

Gender Confusion and the Female Journalist:
TV Journalist Robin Scherbatsky of
How I Met Your Mother

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Abstract

The female broadcaster provides one of the most stereotypical images of contemporary journalist in popular culture. Often, female journalists are portrayed as vivacious, ruthless, and driven individuals who must compete fiercely to survive in a man's profession. Robin Scherbatsky (played by Cobie Smulders) of *How I Met Your Mother* is depicted as an attractive Canadian journalist with a tomboy past on the highly popular television series. Scherbatsky struggles to break free from covering stereotypical "fluff" stories, a genre that is common to female broadcast journalists. While she maintains a rugged and unemotional facade, she is still very womanly and vulnerable in both her career and personal life. This study will examine Scherbatsky's dichotomous character, compare her image on the series to that of other female journalists in popular culture, and analyze her influence on the current stereotype of female broadcasters.

Methodology

Robin Charles Scherbatsky Jr. is a bold, independent, career-minded journalist on the television series *How I Met Your Mother*. The Canadian pop-star turned TV news anchor's multifarious personality differentiates her from other female journalists in popular culture. Female journalists, particularly broadcasters, are pigeonholed as fiercely ambitious, masculine, and cold. Although Scherbatsky does indeed embody these attributes, the series equally focuses on her vulnerable, feminine, and friendly character traits. This study will examine popular females in film and television to fully understand the complex character of Robin Scherbatsky by using academic research, books, studies, film, and television. Scherbatsky's role in the image of

the journalist in popular culture will be analyzed by studying her character in *How I Met Your Mother* seasons 1-6 and episodes 1-16 of season 7, airing from 2005-2012.

Literature Review

Sob Sisters: The Image of the Female Journalist, an essay by University of Southern California professor and director of The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture (IJPC), Joe Saltzman, studies the history and dichotomous nature of female journalists. The term “sob sister” will be defined, exemplified by comparison to popular female journalists in popular culture, and contrasted to Scherbatsky’s character on *How I Met Your Mother*.

News, Gender, and Power by Cynthia Carter, Bill Branston, and Stuart Allan will be used to understand the flourishing role of women in journalism. Through feminist theory and gender-sensitive critiques, the current news industry and function of female reporters in the media will be compared to the stereotype of female journalists in popular culture. The book discusses the changing gender of journalism—a crucial element in comprehending the representation of females in the news media and Scherbatsky’s role as a journalist.

Frank Capra and the Image of the Journalist in American Film by Joe Saltzman will be used to explore the portrayal of female journalists by actresses in film and television.

Scherbatsky is often seen on the series drinking a tall glass of beer while discussing the trials and tribulations of her day with her friends at MacLaren’s Pub. Whether it be a mug of ale or a whiskey on the rocks, Whether it be a good or bad day, Scherbatsky is always quick to order

a masculine drink. *The Drunken Reporter* by Howard Good will be used to analyze the image of the alcoholic reporter and place her in context.

Despite her tomboy upbringing and father's shame over having a girl, Scherbatsky still manages to exhibit effeminate qualities. *The Girl Reporter* by Howard Good exemplifies the diverse and often, complex qualities of female journalists in popular culture. This paper studies Good's book and compares and contrasts it's research to Scherbatsky's character.

How I Met Your Mother: The Series

How I Met Your Mother premiered on CBS on September 19, 2005, created by Craig Thomas and Carter Bays and directed by Pamela Fryman¹. The series takes place in the year 2030 with narration by Ted Moseby (voiced by Bob Saget). Typically, each episode begins with Moseby's son (David Henrie) and daughter (Lyndsy Fronseca), sitting on a couch, facing the camera as their father begins a story about how he met their mother; thus commencing the episode. *How I Met Your Mother* is told through flashbacks, beginning in 2005 with Ted as a single 27-year-old architect living in New York City with his friends from Wesleyan University, Marshall Eriksen (Jason Segal), a law student, and his girlfriend Lily Aldrin (Alyson Hannigan), a kindergarten teacher. Episode 1 starts with Marshall proposing to Lily after dating her for nine years, prompting Ted to reconsider his own dating habits and embark on a quest to find "the one." However, Ted's romance-driven quest is met with dismay from his playboy friend Barney Stinson (Neil Patrick Harris), a quintessential "ladies man" with no plans to settle down or leave the bachelor world behind. Barney coerces Ted to live the single life and engage in wild adventures with him throughout the series. As Ted sets out to find his soulmate in Manhattan, he

