

TIMELINE: CELEBRITY CULTURE

Information courtesy of Ellis Cashmore, author of *Celebrity Culture*.

1859

Blondin (aka Jean-Francois Gravelet) first crosses Niagara Falls on a tightrope, a feat that adds to his growing international renown.

Darwin's *The Origin of Species* is published, introducing a theory of natural selection that adds to secularization; Darwin becomes a nineteenth century scientific celebrity.



Ad from 1878 for *The Greatest Show on Earth*

1871

P.T. Barnum launches what becomes known as *The Greatest Show on Earth* using contrived stories to publicize his show in a manner that foreshadows what is later known as hyping.

1880

The multiple reproduction of photographs in halftone heralds the beginning of a graphic revolution in which images become central to popular culture in photography and later television

1883

Buffalo Bill Cody's *Wild West Show* starts touring; it becomes one of the most popular forms of entertainment in the Western World.

1894

Thomas Edison's kinetoscope, a device that makes the exhibition of motion pictures possible is unveiled in New York.

1895

Macaroni perfects the radio, or wireless.

1905

Neon signs are introduced and literally become a sign of fame.

1919

The faked death of Florence Lawrence to create publicity for *The Biograph Girl* presages the start of the star system.

Film magazines such as *American Magazine* go into print, reflecting the interest in celebrity gossip.

1925

The telephotographic lens is invented making it possible for photographers to gain inmates of distant objects.



Florence Lawrence was a silent movie star who starred in over 300 movies. She was born in Hamilton, Ontario.

1939

John Wayne's role in Stagecoach creates an enduring persona that Wayne lives through during his career: strong, heroic, patriotic, and rationally masculine.

1946

Television is exhibited at the World Fair and sets for domestic use become available.



A TV Guide Cover from 1949.

1948

TV Guide begins publication and by the 1970's it is one of the best-selling magazines in the U.S.

1949

Baseball player Eddie Waitkus is shot by a fan in Chicago, becoming the first victim of what later became known as 'stalkers'.

1951

I Love Lucy begins, it becomes the most commercially successful television show of the 1950's, turning Lucille Ball into one of the

best-known women in the world.

1958

Tazio Secchiaroli, a freelance newspaper photographer, sparks pandemonium in Rome when taking shots of King Farouk, Ava Gardner, Anita Ekberg and others without their permission. The photos appear in various publications.

1960

Federico Fellini's film La Dolce Vita features a Secchiaroli-like "Signor Paparazzo" and introduces a new generic noun to popular vocabulary. About 90 percent of homes have a television set.

1962

Marcello Geppetti takes an influential photograph of Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton.

1969

Andy Warhol launches his magazine Inter/View, in which he famously predicts: In the future, everyone will be world-famous for fifteen minutes.

1972

Photographer Ron Gaillella receives a federal court order barring him from approaching within 50 yards of Jacqueline Onassis or her children.

Computer scientists show an early version of what is later to become the internet.

1974

Cher and Sonny Bono divorce; the National Enquirer builds popularity by carrying full details of the break-up.



"The Sweet Life" is set in Rome in the 1950s and covers the more sensational side of the news; movie stars, religious visions, and the decadent aristocracy.



It's rumored that the National Enquirer paid \$18,000 for this cover photograph from Elvis's cousin Bobby Mann.

1977

The National Enquirer sells 7 million copies of the issue featuring pictures of Elvis Presley in his coffin.

1981

Diana marries Prince Charles.

MTV starts transmission.

1984

Burton dies of a cerebral hemorrhage; Taylor's apprehension about the media deters her from attending the funeral.

1985

Live Aid concerts in aid of famine in sub-Saharan Africa signify the power of popular entertainers to raise awareness of social issues through media.

1989

Madonna's Like a Prayer album is released; Pepsi pulls out of a \$5million endorsement deal with her.

Explicit tapes featuring Rob Lowe circulate; ten years later he reappears in the TV show The West Wing.

1991

CNN reports on the Persian Gulf War "live".

The Jerry Springer Show begins broadcasting.

1992

MTV starts The Real World, a precursor of reality television.

Mike Tyson's rape trial is a huge international story and Tyson is sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

1994

The O.J. Simpson trial commands the attention of the world's media

Michael Jackson marries Lisa Marie Presley, in a secret ceremony that evades the Paparazzi.

1996

Madonna staked much of her career on Evita, gambling that it would establish her as a proper movie star and respected actress.

Tiger Woods makes his professional debut and signs a five-year deal with Nike valued at \$40 million.



Madonna earns plaudits for her lead role in the film Evita.

1997

The Daily Mirror pays a reported \$450,000 for the British right to publish shots of Diana and Dodi Al-Fayed on their vacation off Sardinia. The photographer Mario Brenna earns an estimated \$7 million from global sales of the pictures.

Diana dies in a car accident in Paris; the photographers who chase her prior to the crash are later cleared of wrongdoing.

1998

Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky dominates the media and sparks impeachment proceedings.

Madonna is subpoenaed to give evidence against a stalker.

1999

John de Mol launches a new show he has designed on Dutch Television; within six years, 70 versions of *Big Brother* are shown in countries around the world.



2000

Survivor begins.

OK! magazine secures the exclusive contract with Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones to cover their New York Wedding; arch rival Hello! publishes unauthorized photographs.

2002

American Idol, starts and by 2006 it averages 27 million viewers and becomes the US's most expensive program for advertising after the Super bowl. A 30-second spot costs \$700,000.

2003



An AP photo of the famous kiss that spiced up an otherwise lackluster awards ceremony - and caused headlines around the world.

Michael Jackson is interviewed on television and indicated that he has shared his bed with children.

Excerpts of the Paris Hilton sex tape are uploaded online. She becomes an international celebrity.

Madonna kisses both Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera at MTV video awards.

Douglas and Zeta-Jones are awarded damages from Hello! magazine for breach of privacy and rights 'of confidence'. Zeta-Jones says she spent over three times more in legal costs than she was awarded.

2004

Martha Stewart begins a five-month prison sentence; she is released in 2005 and finds her companies flourishing.

Princess Caroline of Monaco wins a key ruling from the European Court of Human Rights, which confirms that the publishing of paparazzi photographs of the princess in a public place was a violation of her right to privacy.

2005



Michael Jackson is cleared of child molestation charges after one of the most publicized trials in history. Over 1,000 journalists were sent to cover the event.

Vanity Fair has its all-time best-selling issue, featuring a tell-all cover story on Jennifer Aniston, whose breakup with Brad Pitt was given extensive global coverage, including a record five successive weeks on the cover of US Weekly.

Hello! magazine wins a legal battle to overturn a ruling would have forced it to pay \$3.5 million to OK! for publishing unauthorized photos of the Douglas/Zeta-Jones wedding.

Kanye West is reproached for his criticism of George Bush following the devastation of New Orleans by Hurricane Katrina.

2006

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signs a California law that increases penalties against overly aggressive paparazzi.