JULY 28, 2006, 11:30 AM

**A Single-Camera Dramedy, Just in Time for the Fall Season**

Will someone in Broadband Hollywood just give **lonelygirl15** — and, all right, her producer and sidekick **danielbeast** — their own show already?

In **her videos**, she perfects the emo girl-in-her-room pose, balancing playful and moody as she muses about her life and times. She has huge online fame; repressive, religious parents who probably know nothing about YouTube; and a sibling-ish love affair with her video editor. What could be more 2006? Obviously the implication from the stills that promote her videos is that she's going to strip, but she never does, and she controls that shell game by being sweetly deaf to innuendo.

One of her critics — a guy who thinks she's a fake in part because she's lighted too beautifully — says her life so far is "almost Shakespearean in the way it played out." And that cowboy-hatted critic is appealing too! (Of course, she also has **her share of protectors**. Warning: plenty of cussing ahead.) So it's time to get "lonelygirl15," the full-on series, going. Invite the parodists and critics to round out the cast, give some play to the idea that she's a fake, and create a perfect "My So-Called Life" for the MySpace hoards.

**MTV Overdrive**, I’m talking to you. (And while we’re at it, MTV, get your broadband channel to work on a Mac **NOW**.)

64 comments so far...

1. July 29th, 2006
   4:15 am
   Mac users always fail to realize how few they are. It is a pain and expensive to create a parallel system for so few people. Don’t believe the product placement in movies, only 6% of our website’s visitors for example come from mac users (almost 3% use linux for comparison).
   It would be like demanding MTV translate its site into spanish **NOW**, but at least there are a lot of people who speak Spanish.
   You wanted an expensive white computer, and now you have it. Just don’t expect the rest of the world to jump.
   Andrew
   www.boomchicago.nl
   — Posted by Andrew Moskos

2. July 30th, 2006
   1:38 am
   macs suck
   — Posted by Dom

3. July 30th, 2006
   3:01 am
   Congrats bree... about damned time some press gave her recognition.
   Awesome Entertainment here!
   Damien
   House of Jigsaw Media
   — Posted by Damien Estreich

4. July 30th, 2006
   In regards to lonelygirl, I think it would be great if she had her own TV
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>July 30th, 2006</td>
<td>12:36 pm</td>
<td>Totally agree... these two have tons of talent, and Bree is incredibly smart and gorgeous! They have a very bright future in front of them. Not sure that a TV show would be the best idea - part of the appeal is the 'do it yourself' type of entertainment that they provide. We know that it's coming from them and not from a corporate production team (at least theoretically). It would definitely be interesting to see what they do, though, given the tools and the budget to produce more online content...</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 30th, 2006</td>
<td>4:19 pm</td>
<td>Is it really fine for you to use an underaged girl's picture without her prior permission? I simply don’t know enough about that area of the law to know whether her consent to images on YouTube means that images from that site can be used anywhere else. By the way, I’ll admit that I’m also sensitive to the fact that lonelygirl's appeal — and ability to do what she’s doing in the first place — stems from the fact that her parents don’t know about YouTube. It’s quite plausible that they might know about accessing the New York Times via the computer, though, and I’d hate for them to run across this piece and spoil everybody’s good time. Still, it’s a legitimate legal question about her picture accompanying this piece.</td>
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| July 30th, 2006 | 4:40 pm  | So I sat and watched a few of these clips. I could possibly buy the good lighting alone, or the TV-ready girl alone, or the great narrative alone, but all three together? I agree with you.
Me thinks LonelyGirl15 and danielbeast are angling for TV careers from her bedroom using the slightly titillating confessional form as their launching pad.