meets Robin Scherbatsky (Cobie Smulders), a news anchor on a local television network. Ted, Robin, Barney, Marshall, and Lily compose the tight-knit group of friends on the series. Often drinking at MacLaren's Pub located below Marshall and Lily's apartment as they discuss their problems in love, life, and work, the bar is more than a setting—it is a character in itself.

Robin Scherbatsky is relevant to the current image of the female journalist because of the show's immense popularity. The series targets the 18-49 age groups,² with an average audience of nine million viewers per episode. The series began as a way to simply, “write about our friends and the stupid stuff we did in New York,³” according to series creators, Carter and Bays. The Internet Movie Database cites the popular series as the fifth highest rated television series for the first ten years of the website's creation from 2002-2012.⁴ While the show's following is loyal, *The Daily Beast*, a *Newsweek* publication, has disagreed with the comedic series airing on the CBS network. *The Daily Beast* stated, “*How I Met Your Mother* is a twenty-something show on what hip twenty-somethings typically associate as an old man's network.”⁵

Many of times, journalists are usually supporting characters rather than leading roles in television. Although programs such as *Dexter* and *Family Guy* feature journalists, the characters are typically short-lived and receive little airtime. Of the minor, ephemeral journalists portrayed in film and television, parodies of the broadcast journalist are visited most. Frequently, the representation of a broadcast journalist is that of a news anchor. “Weekend Update” on *Saturday Night Live* is a perfect example of a reoccurring parody of a news anchor. Popular and longstanding hosts have included SNL-alums, Chevy Chase, Dennis Miller, Colin Quinn, Jimmy Fallon, Tina Fey, Amy Poehler, and currently, Seth Meyers.

Typically, the news anchor or reporter appears arrogant, overly serious, and self-absorbed. A prime example of the embodiment of these characteristics is by Ron Burgandy, a local news anchor in the film, *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgandy*. While, Scherbatsky possesses stereotypical qualities of a broadcast news anchor, she maintains her identity as an average woman who is vulnerable and socially inept in life outside of her professional career. On *How I Met Your Mother*, Robin is hungry to succeed as a journalist—one small aspect of her character. The series also focuses on her sensitive, social, and quirky side to her character, offering a unique dimension that separates her from the masculine stereotype of the female journalist in popular culture.

Robin Scherbatsky: Tomboy Childhood

A Canadian, Scherbatsky was born July 23, 1980. As her father was keen on having a son, Robin was treated as a boy until she was fourteen, caught kissing a boy after a hockey match. In the episode “Happily Ever After” of *How I Met Your Mother*, Barney, Ted, Lily, Marshall, and Robin hide under a table at a restaurant to avoid interaction with one of Ted’s ex-girlfriends. Perching beneath the dining table, the group discusses whom they would each hide from in their own lives,⁶ during which time Robin reveals her painful childhood through a series of flashbacks. The first flashback is the disdain on her father’s face in the hospital room, as he realizes that she is not the son he dreamed of.⁷ In awe of Robin’s intimate recount of her painful childhood the group remains quiet and listens further as she further admits, “The last person I would want to see walk through that door, I wouldn’t say a word to. I haven’t spoken to him in three years and I don’t intend to start now.”⁸ Heartbroken with a shaky voice she continues, “He wanted a son, and the fact that I’m a girl didn’t change that. Over the years as my body

