



**MAKEUP TRENDS ON TELEVISION NEWSCASTS
IN THE U.S. DURING THE 20TH CENTURY**
Exploring High-Definition Television, Journalists, and Appearance

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ABSTRACT

This study is an exploration of the shift from standard definition (SDTV) to high-definition (HDTV) on television newscasts in the United States. This paper examines how this major historic shift affected the thinking, behavior, and trends of female newscasters when using makeup to see what themes arose. Despite the ubiquity of female newscasters, academic research into the influence of HD broadcasting and makeup appearance is limited. Due to this lack of information, the present study provides a cultural approach to examining historical information about this switch. News West 9 broadcasted in Midland-Odessa and interviews to a female newscaster, a news director, and a makeup artist who experienced this shift are utilized to address the historical issues facing high-definition broadcasting during this time.

1. Introduction

Technology can influence behaviors. During the 20th century, a significant shift happened in the television industry. High-Definition broadcasting changed the television industry not only because of the much clearer and sharper pictures presented on screen, but also because of the significant shift in quality that required far more precise makeup, set design, and lighting. With the inclusion of HDTV, newscasters, especially women, had to adapt the way they put makeup on, something that would not have been as much of an issue in non-HD. For instance, with the shift from SDTV to HDTV, female broadcasters had to start using natural makeup techniques, high-definition makeup, and airbrush makeup. In accordance, HD broadcasting urged for different makeup practices, which required more time and experience from makeup artists. Thus, an expert in makeup no longer only had to know about makeup techniques and cosmetics, but also about video machinery and equipment to make sure the makeup was according to the new technology. The development of HD cosmetics was needed not only for the foundation and powder but also for a more diverse palette of colors hereafter changing the broadcasting environment and media.

The purpose of this paper is to examine NewsWest 9 broadcasted in Midland-Odessa during 1992 and 1998 to see what themes emerge about makeup trends after the transition from SDTV to HDTV in the news industry. This paper also takes a cultural view of the history of television newscasts by conducting interviews to female newscasters, a news director, and a makeup artist to address the historical issues involving HD broadcasting, journalists, and appearance. Therefore, the first part of the paper provides a synopsis of the shifts from SDTV to HDTV on television newscasts in the United States and the regulations that affected HDTV broadcasting. Since this historic shift affected thinking, behavior, and trends in the 1990s in the country, this paper will analyze HDTV's influence on makeup trends, especially on female newscasters to lay a foundation for possible emerging themes. Finally, the last part of the paper provides the discussion and conclusions of the study.

2. Primary Sources

2.1. News West 9

A set of three newscasts from News West 9 in Midland-Odessa recorded in 1992 and 1998, in a Betacam will be utilized for this study. The news anchors were Melissa Hendrix and Jay Hendricks, the weather anchor was Mark Lee, and the sports anchor was Bill Bortko. The newscasts duration are thirty minutes and each newscast is divided into five blocks: local news, weather, national and international news, sports, and last look weather. The year 1998 was chosen for the analysis because it was the year that the first public HDTV newscast in the United States broadcasted. Similarly, the year 1992 was utilized to compare the makeup trends before and after HDTV. The set of newscasts are available at the Radio Broadcasting Museum located in Amarillo, TX. This analysis only focuses on two specific years, but further investigation of newscasts should be explored.

Figure 1



Source: News West 9, 1992.

Figure 2



Source: News West 9, 1998.

2.2. Female Newscaster Interview

Maury Roman-Jordan is a Mexican journalist for Telemundo channel, based in Amarillo, TX. Roman-Jordan joined Telemundo in August 1994 and has reported on a large number of stories both at the news desk and in the field. Currently, Roman-Jordan serves as co-anchor for Telemundo Amarillo, which runs at 5:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. The interview with Maury was selected for the analysis because she experienced the shift from SDTV to HDTV broadcasting in the United States, specifically in Texas. Maury could add, from her first-hand experience, information for the analysis of this significant change.

