

**She'd Kill to Be Famous: Deconstructing the
Image of the Female Journalist in the Film and Novel
*To Die For***

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ABSTRACT

You're not anybody in America unless you're on TV. On TV is where we learn about who we really are. Because what's the point of doing anything worthwhile if nobody's watching? And if people are watching, it makes you a better person.

--Suzanne Stone¹

All she wanted was a little attention. But aspiring television reporter Suzanne Stone got much more. Joyce Maynard's novel *To Die For*, which was adapted into the Gus Van Sant movie, is a satire of television, journalists, and the price of fame. The protagonist Suzanne Stone is twenty-five years old, married, and has always dreamt of a career on television. But when she finds herself at a dead-end weather girl job at a local cable station, Stone decides to take matters into her own hands to make sure she gets her fame. She refuses to let anyone stand in her way— even her husband.

Stone embodies characteristics that are often found in popular culture references of female reporters including narcissism and manipulation, and using sexuality and appearance to get ahead.

To Die For explores some of the exaggerated or accurate representations of women journalists that are commonly found in movies, television, and literature. This image may be more than just a fictitious character in entertainment and may influence the way viewers look at real female reporters in the media. Movies about journalism reinforce ideals about democracy and the role of the press. When the image of the reporter is negative, the viewer loses sight of these ideals.

INTRODUCTION:

So what I'm saying is this, there are some people who never know who they are or who they want to be until it's too late, and that is a real tragedy in my book because I always knew who I was and who I wanted to be. Always.

--Suzanne Stone²

Suzanne Stone was born in Little Hope, NH. At only three years old she began giving weather reports in front of her mirror, using a curling iron as her microphone. Stone enjoyed performing in front of people and loved having an audience, which explained why she was always center stage in her dance recitals and talent shows. As she got a little older, she became involved in commercial modeling.³

One day, after watching the *Today* show when Barbara Walters was one of the hosts, Stone decided she wanted to be on television. She started using a home video camera to tape her own broadcasts about the neighborhood called "Suzanne's World," where she reported on which neighbor got a new pet, and whose grandparent was coming to visit. Her big sister Faye Stone was the anchorwoman, while her father Earl Stone was the cameraman. Suzanne Stone was the star.⁴

Even as a child, Stone was dead set on being famous. But she was self-conscious about the way she looked. She used makeup on her nose to make it appear smaller, and she would stand at certain angles that made her look better. Stone used to critique her taped newscasts and performances, and point out certain problem areas that she needed to work on. At twelve years old, she had plastic surgery to make her nose smaller. The surgery helped build Stone's self-confidence and made her happy.⁵

As a teenager, Stone became involved in a lot of social activities at Lancaster High, including cheerleading, modeling, and the yearbook club. Outside of school, Stone

was active in a church youth group. Although she was popular and always had boys chasing after her, she never developed any close bonds with friends. She also avoided having a boyfriend because she was too focused on her career.⁶

In high school, Stone set high standards for herself. She worked hard and kept her focus. Her parents described her as a smart student who made honor roll.⁷ And even during adolescence, her parents believed Stone never succumbed to peer pressure or rebellion.⁸

But Stone wasn't only a straight-A, popular high school student. She was also the biggest part of her parents and her sister's lives. Her parents Earl and Carol Stone fawned over her constantly and bragged about how perfect she was. Her sister Faye said it was better to be on her side, than be jealous of her.

Stone obtained her bachelor's degree in media communication from Sanders College. She worked for the college radio station as a crime reporter. After college she got back into modeling while trying to find a job as a reporter. Since she was a child, Stone was always ambitious, with her mind set on becoming a famous news reporter.

In her early twenties, Stone met Larry Maretto, a long-haired drummer in a rock band, who also worked at his parents' Italian restaurant. Maretto had been working in the family business since he was a teenager, and never went to college. Stone was attracted to Maretto because she thought he looked like rocker Tommy Lee from Motley Crue. She even compared herself to actress Heather Locklear, who married Lee. Stone often said she was attracted to anchormen and rock stars, and that's why she was initially attracted to drummer Larry Maretto.⁹

Maretto always had lots of girls coming to the restaurant or to watch his band, but he fell for Stone.¹⁰ During their courtship, Maretto worshipped her. He wrote her love poems and songs, sent her flowers, and even bought her a little Lhasa apso puppy.¹¹ Stone named the dog Walter after Walter Cronkite.

To Stone, the most romantic gesture of all was when Maretto bragged about her ability and talent to become the next Barbara Walters.¹²

Stone's family thought that Maretto brought out a wild side in her. But many of her actions and behaviors bordered on exhibitionism, as if she was enjoying putting on a show.¹³ Her affection for Maretto appeared to be part of the act.¹⁴

Eventually, Maretto cut his hair, sold his motorcycle and started working as a weekend manager at the restaurant. He proposed at Epcot Center in Florida and gave her a huge diamond ring. At the wedding, she wore a cream-colored silk gown and a veil copied from Maria Shriver's wedding veil.

Stone took pride in knowing everything there was to know about famous newswomen. She kept her maiden name, like Connie Chung and Jane Pauley, both of which she said she strongly identified with because of their attractiveness.¹⁵

Maretto bought his new bride a flashy red Datsun 280 ZX, which was the same car Stone said one of the news reporters on Channel 4 drove.¹⁶ They moved into a luxury condo and began their lives as a married couple. At this time, Stone started applying for more reporting jobs. She was someone who never gave up until she got what she wanted. And she always did.¹⁷

She had received many rejection letters until finally she got an off camera position at a local cable station. Stone started at WWEN as a secretary, considering it a

foot in the door. She frequently pitched news stories to the news director, until finally she convinced him to let her be the weather girl.

After failing to become a reporter almost immediately, she decided to start a documentary about local teenagers and some of the problems and pressures they face. Stone believed this documentary would be her big break.¹⁸

With permission from her director and cooperation from a local high school, Stone began her “Teens Speak Out” project. Stone used her femininity and sexuality to get the students’ attention, but only one girl signed up for the project.¹⁹ Lydia Mertz was in awe of Stone and volunteered because she wanted to spend time with someone like her.²⁰

Troublemaker Russell Hines signed up himself and friend Jimmy Emmett for the project as a joke, but they both got roped into it. Neither of them planned to take Stone or her documentary seriously.

Almost immediately, Stone started spending a lot of time with the three students. At first, it was harmless. She’d meet them after school or take them out for pizza, and they would work toward building her documentary. But eventually, Stone started spending all of her free time with Emmett and Mertz and began to develop friendships with them. Meanwhile, Emmett became increasingly attracted to her, and Mertz continued to idolize her even more. Hines rarely attended any of their meetings.