developed it got harder and harder for him to pretend I was a boy.”⁹ Robin divulges more memories that are painful from her past that includes her first kiss with a boy. Following a hockey game, donning a large hockey jersey, and playing on an all boys team, she shares a kiss with a team member. Walking in on the special moment, her father realizes that he indeed has a daughter and not a son, deteriorating their relationship. Robin moves in with her mother, grows her hair out, and becomes a Canadian pop star known as “Robin Sparkles,”¹⁰ embracing being a girly-girl. Robin Sparkles is the complete opposite of the current image of Robin Scherbatsky that we as an audience see weekly. Revealed in the episode, “Slap Bet,”¹¹ a young, blonde, peppy Robin sings her hit, “Let’s Go to the Mall.” Although Robin initially tries to hide the videotape of her music video out of embarrassment, she begins to embrace her 16 year-old self in the episode and series from then on. In episode, “Sandcastles in the Sand,”¹² Robin is a fawning, love-struck teenager with her boyfriend, Simon. Robin attends all of Simon’s band’s performances, giggles at his every word and even after he dumps her in an alley-way after a show, she apologizes to him. This dependent behavior is unlike the independent, anti-affectionate and at times emotionally distant character of Robin as an adult. While we can assume that her break-up with Simon caused her to change her attitude towards men and relationships, she still acts as a 16-year old Robin Sparkles when Simon visits her in New York (in present day).

Much of Robin’s characteristics stem from the strained relationship with her father and her masculine upbringing. As the dining scene continues and Lily urges Robin to reconnect with her father to resolve her troubled past, Robin says, “ No, that’s the point. It wouldn’t solve anything. It’s in the past, its done. I mean, what would I even say to him? ‘I wish you hadn’t

raised me as a boy? I wish you hadn't taught me how to hunt, and fish, smoke cigars, and drink Scotch because that's not what girls do? And you know that reason I throw like a girl Dad? It's because I *am* a girl!"¹³

This brief but powerful monologue demonstrating the painful and strained relationship with her father provides the audience with an intimate insight into Robin's character and the history behind her tomboy personality. Whereas many other female journalists must take on masculine traits to survive in a "man's world," Robin's use of masculine characteristics developed from a traumatic relationship, and eventual estrangement, from the strongest male figure in her life.

Image of the Female Journalist and Robin Scherbatsky

The female journalist faces a immense struggle from the onset. Despite possessing feminine traits, the female journalist works in a profession dominated by men and masculine ideals. In *Sob Sisters: The Image of the Female Journalist in Popular Culture*, Saltzman says,¹⁴ "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."

The sob sister is defined as a female journalist who reports on sob stories, usually sentimental, involving a death, animals, children, or domestic issues. Complex emotionally and professionally, the sob sister demands respect from her male counterparts while using her

sexuality and vulnerability to advance her career. In *Frank Capra and the Image of the Journalist in American Film*, Saltzman states, “Those familiar images still focus on thinking today. Whether they be the energetic, opportunistic reporter who would do anything for the scoop; or the cynical big-city newspaper editor committed to getting the story first even if it means strangling his reporters to do it; or the tough, sarcastic sob sister trying desperately to outdo her male competition; or the morally bankrupt, ruthless publisher who uses the power of the press for his or her own needs.”

The audience never witnesses Robin portraying any of the sob sister characteristics fully. While most journalists (both male and female) are sharks in claiming stories, Robin never uses her sexuality or plays devious games to progress in her career. She is energetic but not opportunistic; although she loathes her co-workers, Sandy Rivers¹⁵ and Don Frank,¹⁶ she never steals stories from them or sabotages their careers. On the contrary, helps her fellow male news anchors and rectifies their mistakes. For example, when Sandy Rivers doesn't show up for his own New Year's Eve television special, Robin doesn't jump on the opportunity to steal his spotlight.¹⁷ She sets out to find him in New York City and only after exhausting every possible option, does she go on air to save the New Year's Eve special.