Well, that’s how I feel.
www.IAmATVJunkie.com |
| July 30th, 2006 | 5:16 pm  | Macs have an influential presence online which makes that 4% feels like 75%.
lonelygirl15 sounds like a show already. |
| July 31st, 2006 | 11:30 am | I think she (if she is real) is planted and backed by big money. It appears as though her video diaries are part of a pre-pilot/launch to build the fan base. Her videos are too professional and I'm not buying it...reeks of a professional viral marketing / word of mouth campaign. |
| July 31st, 2006 | 3:27 pm  | #7: She’s obviously not underaged, in my opinion. Although that is probably a major reason she’s so popular, unfortunately. (Seemingly) voyeuristic videos of a pretty “underage” girl? That’s a sure-fire recipe for success on YouTube. But that’s exactly why it would never work as a TV show — the illusion would be gone, and you’d be left with an ambitious, pretty 20-something and her ambitious, male writing/production partner. Hardly worth watching.  
# 1: Trying to mock Mac users by pointing out how few of them there are doesn’t work. In fact, that’s the key to Apple's cult-like appeal. If everyone really started buying Macs, hardcore Mac users would be emotionally devastated. And if there are so few of them, why waste your breath baiting them, anyway? |

Pongman
— Posted by Pongman

Kathleen
— Posted by Kathleen

Fred
— Posted by Fred

Michael W.
— Posted by Michael W.

Joe Bua
— Posted by Joe Bua

Ajit
— Posted by Ajit

Carly
— Posted by Carly
12. July 31st, 2006 9:59 pm
wow thanks for using my video in your article😊
— Posted by dingy

13. August 1st, 2006 9:32 am
1) Methinks youtube has hired lonelygirl15 and danielbeast for just this purpose ...
2) Everyone who actually makes any (good) media uses Macs. That’s why MTV’s poorly functioning broadband channel is an embarrassment.
3) “Yes, VIRGINIA, there is a lonelygirl15. She exists certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no lonelygirl15! It would be as dreary as if there were no VIRGINIAS. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.”
— Posted by JK in NYC

14. August 1st, 2006 4:50 pm
Oh, please. Keep television and YouTube separate. She’s just a girl who saw a bunch of video blogs and had a nice camera. Lighting isn’t that hard to take care of and putting her on television would completely ruin the improvising done on the videos which is WHY they’re so good.
— Posted by JTB

15. August 2nd, 2006 1:40 am
I find it truly entertaining people are calling them fakes set out by the big corporations!! But meh there will always be skeptics for everything in life. lonelygirl15 and her “friend” are just providing some good old fashioned entertainment for yea all.

Bree if your reading this keep up ze good work😊
— Posted by alex

16. August 2nd, 2006 1:51 pm
lonelygirl and danielbeast fakes and set ups by big corporations?? Haha! That’s a good one. Anyone who blogs enough knows that popularity is not difficult to come by. You just need the right charm (which she has), controversy (which people are creating with these debates about whether she’s real or not), and spend enormous amounts of time on the internet making friends.

Just a side note to those of you who commented above: being a professional video editor, I can tell you that her videos are not professionally done. Her lighting looks like a desk lamp shining at one side of her face and sunlight on the other. And the video editing is at the level of someone who is computer savvy and read their iMovie handbook. And who cares how old she is?

She wouldn’t make a good television show at all. Her blogs are too quirky and would not appeal to a broad teenage audience. Just leave her as she presents herself to be: a real, talented teenage girl who blogs online about silly stuff plaguing her mind.
— Posted by lisa

17. August 3rd, 2006 3:49 pm
Ted,
As a Mac user, I have to admit you’re right. If everyone’s computers ran an operating system as intuitive, beautiful, and straightforward as OS X, I’d be seriously upset at having lost my elite status.

Now if only we can get Microsoft to redesign the iPod, maybe I’ll switch back.
— Posted by Nick vdK

18. August 3rd, 2006 3:50 pm
I recommend checking out “Scorchedhottub”’s parody of Daniel. Unambiguous fakery prevails by sheer brilliance.
— Posted by Michael Romano

19. August 3rd, 2006 3:50 pm
What does emo mean?
— Posted by old fart

20. August 3rd, Mac users are very influential, much bigger than what they represent
only a single digit percentage of people using Macs (4%) does not mean they are not important or influential. As an example, 45% of Wired Magazine users, a magazine read by influential people interested on advances in technology, life and culture, are Mac users (by the way, Jews are 0.5% of the world population but they account for more than 20% of Noble prizes).