At this time, Stone was still a weather girl at WWEN and hadn’t been promoted to a reporter. She applied for more jobs, but failed to receive any offers from bigger networks. Most of her time was spent working on the documentary, or attending workshops and classes to gain experience as a reporter.

Stone attended a broadcast conference in Mansfield and met a station manager from New York with whom she had a fling.²¹ When she returned, she became very critical of Maretto and his appearance.²² She spent less time with her husband, and when they were together she was constantly nitpicking at him and pushing him off of her.²³

Although initially supportive of her career, Maretto became frustrated with all the time she spent at the station.²⁴ He kept urging Stone to settle down, start a family and work at the family restaurant with him.²⁵ To Stone, this was the ultimate offense. She believed her husband doubted her aspirations, and now he was standing in her way of fulfilling her dreams.

So Stone decided the best way to help move her career forward would be to kill Larry Maretto. This would put her in the limelight as the mourning widow *and* aspiring reporter. She figured the publicity might even help get her documentary on air.

One night during a meeting at her house, Stone seduced Emmett. She began dancing, swaying her hips back and forth and placing Emmett's hands around her body. She asked Mertz to walk the dog so she and Emmett could be alone. Mertz returned to find Stone and Emmett in her bedroom, with Stone standing over the bed wearing a garter belt from Victoria's Secret and a see-through bra performing an old cheerleading routine.²⁶

The two of them then began a secret sexual relationship, meeting at motels, on the beach and even at Stone's house when her husband wasn't home. Stone only furthered Emmett's obsession for her by telling him she loved him and that she wanted to be with him, but couldn't because she was married.²⁷

Emmett, Mertz and Hines all grew up in the poor area of town. They latched on to Stone for different reasons. For Emmett, it was raging hormones. For Hines, it was a few CDs and a chance to look up her skirt. And for overweight Mertz it was someone to idolize, worship and trust.²⁸ Mertz and Stone became friends. They would go shopping together and tell each other their secrets. Stone took to Mertz like a little sister or best friend, telling her how to improve her body or appearance and confiding in her. Stone used to promise Mertz that when she was famous, she would make Mertz her assistant.²⁹

Eventually Stone convinced them that her husband was abusive and had a temper. She said she was considering going to a battered women's shelter.³⁰ Divorce was not an option because that would mean she would lose the condo, the car, and the cash.³¹ She was convinced that if Maretto couldn't be with her, he'd rather be dead. She enlisted the help of the three teenagers to murder her husband.

While Stone was off at a job interview for an arts and entertainment reporting position, Hines and Emmett borrowed Mertz's mother's gun, broke into Stone's condo, messed things up and waited for Maretto to get home. Hines held Maretto down while Emmett shot him.

When the police and reporters came to her house to question Stone about the death of her husband, her family and in-laws were sitting in the living room stunned. Stone coolly got up, smoothed her hair and clothes, and prepared herself for her appearance on the news.

After the three teenagers were immediately arrested as part of the murder scheme, Stone openly criticized them calling them hoodlums with obsessions toward her. She

said her husband must have had a drug problem and the boys were the ones who supplied the drugs.³²

Eventually, the evidence pointed to Stone's possible involvement in Maretto's murder. Mertz had told to the cops that Stone's husband used to hit her, and that Emmett and Stone were in love. Mertz revealed that Stone was behind the whole plan.

Stone was arrested for conspiracy to commit murder and spent ten days in jail before her bail hearing. She used the experience to her advantage to lose weight, and write a journal, which she planned to send to the major networks once she was released.³³

Bail was granted at \$200,000 and the Stones turned over the deed to their home to release their daughter. At this point, Stone thought all this publicity would be good for her image and only help further her career. She said she had received many television and movie offers, and job opportunities from major networks.

Stone received a call from an ABC producer in New York who wanted to do a one-hour special on her story. They said this story had all the elements that make it newsworthy, and also told her to bring along her reel because the station was looking for new on-camera talent.

“Not to get too heavy or anything, but all of this has made me think. About the way life works. I mean, and how strange it is. First something terrible happens. Then, just when you least expect it, something good comes along, that evens up the score again,” said Stone.

Stone drove out to meet the producer in a secluded spot. Ten days later her body was found washed up on shore. An autopsy was performed that ruled out suicide. The

police knew the Maretto family had connections and figured they had taken care of the problem. But as far as the press was concerned, Stone committed suicide.³⁴

NOVEL AND FILM

Some people say they're sure to make a movie about this. If so, I'd like to see Julia Roberts play me. Or that actress that just got married to Tom Cruise in real life—I can't think of her name.

--Suzanne Stone³⁵

The novel *To Die For* was written by Joyce Maynard in 1992. Three years later, SONY Pictures adapted it into a movie directed by Gus Van Sant. Nicole Kidman was cast to play Suzanne Stone.

Her character, which was much like Maynard had described in the novel, had blonde hair, a small nose, and delicate features. Her short skirt suits and high heels matched perfectly, making Stone look polished and pulled together. Kidman accurately played the vindictive, selfish, star-studded woman described in Maynard's novel.³⁶

There are few differences between the novel and the film, most of which are minor.³⁷ The novel is able to incorporate more details on Stone's life and her personality. However, the movie allows viewers to actually see the eeriness of Stone's character and her actions.

Both the novel and the film follow Stone and the people around her through monologues and flashbacks. Stone speaks directly to a camera in the form of a video interview. She discusses her professional goals and her husband's death. The Stones and Maretto appear on a talk show, and are interviewed about Larry Maretto's death and the relationship between him and Suzanne Stone.

The novel was inspired by a murder case in New Hampshire that received widespread media attention.³⁸ Pamela Smart was convicted of being an accomplice to first-degree murder, conspiracy to commit murder and witness tampering. Smart conspired with her teenage lover William Flynn to kill her 24-year-old husband Gregory Smart.

There are some striking similarities between Smart's story and *To Die For*. Both Stone and Smart were popular cheerleaders in high school and shared a love for heavy metal music. Both women received a communications degree and worked for a college radio station. Gregory Smart bought Pam Smart a Shih Tzu dog, which she named Halen after her favorite rock band Van Halen. Larry Maretto bought Suzanne Stone a Lhasa apso dog, which she named Walter after her favorite anchorman Walter Cronkite.

Smart was a media coordinator at a New Hampshire high school and was working on a local drug awareness program at the school called "Project Self-Esteem." Smart met 15-year-old Flynn, who was a volunteer in the program, and they began a sexual relationship.