2.3. News Director Interview

Shawn Venhaus has worked at KFDA since 1992 where he started as a Photographer. Shawn soon promoted to the position of Chief Photographer where he began to experience more leadership roles and quickly decided he wanted to peruse his career in the management side of the newsroom. His career path took him to the Assignments Desk where he managed the daily content and reporting staff for almost two years. Those years of experience helped Shawn gain the knowledge and leadership skills necessary to throw his hat in the ring for the News Director position when that position came open in 1996. Shawn's interview was chosen for this analysis since he experienced the transition from SDTV to HDTV broadcasting from different perspectives, including photographer, assignment desk, and news director.

2.4. Makeup Artist Interview

Miguel Angel Martinez is an Emmy Award winner and master makeup artist. Martinez is a Miami based makeup artist who has worked at WXTV Univision 41 for 27 years. He is highly active with many TV stations, commercial brands, photographers, designers, and models. His work has been seen in several newcasts, television shows, magazines, fashion shows, newspapers, and red carpet events. Martinez is a beauty expert on cosmetic brands across Mexico and the United States and was selected to be on this analysis since he has the first-hand

experience on the transition from SDTV to HDTV broadcasting. Furthermore, Martinez has also partnered with MAC cosmetics to design the HD collection developed for HD media, which can be purchased in different MAC stores across the United States.

3. Literature Review

3.1. The Transition from Standard Definition (NTSC) to High-Definition (HDTV) Television

HDTV was being introduced as the new standard for television in the United States in 1996 as a significant technical improvement over television systems. This historical shift was the result of technical agreements and investments made by programming producers, receiver manufacturers, broadcasters, and householders (Farrell and Shapiro, 1992, p. 2). HDTV changed the television viewing experience since it was a technological "improvement in the image quality seen by viewers" (Bracken, 2005, p. 195). HDTV was adopted in the United States to provide viewers with up to 1080 lines versus the NTSC standard of 480 lines on the screen. HDTV has been characterized as a "video and audio information at a quality level that exceeds that of NTSC television standards" (Dupagne & Seel, 1998, p. 47). HDTV also uses a 16:9 aspect ratio (widescreen) versus the NTSC standard of 4:3. This distinction is important because, "like seeing a film in the cinema, widescreen television allows the viewer to see more of the mediated environment" (Bracken, 2005, p. 196). Furthermore, HDTV signals contain much more information than do NTSC signals: HDTV "requires a transmission and reception system able to convey this greater flow of image and sound information" (Farrell and Shapiro, 1992, p. 2). Rosston (1991) estimated that the cost of HDTV transmission equipment cost the United States \$38 million and \$10 to \$12 million for the first stations to adopt the shift.

For HDTV programming to be available, HDTV signals "must be delivered to the home, and consumers must purchase HDTV receivers and videotape machines" (Farrell and Shapiro, 1992, p. 14). The key components of this system are: (1) a standard or format for HDTV signals; (2)

programming in the HDTV format; (3) transmission equipment capable of delivering the HDTV signal into the household; and (4) television sets capable of receiving and displaying the HDTV signal (Farrell and Shapiro, 1992). Allegedly, the higher resolution also makes it more desirable to have a large screen, on people's house so that "HDTV technology was complementary with large screen manufacturing and prospectively, with flat-screen technology (which will enable householders to have truly large screens without enormous boxes)" (Wassiczek, et al., 1990, p. 13). Neuman (1988), in an experiment that examined image quality preference, found that participants preferred high-definition (HD) images to standard definition (SD) images. Neuman (1990) found that viewers preferred larger images. So for 35 inches and 180 inches displays, the better the image quality was, the more positive the overall reaction was. In other words, HDTV was created to improve the quality of television programming to the average television viewer, accentuating the "psychophysical perception of telepresence" (Dupagne & Seel, 1998, p. 60).

The transition from SDTV to HDTV happened at the same time that the conversion to digital television (DTV) signal. "HDTV sets became available in the U.S. in 1998 and broadcasts began around November 1998" (Kwerel et al., 2002, p. 17). By January 1, 2003, stations in the top 100 markets obtained and installed equipment necessary to deliver network DTV content (including any HDTV provided) without degradation" (Kwerel et al., 2002, p. 17). Furthermore, cable operators made available to subscribers "a set-top box that supports HDTV programming display and included digital connectors for use in connecting the set-top box to a DTV receiver or display device" (Kwerel et al., 2002, p. 17).

