



2012

# THE MISMANAGEMENT OF MARITAL DISCLOSURES IN THE REAL HOUSEWIVES OF BEVERLY HILLS

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THE MISMANAGEMENT  
OF MARITAL DISCLOSURES IN  
THE REAL HOUSEWIVES OF BEVERLY HILLS

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THESIS

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the  
College of Communication and Information Studies  
at the University of Kentucky

By

Randi Cariella Campbell

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Deanna Sellnow, Associate Professor of Communication

Lexington, Kentucky

2011

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## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

### THE MISMANAGEMENT OF MARITAL DISCLOSURES IN THE REAL HOUSEWIVES OF BEVERLY HILLS

Reality television is unique from other television programming because its format is less scripted than typical entertainment television programs, but not as candid as documentary style shows. Aspects of cast members' private lives are publicly aired as "real." The consequences for airing one's private life in the public sphere are unclear. This may be especially important to study when the private disclosures reveal activities that may be unethical, immoral, illegal, or abusive. Petronio's (date) communication privacy management theory was used to examine the marital disclosures that occurred between Taylor and Russell Armstrong, cast members of the reality television show *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. Two seasons of the show were analyzed and coded according to the five suppositions of CPM. Results revealed several aspects of Walker's cycle of violence theory being played out in the public sphere without consequence. Additionally, co-ownership of information appeared to constitute a license to gossip freely about private disclosures shared in confidence between certain individuals with any and all other cast members.

KEYWORDS: Communication Privacy Management, Reality Television,  
Marriage, Abuse, Disclosure

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April 30, 2012

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*To Little Clinton*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First and foremost, I would like to thank my wonderful committee members for their continued patience, support, and guidance. Dr. Deanna Sellnow, Dr. Tim Sellnow, and Dr. Michael Arrington without you none of this would be possible and I thank you for all the help you provided me along the way. I am so appreciative of the ways you have challenged me and helped me to grow throughout this process. I would like to thank Deanna especially for all of the support and encouragement you have given me since undergrad. If you had not encouraged me to pursue communications and graduate school, I would not be here. I am so thankful for the ways you have invested in me and looked after me throughout my time at UK. I cannot begin to express my appreciation and respect for you.

Secondly, I would like to thank my UK family for the help and guidance they provided me. Specifically, Renee Kaufmann, my mentor and one of my best friends. I think back to our first coffee date at Starbucks and am so thankful the two of us were placed together. From our coffee runs, to co-teaching together, to theories of learning, I feel so blessed to get to walk through this program with you. Holly and Morgan, it has been a pleasure to battle through this program together. We have laughed and cried, sometime simultaneously, but the end is in sight and I fear it is too soon. I have so enjoyed our time here together.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my wonderful family for their emotional and financial support, which they have provided me with my entire life, it is because of you that I am here today. Thank you Mom for always

loving and sacrificing for me. You have always told me I could do whatever I put my mind to and your belief in me has been so important to me throughout the years. Dad, thank you for pushing me to do this and believing I would survive. I have enjoyed being able to vent to you about school and for your steady and encouraging response. To Little Clinton, thank you for your patience with me these past two years (or maybe I should say four) as I have complained and cried to you about my graduate work. I love you and appreciate you more than I can say. I cannot wait to be your wife and start our adventure together. I want to thank my roommates for letting me dominate the living room and subject them to endless hours of *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. I have enjoyed doing life with you girls. Angie, thank you for keeping me sane and for reminding me of the bigger picture. I am so thankful for you and your sweet family. What a strong, beautiful picture of Christ. Thank you again to each and every one of you! I love you so much!



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THE MISMANGEMENT  
OF MARITAL DISCLOSURES IN  
THE REAL HOUSEWIVES OF BEVERLY HILLS

**Chapter One: Introduction/Rationale**

Though we are all of us are managers of private information, most of us do not have to worry about publicly attempting to manage personal information about our lives. However, cast members of reality television programs subject themselves to the possibility of having to negotiate private information on every episode. The purpose of this study is to examine how private information is managed on reality TV in order to determine the potential implications for the viewer for moving one's backstage into the public arena.

This chapter focuses specifically on the issue at hand and the rationale for conducting this study. After discussing what reality television and how it functions with regard to communication privacy management, Goffman's work concerning performances is explained as a foundation for this study. This chapter concludes with a brief discussion about the television series *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*, which is the subject of this investigation.

**Problem and Rationale**

"The repetitive 'lessons' we learn from television, beginning with infancy, can become the basis for a broader world view, making television a significant source of general values, ideologies, and perspectives, as well as specific beliefs" (Morgan, Shanahan, & Signorielli, 2009, p. 39). Because television has the power to influence our attitudes, beliefs, and values about the world around

us, it is important to understand what messages television programming may be cultivating in the minds of its viewers. However, the relationship between viewer and television programming is not one-way. As Auster and Quart (1988) maintained, “television [also] reflects social beliefs and behaviors” (p. 147). Therefore, it is important to examine the messages that are conveyed in television programming because such messages have the potential to not only reflect social beliefs and behaviors, but also to influence audience members’ understanding of the world around them.

**Reality Television.** One genre that should be investigated further is reality television. For the sake of this study, reality television exists some where between scripted television and documentary style television. With reality television, cameras follow around members of the show, but may or may not catch purely candid moments. The final product of these captured moments maybe be heavily edited and pieced together. Despite the complications of this type of television programming, I argue that media heavily influences its consumers. Whether consciously or unconsciously, there is the potential for viewers to be influenced by media messages because such exposure does not occur in a vacuum. Viewers cannot pick and choose which aspects of media by which they desire to be influenced.

The increasing number and popularity of reality television programs is enough to warrant an examination of what messages are being communicated. As Hall (2009) argued, “the size of their audience base gives these shows the potential to affect a larger numbers of viewers and the money they bring in

means they represent a model that networks seek to reproduce” (p. 529). Even though Hall (2009) found that the “outlandish” characters and situations that occur on reality programming may serve as a form of “conversational currency” among viewers of these shows (p. 527), he also concluded that “one of the things viewers feel they may be able to pick up from the shows is a better understanding of human nature and behavior” (p 528). Whether viewers realize it or not, they are learning about how life “ought to be” at least according to the examples depicted through reality television.

Additionally, Nabi (2007) discovered that audiences tune in to watch these reality programs because they “like to watch interpersonal interactions and because they are curious about other people’s lives” (p. 324). Much of this curiosity may be linked to Hall’s (2009) claims concerning viewers’ ability to learn about life from reality television. This “curiosity” could be the desire for viewers to better understand how to interact in the world around them. Thus, this voyeuristic appeal of reality television may serve two purposes: to inform its viewers about how to interact and understand the world around them, as well as serving to entertain.

Another concern about the beliefs these reality programs cultivate rests in their ability to include outrageous behavior when compared to other television programming. Reality television “lacks a clear-cut antisocial or immoral dimension like pornography, television violence, or death metal music, so that, unlike these controversial topics, reality programming has elicited no calls for censorship, escaping the scrutiny of crusaders and Congress alike” (Leone, Peek

& Bissell, 2006, p. 254). Because reality television is not held to the same standards that other television entertainment is, much of the content in these reality television shows tends to be shocking or inappropriate. Further, Leone et al. (2006) found that “respondents may well recognize reality television as a guilty pleasure and, as such, would find it hard to admit impact on the self, but that does not keep them from perceiving negative effects on target groups” (p. 265). Even though viewers may be able to recognize that reality television could have a harmful impact on its viewers, most audience members believe other viewers are more at risk than they are. This tendency for audience members to deflect negative consequences on to others and believe they are immune from the adverse affects of reality television is potentially problematic.

**Goffman’s Performance.** Innate in reality television is the notion that one’s backstage is brought to the front stage. Goffman (1959) defined the back stage as “all the places where the camera is not focused at the moment or all the places out of range of ‘live’ microphones” (p. 121). Reality television is thought to give the audience access to those formally off-limit places in people’s lives. One way this can be observed in reality television is through the confession-style time each performer to reflect on a situation. These moments reflect what Goffman described as the “wonderful putting on and taking off of character” (p. 121). Goffman articulated the distinct differences between the front and backstage. “The backstage language consists of reciprocal first-naming, co-operative decision-making, profanity, open sexual remarks, elaborate griping, smoking, rough informal dress, “sloppy” sitting and standing posture...” (p. 128). The front

stage is void of such behaviors. Goffman recognized that “individuals can transform any region into a backstage” simply by behaving as they would in the backstage

(p. 128). Reality television is able to capture the private realm of cast members lives by capturing their backstage behavior.

According to Goffman (1959), “when an individual appears before others he [*sic*] will have many motives for trying to control the impression they receive from the situation” (p. 15). Goffman conceptualized the way that people try to manipulate people’s impression others have on them is largely through “stage management” (p. 15). A performance, then, is “all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers” (p. 22). Goffman argued, “an idealized impression is offered by accentuating certain facts and concealing others; expressive coherence is maintained by the performer taking care to guard against minor disharmonies” (p. 65).

*Audience segregation* occurs when the performer “ensures that those before whom he [*sic*] plays one of his parts will not be the same individuals before whom he plays a different part in another setting” (p. 49). There is much a performer must be careful of when he or she is before an audience. These include physical errors (e.g., tripping), appearing too concerned or not concerned enough with what the audience sees, and poor performance due to lack of direction (Goffman, 1959, p. 52).

However, many of the performances viewed on reality television do not revolve around one individual's life, but the interactions of several people. Individuals, then, serve as a team offering a performance to the audience. These individuals serve as a team performing for a larger audience and "any member of the team has the power to give the show away or to disrupt it by inappropriate conduct" (p.82).

Goffman (1959) maintained that a potential threat to the performance is the possibility of not having one's secrets kept. The first type of secret is a *dark secret*. A dark secret consists of information that the performers are aware of, but are expected to keep private in order to maintain the image the team wishes to project. Goffman suggests that dark secrets are "double secrets" because it is necessary to hide the information from the audience, as well as, to hide the fact that there is anything to hide (p. 141). *Strategic secrets*, on the other hand, are secrets that team members keep in order to manipulate audience understanding of the show. An *inside secret* is where one's sheer knowledge of the inner workings of performance designates him or her as a group member. These are the types of secrets that distinguish the in-group from the out-group. *Entrusted secrets* are secrets that one was entrusted to keep because of one's relationship to the performer or the team. Lastly, a *free secret* is "somebody else's secret known to oneself that one could disclose without discrediting the image one was presenting of oneself" (Goffman, 1959, p. 143). These secrets can be discovered, revealed accidentally, or subtly disclosed. Goffman notes at times information can be "well-kept dark secrets or negatively-valued characteristics



that everyone can see but no one refers to. When such facts are introduced, embarrassment is usually the result” (p. 209).

Whether individual or team, performers seek to manage the impression they give by “[cooperating] to present to an audience a given definition of the situation” (Goffman, 1959, p. 238). However, “sometimes disruptions occur through unmeant gestures, faux pas, and scenes thus discrediting or contradicting the definition of the situation that is being maintained” (p. 239). Arguably, many of these “disruptions” might be associated with the mismanagement of private information. “Disclosure of different types of secrets can threaten a performance in different ways” (Goffman, 1959, p. 141). Reality television entails the revealing of the backstage to the audience where the viewer is able to see how private information is managed and what front stage issues occur secrets are publicly revealed. Goffman (1959) maintained that confidants are typically located outside the performance or in the backstage regions of the show. “Confidants are persons to whom the performer confesses his [sic] sins, freely detailing the sense in which the impression given during the performance was merely an impression” (Goffman, 1959, p. 159).

**The Real Housewives.** This current research study addresses the call by Lundy, Ruth, & Park (2007) that future research should investigate its [reality television's] influence on decision making, perceptions of reality, reactions toward specific programs and program content...Because RT can be considered a popular cultural phenomenon, future research in this area can significantly contribute to

the growing and diverse field of cultural studies by uncovering how different audiences, in this case young adults, receive, interpret, and consume cultural texts. (p. 217) Specifically, this study examines the Consume cultural texts (p. 217).

Specifically, this study examines the ways the axioms of communication privacy management theory are displayed through the marital disclosures depicted on Bravo's *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills* series in hopes of understanding how these beliefs are developed and reinforced in real life.

*The Real Housewives of Orange County* was the original installation of the Bravo's series first airing in March of 2006. These shows document the lives of wealthy housewives. While these women lead lives of luxury, money cannot protect against some of the trouble life may bring. For example, for Gunvalson, the only housewife to appear on all seasons of the show in the Orange County installment, the show has served to document the decline of her marriage. In season four while looking to purchase a yacht worth a million dollars, Gunvalson's then husband asks, "When is it ever enough?" Gunvalson responds, "It's never enough." Much of season four for Gunvalson revolves around her deteriorating relationship with her husband. In April of 2011, Gunvalson confirmed that she and her husband decided to divorce. Orange County is one of seven locations to be featured for the Bravo network. The other installations of the show include New Jersey, Washington D.C., Atlanta, New York, Miami, and Beverly Hills.

The sixth and final installment of the Bravo series is *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*, which first aired in October of 2010. This show currently follows the lives of Adrienne Maloof, Kim Richards, Kyle Richards, Camille Grammer, Lisa Vanderpump, and Taylor Armstrong. The NBC media center reported “*The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills* sets records with total viewers and attracts 3.7 million in combined prime telecasts” (Anderson, 2011). The show was renewed for a second season; however, the network decided to edit the episodes after the suicide of Armstrong’s husband in August of 2011. A *USA Today* article reported that Bravo has chosen to “lessen Russell’s presence” in the second season to ensure the episodes are “responsible and respectful of the situation” (Mandell, 2011). *USA Today* reports the second season premier “will still feature Taylor revealing that she and Russell had begun counseling, but Bravo cut a scene in which Taylor goes lingerie shopping to ‘spice up’ her marriage” (Mandell, 2011). Armstrong had announced her separation from her husband in July. Despite Armstrong’s work for victims of domestic violence, she disclosed on the show that she had been physically abused during her marriage. The show has also documented the divorce of Camille Grammer from her husband, Kelsey, after he left her for an airline stewardess.

## **Organization**

This study is organized into five chapters. This first chapter introduces the problem and rationale for the study. Chapter Two serves as a review of the relevant literature concerning Petronio’s communication privacy management theory and Walker’s cycle of violence theory. Chapter Two concludes by posing

the research questions arising from the literature. Chapter Three articulates why and how textual analysis was used as the methodology for this analysis. Chapter

Four addresses the findings in relation to each research question posed in

Chapter Two. Finally, chapter five includes the discussion of the relevant findings, suggests future research, and addresses the limitations of this study.

## **Chapter Two: Review of Literature**

The popularity of Bravo's *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills* coupled with the aforementioned tragic events that occurred during the filming of it highlights the need to understand the potential implications of making backstage life events public on reality TV. Access to the backstage of these women's lives provides an opportunity to examine how private information is negotiated, and to better understand what can happen when privacy rules are violated. This chapter reviews the main tenets of Petronio's (2002) communication privacy management theory illustrates how individuals manage backstage information. The second portion of this chapter focuses on Walker's (1979) cycle of violence theory as it explains domestic abuse in relationships since such topics are often discussed in the series.

### **Communication Privacy Management Theory**

Communication privacy management theory focuses on the ways in which people choose to disclose and reveal private information. Petronio (2004) developed the theory after discovering limitations that exist in disclosure theory. The primary focus of the theory is not on disclosing information about one's self, but about "private information" that we may or may not disclose about ourselves or others (p. 195). Petronio explained "to examine the fundamental meaning of disclosure we had to uncouple the process from the content in an identifiable way and then join them together again in a coherent framework" (p. 195). The relationship between private information and disclosure can be defined as a dialectical tension. Five primary maxims form the basis of communication privacy

management. They are (a) conceptualization of private information, (b) privacy boundaries, (c) co-ownership of information, (d) rule-based system of management, and (e) privacy management dialectics (Petronio, 2002, p. 3).

The first maxim of communication privacy management (CPM) addressed the way private information is conceptualized. Private information consists of facts, opinions, and attitudes that are known to the self but not to others. According to CPM, private information is not merely the informational content, but also the process of disclosing or withholding that information with others. Serewicz and Petronio (2007) stated that “defining disclosure as the sharing of private information separates the process of disclosing information from the process of developing intimacy with another person” (p. 259). The authors argued that disclosing private information has the potential to increase intimacy; disclosure does not automatically insure increased intimacy (2007, p. 259). Essentially, there is an assumed ownership of information. If one owns his or her private information, they also have the right to control it (Petronio & Durham, 2008). Though there are times that the information we have control over is private information about ourselves, there are also times where we are not the sole owners of information. This “CPM uses the metaphor of boundaries to illustrate that, although there may be a flow of private information to others, borders mark ownership lines so control issues are easily understood” (Petronio, 2002, p. 3).

The second maxim of privacy management theory is the concept of shared boundaries. Petronio (2002) argued that once information has been

disclosed, the nature of that information is altered. By sharing private information, the primary owner of that information has allowed another to be a co-owner of that information. Petronio and Durham (2008) also termed the role of the new individual in this process as a “shareholder of the information” (p. 314). “Because shared privacy boundaries make the calculus for boundary regulation more complex,” Petronio (2002) proposed three boundary coordination operations “that people use to synchronize regulating mutually held private information” (p. 3). Petronio and Durham (2008) argued that once private information has been disclosed, “all involved parties become responsible for co-owning and comanaging the information” (p. 314). In order for this course of action to be smooth and profitable for relationships, there are three processes involved in the coordination of boundaries.

The first process is the regulation of boundary linkages. These linkages connect the discloser to those to whom he or she discloses private information. One can choose to link himself or herself to another person by intentionally disclosing private information to that person. Additionally, one can unintentionally have private information revealed to him or her (Petronio, 2002).

The second process is the concept of boundary ownership. This refers to the “rights, privileges, and the amount of responsibility for co-owners of private information” (Petronio & Durham, 2008, p. 315). This is why the disclosing of private information is often accompanied with explicit expectations about how that information is to be managed. When the expectation of how to handle private

information is not clearly communicated, an expectation is likely to be violated. This violation will make it difficult to maintain a smooth boundary. Petronio and Durham (2008) synthesized this point when they stated, “when the parties involved are intentionally privileged and they negotiate rules (i.e., when they actually talk about their expectations), the rules they use to manage privacy allow for efficient and effective regulation of the information with fewer complications” (p. 315).

The final process of boundary coordination is the concept of boundary permeability. “As access to private information increases, boundaries become more permeable” (Petronio & Durham, 2008, p. 315). Petronio (2002) used the imagery of thickness and thinness to express the level of openness, or permeability, associated with a boundary. A thinner boundary allows private information to be more easily accessible, however, a thick boundary corresponds to less ability to gain private information.

