and puts it back in the pan]
- 7 You can always pick it up. When you're alone in the kitchen, who is going to see?
- 8 But, the only way you're going to learn how to flip things is just to flip.

(The Potato Show, *The French Chef*, S1, Ep 22, 1963)

Figure 1: Julia scoops up potatoes that miss the frying pan.
(The Potato Show, *The French Chef*, S1, Ep 22, 1963)

In this example (Figure 1), Julia's mistake and discourse make distinctions between frontstage and backstage. In her frontstage persona, she takes an authoritative stance and is "daring" and skillfully cooking in the kitchen (Line 1). In her backstage persona, she makes a mistake, admitting "that [flipping of the potato pancake] didn't go very well" because she "didn't have the courage" (Lines 3–6). Julia's transparency and honesty appeal to viewers who learn how to recover when making mistakes in their own kitchen. Julia cheerfully reminds home cooks that "when you're alone in the kitchen, who is going to see?" and demonstrates that with fallen food, "you can always pick it up" (Line 7). In the kitchen, a backstage space, one can be relaxed about food presentation and cooking perfection with the dropping of one's front (or food!) as permissible, even amusing. The reciprocal admissions of 'learning only by doing' ("to learn how to flip things is just to flip") further reinforce solidarity between the host and audience (Line 8).

Further, bloopers during the cooking add a sense of realness to the episode and cooking itself. The real time filming in Julia's early episodes limited retakes. In an episode on omelets, she forgets that a skillet has just come out of the oven and touches it with her bare hands (The Omelet Show, *The French Chef*, S9, Ep 18, 1972). She instantly pulls back her hand with a shriek, dropping the serving utensil in the other hand. Julia laughs, a non-lexical verbal reaction akin to other notification forms that address self-made faults openly (e.g. Uh-oh! Whoops!, Goffman 1981: 215), and carries on to maintain her front. In an episode on vegetables, Julia tastes a string bean and begins choking (Figure 2), a

Figure 2: “Sticking on a bean,” coughs Julia mid-speech.
(Vegetables the French Way, *The French Chef*, S1, Ep 9, 1963)

discomfort that causes her suffering throughout the remainder of the show (Vegetables the French Way, *The French Chef*, S1, Ep 9, 1963).

In this scene, Julia necessarily pauses mid-script, explaining that she was “sticking on a bean.” The appeal for understanding from viewers for the break in the script displays the tension between frontstage and backstage norms. By explicitly addressing her gaffe (Goffman 1981), Julia self-corrects in a gracious and polite manner and even makes the situation humorous, displaying confidence in her performance.

Besides spoken gaffes, other types of backstage breaches add drama and suspense to the cooking show. A newspaper reviewer of the time compares Julia’s show to a “domestic drama” and “mystery story,” because it is never clear how the dish is going to turn out (O’Flaherty 1963). Further, the cooking show resembles the spy stories (James Bond) of the time, because the culinary narrative, “especially when it deals with bringing exotic objects back from the world at large and into a contained space back home, is often about a mission with a deadline, one in which an intrepid hero embarks on his or her task in a race against time while benefiting from carefully honed techniques and specialized gadgets and gizmos (Polan 2011: 80–81).” The cooking show has cinematic quality, including suspense, excitement, and humor; Julia ventures into the unknown foray of French cuisine, brings back dishes like Supreme de Volaille a Blanc or chicken poached in butter. In addition to the dramatic gaffes, the production limitations require the host to be mindful of pots cooking and

also of filming time. Additionally, the celebrity chef must multi-task, cooking and talking at the same time, which keeps viewers attentive.

Unlike *The French Chef* with streaming shooting, contemporary cooking shows edit and cut the cooking demonstration, including the intentional inclusion or exclusion of bloopers. This hyper-awareness of the production itself is particularly evident when the filming crew and props are shown, as illustrated in the next example.

4.2 Backstage bloopers and meta-production scenes of Trisha Yearwood

We turn to the backstage talk of celebrity chef Trisha Yearwood on her cooking show, *Trisha's Southern Kitchen*. This example shows the ways in which the celebrity displays her 'non-professional' self, despite frontstage pressures to conform to norms of femininity, specifically through play, meta-production, and humor.