— Posted by Max

While I am not a professional video editor (I just do it occasionally for fun), I agree with Lisa (8/2, 1:51pm). It's not hard to imagine how a bunch of kids with some extra time on their hands can pull this off with the tools available today.

- Erik

— Posted by Erik van der Neut

Virginia's woes with MTV have nothing to do with "creating a parallel system for a few people". MTV insists on using Microsoft Media Player — and that creates problems for people on "all" platforms, including Windows. Special media players are flaky, hard to install, and conflict with other media players. Smart purveyors of streaming video, like YouTube, have abandoned them in favor of flash-based media, which is far more reliable and portable.

— Posted by Zicsoft

Ahem. Re "the MySpace hoards" ... that should be "hordes."

— Posted by David

Note that lonelygirl5's fan website domain was registered a month before the first video was posted on YouTube. Real? Fake? Either way they've been very entertaining.

Also note, MTV apologists/mac haters, that YouTube video is completely platform agnostic. MTV has no excuse to be less technically competent than is YouTube.

— Posted by richard schumacher

I can't help but feel that the criticism of lonelygirl5 (whose name reminds me of spam emails) is unwarranted. Should she come clean and admit that her parents live in Jersey while she is a freshmen at Harvard? Or that she is the generously paid product of a dynamic new pilot series by CBS. Or perhaps her love/hate audience should suspend disbelief, leave her alone and revel in some grassroots reality t.v. where you don't have to watch anybody jump out of helicopters or puke in the street.

— Posted by Ann

"Andrew Moskos" is only partly right: Mac users are numerically a minority, but like "Ajit" notes, we have a disproportionate influence on the culture. We cluster into info. and other related media jobs, which control the mental world of all you PC hacks. Kind of like gay people. Oh, yes, I remember, the word is "elites": few but strong!

— Posted by Tdawwg

Mac Users may only be 6% on your site, but we are also better educated, make and spend more money and dominate the artistic and media-driven world. Once you go Mac you never go back.

— Posted by Mark Flora

I believe you mean hordes, not hoards.

— Posted by A.H.

Did it ever occur to anyone that people just watch her because she's hot, and they have nothing better to do?

I watched the hiking video with no sound, and all I saw were images of her pouting her lips .. not really talented.. hot though...
hey, Andrew! Howcum Macs don’t have any trouble with YouTube? Maybe MTV just sucks as much as you. tube.

— Posted by turkeyneck

Gee, thanks for the unsolicited, uninformed, and smarmy comments about Macs.
I did not buy a Mac because it was expensive, shiny, and the hip thing to do. I did so because although it is not perfect (no computer is) it is far more secure and safer than a PC. When I had a PC, as I did for 7 years, the PC was riddled with viruses and spyware, and having to manually reboot was nearly an everyday occurrence. I have had a Mac for a year, and I have had to reboot perhaps once.

In any case, any media content provider would be wise to make content available for ALL platforms (PC, Mac, and whatever else may come along). It makes sense from a business standpoint - and after all, if we’re talking about MTV it’s all about the dollar...

— Posted by Patrick

lonelygirl15 needs someone like avyakata as the pervert who stalks her with video responses to make her videos interesting.

— Posted by john

Wow, I come here to read the New York Times and get an education about the Parallel Universe of the Lonely Girl. She is lonely for a reason already! There seems to be a certain segment of our population that has so little of their own life that they have to depend on some media source to extract meaning from their nothingness. What up? Get a life...

— Posted by John

$1,200. Oh, the suffering.

— Posted by VM

If she reads so much, why doesn’t she know how to spell “a lot”?

— Posted by Grammar is important

$1,200. Oh, the suffering.