Communication privacy management theory posits three ways to manage these boundaries. The first is disproportionately. This is when one individual discloses a higher level of private information than the person to which he or she is disclosing. Petronio and Durham (2008) pointed out “when one person tells a great deal and the others tell very little, a power differential may occur” (p. 315). Petronio and Durham (2008) provide the example of a patient revealing personal information to a healthcare provider. Another form of boundary management is intersected. This means that each person co-manages the information in equal ways. The final form of boundary management is unified, where all members are



“responsible for jointly held information” (Petronio & Durham, 2008, p. 316).

Petronio (2002) determined that this type of boundary is most commonly found in families because private information has the potential to impact the group just as much as the individual.

Boundary turbulence is the term used to exemplify the mismanagement of private information by the shareholders. Often this mismanagement is due to “incongruent expectations, misunderstandings of privacy parameters, or access rules” (Petronio & Durham, 2008, p. 316). Additionally, the researchers noted that examining this type of turbulence is a useful way to better understand the imbalance that can occur in relationships. Petronio (2002) proposed six criteria that can result in boundary turbulence. People may (a) violate rules intentionally, (b) make mistakes following rules, or (c) experience uncertainty about ownership due to fuzzy boundaries. In addition, (d) boundary co-owners may have different orientations in the ways they generally handle privacy and (e) boundary definition predicaments may occur when people treat public space as private space or have their privacy boundaries redefined (as when a person becomes famous). Finally, (f) people may experience privacy dilemmas when they are forced to make unappealing choices to deal with private information they know about another person.

The fourth maxim is the co-ownership of information. Petronio addressed control of private information for two reasons. “One, people believe that private information is *owned* or *co-owned* with others; thus, they desire control over the boundaries. Two, revealing or concealing private information may lead to feeling

vulnerable” (Petronio, 2002, p. 3). Therefore, the control of information is how one combats vulnerability. Petronio noted that “we equate preserving privacy with maintain personal dignity and autonomy and with safeguarding the self” (p. 9). Individuals want to be in control of the information others know about them. Feeling violated can occur when someone learns something about us that we did not want him or her to know (Petronio, 2002). We manage information along personal and collective boundary lines. “We erect boundaries around the private information to mark the lines of ownership and control” (Petronio, 2002, p. 10).

Petronio and Durham (2008) discussed how this concept of managing private information lends itself to privacy rules that help organize and explain the choices we make in revealing and disclosing private information. Petronio (2002) suggested different criteria that these rules for privacy were formed. One criterion is culture. Petronio and Durham (2008) explained, “privacy often has a particular value in a society, ethnicity, or group” (p. 312). Another criterion used in the forging of these rules is gender. Petronio (2002) argued in earlier research, “like culture, gender has the potential to influence the way men and women define the nature of their privacy” (p. 42). Motivation to reveal or conceal information serves as another criterion for the development of privacy rules. Petronio and Durham discussed how contextual criterion influences the development of one’s privacy rules. “Finally, people calculate risks against benefits to judge whether they should keep something private or reveal the information completely or partially” (Petronio & Durham, 2008, p. 312).

Petronio (2002) argued that privacy rules are developed and acquired through socialization. Privacy rules can be informally learned or explicitly stated. Privacy rules can be altered to fit our experiences. Privacy rules that become routine can be attributed one's satisfaction of employing such rules. Additionally, if one finds his or her privacy rules are not working well, that person might change the rules to ensure greater satisfaction in the management of his or her information (Petronio & Durham, 2008, p. 313).

Petronio and Durham (2008) illustrated the final maxim, dialectical tension of disclosure, by discussing that "when people disclose, they manage a friction- a push and pull- of revealing or concealing private information" (p. 311). "The simultaneous nature of wanting to tell and also wanting to conceal makes CPM theory necessary to understand how people navigate privacy" (Petronio & Durham, 2008, p. 311). Therefore, it is possible for privacy and disclosure to occur simultaneously. Serewicz and Petronio (2007) maintained, "Even when people disclose, they never tell all that is private to them because limiting information that others know is one way people retain autonomy" (p. 258). After all, Petronio (2000) argued, "revealing private information is never a straightforward decision...we try to weigh the demands of the situation with our needs and those of others around us" (p. 1).

**Disclosure.** When it comes to disclosure, there are finer elements that contribute to the suppositions of communication privacy management theory. This section discusses the following elements of disclosure: (a) motivation for

disclosure, (b) gossip as disclosure, (c) secrets, (d) types of disclosure and (e) types of confidants.

**Motivation.** Derlega, Winstead, and Folk-Barron (2000) categorized motivations for disclosure into three groups: self-focused, other-focused, and relationship-focused. Self-focused disclosure can be therapeutic or provide the opportunity for the individual to seek social support by disclosing such information. Other-focused disclosure was motivated by a sense of duty or obligation because the recipient of the disclosed information was involved in some fashion. Relationship-focused motivation involves wanting to improve the quality or status of the relationship. Venetis, Greene, Banerjee, and Bagdasarov (2008) found that relationship-focused motivation was the largest factor that prompted individuals to disclose information to another. However, the researchers also noted some motivations for disclosure were dependent on the type of relationship in which the information would be disclosed. "It appears that disclosure to friends may serve a different communicative function than disclosure to parents or dating partners" (Venetis et al., 2008, p. 28).

**Secrecy.** "Secrecy involves actively hiding private information from others" (Kelly, 1999, p. 106). Kelly (1999) asserted that most individuals keep secrets to avoid being perceived in a negative light. Venetis et al. (2008) posited "to those who want to conceal their actions or attitudes, exposure of information could have perceived negative consequences while the same information relevant to another individual may be private or general knowledge" (p. 5). Petronio and

Bantz (1991) discovered that when disclosing secret information, individuals often preface such information with a prior restraint phrase (PRP). “You can’t say anything to anyone, but...” or “I promised I wouldn’t tell, but...” are examples of prior restraint phrases that can help “function as needed insurance by marking potential vulnerability...by signaling the discloser’s concern or ramifications” (Petronio & Bantz, 1991, p. 267). Prefacing information in this way serves as a privacy rule that one is expected to adhere to in order to receive the secret information. However, Venetis et al. (2008) cautioned that the content of the disclosure does not determine whether the disclosure could be categorized as private information or a secret.

**Types of disclosure.** Eder and Enke (1991) defined gossip as “evaluative talk about a person who is not present” (p. 494). Gossip can be broken down into the target of gossip and the evaluation of that target (p. 497). They argued that gossip plays an important role in establishing social expectations and norms (p. 495). They divided gossip into two categories. Positive gossip is used to help the gossiper be seen as more likeable. Whereas, negative gossip focuses on portraying someone not physically present in a negative light (p. 263). Additionally, the researchers note that gossip can function as a power move or to create “alliances” (p. 263). However, as Turner, Mazur, Wendell, and Winslow (2003) noted regardless of the potential for positive or negative outcome, gossip is still largely viewed as a weapon. Thornborrow and Morris (2004) examined the British installment of the reality television show *Big Brother* for instances of gossip. The authors found in their sample that gossip usually was

initiated with a question or an observation. “But for gossip talk to develop, the recipient(s) must display an alignment with the gossiper by taking up the affiliative stance in relation to the potential gossip” (p. 253). The researchers argued that engaging in gossip made the contestants “appear likable and attractive to both their housemates and to the public” (p. 263).

**Types of confidants.** Petronio (2002) argued that there are three aspects of a confidant. “These include the degree to which a disclosure is (a) solicited or unsolicited, (b) expected or unexpected, (c) desired or undesired” (p. 111). Based upon the previous criterion, Petronio categorized confidants into three categories: deliberate confidants, inferential confidants, and reluctant confidants. The defining characteristic of a deliberate confidant is that they solicit access to private information (Petronio, 2002). “In this case, the deliberate confidant may force the linkage with someone else, insisting on a certain degree of boundary permeability” (Petronio, 2002, p. 111). Dindia (2000) argued that those who solicit private information might rely on the notion of reciprocity, but “self-disclosure does not appear to be reciprocal on a turn-by turn basis...it appears that it is appropriate to reciprocate self-disclosure within the same conversation” (p. 29). One example of this type of confidant is a psychiatrist or medical doctor.

For inferential confidants, Petronio (2002) asserted, “Disclosure is expected because it is fundamental to the relational dimension” (p. 111). This could involve the active pursuit of requesting access to another’s private information. Petronio also noted, however, that while one might be aware that

they could serve as an inferential confidant to someone, it does not mean that he or she is actively seek such disclosures. “Sometimes the confidant receives disclosures without asking, yet understands that this role is part of his or her relationship with the discloser” (Petronio, 2002, p. 111).

The context of the established relationship can complicate one’s response to such a disclosure. The one who discloses can choose to disclose private information explicitly or implicitly. Explicit disclosure limits the targets freedom of response, though it can be helpful for meeting the discloser’s expectations for the interaction (Petronio, 2002). There can be much stress associated with how a target responds to an implicit disclosure. Timing may also be a challenging aspect of being an inferential confidant as someone might say the right thing at the wrong time (Petronio, 2002).

Petronio (2002) discussed that when one chooses a target to disclose private information to, that target may not be a willing participant. This often occurs when the target is not expecting a disclosure to take place. Petronio posited that one thing that makes the situation uncomfortable for the target is that he or she is usually “unsuspecting” (p. 117). Petronio conceptualized the reluctant confidant as one who “hears in-depth personal disclosures of experiences when they have not asked for the information” (p. 118). However, Petronio conceptualized the reluctant as a stranger with no established relationship and whom no further interactions would likely occur.

“Being a confidant involuntarily means that individual’s boundaries have been linked either without consent or unwillingly” (Petronio, 2002, p. 112). This

creates conflict because one might not be prepared or willing to manage the consequences of a disclosure. This can also be problematic when it comes to establishing or managing the privacy rules with the discloser (Petronio, 2002, p. 112). This conflict can have negative consequences for both the target and the discloser. Rose (1984) found that violating one's expectations of disclosure often resulted in the relationship coming to an end. Further, Zhang and Merolla (2006) reported that these types of disclosures could negatively impact the relationship with respect to satisfaction, closeness, and stability. However, McBride and Bergen (2008) proposed that individuals might reconceptualize such unwanted, or "shocking," to reduce cognitive dissonance that accompanies receiving negative information from a friend (p. 35).

### **Cycle of Violence Theory**

Walker's (1979) cycle of violence theory articulated the phases in which abusive romantic relationships progressed. This section will discuss the myths associated with domestic abuse, as well as, the characteristics of abusive males and abuse women. Finally, this section will outline the cycle of violence theory.

**Myths and characteristics.** Walker's (1979) cycle of violence theory focused on female victims of domestic abuse. Walker defined a battered woman as encompassing both, the physical and psychological harm inflicted upon the woman. A battered woman is a woman who is repeatedly subjected to any

forceful physically or psychological behavior by a man in order to coerce her to do something he wants her to do without any concern for her rights...Furthermore, in order to be classified as a battered



woman, the couple must go through the battering cycle at least twice. Any woman may find herself in an abusive situation with a man once. If it occurs a second time, and she remains in the situation, she is defined as a battered woman” (Walker, 1979, xv).

Walker addressed many of the myths surrounding women of domestic abuse. Particularly relevant to this study are the myths that battered woman syndrome only affects a small portion of the overall population, middle class women are not victims of violence, the batterer is not a loving partner, and battered women can always leave home. Walker noted that women who belong to middle and upper class society “

do not want to make their batterings public. They fear social embarrassment and harming their husbands’ careers. Many also believe that the respect in which their husbands are held in the community will cast doubt on the credibility of their battering stories (Walker, 1979, p. 22).

Walker refuted the myth that males who are batterers are not loving partners. Rather, it is the loving behavior displayed by batterers that keeps their partners from leaving. Walker also argued that a woman that is a victim of domestic abuse is unable to leave her abusive partner without assistance from others, mostly due to psychological abuse that keeps the woman from thinking she can leave.

Based on Walker’s research interviews with female victims of domestic abuse, Walker (1979) composed a rough sketch of a male who inflicts physical and psychological abuse.

low self-esteem, believes all the myths about battering relationships, is a traditionalist believing in male supremacy and the stereotyped masculine sex role in the family, blames others for his actions, is pathologically jealous, presents a dual personality, has severe stress reactions in which he uses drinking and wife battering to cope, frequently uses sex as an act of aggression to enhance self-esteem in view of the waning virility, believes his violent behavior should not have negative consequences.

(p. 36)

Walker (1979) discussed how these men “become enraged if their women should reveal the true situation...these men do not want to discuss the problem” (p. 36). These men are also extreme in their actions. “Even when the woman is badly injured, the batterer often uncontrollably continues his brutal attack. The same is true for his generosity. During his loving periods, he showers the woman with affection, attention, and gifts” (p. 37). Additionally, a high level of jealousy and suspicion was also reported by the women in Walker’s sample. “Despite this constant surveillance of her every activity, the batterer is still suspicious of his woman’s possible relationships with other men and women” (p. 38). Further, Walker noted that, “children who were abused or witnessed abuse are more likely to grow up to be tomorrow’s batterers” (p. 38).

Walker (1979) also provided a rough sketch of women who are victims of domestic abuse. These women also have low self-esteem, as they “typically underestimate their ability to do anything” (p. 32). Walker found that the woman in her sample agreed with “society’s belief that the batterer would change his

behavior if only she could change hers” (p. 33). These women also hold traditional views of the family and the home. “She readily accepts that ‘a woman’s proper place is in the home’” (p. 33). The women in Walker’s sample were also characterized as women who sought to keep the peace. “She makes herself responsible for creating a safe environment for everyone” (p. 34). Severe stress reactions also characterize many of the women in this sample as they “live under constant stress and fear” (p. 34).

**Cycle of violence theory.** As Walker (1979) posited, “Understanding this cycle is very important if we are to learn how to stop or prevent battering incidents” (p. 55). Walker argued that though the cycle may vary in intensity and duration from couple to couple, the cycle still has three distinct phases: “the tension-building phase, the explosion or acute battering incident, and the calm, loving respite” (p. 55). In the first phase of this cycle, the tension-building phase, minor abuse occurs. Walker asserted that women in this situation either “become nurturing, compliant or may anticipate his every whim or she may stay out of his way” (p. 56). “She lets the batterer know that she accepts his abusiveness as legitimately directed toward her...she denies to herself that she is angry at being unjustly hurt psychologically or physically” (p. 56). Walker noted that many couples are able to maintain this degree of tension building for quite some time, as both partners are trying to avoid an abusive situation. However, “as the batterer and the battered woman sense the escalating tension during the first phase, it becomes more difficult for their coping techniques to work” (p. 59). This usually results in the man becoming more possessive and verbally cruel.

Phase two is characterized by the “uncontrollable discharge of the tensions that have built up during phase one” (p. 59). Walker argued that “the trigger for moving into phase two is rarely the woman’s behavior, rather, it is usually an external event or the internal state of the man” (p. 60). The second phase is usually the shortest of the phases; it is also the most unpredictable with respect to what type and severity of abuse will occur. Not knowing how severe the abuse will be or what will trigger it causes intense physiological stress for the woman. Once the attack has begun, the woman does not try to flee or fight back in fear of more serious violence. “There is also a sense of distance from the actual attack...some women say that it was as though they could stand back and watch their disembodied selves being thrown against a wall or down a flight of stairs” (p. 62). Once the violence has ended, both parties usually enter into a stage of “initial shock, denial, and disbelief” that it has actually happened and the woman rarely consults medical attention afterward unless absolutely necessary (p. 62). “A good many of the reactions of battered women report are similar to those of catastrophe victims...they tend to remain isolated for at least the first twenty-four hours, and it may be several days before they seek help” (p. 63).

Both parties enjoy phase three. The man recognizes he lost control and behaved unacceptably and he attempts to make up for his actions with love and attention. He begs for forgiveness and vows to never commit such acts again. “The batterer truly believes he will never hurt the woman he loves; he believes that he can control himself from now on. He also believes he has taught her such a lesson that she will never again behave in such a manner and he will not be

tempted to beat her” (pp. 65-66). After phase two, many women vow to leave their abusive partners. However, once their abuser approaches her with love and affection many women believe the sincerity of their abuser and choose to stay. If the woman will not go back to their abuser, the man often “asserts something awful will happen to him if she leaves him. Suicide is not an idle threat. Almost 10 percent of the men who battered the women in this sample killed themselves after their women left them” (p. 68). Walker found that it is the most difficult phase for women to leave their husbands. Phase three is also the time women are most likely to be approached by people who wish to help her escape her situation. “If she has been through several cycles already, the knowledge that she has traded her psychological and physical safety for this temporary dream state adds to her self-hatred and embarrassment” (p. 69). However, at some point, the couple will cycle back to phase one if the more drastic measures are not taken.

### **Research Questions**

This study examines the communication privacy management themes emerging in the television show, *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. Specifically, this study focuses on the marital disclosures surrounding the marriage of Taylor and Russell Armstrong. In order to understand the possible implications of these the following research questions were posed:

RQ1: What are the types of private disclosures made concerning Russell and Taylor’s marriage?

RQ2: Considering Petronio's five communication privacy management suppositions, what themes emerge in this reality show setting concerning Taylor and Russell's marital disclosures?

### **Chapter Three: Methods**

This analysis employs a textual analysis to examine emergent themes regarding communication privacy management in the popular reality television show *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. The five suppositions of communication privacy management theory were observed throughout the series in order to identify emerging themes surrounding the marriage of Russell and Taylor Armstrong. This study is unique as it uses an interpersonal theory in a rhetorical analysis. Each episode was coded according to the types of marital disclosures revealed. Those disclosures were specifically noted in light of CPM and Walker's cycle of violence theory.

#### **Data Analysis**

Textual analysis "allows researchers to treat social action and human activity as *text*...human action can be seen as a collection of symbols expressing layers of meaning" (Berg, 2007, p. 304). Further, using textual analysis helps deconstruct the text into manageable pieces in order to fully identify the maxims of communication privacy management theory at work. This method enables one to "organize or reduce data in order to uncover patterns of human activity, action, and meaning" (p. 304). Each piece of data is coded in a way that is most efficient and allows themes of marital disclosure to be readily identifiable. This study is unique as it extends the theory of CPM, an interpersonal theory, into the realm of rhetorical analysis.

## Participants

According to the Bravo Network's website, *The Real Housewives...series* has seven installments of the show set in different locations across the United States. The current study focuses on the Beverly Hills location of the show. This decision was made by the researcher after the suicide of Taylor Armstrong's husband. Taylor Armstrong is one of the housewives featured in the program. There has been much speculation concerning how Armstrong's role in the reality show may have contributed to his decision to commit suicide. "Facts began to emerge Tuesday that raise questions about how the program presented the couple and whether the resulting glare of publicity played any role in his death" reported an article from the *Los Angeles Times* days after the death (Kaufman & Villarreal, 2011, p. 1). It seemed more pertinent to examine this location in order to further understand the repercussions for allowing public access to one's backstage. *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills* airs on Bravo every Monday night at 9pm. The episodes' runtime is sixty minutes with commercials. It recently concluded airing its second season on prime time, cable television. However, the premiere of the second season was delayed due to the network's editing of the second season to adjust the focus away from Taylor's marital problems and Russell's impending suicide.