The murders were carried out in similar fashion, including a .38 caliber pistol. However, Smart was found guilty of using Flynn and some of his friends to kill her husband. She was sentenced to life without possibility of parole and is serving her sentence at a correctional facility in Upstate New York.

APPEARANCE

Looks aren't everything. But let's be realistic. When you meet someone, and she's covered with acne or she weighs three hundred pounds or something, do you feel the same about her as when you meet someone that takes care of herself, and has a pleasant appearance?

--Suzanne Stone³⁹

Stone's character embodies some of the characteristics commonly found among female journalists depicted in popular culture. One common stereotype is that female journalists are judged based on their appearance and less on their intelligence and background. Because of this, women reporters and anchors tend to focus their attention on looking good for the camera.

Although Stone had a solid background in journalism and grew up practicing being on television, she still focused more on her appearance than her actual experience because she believed that is what was going to get her a job.⁴⁰

In her on camera interview Stone says, "With me for instance. Quite frankly, I know one of the things I have going for me is my appearance." Stone thought everyone should look their best every second because they never knew when someone was going to take their picture. She also said that people who don't care about their weight or appearance do not have their life under control.⁴¹

Obsessive about maintaining a telegenic appearance, Stone was the type of person who wouldn't smile for fear of getting wrinkles, wrapped herself in Saran wrap at night to sweat off extra water weight, and applied Vaseline to her teeth to make them shine.⁴² Stone took pride in her appearance and always tried to look composed. Prior to attending a networking convention, Stone bought new luggage and a new briefcase, had her hair highlighted, and went to the tanning parlor.⁴³ She regularly took exercise classes and told her parents-in-law that she needed to lose weight because the camera adds 10 pounds.⁴⁴

Stone has had work done on her nose and talks openly about plastic surgery and the importance of appearances with her sister-in-law, Janice Maretto.⁴⁵

Stone also gave beauty tips to Mertz, who is overweight and unattractive. Stone told her to always dress like you're going to the White House because you never know whom you're going to meet, or when you're going to get your big break. She taught Mertz how to apply makeup under her eyes to cover up circles and encouraged her to diet and consider bleaching her freckles.⁴⁶

Although Stone said she loved children, she would only consider adoption because of all the negative effects pregnancy has on a woman's figure, let alone her career.⁴⁷ Well-known reporters like Joan Lunden, Jane Pauley, and Deborah Norville all got pregnant after they were already established in the industry. Stone mocked them for looking awful on camera while they were pregnant and while they were trying to lose the pregnancy weight.⁴⁸

In Howard Good's book *Girl Reporter: Gender, Journalism, and the Movies*, he said, "the film takes aim at more than tabloid ethics. It takes aim at the career woman as well. If Suzanne is a media-mad monster—'You're not anybody in America,' she says, 'unless you're on TV'"—the ultimate horror is that she puts career ahead of family. Numerous scenes in the film point up her refusal to bear children."⁴⁹

Women have been judged by their appearance in the workplace, and it has influenced their odds of being hired or fired.⁵⁰ It raises questions of whether young, attractive reporters are hired based on their looks as male managers make the news more "visually pleasing," or whether they get the job based on ability.⁵¹

In the film *Anchorman*, Veronica Corningstone (played by Christina Applegate) falls into the stereotype of the “female anchor who is often significantly younger than the male anchor and plays the role of the ‘hot thing on the side.’”⁵² Corningstone is physically similar to Stone, with highlighted blonde hair, bright red lipstick, and both in high heels and suit dresses with short skirts.

Joe Saltzman, author of the essay *Sob Sisters: The Image of the Female Journalist in Popular Culture*, writes that a woman journalist must constantly “prove herself” and “persuade men that she is worthy of their respect.” Stone used her looks to get a foot in the door. In *Up Close and Personal*, established television reporter Tally Atwater (played by Michelle Pfeiffer) seems more concerned about the way she looks on camera than getting information on the breaking news story.⁵³

Seattle TV reporter Lanie Kerrigan (played by Angelina Jolie) in the film *Life or Something Like It* is an independent female journalist who aspires to become a national news correspondent. Like Corningstone from *Anchorman* and Stone in *To Die For*, Kerrigan is a platinum blonde beauty concerned with her appearance.⁵⁴ According to a review in *Entertainment Weekly*, “she acts with her big eyes, sweeping her pupils this way and that in exaggerated gestures of calculated flirtatiousness.”⁵⁵

In *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, Hilary Banks (played by Karyn Parsons) has the confidence and appearance, but lacks education and experience. Nonetheless her looks get her a job as a weather reporter at a local TV station.⁵⁶ Similarly, Kelly Bundy (played by Christina Applegate) on *Married... with Children* is a bleached blonde brain-dead babe who becomes a weather girl because she wears short skirts.⁵⁷

Journalist and writer Paul E. Schindler, Jr. says ugly male journalists are always acceptable, but female journalists must be “young” and “drop-dead gorgeous.”⁵⁸ They are often dressed in a way that is “wildly inappropriate.”⁵⁹ In the film *I Love Trouble*, reporter Sabrina Peterson (played by Julia Roberts) is sent out to cover a story in a train yard wearing high heels and a tight skirt.⁶⁰

Schindler says that “any woman reporter who dressed like the ones in film and television would be laughed off the street,” because “the tight dress, the low cut, and the high heels” would prevent her from physically doing her job.⁶¹

SEXUALITY

It's a dog-eat-dog world out there. You have a goal, you're a fool not to go out there and pursue it. Because I'll tell you something: If I don't go after what I want, there's always going to be someone else who will. And if there's a prize out there for the taking, it might as well be mine.

---Suzanne Stone⁶²

Another stereotype of female journalists is that they use their sexuality to get ahead. Stone was a woman who would do anything—*anything*—to get what she wants. In the film, when Stone was on her honeymoon in Florida she caught the eye of the keynote speaker reporter George Segal at a broadcasting conference. After his speech he found Stone at a bar and offered her a bit of advice: “The point is, Suzanne, if you want it bad enough you'll get it. But you got to really want it. You got to be able to do things that ordinary people wouldn't do. You see what I'm saying?” Segal told Stone about a famous female reporter who slept her way to the top.⁶³ Segal put his hand on her leg and convinced Stone to stay and have another drink with him. When Stone returned to the hotel room a few hours later, her husband was already sleeping. After they returned from

their honeymoon, Stone walked into a job interview at local cable station WWEN and says, “This is a dream all my life. I will do anything to get this job. Anything.”⁶⁴

In the novel’s version, Stone went to the conference where she met a young, attractive station manager named Hal Brady with whom she may have had one-night stand. Brady explained that there are tons of women at these conferences who would give their room key for the chance at a job at a news station. They are attractive women who know how to play the game, and do. They know the moves, they know the way to look at a man, and they know how to put on a performance.⁶⁵

Stone also used her sexuality and her “come-hither professionalism” to seduce Emmett and convince him to eventually kill her husband.⁶⁶ Stone teased Emmett by only sleeping with him when she wanted to, leaving him sexually frustrated and yearning for more. She abused her power by promising Emmett sex only if he could take care of her husband. Ultimately, Emmett’s libido and infatuation convinced him to commit murder for Stone.