Backstage talk in Trisha's cooking shows frames her actions as 'play' (Bateson 1953), which provides a safety-net to express the 'not-nice' aspects of herself. In one episode, the celebrity steps out of character with a falsetto voice, gives an eye roll, and teases her (non-present) husband: "Oh Garth's breakfast bowl is so fantastic! He's so original [laugh]. Whatever [eye roll]" (Yearwood 2012, S2, Ep 6). The humorous intent of her discourse and self-mockery is signaled through "contextualization cues" (Gumperz 1992), including the surrounding discourse (the formally produced episode conveys a serious and genuine tone), sarcasm, change in pitch from medium to high, paralinguistic clues with the use of a smiling or laughing voice (Holmes and Hay 1997: 132), eye roll, and significantly, as we demonstrate next, the display of meta-production filming.

Contributing to the play frame is the meta-production. In this same episode, the shot shifts to the production crew, as one member holds a clapperboard (Figure 3) and asks, "Alright, which episode is this?", which is answered playfully by Trisha: "Episode twenty-seven thousand." The clapperboard and the presence of the crew member cue viewers of the entry and exit of the formal filming to the backstage.

Further, the explicit representation of the clapperboard recalls the hidden "passage." This is Goffman's (1959: 113) metaphor for the space between private and public behaviors on stage: "it is natural to expect that the passage from the front region to the back region will be kept closed to members of the audience or that the back region will be kept from them." The clapperboard symbolizes this

Figure 3: Clapperboard and crew member signal the meta-production of the cooking show. (Brunch with Aunt T, *Trisha's Southern Kitchen*, S2, Ep 6, 2012)

entry and exit from back region to front region, representing both visually and audibly the opening and closing of a gate.

This representation of the filming itself has been noted increasingly in the media (Thornborrow and Haarman 2012, on an analysis of a political summit meeting; Peterson 2005, on broadcast news). While the representation of the processes of the filming itself in television programs serves as “an acknowledgement of, and commentary in the media about, the media’s status as constructed artifice” (Dahlgren 1995: 36), here in cooking shows the artificiality or truth value of the content itself would not be as scrutinized as news broadcast for instance because of its ‘light’ content.

Instead, the meta-production effects in cooking shows involve the audience in the production of the show itself by explicitly showing the artifice created during filming, and conversely, the reality when not filming. This involvement adds entertainment value, recalling Fiske’s (2002) discussion concerning pleasure and television. According to Fiske, the pleasure of television is from viewers’ involvement with the texts: the activity of making sense, activating television’s ‘producerly’ experience, and recognizing its artifice are all part of this pleasure. The meta-television scenes give viewers pleasure in seeing the television’s production and being part of its construction of meaning.

In the next scene, the incongruity of the celebrity’s frontstage and backstage is illustrated even more fully. In Figure 4, Trisha swats her niece with a kitchen spatula while making pancakes, a violence that could potentially be shocking.

Figure 4: Swatting with the spatula. Cooking show credits on the screen.
(Brunch with Aunt T, *Trisha's Southern Kitchen*, S2, Ep 6, 2012)

But, as Coates (2007: 32) notes, “humour often lies in the gap between what is said and what is meant.” The humor lies in understanding that the game is a game, and the two women and audience are aware of this. Like the clapperboard (Figure 3), credits on the screen (Figure 4) signal the show’s peripheral scenes, as a visual cue to the audience of the gap between front-and backstage conduct.

This example of “women behaving badly” is made possible only in backstage moments among close relationships (Coates 1999), such as family here. Further, “one of the strengths of humour is that it allows us to explore, in new ways, what we know, and even by using other words, to explore things which are difficult or taboo” (Coates 2007: 32). These women can enact being *bad* cooks and transgressive women, a double violation of gender norms. In blooper scenes, the actors exemplify Goffman’s (1959: 112) description of backstage as a place where “the performer can relax; he can drop his front, forgo speaking his lines, and step out of character.” These women are relaxed: the smiling and giggling niece signals the contradiction of her aunt’s less nice and inappropriate behavior.

