

SURVIVOR AT 20

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2021 / 7:00 PM

WITH
MYLES MCNUTT
(OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY)
AND LAURIE OUELLETTE
(UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA)





Premiering in the summer of 2000, *Survivor* immediately became a national sensation. As viewers anxiously anticipated the crowning of the “Sole Survivor,” the groundbreaking reality series dominated the pop culture conversation. The show soon came to define water-cooler television, as each week delivered fresh events from the island where sixteen Americans had been stranded and left to fend for themselves.

After receiving over 51 million viewers in its first finale and averaging 30 million viewers a week during its second season (regularly topping the juggernaut *Friends* in viewership), *Survivor* would eventually blend quietly into the reality television landscape. However, the show continues to draw a consistent audience even in its fortieth season, which aired this past spring. This conversation examines *Survivor* as both reality TV innovator and legacy franchise now preparing to enter its third decade on the air. Although often dismissed as disposable one-dimensional programming, or else met with shock that the show is “still on,” *Survivor*’s remarkable legacy and dynamic evolution across forty seasons invites us to consider how our culture has produced and positioned reality television over the past twenty years.

Myles McNutt (Old Dominion University) and Laurie Ouellette (University of Minnesota) will join moderator Jeremy Moore (Film and Media Studies, UCSB) for this virtual discussion. This event will not include a screening.

This event is sponsored by the Carsey-Wolf Center.

MYLES MCNUTT (OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY)

Myles McNutt is Assistant Professor in Communication & Theatre Arts at Old Dominion University, where he teaches and studies on the media industries, with a focus on television. He is also a cultural critic whose writing has appeared at *The A.V. Club*, *Slate*, *The Washington Post*, and his personal blog, *Cultural Learnings*.



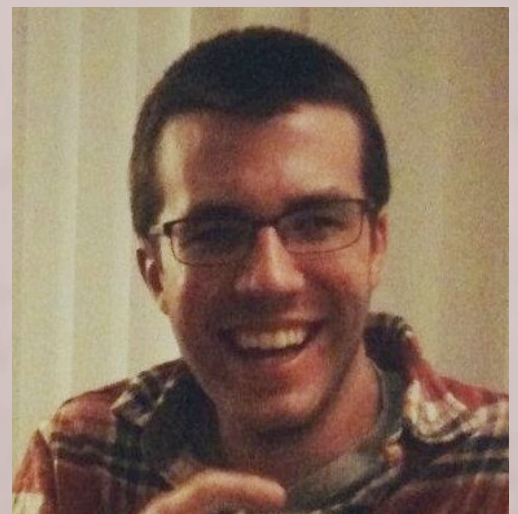
LAURIE OUELLETTE (UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA)

Laurie Ouellette is Professor of Media and Cultural Studies at the University of Minnesota. She watched the first season of *Survivor* (2000) live on broadcast television and has been writing about reality television (among other topics) ever since. She is especially interested in reality television as a cultural technology of self-making and neoliberal citizenship and has published essays on this subject in *Cultural Studies*, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, and other journals. Her books include *Better Living Through Reality TV: Television and Post-Welfare Citizenship*, *Lifestyle TV, Viewers Like You: How Public Television Failed the People*.



MODERATOR JEREMY MOORE (UCSB)

Jeremy Moore is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Film and Media Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His current dissertation work examines on-screen labor, spectacle, and kayfabe in professional wrestling and reality television. His other research interests include video cultures, analog games, and television history.



CWC TV

In recognition of the extraordinary accomplishments of the Center's namesakes, Dick Wolf and Marcy Carsey, the Carsey-Wolf Center is committed to examining television as an institution, industry, and cultural form. In our post-network, multi-channel, multi-media environment, understanding television demands understanding its past as well as its future, through exploration of individual episodes, mini-series, and documentaries.

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