This study examines all episodes in the series' two seasons. The first season allows the audience to see how the women negotiate disclosing private information simultaneously to one another and to the viewing audience. Additionally, it allows the viewer to understand and form expectations of how



certain women will respond in a given situation. Though Bravo did not highlight much of the Armstrong's marital strife in the first season, the first season helps establish an understanding of their marriage and how disclosures were negotiated. The second season highlights the declining marriage of Taylor and Russell. It is also in the second season that Taylor discloses that she is a victim of spousal physical abuse. During this season, Taylor also discloses to her friends over the phone her decision to leave her husband, Russell.

*The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills* first aired in the fall of 2010 on Bravo. The first season consists of seventeen episodes that follow the daily lives and interactions of Taylor Armstrong, Lisa Vanderpump, Adrienne Maloof-Nassif, Kim Richards, Kyle Richards, and Camile Grammer. One of the major focal points of the first seasons was the adultery scandal and divorce of Kelsey Grammer from his wife, Camile. Taylor's deteriorating marriage was highlighted due the eventual divorce proceedings and death of her husband. By focusing specifically on their declining marriage, the potential implications of disclosing private information about marital distress on the front stage become apparent.

### **Procedure**

First, the first two seasons were watched in their entirety to gain an understanding of the general workings and overall plot lines of the show. General notes were made during this viewing of the show. Second, both seasons were viewed again to document (a) each time Taylor Armstrong appeared on screen and (b) when others discussed the Armstrong's marriage (see Appendix B). The coding was based on a thematic-type scale from one to four related to varying

types of disclosure. If Taylor was merely on screen and no personal disclosures took place, the instance was coded as “one” on the scale. A “two” signified Taylor was disclosing private information, but not about her marriage . When Taylor disclosed private information about her marriage and relationship with Russell, the instance was coded as “three.” Finally, a “four” signified that other cast members were discussing or commenting on Taylor and Russell’s marriage whether or not Taylor was present.

Any clip coded as a three or a four was then analyzed more closely to discover emerging themes of how information concerning Taylor and Russell’s marriage was disclosed and managed. Those clips were also transcribed in order to better organize and analyze the data (see Appendix B). Twenty-four pages of conversations were documented that directly or indirectly referenced Taylor and Russell’s marriage. Further, roughly 120 hundred hours of television viewing were logged throughout the process of this study.

## **Chapter Four: Analysis**

This chapter provides a summary of the results based on the two research questions posed in Chapter Two. (1) What are the types of private disclosures made concerning Russell and Taylor's marriage? (2) And, considering Petronio's five communication privacy management suppositions, what themes emerge in this reality show setting concerning Taylor and Russell's marital disclosures? This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on themes that emerged in the analysis related the marriage of Taylor and Russell Armstrong. The second section focuses on the themes that emerged with regard to each of the five CPM suppositions.

### **Armstrong Marriage Themes**

An interesting progression of marital disclosures concerning Taylor and Russell's marriage occurred with respect to Taylor's appearances on the show and the frequency of marital disclosures made over the course of the two seasons (see appendices A & B). It is ironic (or perhaps, intentional) that the very first episode of the series introduces Taylor who says "Everything might look perfect, but its not. It's a land of make believe" as the image of her and Russell appears. As Taylor introduces herself, she spends the majority of her three-minute cameo discussing her marriage with Russell. "Beautiful women are a dime a dozen around here. Especially, twenty-year-old beautiful women and my husband is masculine, there is not blurring that issue. Oh, Lord he's going to leave me for a 20 year old" she says laughing. Though the disclosure was meant as a joke, Taylor is the one who discloses her insecurity about the stability of her

marriage. She comments that their marriage is “eighty-percent business and twenty-percent romance, but that’s what I signed up for.”

Taylor spent the majority of her introduction discussing her marriage and disclosing information in her cameo that revealed an unstable relationship. This will not be the first time that Taylor laughs during inappropriate times when it comes to her marriage. During episode twelve of the first season, Lisa tells Taylor “Stop laughing and joking, because often your laughing and joking is masking what you are feeling.” Taylor’s laughter during troubling comments about her marriage seem to be an attempt to mask the reality of the situation with Russell; however, it does not lessen the severity of their marital problems.

**Work and inattentiveness.** The third episode of the first season revealed greater depths to the instability of Taylor and Russell’s relationship as they traveled with friends to Las Vegas. Taylor comments to Russell, albeit, passive aggressively, “It’s nice to get away just the two of us; I so rarely have your undivided attention away from the office.” Russell agrees saying, “a weekend with no kids,” to which Taylor responds “and no work.” It is through these not-so-subtle jabs that Taylor reveals her resentment of Russell’s work. What is not so subtle is Taylor’s comments in her cameo during the same scene.

I truly wanted to marry someone for love, as opposed to just marrying to get to where I wanted to be in life. But I knew when I married Russell he worked non-stop. That he someone who was not going to be there, holding my hand, and, you know, be by my side twenty-four hours a day. ‘Cus it’s always been the way it is.

She concludes by saying, "I hope it was the right thing to do" in reference to marrying Russell. Not only is Taylor disclosing information about the instability of her marriage, but also it is apparent that Russell's demanding work schedule poses a problem in their relationship. In the season one reunion, when asked whether it was difficult to watch Taylor disclose information about their marriage, Russell attributes much of the problem to the necessity of work. "You know, the last three years have been very challenging for the entire country. I've candidly have been working 80 hour weeks and its very easy to get preoccupied with kids, and business and the day to day grind."

Later in the first season, Taylor begins to comment more openly about her marital problems.

You know Russell and I have some great days together, but then we have some average days together. Just like everyone else. Things have been really tense between Russell and me, lately. You know the business side of our relationship has just seemed to take over. He works. I work. We have kind of forgotten to take time to be a romantic couple. We just need to take some time out to have fun together. I don't know if this is just typical marriage ups and downs, but this is definitely something we need to work on.

Russell and Taylor decide to take a trip to Mexico to sort things out at the end of the first season. "Rather than continuing down the path that we have been on and struggling. Russell and I have decided to take a trip to Mexico and really spend time and talking about our needs and what it is we can do to get our

marriage on track.” She later discloses, “It’s obvious that Russell and I have been having a tough time, as of late. When we get to Mexico we have got to figure this out and we’ve got to make changes.”

One of the first questions Taylor fielded during the first season reunion was whether or not there was love in Taylor and Russell’s marriage. Taylor responds in the affirmative.

Yeah, there is definitely love there. I think there was, um, some inattentiveness probably on both of our behalves. Children and work and all these other things start to become the priorities and you forget to pay attention to the things that are the foundation of your marriage. And I think we let that happen for too much time.

When asked about her and Russell’s trip to Mexico, Taylor discloses that they both decided that they want to keep their family together.

**When to stay and when to leave.** Another issue that causes tension between Taylor and Russell throughout both seasons is Russell’s unwillingness to be social. Several times throughout the series Russell tells Taylor it is time to go even when she indicates that she wants to stay. When Russell made her leave the Vegas party early, Taylor discloses in her cameo that “I was bummed. I didn’t want to leave. I was having a good time. We’re in Vegas. When he says its time to go its time to go. Russell, you know, drives the bus in this relationship.” In another instance during the first season, Russell is ready to leave before Taylor and she comments,

Russell is not someone whose mood you can change. It's a bummer for me because I see everyone's having fun and the husbands are participating. I wish I could find a way to bring him over from the dark side to the fun side

When Taylor actually tells Russell she wants to stay, his only remark is "Sorry."

Taylor debates for a few minutes about what to do, but then decides to stay.

I have left enough times when I didn't want to leave. I just felt like, you know, I needed to do what I wanted to do. So, I stayed. It makes me feel sad and a little lonely even though I am surrounded by people, you know, I feel little alone,

she discloses through tears. Taylor stays behind and discusses the situation with Kyle and defends Russell by attributing his "disconnectedness" to the fact that "he's so busy in his mind worrying about all these deals and ventures." However, Kyle recounts that her husband has the same type of work pressures, but "doesn't get upset like that." The episode ends with Taylor waiting alone for her limo; her voiceover says "You know this night shoulda been a lot of fun, and it was, you know, for everyone else. I feel like I have this life I want to celebrate. I just wish he would celebrate with me." Even though Taylor finally decided to stay, she did not enjoy being there without him. The issue of whether to stay or go is a recurring theme that highlights the problems in Taylor and Russell's marriage.

**The dog.** Russell purchasing a dog for their daughter's fourth birthday is another source of marital contention that emerges in several episodes of the first

season. Despite the fact that Taylor had specifically told Russell “No dog,” Russell still surprises both Kennedy and Taylor with a dog in a grand public display of affection. Kennedy turns out to be highly allergic to dogs. Taylor tells Russell, “I’m really struggling with this whole snowball issue. You asked me about getting Kennedy a dog and I specifically told you she wasn’t ready and now she is allergic to the dog.” Russell replies, “Well, she does seem to be getting better.” Taylor later discloses in her cameo that “I blame Russell. Seeing my child getting sick. It was making me for frustrated with Russell day by day for purchasing a dog against my wishes. I should have never been put in this situation.” The first season finale closes with the image of Taylor alongside text that reads “Snowball is happy in his new home, but Taylor continues to struggle in her current one.”

**Marital comparison.** Taylor also comments openly about her desires to have a marriage like those of her friends. Specifically, Taylor admires Kyle and Mauricio’s marriage. “When I see how affectionate Mauricio and Kyle are I wish that Russell and I were more like that. I don’t know why we can’t be like that.” Later, Taylor is shown watching Kyle and Mauricio with tears in her eyes. Taylor comments,

I really like Mauricio. He lets Kyle be who she is. Just the fact that he is a strong guy who can also be sensitive with her. And, he would do a first dance and in front of all of those people and he feels confident enough to do something like that. I was sort of wishing I had the same thing. And, I could get my marriage a point where we could have those same moments.



Taylor's disclosing what she admires about Mauricio highlights the characteristics of what she believes is lacking in her relationship with Russell. It is interesting that Taylor comments several times about how manly and masculine Russell is, yet what she admires in Mauricio is his ability to be "strong" and "sensitive." Doing so points to Taylor's belief that Russell is unable or unwilling to be sensitive with her.

**Russell's masculinity.** There are sporadic moments throughout the series when Taylor comments on the masculinity of her husband, Russell. Even in her first appearance on the show, she describes Russell as "very masculine. There is no blurring of that issue." She often makes remarks about how manly Russell is, which results in teasing comments from her friends behind the camera. Apparently, Taylor is the only one that sees her husband as hyper masculine. Taylor seems to fixate throughout season two on Mauricio's ability to be strong and masculine, as well as sensitive and caring.

**Seeking marital help.** Taylor and Russell's marriage is visibly unstable; however, throughout both seasons they seek marital advice to help repair their marriage. The first instance of this occurs when Russell asks Ken what the secret to a long, happy marriage is. Ken responds by saying to never go to bed angry. Russell remarks, "I go to bed mad, and I'm not going to do that anymore." There is another instance where Russell asks Kyle and Mauricio "The first how many years were challenging?" Russell and Taylor recognize their marriage needs help and actively seek advice from friends.

**Therapy.** In the second season, Taylor discloses that she and Russell are in therapy to work on their marriage.

Russell and I have a difficult marriage. That's a fact. Therapy is an incredible amount of work. But you are fighting for your relationship and your kids. It's hard. It's really hard. Therapy is helping me find my voice. It is allowing me to find the strength to speak up.

Taylor discloses to her fellow cast members while having dinner at Adrienne's house that she and Russell are in marriage therapy.

However, while many of her peers thought it was admirable that Taylor and Russell go to therapy, Ken disclosed how he thought therapy was a sign of weakness. Taylor excuses herself to the bathroom because she is upset at that comment. Kyle follows her and Taylor confides,

So hard for me, but when Ken, just now, was making it a sign of weakness to be in therapy that really hurt my feelings. I didn't think that was nice at all. You are carrying a dog around BH dressed up in clothes. My husband's in therapy and that's weak? I mean, I don't know, that hurt my feelings really bad. That wasn't nice. I don't care what they do in England, I'm trying to keep my family together.

Kyle responds by affirming Taylor. "I think it takes a lot of courage and strength not only to do that, but to admit it to the table like that. I also thought that was a little below the belt."

Taylor and Russell's therapy sessions with Dr. Sophie are filmed several times. When Dr. Sophie asks Taylor how she knows that she and Russell love

each other, Taylor responds by saying “I just don’t, whenever Russell is good to me it’s better than any other kind of good I can imagine.” He counters with “And, when Russell isn’t good?” “It hurts more than anything in the world.” Other disclosures made during therapy include Russell discussing when he gets angry. “Yes, it’s been very painful addressing the problems and issues we’ve had. The neglect, me being absent because of work...When I get angry, when we argue.” Dr. Sophie observes, “There is a lot of trust that has to be built here. And, a lot of you know, emotional safety.” Taylor discloses that “we don’t want to lose each other so badly. Maybe that is part of the catalyst for why things get...” This session ends when Russell has to leave for work. “I hate to cut this short, but I’m going to be late for a meeting.”

Taylor is also shown attending therapy sessions without Russell. The second season begins with Taylor taking a hike with Dr. Sophie. Taylor’s conversation with Dr. Sophie is the last recorded conversation Taylor has before she leaves Russell. “Now, it’s affecting my friendships, not just my marriage. Now, I’m not mad at the ladies, I’m just mad at him.” “The constant management of Russell so there is not another explosion,” offers Dr. Sophie. “I can’t be associated with his behaviors. I can’t take it much longer. I really can’t. I just feel like I am overwhelmed with all of this. I can’t manage these crises anymore. It’s just too much.” Dr. Sophie ends the session by positing, “And, whose really paying is Kennedy. It’s time for a tough decision.”

**Assertiveness and finding her voice.** Taylor’s need to be more assertive is a slowly building theme throughout both seasons of the series. When

Taylor decides to stay behind at a party in the first season, Kyle comments, “I don’t know what she and Russell has. But it seems to me that Taylor is always questioning whether she deserves to be happy or not.” When Lisa learns that Taylor and Russell are going to Mexico to sort out their marriage issues, she encourages Taylor that “Maybe now is, like, the time you need to go forward and be honest with what you want you know?” Taylor agrees and replies, “Just to have a conversation about what is missing and what each of us needs. But I think it’s fair to ask those questions and put in all the effort we can.”

In a clip from Taylor during the credits for the second season, she declares, “I finally found my voice and I’m not afraid to use it.” Taylor attributes therapy as helping her to become more assertive and proactive. “Therapy is helping me find my voice. It is allowing me to find the strength to speak up.” Taylor discloses to Adrienne how therapy is helping her.

If I don’t start speaking up about the little things in the moment, even if its just you know a rest. He wants to go to and I don’t want to go to, you know just making it a point to say ‘ I really don’t want Italian right now.’ That’s important for me to say the little things.

Adrienne’s responds in disbelief, “Wow. Have you always, for six years, gone along with what whatever he’s said?” to which Taylor replies “Pretty much.” “That’s amazing. I could never do that.” Taylor continues to reference finding her voice and becoming more assertive. “Russell and I are doing marriage counseling and I have a life coach that I am working with to help me find my voice and speak up.”

**Breakdowns.** By the time season two begins, more information concerning the fragility of Taylor and Russell's marriage surfaces. It seems that Taylor is on the verge of a breakdown throughout season two, and her use of alcohol to cope increases. On a ski trip, Lisa comments, "Taylor's drunk nearly a whole bottle of wine, she's drunk and there are tears." Kyle also comments, "I don't know if it was the combination of the alcohol and being so thin, the altitude, but she starts going crazy." Adrienne says that she feels that "Taylor is drinking too much to cope with her marriage because her behavior is irrational...I think she is having a nervous breakdown." Adrienne whispers to Taylor to "Pull it together. Seriously. Don't drink though. Have some water." After Taylor's erratic behavior in Colorado, Taylor meets with her life coach and comments that she thinks she had a panic attack. "I started to get emotional and I couldn't get the reigns back on it...I feel like I just literally had a break- down."

Taylor has another breakdown after the tea party where Camille openly discusses the abusive nature of her marriage on camera. At Brandi's house, Taylor and Dedra fight over Camille's disclosure about Taylor's abusive marriage. Taylor becomes hysterical and yells through tears, "You have no idea what she has done to me! You have no idea what she has done to me! No, you don't! No, you don't! No, you don't! You have no idea what I've been through!" This only stops after Adrienne covers Taylor's mouth saying "Stop, stop! Close her mouth!" Later, when Taylor tells Lisa about the incident, Taylor admits that she does not remember much about the night or the fight. "Unfortunately, it was because I had a little too much to drink, which I'm not proud of. But you know

when my anxiety revs up, I can't help it. It's the first thing I reach for." Lisa comments that, "lately it seems like it's always tears. You're upset and everything. And, it seems like it's going rapidly down hill. You've gotta put the breaks on it."

**Disclosures about separated future.** In the first episode of the series, Taylor comments when discussing her business that she doesn't "want to put myself in a position where I don't have the ability to care of myself in the event that one of these days, you know, the younger better thing comes along and you know, things happen." Though this comment is, again, veiled in laughter, it hints, within the first fifteen minutes of the premier episode, at the fragility of Taylor and Russell's marriage. During one of the last episodes of the first season, Taylor disclosed, "I do my very best to just hope for the best and to not think about what my life would be like if Russell and I weren't to make it. It's just something I am really hoping is not going to happen." In Colorado, Kyle bluntly asked Taylor how long she would continue to try to work things out with Russell. Taylor responds by citing her psychiatrist's approximation, "He said it would take a year for me to let go of the anger and the resentment."

**Vague or veiled disclosures.** Throughout both seasons, many instances of vague word choices intentionally conceal what is going on in Taylor and Russell's marriage. While on a vacation in Colorado with the girls, Taylor and Kyle have an ambiguous conversation in the hot tub. When Kyle asks why Taylor resents Russell, she responds, "It's just been a long time. I'm just tired. I've spent a lot of years..." Kyle even comments that Taylor "doesn't ever say what the real

issue is. She just tells me how she's feeling and sort of hints at things." Taylor tells Kyle that she is "scared" and Kyle tells her "I wouldn't be fighting for something that is really not worth fighting for, to be honest. You're blaming yourself and it's not you."

The drama continues after the hot tub scene, as Taylor dissolves into tears and tells the girls at dinner that "I guess I feel so fragile because of everything I'm going through." Kyle comments to her husband later, "I feel like this girl is so fragile and she's very vague about it." Taylor uses words like "heavy" to describe her marriage and words like "fragile" to describe her emotional state. "I am really fragile right now. I'm just going through so much. It's just, just a lot."