3.2. Regulations and HDTV Broadcasting

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has responsibility for "ensuring that the telecommunications, broadcast and cable television, radio, and direct broadcast satellite (DBS) service markets perform in a manner that is consistent with statutory objectives" (Bykowsky, et al., 2003, p. 157). Beginning in the

1980s, "broadcasters lobbied vigorously for the Federal Communications Commission to devote unused broadcast spectrum to high-definition television, which the broadcasters said would be a great boom to consumers" (Brinkley, 1997, p. 3). The FCC decided that "conversion to high-definition television was in consumers' interest," (Stuart, 2004, p. 486), but interestingly and in accordance with broadcasters' wishes that high-definition television would not be sufficiently remunerative unless the government gave additional spectrum to broadcasters:

The only benefit to the local broadcast industry, as a whole from the adoption of HDTV, would come if viewers watched more television. Accordingly, the broadcasters' collective interest seemed to lie in rejecting HDTV. Indeed, they showed little interest in adopting the technology early on. To broadcasters as a group, HDTV was a threat, not a promise. Households are the least likely to try to take a leadership role in establishing a new technology (Farrell and Shapiro, 1992, p. 14).

After broadcasters demonstrated their frustration, the FCC gave additional spectrum to each broadcaster for purposes of broadcasting in high-definition television, "doubling the amount of spectrum devoted to each broadcaster during the lengthy and indefinite transition period during which consumers would be expected to buy new television sets or converter boxes" (Stuart, 2004, p. 486).

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 "instructs the Commission to encourage the deployment on a reasonable and timely basis of advanced telecommunications capability to all Americans" (Kwerel et al., 2002, p. 2), including, the implementation of HDTV. The Commission's primary tasks were to determine "whether this capability is being deployed to all Americans in a reasonable and timely basis, and how it can best encourage the ongoing deployment of this capability" (Kwerel et al., 2002, p. 2). Even though the Telecommunications ACT of 1996 introduced HDTV in 1998, the target date for completion of the transition was December 31, 2006 (Bykowsky, et al., 2003).

3.3. Broadcasting Makeup afterward HDTV: What is Airbrush?

High-definition (HD) technology has revolutionized the techniques needed by makeup artists: “you need to know more, have more talent, and be more detailed than ever before” (Davis, & Hall, 2008). Because HD emphasizes every detail on screen, it’s essential for makeup artists to know how to achieve the desired look that fits the director’s requirements. High-definition (HD) images are very sharp, “with long tonal ranges and colors are lifelike and true... There is no dirt on the pictures, no scratching, and no picture instability” (Davis, & Hall, 2008, p. 60).

Therefore, HD broadcasting urged for different makeup practices, which required more time and experience from makeup artists. Before knowing about makeup applications, advanced makeup, and makeup designs; makeup artists had to learn HDTV technical aspects of makeup and the aspects that affect their work: “With HDTV and digital HD cameras, every detail is visible. Feature or flaw, it shows” (Davis, & Hall, 2008, p. 192). Makeup artists had to learn about everything on the set from the equipment, colors, lighting, camera filters, tones, anatomy, shapes, skin disorders, environmental conditions, etc. This being said, an expert in makeup no longer only had to know about makeup techniques and cosmetics, but also about video machinery and equipment:

- If the makeup and hair teams are familiar with working in the 35-mm film theatrical environment, then they should have no trouble with the HD environment. That said, a few things are easier in HD, and just a couple of things need more careful watching. If the production is using an HD monitor of decent quality and size onset, the makeup artist have a much easier task. On a well-set-up, 14-inch or 24-inch HD monitor, most problems can be more quickly and effectively dealt with (Davis, & Hall, 2008, p. 60).
- As far as makeup techniques, HDTV required the use of a more technological tool and that was when airbrushing was created. Airbrush makeup is a tool in creating certain looks, especially a flawless finish to the skin. Airbrush

makeup has also “found a niche in the retail cosmetic world. It is used in all areas of makeup: beauty, body makeup, body art, tattoo cover, bruising, effects, and fantasy. Airbrush is used in all media—print, film, television, and theatre—and is a mainstay in HD and HDTV” (Davis, & Hall, 2008, p. 182).