Moreover, the women’s laughter is an important contextual cue in establishing a play frame and intimacy. Jefferson et al. (1978: 174) observe that, when participants collaborate in humorous talk, they achieve a display of “not merely laughing at the same time, but laughing in the same way.” The laughter of the niece acts as a response to Trisha’s utterance, encouraging viewers to laugh in the same way. The laughter shows appreciation for the celebrity chef’s mischievousness as well as complicity in her aunt’s violation of politeness. The laughter

marks the ongoing talk as collaboratively constructed humor that relies on in-group knowledge and familiarity.

The play frame is also established in the cooking show with a dialogue repeated by Trisha to amuse the audience. In the same episode, she impersonates the film crew: “Do you have a story you need to tell America about? Really you do” (S2, Ep 6). In creative play, Trisha collaborates with viewers in talking about one thing (telling America a story), while meaning something else (the difficulty of always having to perform and entertain), thus maintaining a play frame. As McCarthy and Carter (2004: 161) suggest, in discussion of hyperbole, “it fundamentally depends on a joint acceptance of a distortion of reality.” The celebrity’s enactment and embellishment of the dialogue create a meta-play designed to have a humorous effect on the viewers and not meant to be taken literally. Ironically, in attempting to be ordinary, the celebrity host draws attention to the nature of the cooking show as a performance or theatre. The backstage scenes allow eavesdropping in which the audience observes the celebrity manifest feelings of stress and pressure, as if it were a staged performance for their benefit.

Although backstage talk is more relaxed than frontstage talk, there are still constraints. Being backstage does not exempt celebrities from problems of framing and staging. Also, even as the blurring of performer and audience typical of backstage talk produces solidarity among them, it is still important that the celebrities present themselves as nice, both to protect their own face and that of fellow guests. In any context, whether formal or informal, a speaker will select the “least self-threatening position in the circumstances” (Goffman 1981: 326). Here, Trisha’s humorous front deflects criticism of any intentional physical harm to her niece.

These examples from *Trisha’s Southern Kitchen* also show bloopers as codas and transitions to the real world. Cooking shows typically end with the tasting of the completed dish. As a cooking show narrative, this would provide a “good coda” as per Labov’s (1972: footnote, 366) definition in that it not only solves the mechanical problem of ending a story (a cooking show episode) but also seeks to leave the listeners “with a feeling of satisfaction and completeness that matters have been rounded off and accounted for.” Seeing a completed dish and the celebrity’s tasting typically end the show and provide a sense of closure for viewers. In contrast, in *Trisha’s Southern Kitchen*, episodes often end with bloopers in the backdrop of the credits and final cut. At a production level, bloopers are a technique to keep viewers watching beyond the end of the show; at a narrative level, bloopers are a second coda, providing a transition from the cooking show coda to the real world.

The next example addresses the script of the backstage performance of another *Food Network* instructional cooking show, *Giada at Home* with celebrity chef Giada

de Laurentiis, but of backstage performance provided separately from the cooking show. The analysis focuses on behind-the-scenes filming with Giada and her filming crew, including her yoga instructor, make-up and hair artist, and camera crew.

4.3 Behind-the-scenes with Giada de Laurentiis: up close and personal

In a backstage-only web video series, viewers see a typical day of Giada's filming her shows (Waking Up with Giada, *Giada Behind-the Scenes*, Food Network website). Waking up at 5 am in her motor coach, Giada gets ready, starting with her yoga instructor and her make-up artist: she stretches and meditates; she polishes herself: she gets her act together, preparing her breakfast ritual, getting 'glammed up' with make-up, laying out her tactics (i. e. script and cooking sequence); she lingers with her green juice followed by her coffee in the motor coach before making her entrance on the kitchen studio; she relishes this cozy, easy, relaxed atmosphere (Figure 5) (Excerpt 2).

