Reality TV: AFC Wimbly Womblys #87

AFC Wimbly Womblys
https://youtube.com/watch?v=3MFAYHrtuHs
https://nerdfighteria.info/v/3MFAYHrtuHs

Hello and welcome to Hankgames without Hank. My name is John Green; I'm the manager of the AFC Wimbledon Wimbly Womblys. Currently, top of League 1, equal in points to Sheffield United, who we just beat in the Johnstone's Paint Trophy contest. Ugh, they're Kennedy also has a terrible haircut; maybe it's a Kennedy thing. Anyway, there's our beautiful captain, Other John Green with his beautiful mop of red hair.

Today I'm gonna talk about reality television programming, something I know a lot about, not really, but I'm gonna do my best. I haven't seen most of the reality television programs that the young people watch, but I have seen a fair bit of Swamp People. Um, I am completely fascinated by reality TV, though, and more generally by the- oh, it's our old friend, Scott McBeanie- more generally by the kind of proliferation of content. There you see it; we're top of the league.

(singing) We're top of the league! AFC Wimbledon, we're top of the league!

Worrisomely, the franchise is in fifth, which means they're in playoff position, but yeah. We'll see how it all, how it all falls apart. Oh, boy. So, um, I, you know, I was, because I am old, I was part of the original reality TV movement, I guess. Like, I watched the first, uh, season of Survivor, which occurred before many of you were even born. And I remember, uh, ugh! Oh, why did you go from way outside like that, John Green? Because I hit the wrong button, that's why.

Um, I remember the first year of American Idol, when Clay was taking on that other one, um, Kelly Clarkson, and then they starred in Beach Blanket Bingo together. Those are different seasons. Clay- Justin Guarini and Kelly Clarkson! How did Clay- how did Justin Guarini not end up with a good career and Kelly Clarkson ended up being Kelly Clarkson? Ugh. How did that even hap- Seb Brown! Might've been Glédson. Think it was Glédson. Fantastic save. Really a bute. Um, I think that might be us again. But yeah, and I remember at the time being incredibly excited about it, actually, because it seemed like a very new kind of content.

Now, of course, in retrospect, it actually isn't. Um, you know, they've been having, it's an extension of the game show in a lot of ways, right? It's a different kind of, um, you know, there used to be this show back in the 50's called "Queen for a Day", in which, uh, three different women would tell their sob stories of their horrible lives and then the audience would vote on who has the horriblest life. And the person with the horriblest life would a, um, a washing machine. That's a completely true thing. That was on television. And it was very popular. Queen for a Day. About people with terrible lives. Who got to be queen, but only for one day. Um, which reminds me of that song (singing) 'We could be heroes'. (spoken) I did such a bad job portraying the melody of that song that you guys probably don't even know what song I am referring to. Not my best work.

Speaking of not my best work, off to a slow start here for the AFC Wimbledon's, um, Wimbly Womblys. Ugh, God, this is not good! But I'm, um, I remember thinking that this is different, this is new, this is fresh, and this is a cheaper way, um, to make entertaining content, and it's gonna lead to lots more shows, because lots more cable companies will be able to afford to make TV shows, and run original content, and then in turn there will be ever-more networks, and isn't that cool. That's what I remember thinking. And, I mean, in some ways that has come to pass, but what I never foresaw back then, you know, this was like 2000... what, was that like 2002? 2003?

What I never foresaw then, or maybe a little later, was online video. I never imagined a world of online video. There were also, I should add, like these courtroom, these faux/real courtroom dramas. I mean, the weirdest thing about reality television, of course, is that it isn't reality. Um, everybody knows that, right, I mean that's like the- Oh, come on! He got the ball stolen from him! This is ridiculous! We've had 72 breakaways so far. Oh, man. Um, but yeah, so it's not reality.

I mean, there are writers on reality TV shows, and there are so many conventions to the genre now that when you watch them, you can tell that the drama is manufactured, at least most of the time. You know, like, and I'm not just talking about Keeping Up with the Kardashians, I mean, you can tell that the drama is manufactured on Swamp People. They're like, "Oh, we've gotta get this big one!" There's this other, you know, like last season, there was this gator that was the Biggest Gator of All Time, and people were trying to get it for 30 years, and then we got it, and that narrative arc has been solved. But no, there is an even larger gator that people have been trying to get for even longer! And then that narrative arc has to be solved in the next season.

Um, you know, it's also the case on Deadliest Catch, you know, where they have to, they kind of have to invent stakes. The first season of Deadliest Catch, which is a show about crab fishing, the first season was back in the days when there actually was quite a lot of stake, because there was no quota system. You just, um, you caught fish until the wild, you caught crab until the wild, you know, the government authorities decided that the season was over. Sometimes the season would only last 24 hours because there would be so many people out there trying to catch the crab to get to the quota.