— Posted by VM

Andrew,
Here’s the thing, it’s not really hard to set up a video system that works on both platforms, you just have to not let your vendors or developers lock you into a MS only solution. In fact, it’s been awhile since I have seen online video players that didn’t run on the mac.

Which brings us to your boomchicago site, which would seem to require a PC to view. Which, if you gave it some thought, might be connected to the 6% mac-ness of your viewers. Welcome to cause and effect, you make a site that doesn’t work right for Macs, it shouldn’t be a shock you don’t get alot of Mac users going there.

— Posted by carlos

The videos are amusing because she is obviously erudite (a nod to home schooling), but she is also at once carefree and at other times dealing with the lot of a 16-year-old’s normal life. The editing has got that new-technology-in-the-80’s feel and the musical selections range from ironic (i.e. "Grillz") to indie.

This would never work on TV because the beauty of it is its short, choppy, vignetted style. TV tends to bloat things like this until they die under their own weight.

Keep up the good work.

— Posted by Ryan
39. August 3rd, 2006 5:45 pm
MTV has already translated it’s site into Spanish, and Mac is simply a better product. I’m two years into it now and have literally had no issues, where before, on Windows, I had to reinstall my OPERATING SYSTEM at least once every two years because of spam and banners. Ridiculous. ESPN 360 and MovieLink should also get mac centric already, Virginia is right. What they fail to realize is that we are by percentage more media oriented, will watch more, more frequently, and better. Market share is marketshare. No one should sneeze at 6%. It’s a huge segment. Let’s get it into your budgets already corporate America, it will pay off in the same loyalty mac users give their brand.
— Posted by ClearWindow

40. August 3rd, 2006 5:53 pm
The eyebrows are all wrong, though. Too plucky. Fix that and she’ll be aces.
— Posted by minitru

41. August 3rd, 2006 5:58 pm
These Mac vs. PC arguments are inane. The web can be (and should be) platform independent. Moskos, you talk like a sausage. There are plenty of formats that work on ALL platforms including Linux, not the least of which is the economical Flash video. They require NO additional "parallel system."

Please leave your religious arguments at the door and think like a real live boy.
— Posted by AEJ

42. August 3rd, 2006 6:09 pm
I don’t know…it’s all fine, but it ain’t like it’s new or even special. The idea that this is some sort of professional production made to look like it isn’t is laughable. The internet video viewing public simply doesn’t understand how easy it is to shoot, edit and post to the web these days. A kid could do it. In fact, there are many kids who do. She just another one of them. Single camera videoblogs are all over the internet. I watch about 40 of them myself (none of which are on YouTube)–heck, I even have one myself!

Lonelygirl15 just ain’t television material (neither are most videobloggers, including myself)...and that’s totally cool! She’s perfectly suited to stay right where she is.
— Posted by missbhavens

43. August 3rd, 2006 6:31 pm
15 years ago I dropped into a Mac store on my lunch break. I made the mistake of saying to the salesman that I used a PC. He responded by say that since I used a PC Mac was probably not for me, turned his back and walked away. That pretty much turned me off to Macs. Someone needed to take that young man by the scruff of his neck and gently explain to him that 1. This is a business and not your clubhouse. 2.Your response was bad for business. 3. Millions of dollars are invested in developing Macs and they need to be SOLD. 4. He needed to have been fired.
— Posted by William

44. August 3rd, 2006 6:38 pm
I’m going to try to ignore the fact that such an insipid, vapid girl is on the front page of nytimes.com. I am truly sickened. I never thought I’d say this, but I think I’d rather see Paris Hilton covered.
— Posted by Courtney

45. August 3rd, 2006 6:43 pm
Funny, you can tell who all the Mac users are because they get all defensive about having a Mac and then try to make themselves sound cool by calling it a “cult” or “hardcore” thing. Unless you’re engaged in sexual conduct with your Mac, what makes you a “hardcore” user? And post #1 wasn’t really mocking Mac owners for being Mac owners, but telling Mac owners that just because they are rich and “hardcore” enough to own a Mac doesn’t mean everybody has to bend over backwards to make your life easier - that’s your Mac’s job. But I digress . . .