Figure 5: Morning ritual in the motorcoach.
(Waking Up with Giada, *Giada Behind-the-Scenes*, 2015)

(2) Giada de Laurentiis and the Dressing Room

- 1 This is my green pick-me-up. [sipping green juice]
- 2 And now, I'm going to make some oatmeal for me and Julie [make-up artist]
- 3 who is going to glam me up.

In Excerpt 2, Giada addresses two audiences, illustrating how backstage talk can be intentional. Applying Goffman's (1981) participation framework, the 'addressee' is her make-up artist and hair stylist (Julie), who Giada is 'oriented to' and directly talking to; as well as 'ratified participants' (viewers) who are acknowledged but not specifically addressed. This understanding is a result of underlying patterns of knowledge of real conversation and film dialogue (Bubel 2008); that is, viewers recognize that the primary dialogue takes place in the motor coach between Giada and Julie, but is undertaken on their behalf, the secondary overhearers. For her, this warm intimacy is dearer than the serious and professional filming of the cooking show. For viewers, these moments of imperfection, even vulnerability, draws them closer to the celebrity who lets her natural beauty take center stage while increasing their awe of her. Going *au naturel*, make-up free and hair in curls, Giada is accessible and relatable in her downtime, comfortable and most like herself (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Giada checks her social media as her hair gets done.
(Waking Up with Giada, *Giada Behind-the-Scenes*, 2015)

Contributing to the interactional backstage performance is text on the screen choreographed with the celebrity's script: "I love to check my Twitter in the morning" (Figure 6). The Twitter channel invites personal connection with Giada, creating another level of backstage intimacy as well as audience participation. Although these bloopers expose celebrity imperfections to the viewer, the program also goes to great lengths to reveal the ways in which Giada constructs and maintains her impeccable physique through diet, exercise, and

make-up. The backstage scenes show that Giada appears to personally manage her social media accounts, perhaps using her image to sell her celebrity chef brand to audiences.

In this back region, the performance is also an instance of the “fourth wall,” a metaphor that suggests that an invisible wall separates the actors from the audience (Mangan 2013: 172). While the audience can see and hear through this “wall,” the actors act as if they cannot. This episode with Giada demonstrates both the “fourth wall” with the performance conventions of Giada ignoring the viewers and “breaking the fourth wall” is done through directly referencing the audience or the play as a play. The temporary suspension of the performance conventions of avoiding direct contact with the camera draws attention to its use in the rest of the cooking show. Employing nested stories, with the episode story within a story (a filming day with Giada) and play within a play (production of show), functions as a means of inviting the audience in and adds to the multiple layers of backstage and frontstage.

These backstage performances allow Giada to reveal aspects of herself, which cannot normally be displayed frontstage. The warm, relaxed atmosphere of the backstage provides her a relatively safe space to interact with personal assistants in spontaneous conversation. Giada’s behind-the-scenes episodes are a rare frontstage assertion of her private persona. Giada is not having to ‘fit’ her role like she does in her cooking shows; instead, this series shows, similar to Dyer’s (1991: 139) description of American actress Judy Garland, that her “star quality ... is grounded in her own immediate (= not controlled), spontaneous (= unpremediated) and essential (= private) self.” This combination of authentic discourse and the performance of public identity makes these series particularly interesting for analyzing the celebrity in the making of her mediated selves.

4.4 Bobby Flay and bloopers: the ‘domesticizing’ of a male professional chef

While the behind-the-scenes episodes of Giada heighten her femininity and emphasize her self-discipline, other backstage filming also suggests gendered roles in the kitchen. The long-held binary of male-professional-public-chef and female-domestic-private-cook is re-examined in traditional cooking shows with male hosts. Bobby Flay, one of the original hosts on *Food Network* channel and widely recognized for his professional cooking and flavorful food, stars in competition cooking shows including *Iron Chef America*, *Beat Bobby Flay!* and *Throwdown with Bobby Flay!* In addition to these highly masculinized and competitive shows, Bobby also has hosted and produced various instructional

cooking shows: *Brunch @ Bobby's* (since 2010), *Bobby Flay's Barbecue Addiction* (2011–2014), *Grill It! With Bobby Flay* (2008–2010), etc., that are in a domestic kitchen but made acceptable because the cooking is a special event and is leisurely (Swenson 2009).