“Now sex... You put sex into a situation and everything changes. A woman wants to get out of her marriage. Her husband doesn't want a divorce. She's got to dump him, but he's holding on. Nobody knows what to do. Then sex enters in. She gets a sixteen-year-old boyfriend. Now she's crossed a line. Broken the rules. Once she's done that, it's an easy step to the next point,” wrote author Joyce Maynard on her website.⁶⁷

Sleeping one’s way to the top is a common stereotype (or perhaps reality) in many professions when women are trying to move up in the workforce. In Woody Allen’s film *Scoop*, actress Scarlett Johansson plays Sondra Pransky, “the type of girl reporter who thinks nothing of sleeping with her interviewees to get the story.”⁶⁸

In *Girl Reporter: Gender, Journalism and the Movies*, author Howard Good says “the prominence of female characters creates a sexualization of women journalists, who use their feminine charm as a tool for success.”⁶⁹ Good says “this self-exploitation comes at a price” as he discusses Jane Fonda’s character in *The China Syndrome*, “who relies heavily on her beauty to be successful.”⁷⁰

VANITY

There are some individuals I could mention that would probably tell you I’m some kind of cutthroat, ambitious bitch. They’re saying I was full of myself, thought I was so great. Well, what if I did? Since when did it start to be a crime to have a little confidence and self-esteem? If I didn’t blow my own horn, who else was going to do it for me?
--Suzanne Stone⁷¹

Stone embodies the stereotype of the self-absorbed journalist who is more concerned with her personal interest of being on camera and fame, than the public interest of providing news to their audience.

Stone briefly touched on her desire to contribute to society. “It would make you feel good knowing you had an influence in so many people’s lives like that . . . to truly make a difference with disadvantaged youths, provide them with a true learning experience, and act as a positive role model.”⁷²

However, Stone’s real motivation for pursuing a job in the media has always been to be on television. Since she was a little girl, she practiced being on television. Her background in commercial modeling only furthered her exposure on air. Stone believed her documentary would get picked up and make her famous. She was always focused on her big break.⁷³

Throughout both the novel and the film, she acts in ways that suggest she needs to be the center of attention.⁷⁴ The film often symbolized Stone's self-centered attitude. In one scene, at her and her husband's one-year anniversary party, Stone is shown blowing out the candle, which is just a number 1. After she blew it out, her face came into focus and everything around her goes dark except for the number 1 candle and the shadow of her face. At her husband's funeral, Suzanne brought a tape recorder and played the song, "All By Myself."

After her husband's death became publicized, Stone took center stage and turned the focus on herself.⁷⁵ When Stone saw the reporters and the flash of the photographer's camera, she felt excited, even at the her husband's funeral.⁷⁶

She made a big deal that her husband was her biggest supporter, and that she was sad he would never know if she got the reporting job she interviewed for the night he was killed.⁷⁷ Stone also handled the media, acting like she was trying to cooperate with them, instead of implying she would benefit from the experience.⁷⁸

Stone profited from her husband's death by getting in the spotlight first as a grieving widow and then as a suspect. She was very concerned with her appearance and about the clothes that she wore while on trial: an elegant suit with gold earrings emphasizing her highlighted blonde hair. Stone believed a movie was going to be made about this experience and hoped Nicole Kidman or Julia Roberts would play her. Stone started writing a book about her job as a weather girl, and had plans to sell her documentary.⁷⁹ And she even offered different networks an exclusive interview regarding her husband's death and said that she had multiple offers for jobs.

She compared herself to a celebrity, and said she couldn't go anywhere without people knowing who she was. Stone said she knew how Madonna and Princess Diana felt.⁸⁰

“What I wanted to explore was the role the camera plays in our lives, the influence of celebrity on our culture, and the utterly unprecedented form of ambition that now exists, spawned in our media age -- not to be famous for some accomplishment, but simply, to be famous,” said Maynard.⁸¹

In a movie review written in *The New York Times*, Stone is described as a media-loving, limelight-craving, vapid woman. “When Suzanne Stone (Nicole Kidman) sees the paparazzi's flashbulbs, she feels a wave of exhilaration. Because Suzanne believes in the redeeming power of television, she has made herself its candy-colored creature, turning her job as a weather girl into the apotheosis of empty fame. Her whole life revolves around that idea of glamour.”⁸²

MANIPULATION

She was irresistible. She had this ability to manipulate a person. Suzanne had that kind of power of a person. My dad couldn't resist it. Larry Maretto couldn't. You think a sixteen-year-old boy could say no to a person like that?

--Faye Stone⁸³

In the essay *Sob Sisters: The Image of the Female Journalist in Popular Culture*, Saltzman wrote that “the female journalist faces an ongoing dilemma: how to incorporate the masculine traits of journalism essential for success—being aggressive, self-reliant, curious, tough, ambitious, cynical, cocky, unsympathetic— while still being the woman society would like her to be— compassionate, caring, loving, maternal, sympathetic.”⁸⁴

Stone dealt with this dichotomy by presenting a façade of the caring, compassionate female. Stone puts on a performance as a homemaker and loving wife. Once she obtained that fantasized version of married life complete with the husband, car, condo and little dog, she resorts back to being too career-obsessed to be anything else.

She could be considered the epitome of the conniving, manipulative female reporter who will do what it takes to get where she wants and what she wants. She was always able to get a man to do what she wanted.⁸⁵ In particular, she was able to start at a news station as a secretary, while managing to get a promotion to a weather girl. When there weren't opportunities to advance as a reporter, Stone started a documentary on disadvantaged youths.