#7, I can answer your questions. No, reproducing her picture is not illegal just because of her age (think of all the pictures of Britney Spears posted everywhere without her direct consent). Second, it is probably not a copyright violation as it would likely be deemed a “fair use". Nota Bene: I am not your lawyer and this is not free legal advice 😊
Good portrait lighting is simple - I would imagine that anyone savvy enough to produce and edit a successful video blog should be able to buy a 200 watt chimera and turn it on 3 feet from a face.

— Posted by Harrassee

Poster #1 - MTV Overdrive works in Canada on macs (http://www.mtv.ca) ... so it's not that hard or expensive - they're just lazy. There is already a single camera web show airing on CBC - (http://11cameras.com), oh - the recaps only run in Windows ...

— Posted by daniel berman

Note that lonelygirl15's fan website domain was registered a month before the first video was posted on YouTube. Real? Fake? Either way they've been very entertaining. Also note, MTV apologists and Mac haters, that YouTube video is completely platform agnostic. MTV has no excuse to be less technically competent than YouTube.

— Posted by D.A.

the video where they dance & lip sync to rap music is too good to be done by her : the cuts are every 3 seconds. If you see her other videos they are not done by the same person : someone else with a greater sense of editing made the mix. there are some very inventive camera angles, they obiously need a camera operator and understanding of light. but that dance lip sync rocks. plus she is ultra cute! so why don't you guys publish her videos ! you'd get a whole new audience for a great newspaper

— Posted by christian micoine

Fakes, I agree. But that is o.k. right? I mean its all fake anyway right? Reality shows are not reality. If you think they are you are an idiot. If you think this girls drama and show is any more real than any other kid her age you are an idiot too. It's simple to create authentic looking buzz on-line, just look at what bzzagent.com and Edelman are doing.

As for the Mac naysayers, well the MTV Broadband fails to function because MTV is using Microsoft DRM technology not because they can't make it work. MTV says that when a DRM works for mac, they'll make the whole site available to Mac users, I argue that they need to use better technology than the hackable DRM. Go to the MTV production studios and tell me how many PC's they are using, I'll bet Macs outnumber them outside of the sales and accounting department.

— Posted by Skeptic

Tell Andrew Moskos:

If 6% are mac users and 3% are linux users (by his claim), and you ignore them both, you are ignoring about 1 in 10 of your web site visitors. Try telling your boss that this is not important when you run a site that generates income (or could be anyway).

— Posted by Rob Wilkens

Whether or not it's real, lonelygirl and danielbeast have caught our attention. I feel like that leaves me with more questions than answers. What is the reason (or host of reasons) that make their YouTube contribution stand out? Is the appeal in the editing, the pretty face, or pure voyeurism? Furthermore, what does it say about our culture that lonelygirl's face show up on the NYTimes site?

— Posted by Duende

After watching all the lonelygirl15 videos in order, I'm sure that the love story (at least) was crafted for our entertainment. The rest of the details (her age, her homeschooling, her reading of Feynman, etc.) may or may not be true.

— Posted by christian micoine
When she and danielbeast do come clean, or when someone exposes them, I'll be very interested to learn who they really are, and who wrote the scripts. I do hope it's just the two of them who thought the whole thing up and pulled it off, because it's really quite a cute story. And if it was just the two of them, well — that's almost as cute as the story they made up.

— Posted by corcaroli

The funny thing is, all over the video content that MTV provides was made on a mac. You can say macs suck, but then you are obviously a drone. Any creative person in the world would use a mac over a pc any day of the week.