In these shows, bloopers serve to make Bobby less intimidating for the target audience, which is predominantly female. The bloopers illustrate that he makes mistakes too like at-home viewers, such as the following examples from *Brunch @ Bobby's*: he fumbles with a mango cutter for a mango smoothie (Caribbean Brunch, S2, Ep 10, 2011), saying, “it’s so slippery.” He clumsily wraps pecan pie monkey bread dough with plastic wrap, stating: “why is my plastic wrap technique so bad?” (Bold Southwestern Brunch, S3, Ep 8, 2013). He fights with his Kitchen Aide blender that “attacks” him with flour when making muffins (A Basket of Brunch Goodies, S3, Ep 11, 2013). He flops when flipping a sunny-side up egg, stating, “I broke the egg [yolk], but you know, that’s ok. We’re making a sandwich. Don’t fret” (Brunch on the Run, S5, Ep 12, 2015), reassuring himself and viewers that mistakes are ok, implying that standards for cooking at home are low. When he demonstrates how to use a milk frother, it sprays his face and his maroon polo shirt with almond milk. He stops mid-sentence, stating, “Y’know, these things don’t cost a lot, and they work really ni-[ce]” (Breakfast in Bed, S5, Ep 3, 2015). The bloopers cause Bobby to interrupt his performance momentarily in brief periods of relaxation. His laughter and the accompanying funny sound effects (e. g. slides, silly sounds, booings) help present him in a less threatening, less didactic position, in other words, as entertaining and likable. Ironically, bloopers of simple culinary acts protect the celebrity’s masculine identity in a female space, defying the connection that Bobby reigns over the home kitchen as equally as he does in the professional kitchen.

The kitchen has long been a place where gender norms prevail. Media scholars have noted the rise of food media and have examined how the celebrity chefs ‘doing dinner’ (Swenson 2009) are examples of ‘doing gender’ (West and Zimmerman 1987). Opening up debates about new masculinities, Hollows’s (2003) study examines how a mode of domestic masculinity is negotiated in the UK celebrity chef Jamie Oliver’s television shows and cookbooks. Hollows (2003: 239) suggests that the construction of the masculine domestic cook provides a different discourse about cooking, turning domestic cooking from demanding and laborious that is usually linked with domestic femininity in the kitchen to a ‘fun’ leisure and lifestyle activity, a ‘special event,’ even a ‘gift’ to his guests and family. Offering another form of masculinity, Bobby has been described as constructing cooking “as a way to flex professional muscles” (Swenson 2009) and “chef-artisan” (Johnston et al. 2014) with his cooking personality rooted in his professional kitchen.

Conflicting images of Bobby performing the professional but in a domestic kitchen are salient in unguarded off-script moments. One such example is when the celebrity tells stories about his mother as a basic cook, which suggests that good cooking is not part of his lineage. His need to position himself as an expert and gourmand is an attempt to distance himself from his humble upbringings and his mom's cooking. In Excerpt 3, Bobby makes the batter for "Pain Perdue with Fresh Peaches and Vanilla Butter," sharing childhood stories during the recipe telling.

(3) Bobby Flay and Storytelling of Childhood Memories

- 1 1 So while our peaches cook for a while, we're actually going to start our batter for our French toast.
- 2 This is actually one of the first things I remember cooking with my mom.
- 3 Now, my mother was not using brioche. I can tell you that right now.
- 4 You know, I didn't know what brioche was until I actually started to cook professionally. [cracking eggs in a bowl]
- 5 But, it was, um, you know, it was sort of old-school white bread, and it had eggs and vanilla.
- 6 I remember loving vanilla, you know, the first time I actually had seen it or tasted it. [checks on peaches cooking on saucepan]
- 7 And so, I always put in more vanilla in than my mom wanted me to put in.
- 8 And I still do that today. [smells the vanilla extract] I think it has such great flavor. [adds vanilla to the batter] So a little vanilla extract in there.
- 9 Okay, then we have to put a good amount of sugar in. [spoons in sugar]
- 10 Then some cinnamon. [sprinkles on cinnamon]
- 11 And a little bit of nutmeg. This is what a whole nutmeg looks like. [holds up a nutmeg pod]
- 12 I can also tell you that as a kid we were not grating our own nutmeg. [grates nutmeg over the batter]
- 13 It just sort of came out of a jar, which is totally fine.
- 14 But if you can find whole nutmeg, obviously it's going to have a lot more flavor.