When she felt like her husband was the only obstacle in her path to success, Stone convinced Emmett to kill Larry Maretto. She then told reporters and police that Emmett was a crazy, drug-dealing, obsessed hoodlum, who smelled like clams.⁸⁶ She manipulated Hines by promising him money to assist in the murder, but then never paid him. And she even used Mertz to boost her own ego, and then borrowed her gun. After Maretto's death, Stone stopped spending time with Mertz. She told the police Mertz must have had a crush on her, and lied about the times they spent together.⁸⁷ In the end, Stone got what she wanted. She killed her husband and then she turned her back on Emmett, Hines and Mertz.

“The people closest to Suzanne see her as a role model, a woman striving to become like her television idols. Others see her as a self-centered, coldhearted manipulator, a woman who considers the media celebrity that follows her husband's murder a career opportunity,” said Maynard.⁸⁸

The conniving female doesn't let anyone stand in her way. Some of these most powerful images of females emerge in depictions of print journalists. These include editors-in-chief Miranda Priestley from the novel and film *The Devil Wears Prada*,⁸⁹ Wilhelmina Slater (played by Vanessa Williams) from the television series *Ugly Betty*,⁹⁰ and Lucy Spiller (played by Courteney Cox) from the television series *Dirt*.⁹¹

Often the manipulative female is depicted as an aspiring reporter who wants to get the story and further her career. These women can be portrayed as emotionless and cold-hearted. In the movie *Scream*, tabloid newswoman Gale Weathers (played by Courteney Cox) exploited and sensationalized the death of Sidney Prescott's (played by Neve Campbell) mother in a tell-all book. She continued to harass Prescott to get the story about the killer on the loose.⁹²

This image perpetuates the notion that the media sensationalize everything to make it more stimulating. In the novel *To Die For*, Carol Stone distrusts the press: "What do I know about tape recorders? How do I know the tricks they can do to make it sound like a person's saying something they never said? They twist your words around, I know that much. They make it sound like you said things and did things you never did. They'll do anything to get people tuning in to their news show."⁹³ Ironically, the mother of an aspiring reporter considers reporters to be "the scum of the earth. They're vultures. First they tear your heart out. Then they play it back for the world to see on the six o'clock news."⁹⁴

Suzanne Stone's mother continues to blame the media for the death of her daughter: "They're the most guilty of all, in my opinion, for the way they sensationalized everything, and made it so Susie's face was plastered all over the news every night as a

suspected killer. The way those so-called journalists twisted the truth of her story, for their own sensationalistic purposes. They're as guilty of her death as they would have been if they'd stood there and pushed her off the bridge themselves."⁹⁵

CONCLUSION

Here's what I think. All of life is a learning experience. Everything is part of a big master plan, but sometimes it's hard to read. I mean, if you get too close to the screen all you see are a bunch of little dots. You don't see the big picture until you stand back, but when you do everything comes into focus.

--Suzanne Stone⁹⁶

In Career Movies: American Business and the Success Mystique, Jack Boozer writes, "Gus van Sant's film *To Die For* is based on a true story featuring a wanna-be television newscaster (Nicole Kidman) who has her husband killed because he gets in the way of her TV career. That television career presence is the only reality she recognizes as having significance. Her career success fixation is both learned from television and interiorized as her personal mission, a conversion of her personal space and psyche to a success image already saturated in televirtuality and its particular kind of truth. The seductive force of television can hardly be more blatantly expressed than in these real world obsessions to be a performer in the ritualistic glow of this seemingly transformative mass medium."⁹⁷

Stone's character developed as an aspiring reporter who was fascinated with the idea of being on television to a conniving, cold-hearted killer who wouldn't let *anything* stand in the way of her dream. Throughout both the novel and the film Stone bought into the messages relayed to her by TV. Consequently, her character reflects many of the images that the general public may consider to be realistic traits about female journalists.

According to a news release from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, author Matthew Ehrlich said, “journalism is important, journalism has a central place in American life and in democracy” and “journalism can and should be performed well.”⁹⁸ Movies about journalists, almost always reinforce “ideals or mythic notions about democracy and the role of the press.”⁹⁹ When movies portray the reporter or the press as negative, the public’s view of real-life journalism is altered.¹⁰⁰

In the book Acquainted with the Night: The Image of Journalists in American Fiction 1890-1930, Howard Good says the fictitious representations of journalists offer “a symbolic and subjective account of journalism,” that “constitutes a kind of diary about the attitudes and tensions and dreams of a society that produced and consumed it.”¹⁰¹

The female journalist in popular culture often fits into at least one of the stereotypes of women reporters. She could be the cutthroat “ball buster” who breaks the glass ceiling by kicking everyone along the way with her stilettos. She could be the unsympathetic reporter who is only out for the scoop. She could be the woman whose intelligence is overlooked because of her attractiveness. She could be the sex kitten who uses her femininity and sexuality to get the story, or get ahead in her career. All of these depictions of journalists in film, television, and literature result in unrealistic perceptions of the profession.¹⁰²

One stereotype about all reporters that is evident in *To Die For* is that journalists interfere with and perhaps exploit other people’s lives to tell the story. Boozer wrote, “Films about TV in the 1990s are generally more realistically direct in their representations of televisions encroachment on everyday life, and in a way that is closer to the open-ended and fluid powers of cyberculture.”¹⁰³

These images of the persistent reporter who exploits her subject's misfortune and Stone's hyperbolized characteristics portray the female journalist in a negative light that is not representative of real life women reporters. So the images one sees in movies and television shows, and reads in fiction novels, is an inaccurate depiction of the female journalist.

On the contrary, in The Postmodern Scene, Arthur Kroker and David Cook write that "TV is, in the very literal sense, the real world," and that "it's not TV as a mirror of society, but just the reverse: It's society as a mirror of television."¹⁰⁴ Therefore, negative or inaccurate images of the female journalist are accepted to be true.

To Die For represents the woman reporter who will do anything to get ahead in her career. In Howard Good's book Girl Reporter: Gender, Journalism, and the Movies, he describes the film as showing that "a woman's hunger for fame as a television correspondent knows no bounds, not even murder."¹⁰⁵

¹ *To Die For*, DVD, directed by Gus Van Sant. (SONY Pictures, 1995). Nicole Kidman plays Suzanne Stone. Stone is talking to her friend Lydia Mertz.

² *To Die For*, DVD, directed by Gus Van Sant. (SONY Pictures, 1995).

³ Maynard, Joyce, *To Die For* (E.P. Dutton, 1992), 23.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 4. Carol Stone describes Suzanne Stone's popularity: "And popular? I'm telling you, by the time that girl was thirteen, Earl had to have another phone line put in for Susie's calls. We had boys knocking on the door just to get a look at her. Older boys, too—seventeen, eighteen—asking her out when she was still in junior high of course. This was a young lady with a head on her shoulders. 'You know, Mom,' she used to tell me, 'I just don't have time for a lot of dating. I've got to think about her future.' Not that she was antisocial. We're not talking about some sort of hermit. I'm telling you, this girl had activities every day of the week."