An airbrush machine is a tool that many artists, actor, broadcasters, and TV talent prefer since it can create a more natural look, required for HDTV. Before HDTV, the makeup artist used the standard foundation and powder on the talent to create a flawless skin look. However, the airbrush works a little bit more different than the regular makeup people were used to putting on. The airbrush is a small, air-operated tool that sprays various media, including ink and dye, but most often paint, by a process of atomization. An airbrush “works by passing a stream of fast-moving (compressed) air through a valve, which creates a local reduction in air pressure (suction) that allows paint to be pulled up from an interconnected reservoir at normal atmospheric pressure” (Davis, & Hall, 2008, p. 182). In this process, the makeup artist controls the amount of paint by using a trigger that opens a fine tapered needle.

3.4. Female Newscasters, Appearance, and Body Image

In 1965, only about 40 percent of women of ages 16 years old and up were in the labor force. By 1999, when labor force participation was at its peak, around 60% of women were in the labor force (Dewolf, 2017). In media, 25 years ago, women made up only 13 percent of the television news workforce (Engstrom & Ferri, 2000). Today, the majority of entry-level TV news applicants are women, and because of solid growth in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s; by 2001, about two of every five workers in a newsroom were women (Huff, 2003).

When sportscasters, weathercasters, and photographers are excluded, women make up at least half of the workforce in news media (Barnes, 2005). Nowadays, women are working in more fields than ever, but they are still more likely to work in lower-paying jobs than men are, and they remain underrepresented in many occupations such as science, technology,

engineering, and mathematics (DeWolf, 2017). This lack of women in different fields is paralleled to career barriers centered on gender-related issues and stereotypical portrayals, not always experienced by men.

Over time, portrayals of television female news anchors have demonstrated an emphasis placed on their physical appearance rather than on their working skills and journalistic integrity. Female television newscasters have faced unequal treatment and much more pressure than men, due to their body image (Lavin & Cash, 2001). Women not only had to meet all of the newscaster standards that applied to men, but also feminine standards from hairstyle, wardrobe, youthful appearance, and physical appeal (Stone, 2010). Women in general face barriers in their careers that men do not necessarily experience, and this can be especially true for women in broadcasting who, while trying to gain credibility, have to deal with other societal expectations such as personal appearance and body image.

4. Analysis

4.1. News West 9 Makeup Trends

The 1990s' makeup focused on three areas, the eyebrows, the eyes, and the lip. The eyebrows were to be dark and defined, either well plucked or bushy and natural. The eyes had a light smoky eye look, often in shades of brown and purple but also green and blue. As for the lips, shades of apricot, brown, purple, and red were popular. It was also popular to define the lips' lines by a dark lip liner and the rest of the lip in a lighter color.

In the three sets of newscasts studied in this research, we can see these makeup trends; however, after HDTV broadcasting started in the country, the techniques changed. Below you can see the differences in Melissa Hendrix makeup on 1992 compared to 1998 when HDTV broadcasting was released in the United States. The picture in the left belonged to a newscast broadcasted in 1992, while the image on the right belonged to 1998.

Figure 3



Source: Newscast broadcasted in 1992.

Figure 4



Source: Newscast broadcasted in 1998.

In both the pictures, Melissa's foundation looked good and matched her face with her skin tone. It looks like she used matte foundation on both 1992 and 1998 to cover her face and finish her look with a matte neutral powder to enhance her skin. However, the blush/bronze use on her cheekbones is pinker and darker in 1992, compared to 1998. The contouring was a key factor in the HDTV transition and these pictures reflected this trend. Her eyebrows were not exempt from the love of contouring, and her look was then finished with combing and coloring/shaping with a brow pencil.

Due to the shift to HD broadcasting, the love of the natural look and earth tones were must-haves. On 1998, Melissa's eyes looked more natural compared to 1992 since she used matte brown palettes of beige and brown, along with simple eyeliner and mascara on the top and bottom lashes. Before and after HD broadcasting, Melissa used prevalent shades of lipsticks such as reds, plum, and dark berry colors, which were applied along with a soft brown lip liner.