(Cuisine du Jour, *Brunch @ Bobby's*, S1, Ep 2, 2010)

While making French toast, Bobby tells how it is one of the first dishes he remembers cooking with his mom. He compares his "Pain Perdue" to his childhood breakfast, positioning himself as an expert. On the show, he uses brioche, a rich egg and butter bread of French origin, not like his childhood French toast, which was "sort of old-school white bread, and it had eggs and vanilla" (Lines 3–5). Bobby displays affection yet exasperation with his mother: "Now, my

mother was not using brioche. I can tell you that right now” (Line 3). Critiquing her old-fashioned, simple cooking, he further positions himself as an expert by adding more vanilla extract than his mom would. Continuing the contrast, Bobby tells viewers that the childhood brunch dish used nutmeg “out of a jar” (Line 13). While acknowledging this is “totally fine,” he grates nutmeg, another professional and much better cooking technique, because “obviously it’s going to have a lot more flavor” (Line 14) (Figure 7). In the discourse and cooking technique, the distinction between cook and chef is alluded to throughout the show, with Bobby giving clarifications of certain cooking methods or for a certain name of particular techniques or ingredients.

Figure 7: Bobby Flay grates nutmeg while telling the backstory of his childhood food. (Cuisine du Jour, *Brunch @ Bobby's*, S1, Ep 2, 2010)

The contrast of different styles and attitudes of the formally trained chef and untrained cook continues with the title of the dish. The change in nomenclature from the American vernacular ‘French Toast’ for the French ‘Pain Perdue’ positions his mother and his early years before cooking professionally at the end of home-style, domestic cooking and Bobby currently at the serious, professional end with techniques suitable for a restaurant. Ironically, Bobby’s techniques as ‘cheffy’ and perhaps pretentious and suitable for a restaurant ironically valorize the simple, rustic dish invented to use leftover bread – ‘pain perdu’ in French literally means ‘lost bread’ (Ayto 2013). The French title associates Bobby’s cooking with French gastronomy and its esteemed culinary history, from peasant foods to the most luxurious dishes. At the same time, Bobby’s storytelling helps translate foreign and professional cooking technique for home cooks.

This juxtaposition of tradition and novelty is noted as a characteristic of other contemporary cooking shows. In a historical study of Swedish cooking instruction programs, Eriksson (2016) describes that the most recent development of “novice format” cooking shows consists of a chef-expert who is no longer in chef whites but appears like an ‘ordinary guy’ in casual clothing and in a homelike studio. Further, the original conversational coaching has evolved into conversational give-and-take between the chef and an onset novice. Similarly, Bobby’s show is designed to downplay the hierarchy between chef-expert and viewers or home cook-novices but what is different here is that Bobby’s discourse is directed to an invisible audience and is self-propelled, allowing for more spontaneous speech and reactions to his own script.

Another type of blooper unique to cooking shows is scenes of consumption. While taking bites and tasting the food are expected on TV cooking shows as they illustrate approval of the dish (Matwick and Matwick 2017), taking too big of a bite is problematic. Speech becomes impaired or the host talks with his mouth full – both situations evoking an extended pause mid-script and subsequently, discomfort for the viewer. Camera editing and re-takes solve these problems, such as in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Too big a bite.