Many of the other housewives use ambiguous word choices to communicate to Taylor, while leaving much up to the imagination of the audience. At the end of the first season, Lisa says to Taylor "We're there for you. We're all supportive in whatever you want to do." Kyle later comments to the camera that "Russell and Taylor did not seem to be having that much fun at the white party. I am not really sure what was going on with them that night. But they were definitely not on the same page." Additionally, the ambiguity surrounding what is really going on in Taylor and Russell's marriage puts her friends in a difficult and confusing situation. Kyle discloses to the camera, "Taylor will tell us things that make us not like Russell, and it's very difficult because then when we see him, he is very polite and seems like a nice person. It's very confusing for everyone." When Adrienne tries to talk to Taylor about her marriage, she refers

to it as “the situation you’re going through with your husband.” Camille comments that the situation between Taylor and Russell is “the elephant in the room we can’t talk about.”

However, at Lisa’s tea party, Taylor confronts Lisa, expecting the rest of the ladies to join in. When no one speaks up, Taylor exits in anger. While she is gone, the girls discuss the contradictions and ambiguity of Taylor and Russell’s marriage. They decide to confront Taylor about what is going on. Camille remarks that “this is an intervention that was unexpected, but possibly needed.” Taylor soon returns for round two and in frustration says, “Everyone’s talking behind everyone’s back. So, let’s just start being honest...I think everyone should start saying what they mean.” Camille responds, “But, everything Taylor? I don’t think you want everything out there. You said everything. I would be careful. Because are all protecting you.” The rest of the ladies agree saying, “We are all protecting you.”

### **Abuse.**

About what you told us about your marriage. We’ve been protecting you. Because we don’t say that he hits you. Because we don’t say that broke your jaw or that he beat you up and that he hits you. We don’t say that but now we say that.

Camille is the first to openly discuss the rumors that have been circulating about Taylor and Russell’s marriage. While several of the girls discuss in veiled terms the possibility of domestic violence in the Armstrong household, to the viewer much of Taylor’s erratic behavior and ambiguous word choices are clarified



through this disclosure. Taylor's response to her secret being disclosed is to tell Camille her behavior is "uncool" and to tell the other women, "What she said was just above and beyond what needs to." This public, on-screen disclosure leads to the dissolution of Camille and Taylor's friendship.

Camille, Adrienne, and Kyle go out to dinner and end up discussing the drama that had occurred at the tea party. They discuss how all of the ladies were worried about Taylor but confused with the inconsistencies in her story.

Every girl at that tea knew exactly what was going on. So, I didn't feel like I was exposing anything that we didn't all know. She goes around telling all the girls this. Maybe hearing it, herself, was very difficult, obviously, very difficult for her to hear.

Though Taylor and Russell's secret comes out, the women do not discuss the current abuse. The drama largely rests with the ladies trying to determine whether Taylor's stories are true and, if so, why she is staying in that environment- or, if she is exaggerating, why she would do that. There is a lot of attention given to the fallout between Taylor and Camille over Camille disclosing her secret on television. Toward the end of the second season, Lisa openly comments that "When I see Taylor, I am aware the under her make-up something is going on. I see bruising under her eye." That same night, Taylor discloses to her friends what had happened with Russell that finally encouraged her to leave him. "So, um, a few weeks ago Russell and I got into a big fight. We had been fighting for a couple of days prior. We got into a big fight and things got physical and I got hurt. And, I've been dealing and healing with that for the past

few weeks. It was the last straw. I just determined I can't take these risks in my life anymore. I will continue to co-parent with him. I understand that you guys have been put throughout the ringer in this relationship that I have been in and that is unfair to you. At the same time you guys were getting put through the ringer, I was trapped in a physically abusive relationship."

Although instances of abuse in Taylor and Russell's marriage are referenced throughout the series, no action is taken until Taylor leaves him. (This is particularly disconcerting given that Taylor supports a center for women and children of domestic violence.) In episode eleven, Taylor discloses about her personal history with domestic violence beginning at a young age. "My earliest childhood memory, literally, in blue footed zip-up pajamas was someone waging an attack on my mother and that is why I connect so heavily with the work being done at the crisis center."

**Managing disclosures.** Taylor often discloses private information about her marriage with Russell and Russell only attempts to manage that private information after he feels too much disclosure has taken place. One way Russell attempts to manage their marital information is through passive aggressive emails. When private information about Taylor and Russell comes out in the tabloids, the couple suspects Lisa of selling their information to the press. Russell handles this situation by emailing Lisa.

I just got an email from Russell. 'Here's the real story so no need to worry. Don't believe the rumor mill. We have not split. We are absolutely not separated. Our relationship is in a good place right now. We're really

happy. We are very much in love and have no idea where any of these false stories of us are coming from. Our marriage is stronger than ever and our business is up 900%.' Why has he sent that to me?

Lisa receives another email from Russell concerning his marriage to Taylor. The other ladies also received the email and discuss why he would send it to them.

When emailing does not seem to be working, Russell employs more drastic measures. After Camille vocalizes what Taylor has told the ladies about her abusive marriage on camera, Russell sends Camille an email threatening to sue her. The rest of the women are concerned that they will also be targets for a lawsuit if they also repeat the information Taylor has disclosed to them. The fear of legal issues with friends causes Kyle to turn Taylor and Russell away from attending her annual party. Taylor comments, "Russell told me he sent an email to Camille asking her not to discuss the personal details of our relationship. I had no idea he had threatened a lawsuit." Later, Taylor tells her psychiatrist that she read the email and was "floored. I said, you didn't give her an out. You said if you don't say you didn't say it, there will be legal channels...It felt really bullying."

### **Analysis of Privacy Management Maxims**

To adequately address research question two, it was necessary to examine emergent themes related to each of the maxims posited by Petronio's communication privacy management theory. These five themes are: conceptualization of private information, privacy boundaries, control and ownership of private information, rule-based management system, and privacy management dialectics. The first maxim concerns privacy boundaries.

**Maxim one: Conceptualization of private information.** Petronio (2002) contends that people disclose information “to relieve a burden, gain control, enjoy self-expression, or possibly develop intimacy, yet, the goal is not always intimacy” (p. 6). Taylor’s disclosure of her marital problems to her friends, and most specifically the abuse, is most likely a cry for help. However, considering the phases of the cycle of violence theory, it is possible that Taylor delayed disclosing instances of abuse to her friends until Russell had already started apologizing and directing lots of love and attention on her. This could explain the confusion her friends expressed about the truthfulness of Taylor’s accounts of abuse.

Marital information involves two parties, and it is largely Russell’s voice that goes unheard with respect to the information Taylor discloses about their relationship. However, Russell is the only one that actively seeks to silence those who threaten to publicly reveal private information about his marriage to Taylor. From passive aggressive emails to blatant threats to sue, Russell’s goal is to stop additional disclosures from happening. Even in scenes with the other husbands, Russell’s comments about his marriage are vague. He is willing to listen to the other men discuss their own marriages, but he chooses not to comment on his own. This control and secrecy may be due to the abusive relationship he has with Taylor. Walker (1979) noted that abuse is not just physical, but also psychological. Russell’s attempt to control what others know about his marriage with Taylor seems to be another form of control and abuse enacted against Taylor.

**Maxim two: Privacy boundaries.** Petronio (2002) noted that “personal boundaries are those that manage private information about the self, while collectively held boundaries represent many different sorts of privacy boundary types” (p. 6). Taylor, being a main cast member, is largely depicted as the ultimate owner of her marital information. However, it takes two to complete a marriage and, therefore, the information being disclosed also belongs to Russell. This is highlighted only when Russell attempts to manage those disclosures by sending threatening emails and threatening lawsuits as previously discussed.

Additionally, the way this small group of friends discusses the physical abuse Taylor suffers in veiled terms on camera helps to define the boundaries. The women, at that point in the show, are privy to the in-group information. However, the use of vague terms reveals that the boundary separating the audience from the women is impermeable and they would like to keep it that way. When Camille discloses clearly and publicly about the abuse in Taylor’s marriage, those once impregnable boundaries become permeable. This catalyst opens the doors for Taylor’s marital problems to be discussed openly by many of the women and their friends and husbands. What was once taboo is now freely discussed during various social settings and with a wide range of people.

**Maxim three: Control and ownership of private information.** The third maxim of Petronio’s theory involves the conceptualization of private information, or, rather, co-ownership of information. Several examples of co-ownership of information occur concerning Taylor and Russell’s marriage being negotiated by, many of those tensions did not begin until the second season. The only instance

of co-ownership about Taylor and Russell's marital information is during the season one reunion, when Russell is asked by the host "what was it like watching Taylor upset, confiding to Kyle about your relationship?"

However, season two offers many more instances of Taylor disclosing information to her friends and all of them trying to negotiate how to manage that private information. This comes primarily in the form of gossip, as aspects of Taylor and Russell's marriage were disclosed without either Armstrong being present. For example, Taylor discloses to Kyle how hurt she was by Ken's comment about therapy being a sign of weakness. While Taylor is still in the bathroom, Ken asks Kyle whether Taylor is upset about what he said and Kyle affirms that his comment did upset Taylor. Another example occurred between the husbands when Paul reiterates what Taylor told them about doing therapy. "Taylor was telling us that Russell and Taylor are doing therapy and, apparently, it's helping them." From here, the men continue to briefly discuss the Armstrong's marital situation.

Adrienne also discloses, "I have not seen Russell treat Taylor poorly; however, there are rumors in BH that he does. And, I also know what she has told all the girls, and so. I don't know what to think." This comment reveals both that Russell and Taylor's private information is widely discussed and debated, but it also shows that Adrienne is hesitant to disclose any more details of their marital situation at this time. Adrienne's vague word choices, "what she has told all the girls," without exactly saying what Taylor told them reveals she is attempting to respectfully manage the information Taylor has shared with them.

Camille discloses aspects of the trip to her friend Dedra, “Uncomfortable moment with Taylor, she was going through something with her husband. She started crying at the table, you know, she said she was at her breaking point. I could see the pain in her face. I could feel her pain.”

It seems as though any personal information about another person serves as a license to continue to offer up opinions or further discussion about Taylor and Russell’s marriage. Taylor discusses that she regrets having disclosed details of her marriage to her friends.

In retrospect, I should have never talked to my friends about my marriage because its only confused me and complicated matters...I really want to get my marriage on track and I recognize that by telling my friends things, good or bad, it’s just confusing me.

Taylor’s regret seems warranted when, in the next episode, Taylor discloses to Kyle “I wake up today, and get a call from my husband that there is an article in the press about my marriage and I’m not happy.” After assuming Lisa leaked the information to the press, Russell sends her an email.

I just got an email from Russell. ‘Here’s the real story so no need to worry. Don’t believe the rumor mill. We have not split. We are absolutely not separated. Our relationship is in a good place right now. We’re really happy. We are very much and love and have no idea where any of the false stories of us are coming from. Our marriage is stronger than ever and our business is up 900%’ Why has he sent that to me?

Taylor explains Russell's thought process in sending that email to Lisa. "Russell sent her the email because he had some inkling that she was leaking information about our marriage to the press. So, in his mind, I guess he thought if he told her everything was hunky dory she would rely that to the press, as well."

Some of the information Taylor discloses to the women comes back to haunt her. Taylor attempts to defend herself against Lisa's concern about her weight, "I am eating." However, Lisa responds, "Taylor, you have admitted to me you aren't eating." Taylor's weight loss and the information she disclosed to Brandi come up when the women get together for a cookout at Adrienne's house. "I told her earlier she was on the divorce diet." After being asked whether Taylor is getting a divorce, Brandi comments, "I think she's going to after our conversation." When asked what Taylor said, Brandi simply replied, "She said they are working on it and she's doing it for her child. Working on her marriage for her daughter." Adrienne also shared what Taylor had told her in private to her husband when expressing her concern for Taylor. "According to Taylor, their relationship has gotten to the point where it is very physical."

During the tea party episode, the ladies spend much of the time when Taylor is not present trying to determine whether the things Taylor disclosed to them in private are true. Camille shares specific disclosures that Taylor made to her during a visit to her house.

When she came over for lunch, she talked to me for almost three hours about she thought it was over. And, then, after we had this long conversation about she knew that it was over and it was the end. She



gives me a hug and, then, she's telling me she's leaving on a G4 with a smile on her face. And, I'm like 'How can you be leaving on a G4 if he's leaving you?' That to me is a mixed message. That's when I'm like whose telling the truth here.

The conversation turns to discuss more specifically things Taylor has revealed when Lisa says, "I'm talking about saying your husband abuses you." After Camille disclosed what Taylor had been telling them in private, Lisa comments, "We had all talked to Taylor many times in private, but I think she was shocked that Camille laid it out on the table. Camille is angry with the inconsistencies with Taylor and Russell's relationships and this has just been the straw that broke the camel's back."

The most powerful example of Taylor's disclosures causing problems is the information about her abusive marriage. Taylor explains to Dedra why she is upset with Camille. "It was about a simple comment that she could have skirted, but she brought up the other stuff. Which was not okay with me." Later, Dedra supports Camille's decision to discuss the problems openly by saying, "You haven't been saying anything that she hasn't said herself." However, Russell did not like what he found about concerning Camille's comment and threatened to sue her for making "false and slanderous remarks." This leaves all of the women and their husbands baffled as they all recognize that Camille was merely repeating things Taylor had told her.

It is interesting to note a specific example between Taylor and Russell where the two seem to negotiate what exactly is "true" with respect to their

marital disclosures. When they are asked to leave the white party because of the lawsuit Russell threatened Camille with, they discuss the situation on the way home. Taylor tells Russell he should not have sent the email, to which he responds, “Well, I can’t let people say false things like that either, I mean that’s pretty horrible.” However, Taylor responds by saying, “It was exaggerated.” “Yeah absolutely. It was an out-and-out lie.” In her cameo, Taylor discloses that “What Camille said was an exaggeration, but it certainly was not a lie.” Further, at the reunion for the second season, Taylor admits that Camille’s disclosure was not “an exaggeration, I guess. I said he dislocated my jaw, not ‘broke.’”

Kyle seems openly shares most of Taylor’s disclosures to those around her. After the tea party, she tells her friend, Faye, about what happened.

Yesterday, Lisa had a tea at her house. It was Camille, Taylor, Lisa, Adrienne and me. You know the stuff that Taylor has shared with me, and you at times? About the abuse? But I guess not everybody knew about the details.

Faye replies, “Well, yeah I know she didn’t want everyone knowing about it.”

“Well, Camille in the heat of the moment, said something about the abuse.” They continue to discuss Taylor’s situation and what patterns of abuse look like. After Taylor discloses to Lisa on the phone, with Kyle listening in, that she has left Taylor, Kyle is the one who announces this news to the other couples at dinner. “Taylor told us today that she left Russell.” Again, when talking to her daughter, Farrah, she brings up Taylor’s impending divorce. “I told you that Taylor left Russell, right?”

However, many things Taylor discloses to the women only complicate their relationship with both her and Russell.

If she doesn't want us to be involved in her relationship, she shouldn't say anything about what's going on because then when it's so hard for us to handle, then of course we're going to have an opinion. Let her therapist handle it. The professionals handle it.

Even Taylor recognizes this as she admits to Dr. Sophie "Through my therapy, I've realized I've caused a lot of tension between Russell and my friends because I've used them as a sounding board when things have been difficult. I'm coming to terms with the fact that its difficult for the women to like Russell considering the things they have heard about our marital problems." Even after Taylor leaves Russell, she recognizes that she has put her friends in a difficult position. "I just feel bad for dragging my friends into this mess that I got myself into. I mean just because I was living in an unstable situation you know, I just feel really bad about bringing them into the whole thing."

**Maxim four: Rule-based management system.** When it comes to the fourth maxim, privacy rules, some aspects are more apparent than others. While gender, culture, and context all can be factors that influence the development and execution of privacy rules, the most apparent factors are motivation to reveal or conceal and calculated risks. These two are largely hard to separate because the motivation to keep her abusive marriage secret has to do with the potential risks of having that information was revealed. As already discussed, several instances occur where Taylor is more or less willing to disclose details about her

marriage with Russell. However, the topic of marital abuse is not something she wants revealed, let alone discussed openly. Taylor makes this clear at the tea party when she pleads with Lisa that “I have to know who my real friends are because I am still struggling. And, I have a child. And, I have an enormous amount of responsibility. And, I’m honestly doing the best I can.”

The vague and veiled comments that both Taylor and her friends make concerning Taylor and Russell’s marriage seem to illustrate another rule surrounding that situation. It is only after Camille directly states what they had all been talking about that the other women are more specific in their references to Taylor and Russell’s marriage. Lisa gets too close to violating one of the rules when she asks Taylor bluntly, “If somebody raised a hand to you, for example...how long would we be there?” Kyle is visibly outraged at this “hypothetical example” and looks at Lisa and says, “Are you kidding me?” Lisa’s comment is too close for comfort for the women at the table and no one answers it. At the tea party, the women all tell Taylor that they are “all protecting you” by not being “honest” and specific about her situation with Russell. Their motivation to not reveal information is for Taylor and Taylor’s daughter’s safety.

However, that motivation becomes problematic, because the women are not sure if Taylor’s disclosures about her abusive marriage are even true. They question the reality of the claims Taylor makes about her marriage and are unsure whether she is in a dangerous situation. The motivation to know the truth overrides the hypothetical danger Taylor and her daughter are in and Taylor’s secret comes to light. After the fact, the women still comment on Taylor’s

motivation to keep this information private. "I think Taylor is scared that Russell might find out that she told us this stuff" says Kyle to her friend, Faye. Faye notes that Taylor "doesn't seem to want to address it yet," which might be another reason Taylor is not willing to disclose this information about her marriage. In another episode, Kyle comments, "I think she is still trying to protect Russell, but Camille was just repeating what Taylor's been telling us." Taylor herself tells Dedra that the reason she cannot forgive Camille is because having that information about Russell out in the open "puts her daughter in danger...She was the catalyst to a lot that will haunt me, that could hurt me, that can still hurt me very badly." Later in the night, Taylor has a breakdown and screams at Dedra that Camille "has hurt me so much! You have no idea what she has done to me! You have no idea what she has done to me!"

Taylor discloses personal information to Brandi about her marriage and therapy. Though Brandi and Taylor are in the beginning stages of a friendship, it seems as though Taylor is quick to disclose to Brandi because Brandi has just been through a divorce. Additionally, Brandi and her husband went through counseling, even though it was unsuccessful. Because Brandi is able to disclose information about her own experiences to Taylor, it seems that Taylor is more motivated to tell Brandi details she had not yet shared with her other friends. Brandi's advice and relatable situation serve as a motivator for Taylor when it comes to disclosing her own information to Brandi.