Robin's ability to balance masculine and feminine qualities to her personality is another crucial reason why she is unique to the stereotype of the female journalist in popular culture. Repeatedly, popular culture portrays the female journalist as overly aggressive in the workplace or using their female prowess to succeed. Louise, “Babe” Bennett, Hildy Johnson, and Murphy

Brown exemplify popular female's who have shaped the stereotypical view of journalists in popular culture.

Louise “Babe” Bennett

In the film, *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* and *Mr. Deeds* (1936, 2002) the character of Babe Bennett (played originally by Jean Arthur and then Wynona Ryder in the remake), is a young, ambitious reporter. Fainting to get attention from Deeds, an average Joe who inherits a generous chunk of money from a deceased relative, Bennet uses sneaky polys to gain his affection and money. Deeds hires a security guard to ward off annoying paparazzi and protect his reputation, but fails to realize that his love interest is a tabloid reporter herself. Throughout the film, Bennet embodies the characteristics of a traditional sob sister. She appears as emotionally and physically fragile, troubled, and naive. Robin does not embody this image and refuses using her gender as a way to escape vulnerable situations involving romance, work, or family. In fact, despite receiving news that she is unable to have a child, she refuses any help from Ted. She insists her life does not need saving and she can handle her own problems. “I don’t need you to cheer me up. Its not your job to cheer me up...you’re fired,”¹⁸ she says.

A characteristic that Babe and Robin share is their commitment to moral and personal values. Babe leaves her job as a reporter because she is fed up with the lying and conniving work required to get a story. Robin quits Metro News 1 because she refuses to report fluff stories and years to be a respected, hard-hitting journalist. She eventually leaves the news station to work for World Wide News,¹⁹ a respected news outlet.

Hildy Johnson

Almost all female reporters in the 1940s had influences Hildy Johnson's character (Rosalind Russell) from *His Girl Friday*,²⁰ a screwball comedy based on a 1931 film called *The Front Page*.²¹ Instead of casting a male lead (to keep true to the original screenplay), Hildy Johnson plays a female lead in the iconic 1940 film. *Media in the Movies* by Larry Langman suggests that by the 1940s, female journalists faced several setbacks.²² "She appeared only as an adjunct to the more clever, savvy and brave male reporter who got the scoop, solved the murder and helped free the wrongly condemned,"²³ Langman says. Johnson fully embodies the bold, tough, and assertive characteristics typical of her male counterparts. She states her opinion with confidence and doesn't let anyone, especially men, walk all over her.²⁴ The entire staff at the newspaper values her as a dedicated journalist, including her ex-husband editor, Walter Burns. In *His Girl Friday*, Hildy announces that she will be leaving the paper to settle down with her new fiancé and raise a family, causing her ex-husband to plead with her to stay for one last story. He tells her the paper "needs her,"²⁵ because she walks into any situation regardless of difficulty, using clever and persuasive tactics to get what she needs for a story. In another scene, Hildy needs an exclusive interview with a convicted murderer and uses her astute sense and gender (sob sister) to do so. She drops a \$20 bill in front of a prison cell when no one is looking and returns it to the prison security guard, playing it off as a good deed.²⁶ While Robin may not use fast-talking, shifty motives to attain interviews, she exudes an aura of confidence around her male co-workers, specifically with her ex-boyfriend and co-anchor Don. In the episode, "Last Cigarette Ever," Robin initially thinks her new co-host Don is going to boost the early morning program's low viewership. While Robin takes the show seriously (despite a very low viewer count because of its 4 a.m. timeslot), Don makes a mockery of it by unenthusiastically reporting