⁷ *Ibid.*, 5. Carol Stone: "Always a perfectionist. Always the highest standards. You couldn't say gymnastics was her specialty, but you've never seen a person work so hard on the splits."

⁸ *Ibid.*, 13. Earl Stone: “She never gave us a minute’s worry. Never the drugs. Never the late nights staying up waiting for her to come home, and she’s past curfew. Only worry she gave us was that she pushed herself too hard.”

⁹ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁰ *To Die For*, DVD, directed by Gus Van Sant. (SONY Pictures, 1995). Larry Maretto’s sister Janice Maretto is being interviewed and she describes her brother as someone who attracted a lot of women. Janice Maretto: “He could have hand anyone basically, but Suzanne won.”

¹¹ Maynard, Joyce, *To Die For* (E.P. Dutton, 1992), 6, 37. The courtship between Larry and Suzanne involved Larry buying her presents, writing her songs and love poems. He even bought her a Lhasa Apso puppy, with a note attached saying “I’d die for your love.”

¹² *To Die For*, DVD, directed by Gus Van Sant. (SONY Pictures, 1995). Larry Maretto, Janice Maretto and Suzanne Stone are all out to lunch. Larry tells Janice that Suzanne is going to be the next Barbara Walters.

¹³ Maynard, Joyce, *To Die For* (E.P. Dutton, 1992), 38. The couple went on a trip to Florida with some of Maretto’s friends, and Stone blasted rock music, cussed profusely, mooned a tollbooth attendant, and even attempted oral sex on her husband in the car in front of his friends. Another time, at a baseball game at Fenway Park in Boston, Stone unzipped Maretto’s pants under a blanket and began feeling him up. When he told her to stop, she told him about a baseball game in Toronto where a hotel overlooks the ballpark, and one night a couple was having sex in the window and everyone stopped watching the game to look at the couple. She suggested they rent one of the rooms and said, “Just think, we’d be more famous than the ball players.”

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5. Carol Stone says that Suzanne Stone wasn’t head over heels for Larry Maretto, but she didn’t turn him down. Affection for Maretto is a façade; page 5 (she didn’t turn him down but wasn’t head over heels). On page 232, Joe Maretto says Suzanne’s affection for Larry was one big performance.

¹⁵ *To Die For*, DVD, directed by Gus Van Sant. (SONY Pictures, 1995). Suzanne Stone is out to lunch with Larry and Janice Maretto and she says that she relates to Connie Chung and Jane Pauley because of similar physical traits.

¹⁶ Maynard, Joyce, *To Die For* (E.P. Dutton, 1992), 7. In the movie, she drives a Mustang.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 13, 232. Earl Stone: “Every goal she set herself, she attained it.” On page 232, Joe Maretto discusses how Larry got in Suzanne’s way so she “got rid of him,” in order to succeed in her career and get what she wanted.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 15, 25, 35. There are multiple references about the documentary being Suzanne’s big break and making her famous.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 14. Suzanne shows up the first day and Jimmy Emmett describes her appearance: “Steps out like some chick in a commercial—first all you see is her legs in those high-heel shoes. Didn’t even see her face right off, just that leg. Her nose was kind of funny, but to me she still looked pretty. And knew it. She bends over so her rear end’s in our face, reaching for her damn briefcase or some shit. Then she just stands there for a minute, leaning against her car and she runs her tongue over her lips, like you know women do because they saw it in a movie and they know it makes guys hot, and

then she heads into the school, tossing her hair when she passes us, wiggling her butt, the works.”

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 32. Lydia Mertz is in awe of Suzanne Stone. Mertz: “If she was a student, she’d be homecoming queen for sure. She’d be the most popular girl in the entire school. I never would’ve dared to speak to her. And I guess I figured it would be nice to just hang around her a little, maybe. I never dreamed we’d get to be friends like that. I figured someone like her would have a jillion friends. Who she reminded me of was Princess Diana.”

²¹ *Ibid.*, 83-86. In the movie, Stone goes to a conference and meets an old station manager with whom she has a few drinks. She returns to her hotel room and her husband is waiting. It is unclear whether she engaged in sexual relations with anyone. In the novel, Stone goes to a conference alone and meets a young station manager. She describes their connection to Lydia Mertz and Mertz assumes she had an affair. Stone never directly said that. The station manager, Hal Brady, said that he probably slept with her, but doesn’t remember it because there are many women who will sleep with someone to advance their career.

²² *Ibid.*, 87. Joe Maretto: “I don’t know what happened at that TV conference Suzanne went to, back in the winter, but I’ll tell you one thing, she was a different person when she came back. All of sudden everything was wrong with her. Nobody was good enough. Nothing we did was right.” Joe Maretto continues to describe Suzanne’s new snobby behavior, and how she was rude to Larry Maretto: “It’s the way she was treating our son that hurt. Picking at him, nonstop. Pointing out the calorie count in every piece of food he puts in his mouth, giving him this look. ‘Your pants are too short, Larry,’ she tells him. ‘We’ve got to get rid of this polyester shirt. It makes you look so cheap. And it’s getting a little tight on you too, I might add.’”

²³ *Ibid.*, 84, 87. On page 84, Lydia Mertz recalls Suzanne Stone complaining about Larry and his appearance and saying, “It’s horrible when someone’s crazy about you, and you wish they wouldn’t even touch you. Night after night I tell him I’m not in the mood. But the truth is, I don’t think I’ll ever feel like doing it with him again.” On page 87, Stone pushes Maretto away when he tries to kiss her at a dinner at the Maretto’s house.

²⁴ “To Die For” (1995). Available from: Crazy 4 Cinema.com

<http://crazy4cinema.com/Review/FilmsT/f_todiefor.html> (accessed 17 March 2009).

²⁵ Maynard, Joyce, *To Die For* (E.P. Dutton, 1992), 232. Larry Maretto starts to doubt her ability to become a newswoman. He wants her to help him with the family business and start a family. Maretto says, “I’m not selling short what you’re doing now, I mean the weather report stuff, which you’re really good at, but let’s face the facts, it’s probably not going to happen. You didn’t get any big network offers. And this way we can be working together in respective fields, doing what a family is supposed to be doing. A family, that’s what I’m talking about Suzie. What do you think?”

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 117.