Concerning the emails Russell sends Lisa about his and Taylor's marriage, one can see his motivation for disclosing positive information to her.

Taylor even articulates his motivation for sending Lisa an “accurate” account of their current marital situation. “In his mind, I guess, he thought if he told her everything was hunky dory, she would rely that to the press as well.” Russell is motivated to disclose, but only to keep up appearances and to stop further press leaks about his marriage with Taylor.

After Russell’s suicide, Taylor decides to publish her memoirs and to openly discuss the abusive relationship she had with Russell. Russell’s absence allows many of the privacy rules concerning her marriage to be re-worked or abolished. For example, Lisa is hesitant to disclose too many details of what she knew about Taylor and Russell’s marriage, but Taylor assures her it is okay, that “it’s all out in the open now, anyway.” Lisa then discloses details about a text that Taylor had received from Russell while Lisa and Taylor were in Las Vegas for Lisa’s daughter’s bachelorette party. However, not everyone agrees with these altered privacy rules since Russell’s death. Brandi comments that she thinks it is inappropriate that Taylor wrote a book. “It’s been like a hot minute...Let him rest in peace.” Taylor defends her motivation for writing the book, as it would help other women who are victims of domestic abuse. It would also help her get out of the enormous debt in which Russell has left her.

**Maxim five: Privacy management dialectics.** The private-public tension is visible throughout both seasons, as Taylor does not always want to discuss her marital problems. There are moments when Taylor seems more willing to disclose personal aspects of her marriage and other moments when she is completely unwilling to reveal anything more than terse answers or vague

responses. Through the vague responses one can see Taylor's way of managing the tension between wanting to disclose and to conceal private information about her marital problems.

Sometimes the women ask Taylor how she is really doing or how things with her and Russell are going and she discloses little information. When Lisa asks her at the end of the first season how everything is, Taylor's replies tersely, "It's alright." Later, Taylor opens up more to Lisa when asked the same question. "It's good. Today was a long day. I'm a little bit emotionally exhausted. I think she allowed to give support where support is due." Though still vague, Taylor is willing to be more vulnerable and discuss her marriage more than she was in the previous episode. When asked about how therapy is going, Taylor seems more open to answer the question and continue the discussion. "Well, we're doing all this therapy and working on everything. It's really heavy stuff." Taylor freely discloses to Brandi how she is struggling through therapy. "Well, I mean I've had some instances where I've fallen to pieces and I was disoriented. I didn't know where I was. It was really scary. And so I took a few days off."

Other times, ambiguity helps Taylor politely address questions without disclosing more than she wants to share publicly. Lisa can tell that Kyle knows more of what is going on in Taylor's life than what Taylor cares to disclose to Lisa. "I see you're going through something and I know you said something to Kyle and I don't exactly know what. But, we are all here for you. Absolutely." Kyle asks Taylor about the resentment she said she had for Russell, to which Taylor replies, "It's just been a long time. I'm just tired. I've spent a lot of years."

## Summary

This chapter summarized the results revealed through a textual analysis of *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. More specifically, the findings of research question one, which sought to determine the types of disclosures that were made about Russell and Taylor's marriage, revealed ambiguity and secrecy as recurring themes. With respect to research question two, which dealt with the ways that the suppositions of CPM played out in the series, Taylor experienced tension about whether to reveal or conceal information about her abusive marriage. Also, boundary negotiations and attempts to control the spousal abuse secret were largely conveyed in the second season of the show. Finally, Taylor personally disclosing private information to the other housewives appeared to give those women license to gossip about Taylor's marital problems.



## Chapter Five: Discussion

This chapter begins by offering conclusions to the two research questions posed in this study. Next, the implications of the findings of this study are addressed. Finally, directions for future research are proposed and limitations of this study identified.

### Conclusions

Research question one sought to determine the types of disclosures made concerning Taylor and Russell's marriage. The analysis revealed several answers to RQ1. Many of the disclosures about Taylor and Russell's marriage followed the patterns of abuse addressed by Walker's (1979) cycle of violence theory. During the second season reunion episode, Taylor explains why she chose not to leave Russell sooner.

Well, I didn't report it because I didn't want him to go to jail. I loved him. And, he'd always tell me, 'Go ahead. Call the police. I'll go to jail and you and Kennedy will be on the street. I'll bankrupt you and I'll sue you until you have nothing.'

This speaks to the myth that Walker (1979) addressed concerning the type of women who are typically victims of abuse. "They fear social embarrassment or harming their husbands' careers" (p. 22). Russell also seems to fit the description of a batterer when Taylor discloses how closely Russell monitored Taylor's every move. "The first time I found a recording device...small tape recorder under the desk." She goes on to discuss how Russell made her take a polygraph test

concerning her fidelity, which she passed despite his claims that she must know how to fake a test.

The tenet that women who are victims of domestic abuse often do whatever it takes to keep the peace seems to epitomize Taylor's behavior. When her friends fight, Taylor is usually the one to step in to defuse the situation. When Kim, Kyle and Brandi get into a heated argument, Taylor gets upset and declares, "There will be no touching! No one is getting hurt." Dr. Sophie describes the responsibility Taylor takes for Russell as "the management of Russell." This constant "management" of Russell to avoid an episode of violence also explains the extreme stress and the breakdowns Taylor has during the second season of the show.

Some of Taylor's disclosures seem to hint at her and Russell's familiarity with the cycles. Taylor tells Kyle that she does not know how she is going to "let go of all the resentment," which characterizes the first phase of the cycle of violence theory as the woman struggles to deny her anger and resentment at being abused. This first phase is also characterized by the woman trying to make excuses for the man's behavior, which leads to the alienation of loved ones who desire to help. This is illustrated, as the women are confused about what to think about Russell. They hear horrible things about him and they do not like him, but Taylor desires for them to like him anyway. Phase two was never revealed on the show, which is no surprise because the physical abuse typically occurs within the secretive walls of the home. However, Taylor hints at phases two and three when

she says that “When Russell is good to me its better than any other kind of good I can imagine” but when Russell is bad “it hurts more than anything in the world.”

The delay in discussing when phase two occurs explains why Taylor’s friends desire to help her leave Russell is often met with silence or a subject change. When Taylor discloses to her friends about the abuse, it is most likely after phase three has already began. There is an interesting correlation between Taylor finding “her voice” through therapy and her finally getting the courage to leave Russell. Walker (1979) commented that despite her fear that therapy would only anger the abuser, she found that “The psychotherapy these women were receiving gave them the strength not only to talk about their experiences to others, but to end the battering relationship as well” (p. xii).

Research question two addressed the themes that emerged concerning Petronio’s communication privacy management suppositions. When it comes to addressing research question two, much of the boundary coordination and ownership of information revolved around Taylor and Russell’s secret concerning their abusive relationship. Though all of her friends knew what was going on, all of the women took great lengths to “protect” her by keeping the abuse a secret. It was interesting to find that the only rule that seemed to guide much of their conversations about Taylor’s marriage was, essentially, to not discuss the abuse in clear and open terms. Further, when the secret was finally exposed, the power of the rule collapsed and the women freely discussed the abusive aspect of Taylor’s marriage.

When it comes to control and ownership of private information, much of the information was portrayed as being possessed by Taylor, even though Russell had equal ownership in the information content. Russell, it seemed, did not know of many of the things Taylor had told her friends. However, whenever he did find out that people had access to private information he did not want them to possess, he used threatening tactics in an attempt to control the way that private information was handled. This was largely unsuccessful. It is also curious to note how much gossip surrounding Taylor and Russell's marriage was documented after the secret of abuse was disclosed. It was as though the women were given a small piece of ownership of information and that was justification enough to tell others what they knew and to offer their own opinion about the situation. Somehow, Taylor personally disclosing information to them gave them license to freely discuss that information, since they were now co-owners of information.

In terms of dialectics of private information, Taylor struggles between wanting others to know and not wanting anyone to know about her abusive relationship with Russell. Taylor discloses information about the abuse with all of the women, however, she also becomes enraged when Camille openly repeats what she had told her. Taylor tells all of the women about the abuse and all of the women offer to help her. Still, she does not accept help from them. It is as though she wants others to know but is not ready or willing to take the next step in escaping the abuse.

## Implications

As Walker (1979) asserted, “Understanding this cycle is very important if we are to learn how to stop or prevent battering incidents” (p. 55). Though this study did not set out to examine how people handle abusive relationships, many of the disclosures documented from the program seemed to fit into the pattern that the cycle of violence theory articulates. This is important because, even though the abuse Taylor suffered in her marriage was widely known by those around her, no one took action to get her help for which she was crying out. Rather, many of the women questioned whether or not the violence was even real because, if it was, they could not understand why she would keep going back to Russell. The women witnessed the cycle of violence being played out in front of them but seemed unable or unwilling to acknowledge it as such. The backstage information that occurred on the front stage in this program and was still not dealt with proactively gives rise to an important question. How many women in similar relationships express a veiled cry for help only to get responses of doubt about the truth about what they claim? Walker’s (1979) work was published over thirty years ago; however, these episodes of *Real Housewives of Beverly Hills* are occurring today. Perhaps we have not come as far as many of us would like to believe with regard to identifying and stopping the cycle of violence.

The more educated people are about the cycle of violence, then, perhaps more people would intervene when they see the warning signs of private disclosures and behavior, not waiting to see the physical proof of an abusive

relationship. If aspects of this theory were observable on a reality show where that secret is being kept, it is possible to observe these behaviors in real life and intervene. Though Taylor and Russell attempted to keep this secret in the backstage of their lives, smaller, telling behaviors and disclosures made their way to front stage and contributed to the overall disclosing of the abusive relationship. Perhaps this program and analysis will serve to instruct viewers and readers not to ignore signs of abuse and, rather, to take steps, however small, to help stop it.

### **Limitations**

Several limitations of this study must be addressed. First, only one coder was used to conduct this textual analysis. Having multiple coders would have helped present a wider range of perspectives, rather than rely on the sole opinion of the author. Additionally, the program was examined through one lens—communication privacy management. Using another perspective or multiple perspectives may shed new light on different communication phenomena being played out in the program.

### **Future Research**

This analysis and its respective conclusions and implications point to a need for further research along several lines. It might be beneficial to examine how marital disclosures, overall, are addressed in this television series. Additionally, several of the other installments of the Real Housewives franchise also depict marital problems and, often, serve to document the dissolution of marriages. Several other plot lines would have been interesting to investigate

using CPM. For example, in the first season, Camille Grammer's marriage to Kelsey unravels. This study focused solely on Taylor and Russell Armstrong, but focusing on a different cast member might shed light on different phenomena.

### **Summary**

Reality television is growing in popularity as an entertainment option today. Thus, the lessons it might teach us regarding communication phenomena ought to be explored. This study, grounded in Goffman's discussion of performances, used communication privacy management theory to examine how the five suppositions of the theory play out in the marital disclosures of Taylor and Russell Armstrong in the series *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. Many of the disclosures documented in this show revolved around the abusive nature of Russell and Taylor's marriage and the attempt to keep that information a secret. Aspects of the cycle of violence theory became apparent as the series progressed. The implications for this research is important as many of the women did not recognize the cycle of violence in action. This ignorance about what domestic abuse can look like can paint victims of domestic abuse as women who exaggerate, not as women who desire to get out but do not know how. Such programs could serve as more than mere entertainment if the public knew how to identify, communicate, and act when exposed to others who may be trapped in this vicious cycle.

## Appendix A: Taylor Armstrong Appearances

Episode	Start	End	Type	Situation	Disclosures	Notes
1	7:46	8:45	1 or 2	A talks of friendship with T	T: A is godmother to Kennedy	
	12:00	15:00	3	T gets filler, T featured	“leave me for a 20 yr old”	
	25:41	27:00	1 & 2	Girls go to Kings game	“I don’t know what to expect”	
	29:40	38:32	1	Plane, lunch		Talk Jiggy, surrogacy,
	37:30	37:22	2	Kim	Kim avoiding her	
	37:18	38:32	2	Kim	Stopped trying with Kim	
2	18:20	20:10	2	T stylist at home		“\$ buys convenience”
	31:33	32:23	2	Drinks with Linda Thompson	Talk parenting	
3	8:36	12:20	1	Couples just getting together for a meal		L heard from T- R “big, sexy cowboy” L laughs
	15:00	16:30	2 or 3	T packs for R, he tells her what to pack		R tells T he has to “squeeze in” business on friend trip—T mad
	16:34	18:54	1	Gang travels to Vegas	“going to Vegas with A is better than without A”	
	18:59	20:09	3	T & R check into room & talk	“I truly wanted to marry someone for love...”	“I so rarely have your undivided attention from the office”



	22:00	25:51	1	All eat		
	24:42	25:51	3	T & R talk about how they met		
	25:55	27:46	1 or 3	Out Dancing	R didn't even dance at their wedding, but dancing now	
	28:07	28:31	1	Ladies freshen up make up		
	28:29	32:48	1	All at the pool		
	31:49	32:29	3	Talk about where R is	"I was really irritated and disappointed"	K feels bad for T b/c R not there
	32:57	37:00	1	All eat		C: "R's back!" people laugh
	36:20	36:40	1	L talks about how T eats cotton Candy		
	37:10	40:01	2	All at the concert & after party	"I don't know any of his songs, but I like the NY song"	
	39:28	40:01		R wants to leave, T doesn't	When he says its time to go, it's time to go- R drives the bus in this relationship	
4	1:26	3:53	2	Buys K birthday jewelry		
	11:07	14:50	2	Plans party		
	29:02	31:40	2	Party		
	33:16	37:03	3	Party	"Russell spent more time at the party than I had expected"	

	40:07 41:23	41:08 43:20	Party Necklace vs. Dog	R didn't tell T about gift beforehand	him to"	"we had talked about this and we agreed- no dog"
5	6:07	8:44	2	Goes shopping with Kyle		
	9:45 27:15	10:30 32:00	2 1/2	Waiting in airport with girls to go to NYC	Opinion about the Kyle/Camille drama	
Russell	32:08	33:44	2/3	R asks for marital advice from Kent	R: Give us the secret. R: I go to bed mad and I'm not going to do that anymore.	
	33:52	35:15	1	In limo in NYC & out to eat		
	38:02	40:27	1	T & C alone- then drama at dinner		
	40:44	43:24	1	K & C fight at dinner	42:27 T: I just felt like everyone's feelings were getting hurt	
6	1:24	7:38	1/2	Fight continues (3:39- Kim brings T into fight "insecure")		
	16:56	20:00	Still	1		

			fighting- without C			
	20:52	21:57	1	T leaves A voicemail		
Russell	23:41	24:20	1	R tries to feed K	T: R has never, ever stayed alone with K for the weekend	
Russell	24:55	25:13	2	“	T: Can’t imagine what he will feed K	
Russell	25:45	25:56	1	“		
	28:49	29:17	1	At the play		
	31:07	36:21	1	After party for play- next day		
7	8:21	10:35	2/3	T takes K to doctor for dog allergies	T: I had told R no dog. I blame R. I just can’t believe he’s done this.	
	22:19	24:50	2	T & R meet to talk about the dog		
	26:34	26:50	2	Gets ready for party	T still upset about the dog	
	28:08	30:25	1/2	Arrive at party- meet Martin	To L : I wore pink in your honor	
	36:21	36:28	3	T cameo	Wishes her and R were affectionate like K & M	
Russell	36:28	36:45	2/3?	Asking K & M about marriage		
	40:12	43:18	3	K&T meet and talk	T: realize all the ways	“we’re so disconnected”

				marriage	your different	“we’re great business partners” constant approval
8	4:17	6:23	2	A and T kickbox— talks about her work at the crisis center		
	28:05	30:22	2	T at crisis center for poker tourn.	Discloses about family history with abuse	
	38:27	43:34		R & T leave for event & at event		R:It’s really unfortunate that you picked this weekend..
9	2:28	4:45	2	T & C go out to lunch— discuss dinner party		
	14:52	15:03	1	In car on the way to C’s		
	15:50	15:59	1	“		
	16:58	20:16	1	All arrive at C		
	20:32	30:47	1	Dinner party		
	30:55	38:41	1	Dinner party and exit		
	39:50	42:44	1	“		
10	7:40	8:01	2	At L’s charity event disuss Camille	T: Hasn’t called C yet	
	11:00	11:29	1	At event		
	15:26	17:03	1	T throws		

				20s costume party		
	21:15	22:24	1	T calls C about party		
	22:36	24:37	2	T & Kim get manis		
	30:00	31:19	1	T gets hair done		
	35:47	40:20	1/2	T & R arrive at party- mingle		
	42:13	43:12	1	T checks on K and C		
11	13:43	15:20	3		“Things have been really tense between R and me”	
	26:20	26:45	3	T & R arrive at K’s white party	T talks of wanting to have fun with R	
	28:10	28:40	1	T asks about Ken’s wild swan		
	29:38	30:40	1/3	T&R interact	K: T&R were not having fun, not on the same page	
	35:13	35:52	1/3	T likes Maurcio, good husband	T: I was sorta wishing I had the same thing	
	36:07	38:34	1--3	T taking picture with Ken, L asks T about marriage	L: I’m not sure if R T having a good time- barely been together	T: R is not someone whos mode you can change

	38:49	40:00	1-3	R wanted to go, T wants to stay		
	40:18	43:16	3	K asks T what happened- R left	T: its so rare that we get to dance and have fun	K: I felt bad for T
12	4:38	6:49	3	T crashes K and L's lunch		L: I see you are going through something and we are all here for you
	31:24	31:40	1/2	R had to work, T goes to grad party alone		
13	7:49	11:20	1/2	L & T talk about the K & C drama	R plans Bday for T	
	15:35	17:35	2	T meets with friend about giving dog away	T: go to Mexico to work on our marriage	
	21:24	22:17	3	T & R go to her party	T: try to best to not imagine life without R	
	32:36	33:45	2/3	R makes speech for T's bday, T talks to L about marriage		
	35:38	42:18	2	T confronts Kim about K & C drama		
	53:08	53:26		Ending blips		"Snow ball is happy in his

new home...but Taylor continues to struggle in her current one.