the news, belittling the integrity of the newscast, and disrespecting his co-anchor. Robin expresses hope that one day she will be on a major network, taken seriously, and report on important events to which Don discourages her and tells her she will never achieve those dreams. On the surface, she ignores her pessimistic co-anchor, yet begins to question her role as a news anchor on the program. Just as she is about to join Don in his apathetic view toward the show by smoking a cigarette on live television, she realizes that she still respects the integrity of program and her role as a morning news anchor.²⁷ In the following episode “Rabbit or Duck”, Don parades around the set of Metro News 1 drunk in his underwear while Robin maintains her professional demeanor, disregarding his inappropriate behavior.²⁸ Robin’s demeanor in handling this situation resembles Hildy Johnson. Both women remain headstrong, confident, assertive, and professional in the workplace despite rude, condescending behavior by their male peers. Although Hildy Johnson’s character first appeared in the 1940s, her influence on the portrayal of female journalists in popular culture as audacious, assertive, and ambitious remains.

Murphy Brown

Another example of an influential female television reporter is Murphy Brown (Candice Bergen). Unlike other popular female reported in pop culture that fit the image of a sob sister, Brown veers away from the stereotype. The television series, *Murphy Brown*, had an outstanding run for a decade (1988-1998) with Brown portrayed as a strong, independent, female journalist. Unlike a film which is usually seen once, Brown’s weekly reoccurrence on television allowed her grow as a character (personally and professionally) and shape the view of female journalists in popular culture. Saltzman states, “Murphy Brown is the image of the sob-sister-now-celebrity-journalist that dominates the final decades of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st

century.²⁹ Both Robin and Brown work in male-dominated newsrooms and think about lives outside of their careers, including love and family. In the 1991-1992 seasons, Brown becomes pregnant and decides to become a single mother,³⁰ unlike Robin who has no desire to lead a traditional domestic life. Brown is the first female journalist on television whose character balances a professional career in broadcast journalism and raising a family. While Robin doesn't have children, she is very much like Brown in their constant struggle to balance a career and personal life.

Robin, Family, and Fluff

Robin constantly questions her views on children and marriage on *How I Met Your Mother*. In season one she decides that she never wants to get married but knows she loves Ted.³¹ In season 2 she covers up her feelings to please Ted's parents and tells them that one day she does want to get married and have children with their son.³² In the last episode of season 2 she breaks up with Ted insisting, "I never want to get married. I never want to have kids. I want to travel the world and be a successful journalist." As the series continues, the audience learns (by way of older Ted's voiceover) that Robin eventually travels to Argentina, Morocco, Greece, Russia, and Japan as a successful journalist.³³ In season seven Robin dates Kevin, a psychiatrist. She contradicts herself and her beliefs against marriage when Kevin proposes because while Robin wants to get married, she continues to insist that, "I don't want children. I will never want children, I don't even want to adopt. You may be okay with this now but what about way down the line. You'll resent me and I can't live with that."³⁴

The issues facing female journalists are not limited to the conflict between having a

professional or domestic life, but about the content female journalists are expected to report as well. In *News, Gender, and Power*, Liesbet van Zoonen states, “It was and is often said that the minority position of women in journalism affects the quality of the news product, be it the press or television. Because the news is made by men, it is thought to reflect the interests and values of men too, and therefore news cannot serve very well the needs of this famous other fifty percent of the population, namely women.”³⁵ Robin’s editor degrades her as a reporter by assigning trivial or fluff stories rather than hard-hitting ones. In “Return of the Shirt,” (one of the most popular episodes in *How I Met Your Mother*). Robin performs outrageous acts while anchoring the nightly news to win money from bets she places with Barney. Barney offers Robin \$50 to “say some stupid word on the live news report”. At first Robin responds, “But I’m not doing it. I am a journalist.” Barney mocks her profession by stating, “Journalist? You do the little fluff pieces at the end of the news. Old people, babies, monkeys, that’s not journalism. That’s just things in a diaper.” She responds with, “For your information my boss is going to bump me up to the city hall beat...so I’m not going to jeopardize my promotion by saying ‘booger’ for 50 bucks.” When Robin’s boss asks her to cover at city hall she is excited to finally cover a newsworthy story but is disappointed when she discovers it’s a profile of the hot dog vendor who works outside of the building. Frustrated and feeling defeated, she gives in and says “nipple” on television and Barney gives her money. He continues to place bets with her and offers her more money, enticing her by saying she is underappreciated at work, paid poorly, and still can’t get promoted despite her immense dedication to her job. He tells her that this isn’t about the money, but rather, the thrill of seeking revenge at Metro News 1. Robin eventually gives into his outrageous bets and says, “I’m a dirty dirty girl, ow” as she spansks herself on the butt on live television. When Robin panics after being summoned to her boss’ office following her