After comparing Melissa's makeup trends before and after high-definition, one can

conclude that Melissa's skin looks flawless and more natural in 1998, compared to the heavy makeup of the cheeks and eyes of 1992. Natural and effortless beauty was the goal after HDTV, as demonstrated by Melissa Hendrix. The popular makeup look was light pink blush, neutral eye shadows, light mascara, and bright lips. The primary transition can be identified when Melissa changed the bold and pigmented eye shadows as well as the dark pinks and gold blushes, with more neutral and light-colored choices. In an effort to be more "normal" and natural, many female newscasters ditched cosmetics all together for a natural look.

4.2. Challenges that Female Newscasters Faced

Throughout her career, Maury's appearance has been a constant negotiation between herself and news directors. Roman-Jordan (2018) pointed out that "in broadcasting, your work often still comes second to how you look." Maury has worked for over 24 years on the news industry, and she remembered that when she started at Telemundo Amarillo, she was required to cut her hair, dress a certain way, and wear a certain amount of makeup. After the transition between SDTV to HDTV happened, she did not think about it much. However, she will never forget a letter that she received from a viewer around 1998 where the sender was making fun of her flowery dress and her exaggerated blush and lipstick. After that letter, she got more aware that the colors and facial expressions on TV were more defined, but she did not change her makeup or wardrobe right away:

The transition did not affect me immediately. It was until later, like a year after, when a viewer, recommended me to increase my makeup and wardrobe selections since according to her, they made me look comical and older. So, that's when I started paying attention to this issue and began incorporating more natural colors on my make-up and a little more on my clothing (Roman-Jordan, 2018).

After remembering how this shift affected her in many ways, Roman-Jordan (2018) also clarified that the expectations surrounding women in broadcasting are changing: "When I

started in the industry, there was a very old-school beauty mentality. Makeup artists put on so much makeup. I swear I looked like a 45-year-old woman when I was 25".

According to Maury, for so long there was an expectation of how female newscasters were supposed to look, and many of them had to wear fake lashes, bright lipstick, and lots of blush, and eye shadow. Nowadays, this has changed, she added:

My make up routine now lasts less than 20 minutes. Today, makeup artists, usually put on a primer because I get shiny, HDTV foundation to even my skin tone, a little eye shadow, liner, mascara, some blush, no contour, and some lip-gloss... My wardrobe also has now more natural colors. When you look like a normal person, people have an easier time connecting to you (Roman-Jordan, 2018).

4.3. What News Directors Have to Say

Shawn Venhaus remembered the transition from SDTV to HDTV quite well. He was working in the news industry when this shift happened. According to Venhaus, the transition had a large impact on makeup worn by both male and females. He pointed out that "the new HDTV was so clear that the news industry had to actually change the type of makeup used and change to a newer makeup that was designed for HDTV" (Venhaus 2018). Venhaus also explained that "the newer makeup was not as noticeable, which it is important especially for men, as most viewers do not know they wear make-up. But also had a large impact on females as now every blemish could be seen if not properly covered" (Venhaus, 2018).

Venhaus furthermore illustrated that one of the biggest challenges was educating the public: "We produced special content to help educate the viewers on several topics from converter boxes to keep their old TV running, to new HDTV antennas and new television sets. This was extremely challenging for many viewers, especially the older generation who had been using the same technology for decades" (Venhaus, 2018). Regarding appearance, Venhaus remembered that they had many calls and letters from people complaining about the color skin, clothes, and makeup of anchors and

reporters: “people criticized that the female newscasters looked to tan and their makeup was not natural. We experienced a shift toward a real, more natural-looking beauty” (Venhaus, 2018). Regarding the impact of this transition, Venhaus (2018) added:

It is much greater than most realize. Many people thought we simply had to buy a new HDTV camera and pow, we are now HDTV. That was not the case. The transition was in the millions of dollars. KFDA had to replace field cameras, edit bays, studio cameras, the switcher in control, the Master Control boards, the wires that run up the tower, the broadcast antenna at the top of the tower, the actual transmitter machine itself and many, many more components had to be replaced and upgraded.