14*				
15	14:50	20:00	3	Focus on T
	21:45	22:31	3	R asked about marriage

Episode	Start	End	Code	Situation	Disclosures	Details
1	1:55	2:00	2/3	Show's intro	"I finally found my voice and I am not afraid to use it"	
	5:38	7:53	2/3	T meets with Dr. Sophie and walk trails	"R & I have a difficult marriage and that's a fact."	
	17:48	20:10	2	T meets K shopping, tells of running into Cedric		
	24:37		1/2	T arrives at A's party, hanging out		
	32:37	41:29	3	A's husband asks about T's marriage	psychotherapy	C & K comment in cameo
2	9:51	9:55	1	T leaving house		
	10:12	12:13	3	T rides with A, discusses therapy		
	13:20	20:20	1	All meet at airport, fly, in car, arrive		
	18:55	20:20		K asks L about therapy comment		
	24:39	29:55	1	Girls go out to eat at Beaver Creek		
	30:06	39:20	1	T checks on sick		

				Kim, get ready, ski		
	39:29	43:10	3	T and K get in hot tub	Talks about how scary it is to be alone	
3	1:25	4:47	3	“		
	5:22	13:00	2/3	T has a meltdown		
	15:18	16:20	3	Boys discuss R and T’s marriage		
	16:21	19:46	3	Ladies discuss T’s marriage		L: If someone raised a hand to you, how long would we be there?
	20:00	21:40	2/3	Kim comments on T, K & A talk about T in car ride home		
	23:22	24:17	3	C discloses to DD about T’s marriage		
	25:20	26:30	2/3	K tells Mauricio about T break down		
	34:34	37:02	3	K meets with life coach, talks about Beaver Creek	T: I should have never talked to my friends about my marriage.	Wants to get marriage on track, telling friends things good or bad is just confusing.
4	13:35	15:23	3	T visits K to talk about an article about her marriage in press—think its Lisa	T: R and I decided I should not be talking to my friends about my marriage	
	30:52	31:59	3	T arrives at K’s charity event, L asks how she is doing, comments on her weight		
	33:37	35:20	3	L talks to T again about her concerns		
	37:00	37:42	1/2	T talks to Brandi,		



	38:55	40:29	1/2	first meeting T & K talk about Brandi	
	40:30	41:27	2/3	T talks with someone to determined who leaked info to the tabloids	
	42:33		1/2	T and girls talk trash on Brandi	
5 DVR	1	6	1/2	T & K go to Dana's for lunch	
	14	17	3	T discloses to Brandi over dinner, counseling, etc.	
	20	23	4	K & M and L & K couples date, discuss T's weight and friendship	
	30	31	1	T arrives at A's party	
	36	37	1	T & C on trampoline	
	46	47	4	The girls discuss T's weight and marriage- Brandi drops "D" word	B: discloses T's information
	58	58	2	T cameo- about not wanting to roll her eyes at B or Dana	
6 DVR	4	7	2/3	T & Dana make cookies- T asks D to plan a game night because things are "too heavy" in hers	
	21	28	1/2	T arrives at party	
	30	31	1	All at Dana's game night	
	36	37	1	At the party, choosing teams	
	44	49	1	Playing the game, K&K fight	

	51	53	1	with Brandi K&K fight with Brandi	
	56	58	1	B confronts K&K, big fight	
7	1	9	1	T splits up the fight, people leave,	T: no one is touching anyone, no one will hurt anyone
	18	21	2	T meets with B to talk over lunch- talk about game drama	
	45	45	1	T comes to C's charity event	
	48	49	1	T at charity- focus on K and B feud	
8	6	8		T & K & Dana's kids play together, talk drama from game night "crystal meth" comment	
	18	18	1	T arrives to A's spa day	
	33	33	1	T told A where K & Kim were	
	42	43	1	K and Brandi try to make up	
	47		1	T tries to talk to Brandi about K&K drama	
9	4	4	2	L calls T to invite her to Pandora's party, sans R because him and the host don't get a long	
	4	7	2	T and D meet to look at cakes	
*	18		3	T prepares for K and M to come over for dinner	T:
*	37				

*	44	45			
10	3	4	2	T is getting filler in her face by Paul	T: Annoying when L tells her to eat
	6	8	1	“	
	8	9	4	L gets an email from R about his marriage defending it	
	14	16	3	Girls all hanging out, T leaves, L confronts T about email	T: R sent her the email because he had some inkling that she was leaking info to press, so in his mind if he tells her everything is hunky dory then maybe she will relay that to the press
	19	20	4	A, L, K talk about T's marriage	
	28	30	2	T discloses her anger at L about saying T doesn't have friends	
	32		1	T arrives at K's physic party	
	47	47	3	Psychic discloses about the "light" and "dark" in her marriage	
11	7	9	3	A tells R that T's marriage has gotten to the point that it is "physical"	
	16	16	2	T and R joke as she goes to the award ceremony	
	17	17	1/2	Friends come to support T	
	19	21	1/2	K tells T she told L about the event	T: I don't have any regrets about

				she wasn't invited, awards	Lisa not being there.	
	21	21				
	29		4	Girls talk about T's weight, R sent email to Lisa		
	31	36	2	L confronts T about not getting invited to T's even	T: Please don't be my enemy because my life is tough enough as it is.	
	39		2	Fight with L continues & storms out		
	41	41	3		T: I am not wild about my husband 90% of the time.	
	42	42	3		T: I need to know who my friends are because I am still struggling. And, I have a child.	
	46	49	4	L and girls discuss T's marriage	L: I'm saying telling people your husband abuses you.	T's abusive relationship is openly discussed.
	56	59	4	T comes back, fighting continues about T's marriage	C: This is an intervention that was unexpected, but possibly needed.	
12	1	5	4	Tea party recap and continues		T & L resolve their drama, but not T and C
	8	10	4	K tells Faye about T's marriage		
	18	20	4	T, A, & C talk about fight and T's marriage	C: Every girl at that tea knew exactly what was going on.	
	20	24	2	T prepares for Kennedy's 5 <sup>th</sup>		

	27	31	2	birthday party More preparing, R shows up		
	36	37	2	Kennedy's birthday party, greet Brandi		
	44	44	2	Kennedy's Party		
	47	49	3	K talks about T's marriage		
*	56	59		T gives speech at K's birthday		
13	7	11	3	T and R go to therapy together	T: We clearly love each other. When R is good to me it is better than any kind of good I can imagine.	R: The good news is nothing in this marriage has been so damaging that we can't recover.
	28	30	3	T & R discuss her tension between her and C	T: about how her disclosures about R to friends creates tension between friends	
	31	31	1/4	T and K greet each other, discuss seeing C	K: awkward to see R K: C was just repeating with T told us	
	31	33	2	They arrive, T is nervous to see C	T: it's weird having R at A's event	
	41	42	2	T runs into C, will talk later		
	57		2	T recounts encounter with C		
14	23	24	2	T talks about drama with C and how she doesn't want to be her friend.		
	27	29	3	K wants to know about the abuse, T vents about C	K: I think T is worried that R will hurt her if he knows what C said	
	31	31	2	T still vents to K		
	32	32	2	T & K show up to		

	36		1/2	B's party Girls dancing at B's party, steps outside, snide comment in C's earshot	T: feels weird bumping into C	
*	39		3	DD talks to T about C, talks about C putting her kid in danger	T: that can still hurt me very badly	
	47	51	2/3	Convo continues about C's disclosure about her marriage, breaks into a fight	T: you have no idea what she has done to me	A tries to cover her mouth to keep her from saying too much
	53	53	1	T & K leave		
	57	59	2	T asks for a light in the ride home, wants to pull over, acting erratic	T: I can't relax. I'm so stressed out.  K: I think she is realizing the severity of her situation	K: I don't believe that T's breakdown has anything to do with Malibu...thinks its about her personal life. T can't remember much of the night because she drank too much
15	1	5	2/3?	T & L meet up to talk about the fight with C		
	5	7	4	C, B, DD talk about fight and how T is putting her family in jeopardy		
	27	30	2	T in Las Vegas with L		
	33	35	1	T, L and girls out to dinner at Pandora's bach. party		
	36	37	1	Girls head out to Chippendales		
	44	46	1	At Chippendales		
	47	49	1	Dancing with the guys		

16	1	4	4	A tells Paul about R wanting to sue C over what she said
	10	11	4	A calls K to tell her about R suing C
	15	17	4	"" not sure about going to white party now
	22	22	4	C doesn't want to resolve things about the email at the party
	23	24	4	K & L discuss lawsuit and what to do about T&R
	27	29	4	" " A and Paul and M join in the conversation
	42	50	4	T&R head to party, the gang discusses how to turn them away from party
	56	59	3/4	Turn T and R from party, K follows T to car
17	1	6	3/4	T&R leave, they talk after about it
	19	22	3	T goes to therapist, discusses white party fiasco
	53	53	3	T leaves R
	56	59	3/4	"
18	14	16	4	K tells everyone that T left R
	41	44	3	T visits Dana, tells her about leaving R
19	2	2	4	K tells her daughter, Farrah, that T left R
	31	33	4	T brought Dr. Sophie to Surr's

	40	42	4	opening T and Dr. Sophie leave for the party, discloses about maybe not wanting to go to the party, running from her friends	T: feels bad for dragging her friends into this mess she got herself in. Just because I was living in an unstable situation.
	1:02	1:09	3/4	T arrives at the party, L confronts T about her eye being bruised, T tells friends about what happened with her and R	
	1:12	1:14	3/4	T discloses about her marriage ending	
20	49	50	4	K: Since Russell died, we haven't seen a lot of Taylor.	
	50	50	1	T shows up to K's for a hangout	
	56	56	3	"Taylor has been trying to keep afloat after the tragedy. Facing financial and legal issues, she is publishing her memoirs."	
21*	26	36	3/4	T asked questions about how she is doing, ladies give their reactions	
22*	39 29	42 31	3/4 3/4	" Brandi comments on T writing a book, they fight	
	56	59	3/4	T discloses about abuse with	



23*	1	6	3/4	R, girls comment T discloses more about R and her book
	18	18	4	Ken asked about the therapy comment

*Note.* The coding for column four is as follows: (1) Taylor appears on screen, (2) Taylor discloses non-marital information, (3) Taylor or Russell discloses marital information, (4) Others disclose information about Taylor's marriage. Column five notes what the disclosure was. Column six describes the situation. Column seven records relevant notes of the author as the show progressed. T= Taylor, R= Russell, L= Lisa, K= Kyle, A= Adrienne, M= Marucio, C= Camille.

## Appendix B: Armstrong Martial Disclosure Transcriptions

S1, E1--- “Everything might look perfect, but it’s not. It’s a land of make believe” – Taylor’s voice and image of her and Russell (INTRO)

“Beautiful women are a dime a dozen around here. Especially, 20 year old beautiful women and my husband is masculine, there is not blurring that issue. Oh, Lord he’s going to leave me for a 20 year old.” ---while getting filler

C: “I don’t want to put myself in a position where I don’t have the ability to care of myself in the event that one of these days, you know, the younger better thing comes along and you know, things happen. (laughs)”

C: “I just read online that you put 10mill dollars into her company”

C: “Our marriage is 80% business and 20% romance- but that’s something I signed up for”

S1, E3---

“It’s nice to getaway just the two of us, I so rarely have your undivided attention away from the office”

“A weekend with no kids” R and T” and no work”

C: “I truly wanted to marry someone for love, as opposed to just marrying to get to where I wanted to be in life. But I knew when I married R he worked non-stop. That he someone who was not going to be there holding my hand, and, you know, be by my side 24 hours a day. Cus its always been the way it is. I hope it was the right thing to do” (just the two of them in hotel room)

T: we met in a restaurant waiting for a table. And, I saw him from a distance and I just knew I was going to be with him one way or another.

L: I just don’t believe for one second that Taylor noticed R from across the room. Are you kidding me?

R: I ran for three months. (All out to eat)

T: My husband didn’t even dance at my wedding, so this was a first for R and me to get up and dance together. ©

K: C I felt bad for T. I could tell that she was either or embarrassed or felt sad that he left. I felt bad.

T: C I was really irritated and disappointed because I wanted to spend time with him. And, I wanted him to have a chance to bond with my friends and our husbands and he wasn’t there.

R: Let’s get some food.

T: C I was bummed. I didn’t want to leave. I was having a good time. We’re in Vegas. When he says its time to go its time to go. Russell, you know, drives the bus in this relationship.

K: C I would be so annoyed if M did that to me. Party was over for t. Not good.

Episode 5:

R: So, Ken, give us the secret. How do you make it last forever?

K: Never go to bed, to sleep in a fight.

R: I go to bed mad, and I'm not going to do that anymore.

Episode 7:

T: C I had told R no dog. I blame R. I just can't believe he's done this.

T: I'm really struggling with this whole snowball issue. You asked me about getting Kennedy a dog and I specifically told you she wasn't ready and now she is allergic to the dog.

R: Well, she does seem to be getting better.

T: C I blame Russell. Seeing my child getting sick. It was making me for frustrated with R day by day for purchasing a dog against my wishes.

T: C I should have never been put in this situation.

T: C I'm still upset with R about the dog. But I am going to put it behind me and put on a happy face because that's what I do.

T: C When I see how affectionate M and K are I wish that R and I were more like that. I don't know why we can't be like that.

R talking to M& K: So , the first how many years were challenging?

Episode 8:

T at Crisis center

T: discloses about her history and experience with physical abuse "My earliest childhood memory literally in blue footed zip up pajamas was someone waging an attack on my mother and that is why I connect so heavily with the work being done at the crisis center.

Episode 11:

T: C You know R and I have some great days together, but then we have some average days together. Just like everyone else. Things have been really tense between R and me lately. You know the business side of our relationship has just seemed to take over. He works. I work. We have kind of forgotten to take time to be a romantic couple. We just need to take some time out to have fun together. I don't know if this is just typical marriage ups and downs, but this is definitely something we need to work on.

T&R arrive at K's white party

T: C I am really looking forward to having some fun with r tonight. It has been way too long since we've just have hung out and had fun together.

T: C It really shows how much they enjoy their life together—

L: R and T did not seem to be having that much fun at the white party. I am not really sure what was going on with them that night. But they were def not on the same page.

T: It's such a happy occasion. I was just trying to enjoy myself and R is really different. You can't lure him into the fun.

T: C I really like m. He lets K be who she is. Just the fact that he is a strong guy who can also be sensitive with her. And he would do a first dance and in front of all of the those people and he feels confident enough to do something like that. – I was sort of wishing I had the same thing. And, I could get my marriage a point where we could have those same moments.

T taking picture with K, L asks about marriage

L: How's everything with you.

T: It's alright.

L: C I am not sure if T and R are having a good time or not. I mean they have barely been together all night.

T: c R is not someone whose mood you can change. It's a bummer for me because I see everyone's having fun and the husbands are participating. I wish I could find a way to bring him over from the dark side to the fun side.

R: Well, let's go. Let's do it.

T: C R wasn't having fun and engaging.

T: I kind of want to say.

R: Sorry.

T: C I have left enough times when I didn't want to leave. I just felt like, you know, I needed to do what I wanted to do. So I stayed. It makes me feel sad and a little lonely even though I am surrounded by people, you know, I feel little alone (through tears)

K: What happened?

T: Well, he left. I'm like. It's so rare that, you know, we get to dance and have fun.

K: Did he say he's mad and I want you having fun?

T: No he just said. I'm done I'm going to go home. And, I feel bad.

K: Does he not like to see you have fun?

T: I just don't..I don't know.

K: C I felt bad for T because if my husband ever did that, I would really feel bad

T: I feel so disconnected and I think its because he's so busy in his mind worrying about all these deals and ventures..

K: I know, but no offensive, my husband is busy too, worrying about all these deals, but he doesn't get upset like that.

T: But I (stops herself and looks like she might cry...)

K: C I don't know what she and R has. But it seems to me that T is always questioning whether she deserves to be happy or not.

T to K: I gotta go. I need to get a good night's sleep and not be worried.

T: C you know this night shoulda been a lot of fun, and it was, you know, for everyone else. I feel like I have this life I want to celebrate. I just wish he would celebrate with me.

## Episode 12

L: So, how's everything with you?

T: It's good. Today was a long day. I'm a little bit emotionally exhausted. I think she allowed to give support where support is due. (to L about K and her holding hands)

L: I see you're going through something and I know you said something to Kyle and I don't exactly know what. But, we are all here for you. Absolutely.

T: laughs that was my soap opera look.

L: Stop laughing and joking, because often your laughing and joking is masking what you are feeling.

L: C I want T to take things a little more seriously. I have been privy to Taylor being upset before. So the fact that her marriage, um, had a few problems was of no surprise to me.

L: Here's to being honest (cheers—looks at Taylor)

## Episode 13:

T: C Rather than continuing down the path that we have been on and struggling. R and I have decided to take a trip to Mexico and really spend time and talking about our needs and what it is we can do to get our marriage on track.

T: C It's obvious that R and I have been having a tough time, as of late. When we get to Mexico we have got to figure this out and we've got to make changes.

T: C We're on our way to this great birthday that he has planned for me, and I'm just hoping we can set all of our emotional issues aside and just have some fun together and laugh and see our friends and just some fun.

T: C I do my very best to just hope for the best and to not think about what my life would be like if r and I weren't to make it. It's just something I am really hoping is not going to happen.

R makes speech for T's birthday

R: I want to thank everyone to coming to T's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. It's been a wonderful year. Um, I really look forward to the next year, and um, happy birthday.

T: thank you all for coming, I'm not 30, I'm 39.

L: Everything good?

T: Everything's good. You know it's my birthday. I'm going to Mexico tomorrow.

L: I know, I heard that. Maybe now is, like, the time you need to go forward and be honest with what you want you know?

T: Just to have a conversation about what is missing and what each of us needs. But I think its fair to ask those questions and put in all the effort we can.

L: I just hope you are honest with yourself and get what you want from life.

L: C I m not sure about T really. I think she kinda craves that Beverly Hills lifestyle, maybe more than truly being happy.

L: Were there for you. Were all supportive in whatever you want to do.

T: I know, thank you.

Season close blip “Snowball is happy in his new home...but Taylor continues to struggle in her current one”

Episode 15:

Q: Is there love in the marriage?

T: Yeah, there is definitely love there. I think there was, um, some inattentiveness probably on both of our behalves. Children and work and all these other things start to become the priorities and you forget to pay attention to the things that are the foundation of your marriage. And I think we let that happen for too much time. (tears)

Q: What came of Mexico?

T: we spent some time relaxing and then we had some really serious conversations about the things had to change or they had to end. And we definitely agreed that we want to keep our family together. I def feel that I need to be more assertive about what I need.

Q: What do you, as a friend, see in this relationship? (to Kyle)

K: I think, like T said, they need to learn to communicate better. I think she hasn't wanted to go there yet because I don't think she felt she deserved that or that, you know, that every relationship had that.

Kim: I think you need to show him a little bit more of what you need for yourself.

A: It could also be that she lost respect for him.

Husbands join, R asked about marriage by Andy

A: what was it like watching Taylor upset, confiding to Kyle about your relationship?

R: It was difficult. You know, the last 3 years have been very challenging for the entire country. I've candidly have been working 80 hour weeks and its very easy to get preoccupied with kids, and business and the day to day grind.

A: What did you think when you heard your wife say she was scared you were going to trade her in for a 20 year old?

R: I don't have the energy for a 20 year old. So. I wasn't that concerned.

Episode 1:

T: I finally found my voice and I'm not afraid to use it. (Intro credits for show)

T: R and I have a difficult marriage. That's a fact. Therapy is incredible amount of work. But you are fighting for your relationship and your kids. It's hard. It's really hard. Therapy is helping me find my voice. It is allowing me to find the strength to speak up.