²⁷ *Ibid.* Throughout the novel and the film, Jimmy Emmett and Lydia Mertz reveal that Stone said she wanted to be with Emmett but couldn’t because she was married. She begins a sexual relationship with him and convinces Emmett that she wants to be with him. Stone uses sex as a weapon to get Emmett to kill her husband.

²⁸ “To Die For” (1995). Available from: Rolling Stone
 <http://www.rollingstone.com/reviews/movie/5947133/review/5947134/to_die_for>
 (accessed 17 March 2009).

²⁹ Maynard, Joyce, *To Die For* (E.P. Dutton, 1992), 127. Suzanne Stone tells Lydia Mertz that she wants to move to California and become famous, and she would make Mertz her assistant. In the film, Stone and Mertz plan to move to Florida.

³⁰ *To Die For*, DVD, directed by Gus Van Sant. (SONY Pictures, 1995). Suzanne Stone spends time with Jimmy Emmett (“James” as she calls him) because she loves the attention and the adoration. One night, she cries to Emmett and tells him that her husband has a temper and that she wants to “go into a shelter” for women who are abused. Emmett says he will never hurt her and couldn’t let anyone hurt her and says that someone who treats her like that “doesn’t deserve to live.” Suzanne says, “I suppose he doesn’t.” Then all of a sudden Sweet Home Alabama Comes on and Suzanne gets up and starts dancing in front of the car, wearing a short dress and lifting it up.

³¹ “To Die For” (1995). Available from: Rolling Stone
 <http://www.rollingstone.com/reviews/movie/5947133/review/5947134/to_die_for>
 (accessed 17 March 2009).

³² Maynard, Joyce, *To Die For* (E.P. Dutton, 1992), 100, 176, 185, 194. Suzanne Stone insults Lydia Mertz, Jimmy Emmett and Russell Hines by calling them “hoods” and saying that they come from poor, broken families. Stone says that they obviously conspired against her because they were jealous of her and obsessed with her: “You knew the kind of element they were part of, and of course I was aware of the fact that James had this crush on me. But in my wildest dreams I never believed his jealousy of Larry would lead him to murder. In his perverted brain I guess he actually believed that if Larry were out of the way he’d be able to have me for himself. The part that shocks me is how the police accepted their assertions as credible. When any idiot could see these boys were troublemakers from the word go. As for the girl, Lydia. I gradually came to understand, from spending time with her, that she had a sexual obsession with me.”

³³ *Ibid.*, 198. Suzanne Stone: “I won’t pretend I wasn’t upset. But then I just switched gears. OK, I told myself. I’m going to benefit from this experience. I’ll keep a journal. I’ll do exercises. Cut back on my calories—which believe me, once you’ve taken a look at what they serve here, it’s not that hard to do. I decided to view my time in the correctional facility kind of like I was at a spa. Well, not a spa exactly. Maybe a religious retreat or a prisoner-of-war camp. Something to broaden my experience. And when it was all over, I’d have some dynamite material to market.”

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 226.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 204.

³⁶ *To Die For*, DVD, directed by Gus Van Sant. (SONY Pictures, 1995).

³⁷ *Ibid.* Some differences include the honeymoon spot, brand of car and type of dog.

³⁸ “A Few Words About the Origins of *To Die For*,” (2007). Available from Joyce Maynard’s website <<http://www.joycemaynard.com/books-jmaynard/to-die-for.shtml>>
 (accessed 17 March 2009).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 203.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 32, 46, 204, Throughout the novel, Suzanne refers to her appearance and looks more than her intelligence or background in journalism. She tells Lydia that it’s important

to dress like you're going to the White House, and that you always have to look your best because you never know when someone is going to photograph you.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 204-205.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 54.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁴⁵ *To Die For*, DVD, directed by Gus Van Sant. (SONY Pictures, 1995). Suzanne Stone and Janice Maretto are out to lunch. Stone says, "I believe that Mr. Gorbachev—you know, that man who ran Russia for so long—I believe that he would still be in power today if he had done what so many people suggested and had that big purple thing taken off his forehead. I firmly believe that. Someday I hope to interview him and discuss that along with other more pertinent international things, you know."

⁴⁶ Maynard, Joyce, *To Die For* (E.P. Dutton, 1992), 32, 33, 176.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 78. Suzanne Stone and Mrs. Maretto talk about having babies. Stone says, "A woman in my field with a baby has two strikes against her. Say I'm in NY, well for instance, and I'm suddenly called to go on some foreign assignment, like a royal wedding or a revolution in South America. Well you can't run from place to place with your crew following and conduct serious interviews with a big fat stomach. Or say you've already had the baby and you have this blubber and your boobs down to here. It's so gross."

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 35, 76, 175. Suzanne Stone frequently references other female reporters who have gotten pregnant and fat.

⁴⁹ Good, Howard, *Girl Reporter: Gender, Journalism and the Movies* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998).

⁵⁰ Steiner, Linda. *The Gender Matters Debate in Journalism—Lessons from the Front*. (Journalism: Critical Studies. England: Open University Press, 2005), 51. Women have long been hired, fired and judged on the basis of appearance, although the standards of beauty change and critics are hard on women who are overly sexy."

⁵¹ Ross, Karen. *Women in the Boyzone: Gender, News and Herstory*. (Journalism: Critical Studies. England: Open University Press, 2005), 292. The extent to which appearance is focused on by employers and women journalists themselves raises questions as to whether the inclusion of young attractive reporters in television news, is based not on ability, but is an attempt by male managers to make the news more "visually pleasing"; using women's bodies to sell serious content to the public.

⁵² *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy*, DVD, directed by Adam McKay. (Dreamworks Video, 2004).

⁵³ *Up Close & Personal*, DVD, directed by Jon Avnet. (Walt Disney Video, 1996).

⁵⁴ *Life or Something Like it*, DVD, directed by Stephen Herek. (20th Century Fox, 2002). Lanie Kerrigan works out every morning before going to work, is very particular about the way she eats and focuses on how her body looks.

⁵⁵ "Life of Something Like It" (2002). Available from Entertainment Weekly <<http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,233262,00.html>> (accessed 17 March 2009).

⁵⁶ *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, Television Series. (NBC Productions, The Stuffed Dog Company, Warner Bros. Television 1990-1996).

⁵⁷ *Married... with Children*, Television Series. (Fox 1987-1997).

⁵⁸ “Women in Journalism Movies” (2007). Available from Paul E. Schindler
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⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ “Journalism Movies.” Available from Paul E. Schindler
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⁶¹ “Women in Journalism Movies” (2007). Available from Paul E. Schindler
<<http://www.schindler.org/jwomen.shtml>> (accessed 17 March 2009).