(Say Cheese, *Brunch @ Bobby's*, S5, Ep 8, 2015)

“Mmm,” says Bobby after taking too big a bite of a Cherry Cream Cheese Pancake (Figure 8). The non-lexical gustatory expression and the waving of his fork cue the camera to cut the scene and move to the next sequence before Bobby violates the politeness norm of food etiquette (do not talk with your

mouth full). Further, we argue that Bobby as a male is what makes this scene of taking too big a bite acceptable; another male-led cooking show celebrates this with gusto: *Guy's Big Bite*, with Guy Fieri, celebrates his “no limits” personality matched by his “full of flavor” food, “big appetite,” and “big bite.” Gender norms dictate that men have hearty appetites in contrast to women who eat small “feminine” meals comprised of vegetables and lighter foods (Basow and Kobrynowicz 1993; Fuller et al. 2013; Mooney and Lorenz 1997). Bobby pays attention to both the frontstage norms of politeness and masculinity even while relaxing and letting down the conventional front normally in backstage.

4.5 Linguistic bloopers: Ree Drummond of *The Pioneer Woman* and family

Perhaps the most common and recognizable form of bloopers is linguistic, or what Goffman (1981: 207) calls “influencies,” including fumbling words, restarts, filled pauses, and mispronunciation. The tripping over lines is evident in the final example below. In the cooking show *The Pioneer Woman* starring Ree Drummond, her family and members of the ranching community often serve as the backdrop and frequently are integrated into the story as side narratives. Their inclusion adds authenticity and humor. For instance, in Excerpt 4, Ree's son Bryce fumbles his script on how to find recipes from the cooking show website, whose text are added on-screen to increase legibility (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Bryce Drummond and re-starts.
(Other Cuts of Beef, *The Pioneer Woman*, S15, Ep 3, 2017)

(4) The Pioneer Woman: Re-takes of Disfluencies

- 1 For recipes or more go to Food Network dot com slash
- 2 Agh!
- 3 For recipes or more go to Food Network doc com sl-
- 4 For recipes or more, go to Food Network dot com slash pioneer woman

(Bryce Drummond, Other Cuts of Beef, *The Pioneer Woman*, S15, Ep 3, 2017)

Despite the brevity of the line, Bryce makes two false starts in these “incidents” (Goffman 1959), showing how hard it is to act ‘normally’ but flawlessly on camera. Bryce’s embarrassment with himself and re-starts align with Goffman’s (1981: 212–213) observation of how a speaker responds to speech faults: “‘reaction’ (in the form of exhibited embarrassment, chagrin, consternation, and the like, externalized as notification of flagging) and ‘remedy’ (in the form of some corrective effort, both substantive and ritualistic).” Bryce’s good-humored reaction and remedy to his mistakes make the blooper enjoyable to watch as viewers are able to laugh with him, not at him.

Further, the false starts are not as grievous because they are by a young boy, a non-professional. Nonetheless, he is no ‘ordinary’ bystander; as the son of the host and celebrity chef Ree, he gives an extended version of Ree’s backstage (like mother, like son). The restarts and their interpolation in the cooking show balance Ree’s smooth performance and her relaxed, poised manner. This scene offers a backstage that shows not a ‘different’ version of the boy but rather allows viewers to understand Ree’s role as a mother and appreciate her performance as a celebrity chef.

5 Discussion and conclusion

In this paper, we have identified different types of bloopers on instructional television cooking shows and have discussed how this backstage talk becomes part of the host’s “mediated persona” (Thornborrow 2015). The analysis focuses on aspects of star performances that involve “authenticity” and “truthfulness” or being “the true personality of the performer” (Dyer 1991: 133). Media texts, such as bloopers in this present study, further mark authenticity in moments “that indicate lack of control, lack of premeditation and privacy” (Dyer 1991: 137). The audience scrutinizes stars’ performances to identify their charisma, looking for moments of the essence of the star persona that may be revealed in the unique gesture, the catch of the voice, or in moments when the celebrities appear unaware that they are being

observed. While showing unrehearsed performance is not part of traditional television recording, we suggest that intentional filming techniques (i. e. choreographed bloopers, behind-the-scenes series, and music and text cues) stage the construction of celebrities and legitimate their authenticity.