Paul asks about T's marriage to all

T: We're working on things. We are knee deep in so much psychotherapy that I'm sick of myself. And, so it's been really helpful for each of us to take a look at our own lives and what we brought into the relationship and how its effecting our time together. You know. It's been good for me I know, I can't speak for Russell...

C: C I think it is very admirable that T and R are working on their marriage through therapy. My ex never gave me that opportunity.

K: whose idea was it to go?

T: It was mine.

K: was he open to it?

T: yeah. I mean it took some time.

K: Believe me, I have friends who can't get their husbands to go.

Ken: I absolutely wouldn't go. Maybe Americans are different. I wouldn't want my wife going to a therapist. I think its up to the man, if your woman's not happy, you've got to make her happy. You've got to sort it out yourself. If I had to go to a therapist to make my marriage better, I would feel weak.

T: C Did he just call me weak for trying to work on my own mental health and save my marriage for my child?

T: (to K) So hard for me, but when ken, just now, was making it a sign of weakness to be in therapy that really hurt my feelings. I didn't think that was nice at all. You are carrying a dog around BH dressed up in clothes. My husbands in therapy and that's weak? I mean, I don't know, that hurt my feelings rally bad. That wasn't nice. I don't care what they do in England, I'm trying to keep my family together.

K: I think it takes a lot of courage and strength not only to do that, but to admit it to the table like that. I also thought was a little below the belt.

Ken: Where's taylor? Did I do wrong talking about her therapy?

K: I think you offended her a little bit.

Ken: Offended? That's a big word.

L: this is ken's opinion, stiff upper lip and all that.

Ken: Did it upset you, me saying that?

T: It did.

Ken: I wouldn't just attack you and say therapy is a sign of weakness. That is just not my style.

T: You know, I'm really fragile right now. I'm going through so much. It's just, just a lot.

T: C As usual, you know, once again, I felt judged.

## Episode 2

T and A in car, discuss therapy

A: How are you doing, by the way?

T: Well, we're doing all this therapy and working on everything. It's really heavy stuff.

A: And even people who have a good marriage have to work on it.

T: If I don't start speaking up about the little things in the moment, even if its just you know a rest. He wants to go to and I don't want to go to, you know just making it a point to say ' I really don't want Italian right now. That's important for me to say the little things.

A: Wow. Have you always, for six years, gone along with what whatever he's said?

T: Pretty much.

A: That's amazing. I could never do that.

## T & K Talk in hot tub

T: You know, I spent, pretty much my whole life alone. I didn't even get married till I was 34. So, the thought of being alone again, its just so frightening to me. Maybe more than other people. It's like, I've been alone. The majority of my life. You know, I've only been a couple for six years. So its almost like I'm so banking everything on it working so I almost don't have to be alone again.

K: How do you think you'd give it?

T: You know what, my therapist said a year. He said it would take a year for me to let go of the anger and the resentment.

K: what are you angry about?

T: just holding my voice for so long. And, sometimes I think, are we ever going to get there?

K: Where you ever there?

T: No. I've never been there.

T: C The thought of being alone would be a vacancy in my heart. And, just not having someone there just next to you. It was just really overwhelming for me.

T: I don't know how I'm ever going to let go of the resentment.

K: what is all the resentment? What is it about?

T: (tears) It's just been a long time. I'm just tired. I've spent a lot of years..

L: T doesn't ever say what the real issue is. She just tells me how she's feeling and sort of hints at things.

T: I just want so badly to make it work?

K: Why? I'm sorry to say that. I know you have a child, but I don't understand.

T: I'm scared.

K: you're never going to be a lone. You have your friends.

T: And, I love him. I do.

K: I wouldn't be fighting for something that is really not worth fighting for, to be honest. Your blaming yourself and it's not you.



K: C I see a difference in Taylor. She's lost a lot of weight. I see that she's stressed and she's not eating. I see that she really is a broken person right now.  
K: Don't fall into that trap. You're stronger than you think, you know. You're not happy. You're not.

L: C T's drunk nearly a whole bottle of wine, she's drunk and there are tears.  
T to Kim

Kim: You do not need him to be okay. You need yourself to be okay.

Kim: C saying T drank too much

T: we were so poor, and I am so terrified of going back to that.

Kim: Everyone has problems.

T: But not everybody admits them. I guess I feel so fragile because of everything I'm going through.

K: C I don't know if it was the combination of the alcohol and being so thin, the altitude, but she starts to go crazy.

Kim: C I think Taylor was having a horrible moment.

A: C she really seemed disoriented.

K: C I do not feel this is a normal reaction to someone losing their make up bag.

A: c I believe that Taylor is drinking too much to cope with her marriage because her behavior is irrational.

C: C Lis and A didn't give me specifics, bu they told me t was downstairs and she seemed to be extremely upset.

Kim: You look like you worked through it.

T: Im trying. I really am.

L: C she seems to be in a very dangerous place in my opinion.

A: I think she's having a nervous breakdown, I swear to God.

C: Taylor's outside, her and Kyle were talking, this is all I'm getting. And, then, what happened?

L: They were in the Jacuzzi they had a few drinks, often when people have a few drinks they often..

C: C Lisa grabbed me and told me its not good.

T: I never eat.

A: you're having a nervous breakdown. Yeah you are. I can see it.

A: Come on, pull it together. Seriously. Don't drink though. Have some water (whispered secretly to T)

L: C T just always looks like such a victim to me. And, seems to dissolve into tears all the time.

A: the history is way long. You can be married and be alone. But sometimes when you are afraid to leave a situation it is because of loneliness.

M: Let me ask you a question. R and T?

P: C R and T's marriage. In general, you know its what he says, she says, and, then, what the real truth is. So, who knows what is going on in that relationship.

P: T was telling us that R and T are doing therapy and apparently its helping them. Everyone can use that. Now, Kens' thought was basically, why do you need that?

Ken: I think I said me being an old fashioned brittish guy, um, I don't believe in therapy. But that was for me. I am actually sorry I said it. I didn't realize it would upset T so much. And she ended up in the bathroom crying. But I happen to like T and I think she is going through a lot.

Paul: I hope it works out for them.

R: R doesn't cheat on me.

A: but other things could be worse...

A: C I have not seen R treat T poorly, however there are rumors in BH that he does. And I also know what she has told all the girls, and so. I don't know what to think.

L: If some body raised a hand to you, for example,

K: Are you kidding me?

L: Exactly. How long would we be there?

K: Let's just fast forward for a minute and pretend that you have strength and the courage and the time you thought you already put in to this and you left?

T: and the safety of my daughter?

L: Don't you really feel that maybe you really deserve better than what you've been treated, really?

T: I think I don't believe that.

A: C she doesn't really know what to do. I think she is afraid to leave. I think she is afraid to be alone. And, I'm not quite sure if she is ready.

K: If it doesn't work, you are not a failure.

A: Sometimes two separate happy homes are better than one miserable home.

K: If you are in love with someone and you really have something worth fighting for and saving you do everything you can in your power to save that. However, I don't feel that from T.

T: But I'm in love with him and that makes me so sad.

A: Are you in love with him or you afraid to be alone?

K: C I felt like poor T had the worst time of it all.

A: C the trip was emotionally draining. I left with kind of a heavy head hoping that T would be okay.

K: What a night that was last night.

A: you know what? It was bad. Really, really, bad. It was bad for T because I feel so bad for her period. But yet I have never seen her so skinny. Ever.

K: She is so stressed she can't eat. I think she has so much going on and she hit her breaking point.

K: C I really think it was a combo of the altitude and the alcohol.

K: I feel like, is she really fighting for something that she really really wants, though?

C& DD talk

C: Uncomfortable moment with T, she was going through something with her husband. She started crying at the table that you know she said she was at her breaking point. I could see the pain in her face, I could feel her pain.

DD: You think they will be able to work it out?

C: I hope so. I hope they can work it out for their daughter.

DD: But at least they are going to therapy. I mean, you guys didn't.

K tells M of break down

K: It was like all of the sudden she just snapped like that. I feel like this girl is so fragile and she's very vague about it.

T meets with life coach

T: C R and I are doing marriage counseling and I have a life coach that I am working with to help me find my voice and speak up.

T: I think I had a panic attack. I started to get emotional and I couldn't get the reigns back on it. Camille, she just went through a divorce, so she's feeling this horrible loneliness and she was also betrayed in her marriage and so she was giving it to me from her perspective. And, then, my friend, Lisa, she has this incredibly strong marriage where she wears the pants and she runs the show and, so she can never imagine being in my kind of marriage. And, then, Kim is divorced and has been for a long time and she's felt the pain of that and so she has her perspective. And, I feel like by the end of the trip and I just couldn't handle it anymore. I was taking on everyone's version of what it was and I feel like I just literally had a break down.

T: C In retrospect, I should have never talked to my friends about my marriage because its only confused me and complicated matters. .. I really want to get my marriage on track and I recognize that by telling my friends things, good or bad, it's just confusing me.

Episode 4:

T: I wake up today, and get a call from my husband that there is an article in the press about my marriage and I'm not happy.

T: C R and I decided that I should not be talking to my friends about my marriage. Now, there's a gossip site featuring pieces of our personal life. This is not good.

K: (reading) T's a sweet girl...she's not acting like herself..

T: It says I'm barely eating.

K: No, I know you've been stressed.

T: I have been stressed, but this is not helping.

K: This is like, personal stuff.

T: Detailed.

K: That's weird. Where would that come from?

K: C Your first thought is it has to be someone you know, but then you think, would they do that? ....Does R know about this?

T: Yes. Yes. He is furious. He's like who of your friends has done this? There is too much information here for this to be a random source.

L & T talk

L: How are you doing?

T: I'm good.

L: how are you really doing?

T: I'm good.

L: you have lost so much weight. You've dropped a hell of a lot of weight. I'm worried about you.

L voices her concerns about T

L: I am very worried about this young lady. I am seriously worried about her. Every time I see you, you are in tears. Something very serious is going on here. And I am very concerned about your arms I am very concerned about how you are looking. In two weeks I've seen you drop ten pounds, and you needed to put on ten pounds. You need to eat.

T: I am eating.

L: T, you have admitted to me you aren't eating. ..If you need to get the (Bleep) out of there then you do it. And, you regroup. Right now, if you need something sorting out. I'll help you.

Episode 5

T meets Brandi for lunch

T: So, I'm in marriage counseling.

B: Been there.

T: How'd it work out for you? (laughs)

B: We're divorced.

T: Exactly. It's made me super vulnerable and I haven't handled it well.

B: What do you mean?

T: Well, I mean I've had some instances where I've fallen to pieces and I was disoriented. I didn't know where I was. It was really scary. And so I took a few days off.

B: I was in therapy and it was really stressful. I actually, at the time, lost a ton of weight. I couldn't gain weight if I wanted to. I was anxious all day long.

B: I wouldn't recommend doing what I did. Get a mediator. Don't fight it out in court. It's a disaster.

T: No, I would never. I mean, I'm not that girl. I would try.

K&M and L&K couples date- discuss T's weight and friendship

L: We all know that, Taylor, is I mean, really whatever you are doing right now is not working. She's always crying every time I see her. And, she has dropped so much weight.

K: So T, I know you aren't a fan.

L: I am not going to compromise and say "I'm your best friend" just because she is in trouble.

A, K, B talking about T

K: Can we make sure T ate something?

B: I told her earlier she was on the divorce diet.

K: what is the divorce diet?

B: When you are getting a divorce, you eat all day long, but you like get really skinny.

K: Is she getting a divorce?

B: I think she's going to after our conversation.

K: What did she say?

B: She said they are working on it and she's doing it for her child. Working on her marriage for her daughter.

Dana: Just so you know guys, seriously, she eats a ton with me. And, I look heavy and she looks skinny.

Episode 6:

T asks Dana to throw a game night,

T: I appreciate the fact that you would be willing to do it at your house, just things are just so heavy in my life right now. I could use time where I am just a guest.

Episode 9:

K&M eat at T's house

K: C T will tell us things that make us not like R, and it's very difficult because then when we see him, he is very polite and seems like a nice person. It's very confusing for everyone.

R: So, did you hear the big story today? Us Weekly. We officially separated today.

M: and, yet we are having dinner.

K: I would be so upset.

R: I don't mean to falsely accuse anyone.

R: A certain person we all know, told me that Lisa is very good friends with the editors at US magazine.

K: C It's not like there is one person who knows about T and R's marriage.

Everybody in town knows. You know, she and R having problems. This is the gossip around town.

Episode 10:

L gets an email from R, defending marriage

L: I just got an email from R. "Here's the real story so no need to worry. Don't believe the rumor mill. We have not split. We are absolutely not separated. Our relationship is in a good place right now. We're really happy. We are very much in love and have no idea where any of the false stories of us are coming from. Our marriage is stronger than ever and our business is up 900%" Why has he sent that to me?

K: No.

L: I am totally confused. Is this because I extended a hand to her. You know, a subtle way of saying I shouldn't interfere. Anyway, I am confused.

L confronts T about email

L: Before you go, why would R email me?

T: I don't know. What did he say? Maybe he emailed everybody.

L: No, just me.

T: Well, I don't have time to talk about this now. I'm late. But, um, I'll ask him.

T: C R sent her the email because he had some inkling that she was leaking information about our marriage to the press. So, in his mind, I guess he thought if he told her everything was hunky dory she would rely that to the press, as well.

A,L,K talk about T

A: What's happening with T and R? Why are they saying they are happier than ever?

K: Maybe they feel that it's no body's business, the public's business.

A: But then how did it get out that they broke up?

L: but they haven't broken up, so there's not point. All a mystery.

L: C Camille has specifically said she never sees her or speaks to her (T)

Psychic discloses information about T's marriage during séance

P: Your relationship with your husband is very different. It has the light spots and the very dark, like darkness that has to do with the mob or something to do with, you know, that doesn't mean this lifetime. You had a relationship with him where you involved with people that were the light and the dark. So the thing is for you to find that comfortable space with someone who understand you and isn't all about money, money, money. I'm not saying your husband is all about that. I don't even know your husband. But I am trying to find you a happy place to find your own ability to make your own choices without fear. It's really about feeling stable and being secure without having to depend on somebody.

Episode 11

A&P eat dinner, talk T&R

A: I'm a littler concerned about T. A little concerned, I'm very concerned.

P: therapy made it worse?

A: I don't know what's going on with her. You'll say hi to her and she'll practically break down crying. It is non-stop. According to Taylor, their relationship has gotten to the point where it is very physical.

P: Is it true?

A: I don't know because I've never witnessed it.

A: C It has been very difficult for me to like R considering what T has told me about her situation.

P: His personality doesn't seem like that, though. He seems so mellow.

A: I only know what she tells me. She gets emotionally, so distraught over what he has done, fifteen minutes later the next day, its like nothing ever happened. Its very confusing.

A: C I want to be there for her. But the stories are so severe that its very difficult to understand why she goes back to a situation like that.

P: I don't know if I believe it. C'mon.

A: I have never seen it so I don't like to judge people unless I see that for my self. I don't know.

At L's tea party

L: I got another email from R today. Did anyone else get one?

K: I got it.

C: (reading)"I only wanted to lose a few pounds before a big event and decided to take a diet supplement."

A: Why would she take diet pills?

L: Why would he send it to us?

T: I'm not wildy about my husband 90% of the time. So, welcome aboard.

T: But I have to know who my real friends are because I am still struggling. And, I have a child. And, I have an enormous amount of responsibility. And, I'm honestly doing the best I can.

K,A,L discuss T's marriage

L: I don't know. I am unsure. And, you've all voiced the same opinion to me.

L: C It seems silly to me that we are focusing on my relationship with T when we have heard so many terrible things T's marriage.

A: How could somebody live with somebody that is so horrific to this person and then five minutes they're best friends. Its hard.

K: A. Its either not true. Or B. Its classic typical situation where they are in denial.

C: When she came over for lunch, she talked to me for almost three hours about she thought it was over. And, then, after we had this long conversation about she knew that it was over and it was the end. She gives me a hug and then she's telling me she's leaving on a G4 with a smile on her face. And. I'm like "how can you be leaving on a G4 if he's leaving you?" That to me is a mixed message. That's when I'm like whose telling the truth here.

K: Maybe she's exaggerating things or maybe, people, people say they have more than they have.

L: I'm talking about saying your husband abuses you. Its a very different thing to say I have more than I have.

K: If its not true, I don't want to be associated with any talk of this because that is horrific. Unless, I see something with my own eyes, I just can't say.

T returns, intervention

C: C This in an intervention that was unexpected, but possibly needed.

C: We just kind of rehashed the situation you're going through with your husband.

K: L's saying that she doesn't like him based on what you've told him.  
T: Why are they talking about this (quietly)  
K: Look, maybe I'm saying maybe they had a fight and it was exaggerated and  
T: Over six years?  
K: I don't know. Listen, my point is.  
T: Why is this about my marriage?  
C: I said that you talked to me for three hours, said that your husband was definitely leaving you. And when you hugged me you said you were leaving with your husband on a G4 some where. And, I went, that is so odd.  
T: C I feel like I have no idea who my friends are. I am so confused. I am in shock.  
T: Everyone's talking behind everyone's back. So, let's just start being honest...I think everyone should start saying what they mean.  
C: Okay, well I think we got it here today.  
T: Well, I don't think we got everything, but okay.  
C: But everything, T, I don't think you want everything out there. You said everything. I would be careful. Because we are all protecting you.  
All: we are all protecting you.  
T: About my marriage?  
C: About what you told us about your marriage. We've been protecting you. Because we don't say that he hits you. Because we don't say that broke your jaw or that he beat you up and that he hits you. We don't say that but now we say that.

## Episode 12

### Tea party continued

C: We're supposed to walk around saying "Yay we can't wait to see R". but we don't know if it's true because you come over and you don't have any signs of physical abuse on your body.  
T: That is really uncool.  
L: C We had all talked to T many times in private, but I think she was shocked that C laid it out on the table. C is angry with the inconsistencies with T and R relationships and this has just been the straw that broke the camel's back.  
C: you have to be honest. You need to be honest. That's not cool (Leaves).  
T: What she just said, was above and beyond what needs to  
L: Well, you know, we've been skating around it for so long. I, as I said, I believed what you said to me about your marriage, initially. That's why I didn't like him.

### K tells Faye about T's marriage

K: Yesterday, L had a tea at her house. It was C, T, L, A and me. You know the stuff that T has shared with me and you at times. About the abuse. But I guess not everybody knew about the details.  
F: Well, yeah I know she didn't want everyone knowing about it.  
K: Well, C in the heat of the moment, said something about the abuse. I think T is scared that R might find out that she told us this stuff.



F: You know I've been working with this stuff for 19 years. I know the patterns, I know everything there is to know about it unfortunately. And, it's dangerous.