Venhaus (2018) said that another critical item was the studio set since they had to re-design the studio for high-definition: “The flaws in the old set would now be visible without a redesign. The lighting in the studio also had to be changed in order to meet the higher demands”. Venhaus (2018) also recalled that “even SDTV make up was cheaper than the new one. Makeup expenses increased more than \$12,000 between 1998 and 1999. KFDA pays the makeup for news anchors and reporters, but the transition from SDTV to HDTV costs as more money than we expected”.

4.4. Makeup Artists Adaptations after HDTV Broadcasting

Miguel Angel Martinez, an Emmy Award winning makeup artist, mentioned that:

The change from SDTV to HDTV was big. Makeup had to be more natural. Having studied film and special effects made it easier for me. I just applied the same technique as for film. Having come from editorials, the makeup was more detail-oriented and much LESS. Technique not always applied nowadays (Martinez, 2008).

In 1998, another makeup artist, who used to work at Telemundo, contacted Martinez to start a partnership with MAC Cosmetics, a prominent makeup company in the United States, to create and release makeup for HD broadcasting.

Martinez accepted the challenge and began the alliance, which was very successful. Martinez not only helped to design the TV collection developed for HDTV media but also helped to promote the products on different platforms. Today, MAC Cosmetics is one of the few companies in the United States that sells high-definition products that are used in television, film, and print media.

Makeup artists need to know about everything on the set, they not only know about makeup techniques, but about technology, lighting, cameras, and so on: “As film stock and lighting became more forgiving, and reality became the accepted convention, beauty makeup has, too, evolved to appreciate a more naturalistic aesthetic” (Martinez, 2008). Over the past few years, cameras, monitors, computer screens, and televisions have used 4K technology and makeup artists have learned about it. 4K is known as Ultra High-Definition: “4K gives the camera operator an image with the truer, richer color that is also clearer because it has four times the number of pixels than conventional HD. 4K also delivers images with significantly more detail for directors and crew to observe the action” (Martinez, 2008).

5. Conclusion: Final thoughts

During the 20th century, high-definition broadcasting changed the television industry not only because of the much clearer and sharper pictures presented on screen but also because female newscasters had to adapt the way they put makeup on, something that would not have been as much of an issue in non-HDTV. After analyzing NewsWest 9 broadcasted in Midland-Odessa during 1992 and 1998, and talking to experts on the news industry, who experienced this shift, two themes emerged about makeup trends after the transition to HD broadcasting.

First, female newscasters started using natural makeup techniques with more neutral and light-colored choices: “We experienced a shift toward a real, more natural-looking beauty” (Venhaus, 2018). In an effort to be more natural, many female newscasters ditched cosmetics all together for a natural look, including light pink blushes, neutral eye shadows, and light mascara. The main transition between SDTV to HDTV can

be identified on the changes from bold and pigmented eye shadows as well as dark pinks and gold blushes, to more earthy colors. “When you look like a normal person, people have an easier time connecting to you” (Roman-Jordan, 2018).

Second, HD broadcasting urged for different makeup practices, which required more time and experience from makeup artists. The development of HDTV cosmetics was needed not only for the foundation and powder but also for a more diverse palette of colors. For instance, cosmetic brands around the world designed HDTV collections developed for HD media, including MAC stores. However, this period cost television stations thousands of dollars: “SDTV make up was cheaper than the new one. Makeup expenses increased more than \$12,000 between 1998 and 1999... The transition from SDTV to HDTV costs as more money than we expected” (Venhaus, 2018).

Therefore, the interviews of this study and an artifact collected twenty-five years ago showed HDTV’s influence on makeup trends during the ’90s through a historical and cultural analysis. Since technology can influence behaviors and little research has been done on HDTV’s influence on makeup trends, further exploration into this should be examined. This study is important because two of every five workers in a newsroom are women (Huff, 2003) and many of them not only had to meet all of the newscaster standards that applied to men, but also feminine standards from hairstyle, wardrobe, youthful appearance, and physical appeal (Stone, 2010).

In the future, more artifacts and primary sources such as more broadcasts, photo scraps, company documents, interviews, and personal observations should be used to extend this case study. Hence, a new makeup perspective within HDTV and media can forge tactical alliances with other cultural and historical aspects of knowledge to learn past social practices.

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