⁶² Maynard, Joyce, *To Die For* (E.P. Dutton, 1992), 81.

⁶³ *To Die For*, DVD, directed by Gus Van Sant. (SONY Pictures, 1995). Suzanne Stone is talking to broadcaster George Segal. Segal says, “When I was at the network there was this gal from some station where she did the weather—the weather—so she comes up to NY, in her best Donna Karan dress for success knock-off, blonde hair all done up in a French twist and an audition tape in her imitation leather briefcase, along with letter of introduction from her station manager” which says that she has moderate intelligence, some experience in broadcasting and can perform very well sexually. Everyone at the table laughs and Suzanne laughs along with them uncomfortably. Segal then whispers who that girl is today: some big shot female reporter. Later, Segal runs into the station manager who wrote the reporter’s recommendation letter, only he says he never wrote it. It turns out the reporter wrote it herself. Stone replies, “I watch her show all the time!” Segal then begins to seduce Stone.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* As Stone leaves her interview, she rips up an envelope, presumably a fake recommendation letter.

⁶⁵ Maynard, Joyce, *To Die For* (E.P. Dutton, 1992), 85.

⁶⁶ “Film Review: She Trusts in TV’s Redeeming Power,” (1995). Available from The New York Times.
<http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/review?_r=2&res=990CEFDC103BF934A1575AC0A963958260> (accessed 17 March 2009).

⁶⁷ “A Few Words About the Origins of *To Die For*,” (2007). Available from Joyce Maynard’s website <<http://www.joycemaynard.com/books-jmaynard/to-die-for.shtml>> (accessed 17 March 2009).

⁶⁸ “Scoop” (2006). Available from The Hot Button
<http://www.thehotbutton.com/today/hot.button/2006_thb/060728_fri.html> (accessed 17 March 2009).

⁶⁹ Good, Howard, *Girl Reporter: Gender, Journalism and the Movies* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Maynard, Joyce, *To Die For* (E.P. Dutton, 1992), 80.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 25, 29.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 15, 25, 35.

⁷⁴ *To Die For*, DVD, directed by Gus Van Sant. (SONY Pictures, 1995). While hosting a dinner party for her parents and new in-laws, Suzanne Stone interrupts Janice Maretto who is talking about a television special that will feature her ice-skating.

Stone gets jealous of Janice's news and the thought of her being in the spotlight. Larry Maretto notices Stone and interrupts Janice's story to break the news that Stone has a job at WWEN, a local news station.

⁷⁵ Maynard, Joyce, *To Die For* (E.P. Dutton, 1992), 238 bottom. After Larry's death, Suzanne is on the television every night in the spotlight. Her sister says that everyone feels sorry for Suzanne.

⁷⁶ "Film Review: She Trusts in TV's Redeeming Power," (1995). Available from The New York Times

<http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/review?_r=2&res=990CEFDC103BF934A1575AC0A963958260> (accessed 17 March 2009).

⁷⁷ Maynard, Joyce, *To Die For* (E.P. Dutton, 1992), 19, 164, 171. Suzanne Stone is a self-absorbed person who says now that her husband is dead and he'll never know if she got the job she interviewed for. Stone also exploits her husband's death for an exclusive on the news.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 204. Suzanne Stone: "As you can imagine. I was shocked, beyond comprehension. To think that these disadvantaged youngsters who I had taken under my wing and spent my time with and would only stand to benefit from my media savvy. To think that they might be responsible for this heinous crime? It simple boggles one with disbelief. Of course, I realize and I hope this doesn't sound callous that the upside to all this— assuming justice prevailed— is that I would have in my documentary an extremely marketable commodity, something that even PBS would take an interest in, which of course would be mean smaller audience but a much larger prestige factor."

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 204, 220. Suzanne Stone says that she feels like a celebrity.

⁸¹ "A Few Words About the Origins of *To Die For*," (2007). Available from Joyce Maynard's website <<http://www.joycemaynard.com/books-jmaynard/to-die-for.shtml>> (accessed 17 March 2009).

⁸² "Film Review: She Trusts in TV's Redeeming Power," (1995). Available from The New York Times

<http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/review?_r=2&res=990CEFDC103BF934A1575AC0A963958260> (accessed 17 March 2009).

⁸³ Maynard, Joyce, *To Die For* (E.P. Dutton, 1992), 239. Suzanne Stone's sister says that Suzanne had power over people, especially men.

⁸⁴ Saltzman, Joe, *Sob Sisters: The Image of the Female Journalist in Popular Culture*. Available from IJPC.org <www.ijpc.org> (accessed on 12 March 2009).

⁸⁵ Maynard, Joyce, *To Die For* (E.P. Dutton, 1992), 43.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 100, 176, 185, 194. Suzanne Stone badmouths Jimmy Emmett and Russell Hines.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* Suzanne Stone calls Lydia Mertz a lesbian and lies about their relationship.

⁸⁸ "A Few Words About the Origins of *To Die For*," (2007). Available from Joyce Maynard's website <<http://www.joycemaynard.com/books-jmaynard/to-die-for.shtml>> (accessed 17 March 2009).

⁸⁹ *The Devil Wears Prada*, DVD, directed by David Frankel (20th Century Fox, 2006).

⁹⁰ *Ugly Betty*, Television Series. (ABC, 2006-present).

⁹¹ *Dirt*, Television Series. (FX Networks, 2007-2008).

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- ⁹² *Scream*, DVD, directed by Wes Craven. (Dimension Films, 1996).
- ⁹³ Maynard, Joyce, *To Die For* (E.P. Dutton, 1992), 198.
- ⁹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 224.
- ⁹⁶ *To Die For*, DVD, directed by Gus Van Sant. (SONY Pictures, 1995). Suzanne Stone talks about life and her master plan.
- ⁹⁷ Boozer, Jack, *Career Movies: American Business and the Success Mystique* (University of Texas Press, 2002).
- ⁹⁸ “Movies Elevate, Rather than Denigrate Journalism and Reporters, Author Says,” (2004). Available from News Bureau of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign <<http://www.ijpc.org/ehrllichmovies.htm>> (accessed 17 March 2009).
- ⁹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰¹ Good, Howard, *Acquainted with the Night: The Image of Journalists in American Fiction, 1890-1930*. Available from IJPC.org <www.ijpc.org> (accessed 19 March 2009).
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- ¹⁰⁴ Arthur Kroker and David Cook, *The Postmodern Scene* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988), 268.
- ¹⁰⁵ Good, Howard, *Girl Reporter: Gender, Journalism and the Movies* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998).

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