But now, you have a quota, so you just catch your quota, and then you catch it if it takes a day or if it takes a month. And there are small stakes, there are stakes involved because, obviously, it's more expensive to, you know, run a boat for a month than it is to run a boat for a day, but they're very different from the stakes in the very first season of Deadliest Catch, where, like, you know, millions and millions of dollars were at stake. So, I find that, um, yeah, so I- OH! Awww. Almost stole the ball from the goal keeper and was able to run it in. But Glédson, Glédson's there.

Um, so yeah, I mean, it's not just... People always say, like, oh, it's Keeping Up with the Kardashians or Rich Kids of Beverly Hills, like you can tell that those shows are fake. Well of course they're fake. Yes, they are definitely fake, but so is, so is any reality television show. I mean, they're there even earlier in the world of The Real World, you know, the first couple seasons of The Real World were, to me at least, very narratively interesting, because what they did was they brought very different people together who were talented in their fields, and promising, but who had very different lives, and maybe very different values, and asked them to have big conversations about things like, um, the rights of gay people and how we were gonna deal with, um, with HIV/AIDS, and, um, and then it just became a show about, like, essentially about partying.

Um... but even in the first couple seasons it was manufactured in the sense that they were manufacturing drama by putting people who don't agree with each other together, people who aren't gonna like each other together. That said, um, oh! It was a better kind of drama; to me at least, it was a more interesting, more socially constructive drama. I feel like the stakes now have become purely- I'm gonna need Glédson-um, the stakes now have become purely inauthentic. You know, they've become purely hypothetical, and it's become entirely distraction, not engagement.

Um, that said, I find the Kardashians very likeable and very interesting to watch, in the same way that, like, why do I like Hannah Hart's videos? Well, part of it is that, you know, she makes really good videos, and they're on interesting topics, and she has interesting things to say. Part of it is that I like Hannah. I just find her to be an appealing personality. Now, the Kardashians is like

that, without the interesting videos and commentary and community. Or, at least, I don't know. I don't feel like there's much of a viewing community. Like people, I think very few people in the world, if you asked them to say ten things about themselves, very few people in the world would say, "Well, I'm a Kardashians fan."

So, like, they have many more viewers than Hannah Hart, but there's probably 10,000 people in the world who, if you asked them to name the stuff about them that's really core to them, who'd say, "Well, I'm a big fan of YouTubers like Hannah Hart," Um, and that, to me, is why Hannah Hart is finally much more influential than anyone who's on a reality TV show these days, because those shows are mostly driven, um, not by, like, deep, deep identity or deep relationships but by, um, it's kind of an appealingness distraction/a sort of schadenfreudic joy in the weirdness of, you know, The Real Housewives of Orange County, or whatever.

Um, and I find that, I find that, I guess, a little troubling. I feel like, as always happens, like the genre didn't live up to its possibilities. It could have been, oh my God we're so bad at defense, it could have been something that in the end it kind of failed to be. My God, if they scored here I truly deserve it. I don't know what to say. Oh, ugh. I don't even know where my guy is! Dang it! I was moving the wrong guy. That was the worst defense I've ever seen in a Wimbly Wombly game. I mean why did those guys, why did he back off so much? Ugh, I'm so sorry guys. That's now who I am as a person. This is terrible.

Um, so this is a reality television program in a lot of ways, right? Or when I was initially conceiving it, I thought of it as a kind of a response to reality TV, like, how do we make something that's clearly fictional also real? How do we make characters that don't exist that can still be characters? It's reality in the sense that I don't know what's going to happen, it unscripted, right? I can't script the, OH MY GOSH!, oh he was offside. I almost gave up two goals there. I can't script the events in the game because I don't who's going to win or lose. Like I would not have thought we would lose to Barnsley for instance. Um, but also can it be a way to do interesting, like, genuinely interesting stuff?

So like my, you know, I thought the weakness of the Swoodilypoopers at least for me, as a creator, where I enjoyed was in creating the characters and creating this narrative and collaborating on the narrative with you guys because you're participating in it by coming up with character names and by coming up with songs and by your comments and by giving my advice on how to be less crappy at FIFA and everything else that you do. And that I was able to create a world that I cared about and liked that was fiction and we could still be invested in.

The weakness in it for me was that we didn't do anything with that, which now we do hopefully, at least. Look at that Kennedy! He has the same thing that other Kennedy has - the weird Mr. Buns thing. Uh, it's a disappointing loss for the Wimbly Womblys. I'm a little bit horrified by how I played in general but I was taking about, stop showing me their Kennedy, it's making me sad, I was talking about reality television, which is so important to me. Anyway, we get to do something which is that together, every time you watch this, it helps AFC Wimbledon, a real club owned by its fans, just a little bit. And I think that's awesome. So, thank you for watching. I'm sorry about the hideous, hideous performance, it's a great embarrassment. I'm going to give the boys a good shellacking when we get to the locker room. Best wishes.