— Posted by jason macdonald

Doesn't anyone — ANYONE! — see the voyeuristic, pedophilic danger YouTube is encouraging? YouTube and all the major media outlets airing its junk are making watching teen girls acceptable. The kids are innocently being kids... those who are watching aren't so innocent. When will reason prevail? Oh... lonelygirl15 is planted. Stop worrying whether MAC outshines PCs and start worrying about our children.

— Posted by Jimmy M

Real or fake, professional or not...Bree is amazingly captivating! I'm a married woman in my late 30's and I've been totally sucked in, too. In a culture where contestants eat pig uteruses and the liquid from cow eyes on for sport on TV & shows discuss sexual alternatives such as clitoris piercings and man diapers on prime time...I'll take a little more innocence any day, manufactured or spontaneous. Just because it's available, you don't have to wade all the way in and wallow in it. Hurrah for restraint!

— Posted by Irene

I never thought in my entire life that an outfit as reputable as the New York Times would demand that some yahoo with a webcam is deserving of a show. I mean, are you serious? Or are you trying to draw in the MySpace/YouTube audience to your blog? Is she your sister? Of the millions of people who have webcams and post their lipsyncing efforts online, maybe one of them is worthy of being on television. But in the world of reality TV, where hacks have bum rushed the networks with their drivel and driven real substantive storytelling to the margins, every last meth-addicted, mothball chewing teen from Bangor, ME to Bend, OR will have a TV show in no time. 15 seconds of fame? More like 15 gigs of server space with which to bore us to death with all things lowbrow.

— Posted by D. Dike

The problem with PC users is that they have personalities to match their machines...

Anybody can get a Chimera softbox?!!!Come on. Most people outside of the professional realm would have no idea what you're talking about. The edits themselves may not be technically sophisticated but they have a flow and symmetry that indicates the hand of someone with experience and talent. I'd have to agree with earlier comments that the coincidence of the lighting, telegenic face, coy naivete, good editing and consistency of dialogue point to a corporate plant. Obviously You-Tube is a new medium and the big boys are running scared. They're workshopping programming on it before they get sidelined.

— Posted by Stafford Smith

I think that you tube is a vast wastage of precious time that can be spent on a more productive manner. much like facebook and those sites that appeal greatly to kids and they take a lot of time from the real world.

— Posted by harold

I can get a Chimera softbox and I'm not a corporate plant. Heck I can even make one. Talent does not result solely with the corporate pukes -
what you may be witnessing is the evolution of the real digital video revolution - the ability to make low budget look high quality - yes, even in the hands of a teenager
— Posted by Smedley Underfoot

@ VM...LOL! Right there with you. I love my intel MAC too. And there really is no comparison PC people. You’ll just never get it unless you come to the “dark side.”
Right on, Virginia, thanks for saying that to MTV.
— Posted by Robin ‘Roblimo’ Miller

I know for a fact that this is a fake video blog. It is being created by wannabe writer-director types in Hollywood. Nice guys actually. I would disagree with Stafford Smith, then, regarding the source being corporate. It is more a creation of up-and-comers looking in.
Really nice going guys: you got some props for your technique, as well as making the Times look like trainspotters. (The last part wasn’t too hard.)
— Posted by Thomas

Add your comments...

Name
E-mail
Comment

Submit Comment

Comments are moderated and will be posted if they are on-topic and not abusive. They may be edited for length and clarity. For more information see our Member Agreement.
A Single-Camera Dramedy, Just in Time for the Fall Season

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One of her critics — a guy who thinks she’s a fake in part because she’s lighted too beautifully — says her life so far is “almost Shakespearean in the way it played out.” And that cowboy-hatted critic is appealing too! (Of course, she also has her share of protectors. Warning: plenty of cussing ahead.) So it’s time to get “lonelygirl15,” the full-on series, going. Invite the parodists and critics to round out the cast, give some play to the idea that she’s a fake, and create a perfect “My So-Called Life” for the MySpace hoards.

MTV Overdrive, I’m talking to you. (And while we’re at it, MTV, get your broadband channel to work on a Mac NOW.)
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