K: Now, T is really, really upset with C

F: Of course she is. And, she's probably embarrassed.

M: Is that because she doesn't want it to come out? Is that what the deal is?

F: She doesn't seem to want to address it yet.

K: I think that's why I have a hard time understanding it.

F: After the abuse, there is the honeymoon period where a man just romances you. And, that's why these women go back. He sends you flowers and he says I love you and I'll never do it again. And then the woman, because she loves him, she believes him and she wants to pretend or assume that it will never happen again.

K: Do you know how many times I've told her "T you have to leave" and if this is what you are telling me is true, you have to leave. And, then they are back together.

C,A,K eat dinner

C: I texted T maybe three or four times "I'm so sorry. I never meant to hurt you."

K: I think she knows we all have concerns.

C: Yes, I said exactly what she told me.

C: Don't goad me into saying something if you don't want me to say it.

C: It's almost like the elephant in the room we can't talk about.

K: It's out there now.

C: C Every girl at that tea knew exactly what was going on. So, I didn't feel like I was exposing anything that we didn't all know. She goes around telling all the girls this. Maybe hearing it, herself, was very difficult, obviously, very difficult for her to hear.

A: If she doesn't want us to be involved in her relationship, she shouldn't say anything about what's going on because then when it's so hard for us to handle, then of course we're going to have an opinion. Let her therapist handle it. The professionals handle it.

K talks about T's marriage

K: C I do not know what to think about T and R's marriage. She's happy. She's not happy. There's trouble there's not trouble. I just am completely baffled by this.

Episode 13

T&R go to therapy

R: I've been very busy.

S: We've been doing a lot of work, the two of us.

T: R and I have been through a lot. And we've started this really intense therapy on our marriage. And, I've recognized when we went into it, one of the agreements was we are going to do everything we can to keep it together or we

are going to figure out how to not be together in the most successful way that we can.

S: I think we need to talk about where we're heading, and how you're feeling together. Some of the stuff that is coming up.

T: We clearly love each other.

S: How do you know that?

T: Sigh, I just don't-when r is good to me its better than any other kind of good I can imagine.

S: And when R isn't good?

T: It hurts more than anything in the world.

S: How do you deal with that?

T: Not very well sometimes.

R: The good news is there is nothing that has happened that in this marriage that is so damaging that either one of us cannot recover.

S: Do you agree

T: Yes. I mean we wouldn't still be sitting here because this has not been easy.

R: Yes, it's been very painful addressing the problems and issues that we've had. The neglect, me being absent because of work.

S: When you get angry.

R: When I get angry, when we argue. You know, its not easy talking about these things.

S: Do you know when you're getting angry?

R:nods.

S: do you get past it?

R: It's not a nice process.

S: What does that mean? When it gets loud and mean? You say things you don't mean?

R: You say things ou don't mean, you get angry.

S: You get mean and aggressive and you don't even mean it when its done, but the bottom line is it just becomes nasty.

RT: nods

S: I think understanding why you want to hurt that person. Figuring out why you want to throw that dagger at them. You want to hurt them, why do I want to hurt them? Because I'm angry? Why am I angry with them? Figure out what you are angry about and tell them like an adult in a respectful way. The dynamic of communication is what has to be fixed if we're going to go forward in the future. Which means know when you are angry, before you are really angry.

R: this whole process has brought all of this to the forefront, and the problem is without the counseling, you know, its like you're just going through life out of control.

S: Because there is a lot of trust that has to start to build here. And a lot of you know, unspoken emotional safety. You have to feel emotionally safe around him, you have to feel emotionally safe around her.

T: We don't want to lose each other so badly. Maybe that's part of the catalyst for why things get...

S: right. Someone is so desperate to hold on. That's the part we have to look at. Is that desperation because we are scared and don't want to be alone. Why are you crying?

T: I want all the hurt and heartbreak to be over. To just keep building, like we are doing.

R: You, know it's amazing what a little respect and common courtesy will get you in life.

S: And, self control.

R: Yeah, and it's amazing how just the opposite can destroy.

T: You know, we just want to move forward and can you just have a clean slate, today, and go forward and build from there?

S: Well, I appreciate that, but we can't because that's kind of immature. We want to get on a path where we won't keep hurting each other.

R: I hate to cut this sort, but I'm going to be late to a meeting.

T: He's gotta go.

S: So let's just wrap up with, we've gotta really do this stuff.

T&R discuss her tension between C

T: C through my therapy I've realized I've caused a lot of tension between r and my friends because I've used them as a sounding board when things have been difficult. I'm coming to terms with the fact that its difficult for the women to like R considering the things they have heard about our marital problems.

T: I'm apprehensive about seeing C.

R: Well, the bottom line is you didn't start this. She has said things that are blatantly false about you and I and, um, it's not right.

T: does not comment.

T&K greet each other

K: C After what happened at the tea party, it was awkward to see R. It's really hard when I hear things from T that she'll say about her marriage and then I see them together, it's very hard for us to put those things out of our minds.

K: C T is really upset with C about what she said at the tea party. I think she is still trying to protect R, But c was just repeating what T's been telling us.

Episode 14

K wants to know about T abuse as T vents about C

K: C I really want to know the full story about the abuse with T and r, but I don't really know how to approach it since I see how angry T is with c. I think that T is worried that R will hurt her if he knows what C said.

DD talks to T about C (fight)

T: It was about a simple comment that she could have skirted, but she brought up the other stuff. Which was not okay with me. That puts my daughter in danger, and I can't get past that. I have defended her with Kelsey and her divorce and her child custody issue...

DD: She's defending you too, though.

T: Not this time. She was the catalyst to a lot that will haunt me, that could have hurt me, that can still hurt me very badly.

C: C If the things that T is saying about her marriage and now she blaming me for putting her in danger? The only one who is putting her and her daughter in danger is herself.

Continues—Escalates

T: I am still hysterical..She was not cool.

DD: She got backed up against a wall, T.

T: No, she did not. Outside.

T: I'm not angry, I'm not angry. I want to talk to her alone, I just don't want all these people around. I have been her friend. I have never hurt her x3 She has hurt me so much. You have no idea what she has done to me x2(screaming) No, you don't! x3 You have no idea what I've been through.

A: Stop stop, close her mouth (physically covers her mouth)

A: C T I had no idea what was going to come out of her mouth and I didn't want her to say something she would regret.

T: It's not fair.

Episode 15

T & L meet to talk about fight with C

T: Well, unfortunately it because I had a little too much to drink. Which I'm not proud of, But you know when my anxiety rev's up I can't help it, it's the first thing I reach for because I'm like (ahh).

L: C I am looking at T I see she's in trouble, to me this looks like a cry for help.

T: She said things, she shouldn't have said.

L: Lately, it seems like it's always tears you're upset and everything. And it seems like it's going rapidly down hill. You've gotta put the breaks on it.

C,B, DD talk about fight

C: C I think she is stuck in a pattern of abuse that she is having a really hard time getting out of.

C; I felt like I didn't say anything that everybody else hadn't been saying to her.

DD: You haven't been saying anything that she hasn't said herself. She said you put Kennedy in jeopardy, her daughter.

C: That's unfortunate that she would say that. She's putting her family in jeopardy.

DD: She is putting her daughter in jeopardy by staying with a man who is not good to her. She is in this relationship because she is in this relationship. Not because you forced her to be in that relationship or anyone else for that matter.

C: Own it.

Episode 16

A tells Paul about R wanting to sue C

A: So, R didn't like that, I guess, and he has sent an email to C threatening to sue.

P: because she just repeated something that t said? Come on, that's ridiculous.

A: C R commented that C made false and slanderous remarks that could damage his business. C was shocked that a friend could actually be potentially suing her.

A: T has actually told all of us about the situation between her and R.

P: So that puts stress on all of us now, as a group.

A: C I thought that all of us would probably be receiving threatening letters to sue.

A: All of us are only repeating what T has said to us about that situation. So, I'm going to for feel weird, too. I don't know what to do.

P: First of all, T shouldn't have to put all in that situation.

A: Emotionally, it's draining. We've all been told thins by t about her and R's relationship.

A calls K to tell her about C being sued

A: Have you spoken to C? Well, she just got.. a letter coming from R. It was a threatening letter to actually sue her for things that were said about Ru.

K: how can you sue somebody for repeating?

A; C was only repeating things that T had told her. I don't want to get a letter either because she had told me many things as well that r has done. She's told you and some of the other girls. Who's next, you know?

K: C I feel completely sick to my stomach.

K: a is scared to be around either one of them because of a lawsuit.

L: me, too. I'm in the same position.

K: I have not said anything, the only thing anyone has ever said, is what she was told. What came out of C's mouth is what T told her. She didn't accuse him, she repeated what she was told, what was being repeated to all of us.

A&P join in on conversation, discuss lawsuits and what to do about T&R at the white party

K: I don't understand, we are being told something.

A: She put us all in this position.

L: Do you have a clue of any of this that has gone down? I would think that she doesn't know.

A: Of course she knows. How do you not know that?

L: He was sending emails to me that she didn't know about.

T&R arrive & turned away

L: I am just saying, there is a possibility T doesn't know about it.

A: L, she knows.

T: C I told R about what happened at the tea party while we were in a therapy session. He wasn't happy. He was really upset that other people knew about what was going on, especially when we were trying to work through things.

R: We need to have some fun.

T: Yeah, and that we have forgiven each other.

R: now, that I'm good boy again.

P: The email that was sent out. That was inappropriate.

R: I was very kind to her.

P: Guess what? I read the email. It was not kind.

A: We all read the email. We all know about it.

T: No, I haven't read it.

T: C R told me that he sent a email to C asking her to not discuss the personal details of our relationship. I had no idea he had threatened a lawsuit.

R: I heard a rumor. I just simply sent C an email saying that if you made this comment its false and why would you say something like that?

T&R Leave, in limo

K: She made the comment, it wasn't that she invented it. It's stuff that T's told her.

T: No, she repeated an exaggerated version of what I told her. And, I agree I told her something I should have not have told her. And, he knows exactly what I am talking about.

Episode 17

T&R in limo

A: She continuously involves all of us. It's not fair. Ultimately, she has to make the decision.

T: I feel that you probably shouldn't have sent the email, but

R: Well, I can't let people say false things like that either, I mean that's pretty horrible.

T: It was exaggerated.

R: Yeah, absolutely. It was an out and out lie.

T: C What C was an exaggeration, but it certainly was not a lie.

K: Unless we see with our own eyes, nobody knows here.

R: We're making al this progress and for people to say out and out lies is not right. I can't just sit here idle.

T: I did, you know, talk about our marriage in times I shouldn't have. And, I've apologized for that and so. All couples fight.

L: the first night I met her, she told me her story. That's why I have my opinion of R.

T goes to therapist, talks white party

T: I'm okay. I'm supposed to be in Hawaii with all my friends. Unbeknownst to me, R sent an email to C threatening litigation of the statement that she made. She was only repeating things I had told her, but I had no idea R would threaten her with the lawsuit.

S: where were you and R communicating through all this?

T: We weren't.

W: Don't you find that odd that you wouldn't, you just got thrown out of a party and you aren't going to talk about it? So, there's no ownership really?

T: It feels horrible. I'm really angry about it now. Having my friend tell me I can't go to Haw because of something R emailed..I had him print it out to me. And, then I read it and I was floored. I said, you didn't give her an out you said if you don't say you didn't say it there will legal channels.

S; Well that's a threat.

T: If felt really bullying. And, once I read it understood the situation. I just felt so angry at him for the fact that he could not control himself.

S: do you understand the position that these friends of yours are in all the time. It's a catch-22. They want to rescue, want to help, they hear the cries for help but they get their hands slapped.

T: C Now its affecting my friendships, not just my marriage. Now, I'm not mad at the ladies, I'm just mad at him.

S: The constant management of R so there is not another explosion.

T: I don't want to be associated with his behaviors. can't take it much longer. I really can't/ I just feel like I am overwhelmed with all of this. I can't manage these crisis's anymore. It's just too much.

S: and, whose really paying is Kennedy. It's time for a tough decision.

T leaves R – calls and tells L&R

T: you know, what my marriage is over.

K: did you leave him, like officially leave him?

T: Yes. Were done. He's moving out. He's going to be gone. He has the whole weekend. Things have not been working for a very long time as you both know, and I just said before we hurt each other anyone, especially with growing up this little girl. We have to stop it. We are going to do in a nice way and hopefully move forward with our lives. And try to be the best co-parents we can be to our daughter. We both recognize that we have a very toxic marriage and we are both unhealthy together. I feel so at peace.

L: did you expect that or not?

K: No.

Episode 18

K tells all about T& R

K: T told us today that she left R.

Paul: They'll be back together in two weeks.

C: C I wasn't sure if it was for real or, she says one thing and her actions say another

C: No, she said he was leaving that day. She said he was definitely leaving that day and she knew it was over.

A: Paul says two weeks. Forty-eight hours.

T visits D and tells her of Divorce

T: the last couple of weeks have been hell.

D: I've been really worried about you since the party, it was like it was so crazy. When push comes to shove, the bottom line is I always believe you. I need to be supportive of you, but I feel like there is this perimeter

T: Let me just stop you. R and I's marriage is over. He's gone. O have given everything I can and I have been to counseling with him, without him, I've tried to change myself. The last 6 months I haven't even been myself. I' either crying or screaming or drinking too much. I am trying to hold it all in and I can't do it anymore.

D: Everyone was like, just say it.

T: It's really hard to not have my friends standing up for me.

## Episode 19

K tells daughter, F about T's divorce

K: I told you that T left R, right? I think she is serious this time. No, he moved out. I know she was trying for a long time to make it work for Kennedy

K: C if even a fraction of what T has told us about R's abuse is true, then she did the right thing.

T brought Dr. Sophy to Surr's opening

T: I just feel bad for dragging my friends into this mess that I got myself into. I mean just because I was living in an unstable situation you know, I just feel really bad about bringing them into the whole thing.

T arrives at Surr

L: C when I see Taylor, I am aware that under her make up something is going on. I see bruising under her eye.

L: What's going on with this? Is this what it took for you to leave?

T: unfortunately.

T: So over the last 6 months, I've been acting like a crazy person. My life was so out of control and I was just trying to make it all better by myself. And, I couldn't keep the lid on it anymore. And I started to out act all over the place. And, I'm sorry. I love you guys you mean so much to me.

A: C I've been told so many stories by T and R I don't know what to believe.

K: It doesn't make sense to us. That's the bottom line.

T: So, um, a few weeks ago R and I got into a big fight. We had been fighting for a couple of days prior. We got into a big fight and things got physical and I got hurt. And I've been dealing and healing with that for the past few weeks. It was the last straw. I just determined I can't take these risks in my life anymore. I will continue to co-parent with him. I understand that you guys have been put throughout the ringer in this relationship that I have been in and that is unfair to you. At the same time you guys were getting put through the ringer, I was trapped in a physically abusive relationship.

C: you accused me of putting your family in danger.

T: You told the truth and you ended up getting punished for that because I wasn't brave enough to tell the truth and I apologize for that.



## Episode 20

K: C Since R died, the girls have not seen a lot of T. It's time for us to come together to support her.

Ending blip: "Taylor has been trying to keep afloat after the tragedy, Facing financial and legal issues, she is publishing her memoirs."

## Episode 21:

T fields questions about her marriage, how she is doing

H: How are you doing?

T: not all days are good and unfortunately I have so many flashbacks in mind

A: It's been about six months

K: I thought it was a lie (about R's suicide)

A: You would never suspect that he would do something like this.

T: At the time I couldn't focus on the show.

H: I thought the show should air and I thought that it should air because there's a message there about domestic violence and suicide and to have a show that could shed some light and take us through what R went through, and what T went through.

C: I didn't think it should air. I kept thinking about his children.

H: in abuse, why agree to RT?

T: cameras provide protection. Either have abuse stop or force us into a divorcee. We were stuck in plateau of an unhealthy relationship.

H: What do you think would have happened if you didn't do the show?

T: L most people I have talked to, experts, typically these types of things end in murder suicide.

A: I think the show saved your life. I think at some point it might have been you.

H: C, you felt T had goaded you that day (tea party)

T: I thought she was going to be honest about what she told me, not what I told her in private prior to the show filming.

H: did you ladies doubt what you were hearing from her?

C: yes

L: Yes, its really bad the abuse, then it would get better, then you'd say you've got to like him and I can't. I saw an incredibly abusive text. It was aggressive. "F whore, piece of sh" that terminology, quite a long text and she just sat there crying. This was not a normal relationship.

H: you wrote a book about your relationship with r. you said that after R's suicide in some ways you miss the control and abuse.

T: Some days I wake up and think and I supposed to be doing this and doing that? I am so used to having someone telling me what I can and can't do. You know, it's a very hard thing for people to understand, but whenever you are so used it you just kinda feel like you are dangling there and I'm able to make all of my own decisions now, and that's hard. Just hit me so we can get this over with.

H: do the other women think R knew about the email before r sent it?

A: I think she did.

Episode 22:

B thinks its inappropriate to publish a book

B: When does the book come out? How long has it been?

H: you think it's inappropriate she wrote a book?

B: It's been like a hot minute.

T: Three women die everyday of domestic violence. You want me to wait another month so three hundred women die?

K: someone died here.

B: Exactly, so let him rest in peace.

T discloses more about R and her book

H: you just finished a book, why'd you write it?

T: I was journaling through my therapy and when I was reading back through it I just recognized that there were lots of patterns in my life from the time when I was little that allowed me to be in controlling relationships. And I just thought that girls with low self-esteem could use a little boost.

H: when did the abuse start?

T: when I was pregnant.

H: So about 5 and half years?

T: umm hmm

H: and continued all the way though?

T: Uh yeah every six weeks or so?

T: Well, I didn't report it because I didn't want him to go to jail I loved him. And, he'd always tell me go ahead call the police Ill go to jail and you an Kennedy would be on the street. Ill bankrupt you and ill sue you until you have nothing. Once you get divorced, you have to send your kid to this person. And so now I know this person have a volatile temper and I have to send Kennedy to spend the night with him?

K: He would not be able to work once people knew about that.

H: when did he open up to you about this?

A: after a few months, she started telling me about her husband. This was an on-going thing.

Episode 23:

T discloses about R and book

H: R used to monitor you, secretly.

T: the first time I found recording devices – small tape recorder under the desk, took polygraph test...attacked friends that were offering to help her out of her situation "just take care of Kennedy if anything happens"

T: It was not an exaggeration, I guess. I said he dislocated my jaw, not broke. (about C exaggerating)

Ken asked about therapy comment

K: Obviously therapy works for some people, a lot of people. It just doesn't work for me. I'd rather sit down with my wife and talk it out. And, then I do what I'm told. I wasn't having a go at Taylor.

*Note.* T= Taylor, R= Russell, L= Lisa, K= Kyle, A= Adrienne, M= Marucio, C= Camille.

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