Besides being entertaining, cooking show bloopers add a sense of “liveliness,” which following Tolson (2006) can be attributed to the media’s concept of ‘liveness.’ Originally, broadcasting was live (as in the case of Julia Child’s early recordings), so discourse indicated a sense of ‘here’ and ‘now.’ While Tolson (2006: 11) argues that “‘liveliness’ is most effective when determinacy of a script is concealed,” we demonstrate that the feeling of spontaneity comes with the blatant revealing of the script through bloopers. As Lorenzo-Dus (2009: 74) notes, this liveness in television discourse arises from spontaneity in the conversation and its departure from the predictable. In contrast to more ‘serious’ genres such as political debates and broadcast news that tend to be regulated, scrutinized, and criticized (Montgomery 2007), cooking show mistakes are relatively harmless and add a quality of real time to the cooking show.

Also, we have explored the ways in which celebrity chefs show their imperfections or unscripted aspects of themselves, despite pressures to conform to norms of the frontstage world and of the media. We argue, following Goffman (1959), that backstage is a region that allows celebrities to drop their front and show aspects about themselves that do not fit their frontstage, professional role. The domestic sphere of the kitchen is itself a backstage, and the use of bloopers and mistakes is a part of this informality and intimacy. It could be argued that, in contemporary America, behaving unguarded is a taboo for women yet a positive association with men. Regardless of gender, seeing the hosts behave the unexpected is what surprises and delights the viewers. The cooking mishaps convey the host as incompetent yet an expert in doing so. As part of the cooking show itself, the behind-the-scenes are purposefully included. Rather than a single ‘backstage’ and ‘frontstage,’ multiple layers of performance add authenticity to the performer.

For example, we see Julia Child condoning her lack of conviction or Trisha Yearwood making fun of herself through meta-play, and Bobby Flay distancing himself from his mother’s old-school cooking. In another case, this means sharing intimate morning routines that enhance the celebrity’s image as glamorous (Giada de Laurentiis). Or, as in the last example (Bryce Drummond), backstage bloopers can simply be included to add humor and solidarity with the viewer by showing how difficult it is to perform and be filmed. In other words, backstage talk, whether occurring frontstage or backstage or a layer in between, allows celebrities to relate to viewers and display ‘being ordinary’ (Chaney 1996: 114). While the necessary professionalism presented during the

production attempts to create a sense of reality in the cooking shows, the slips and gaffes suspend this belief and heighten the collaborative experience between presenter and audience.

Performing expertise is paradoxical in relation to authenticity. On the one hand, the professional format changes in a way that reduces the distance between the expert and viewers. Bloopers and gaffes simulate interaction and help make the expert appear part of the community. This complexity between “distinction” and “democracy” is similar to Johnston and Baumann’s (2010: 52) argument about foodie culture and the *Food Network*: “while food television is broadly accessible to anybody who accesses cable television, a close reading of the programming reveals that these shows continue to embody significant elements of cultural and economic capital.” Johnston and Baumann note that the projection of *Food Network* celebrities as popular and democratic appeal may reduce their power as symbols of distinction.

However, we follow the argument that *Food Network* celebrity hosts are influential models of culinary and social practices because of their frontstage performance and that this social power obliges them to pay attention to prevailing social norms. Paradoxically, this frontstage provides a platform to project their backstage flaws. This tension between frontstage and backstage norms, which is a feature of all backstage talk, follows the overall shift in late modern authority in Western societies from impersonal, institutional power to popular expertise (Giddens 1990). This strategy of ‘celebrity ordinariness’ (Tolson 2001) by television celebrity chefs is a way to build culinary authority, and as Miller (2007) notes, be influencers of a lifestyle centered on the enjoyment of food. These ‘cultural intermediaries’ (Bourdieu 1984) demonstrate ways in which viewers can gain status via “culinary capital” which Naccarato and LeBesco (2012: 3) describe as a concept “to understand how and why certain foods and food-related practices connote, and by extension, confer status and power on those who know about and enjoy them.” Television cooking shows remain one of the most popular, powerful, and playful distribution sites for acquisition of such culinary capital.

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