inappropriate behavior during the broadcast, he completely doesn't even notice what she did on live television because he wasn't watching. Instead of reprimanding her unprofessional behavior, he compliments her work ethic. The narrative follows the scene by saying, "That's when Robin realized that no one, not even her boss watched Metro News 1." Barney then dares her to do a silly dance on the next broadcast to which a discouraged Robin responds, "What do I care? Its not like anyone is watching anyway."³⁶

Another example of the female journalist expected to cover "fluff" pieces is in episode, "I Heart N.J." Robin rants at McClaren's Pub with the group, complaining about how she often reports on trivial stories and is forced to say cheesy, insensitive puns at the end of each broadcast. The episode shows flashbacks of Robin saying witty puns following each story on the news, which are most fluff pieces.³⁷ Taking a seemingly prestigious lead anchor position at the top English news channel in Japan, she believes this is her big-break where she can "finally do serious news." The scene jumps to Robin sitting next to a chimpanzee as she reports on the stock market and struggling to speak in front of an enormous fan blowing in her face.³⁸

Saltzman states, "Editors used female reporters to cover the human angle or color sidebar of the story."³⁹ A sob sister by definition is a "woman news reporter who appeals to readers' sympathies with her accounts of pathetic happenings."⁴⁰ Demonstrating these concepts, Zoonen describes the topics commonly covered by male and female reporters below (Zoonen 16).⁴¹

Table 2.1 The gendered nature of journalism

	Masculine	Feminine
<i>Topics</i>	politics crime finance education and upbringing	'human interest' consumer news culture social policy
<i>Angle</i>	facts sensation male	backgrounds and effects compassion general
<i>Sources</i>	men	women
<i>Ethics</i>	detached	audience needs

Sources: Creedon 1989; Dickerhof *et al.* 1985; Neverla and Kanzleiter 1984; Skard 1989; UNESCO 1987; Gallagher 1995; van den Wijngaard 1992; van Zoonen 1989, 1994; van Zoonen and Donsbach 1988.

Based on 1988 data, Zoonen concludes, "Although male journalists in these research projects mentioned are less outspoken about the gendered nature of journalism, and certainly not critical of it, many of them feel that female journalists do have another approach to news. This is demonstrated, of course, because part of these feelings are expressed in stereotypical views on what female journalists should do: cover fashion, babies, and cooking and in stereotypical views on what they cannot do: write tough stories on rising crime. Male journalists also assume that women are better at and more interested in human interest stories, or in caring about audience needs."⁴² Although Robin eventually leaves Metro News 1 to be a research associate at World Wide News Network,⁴³ she portrays the image of a "fluff journalist" for much of *How I Met Your Mother*. We never see her report on hard news but rather about dogs, quirky events, or profiles on local vendors. In the episode "Do I Know You," Robin truly begins to hate the types of stories she covers and says, "I officially hate my job. I'm not a reporter. I'm just someone that shows up at night and scares people. I'm the boogie-man with a teleprompter."⁴⁴

Robin, Alcohol, and the Image of the Journalist

A popular image of the journalist (male or female) is that of the drunk/alcoholic reporter. In films such as *Platinum Blonde* or *It Happened One Night*, journalists are frequently chugging drinks at a bar or even at the workplace. “If you were in the newspaper business in the movies in the 1930s and 1940s, you drank all the time. Alcohol flowed as freely as the sarcastic one-liners,”⁴⁵ Saltzman says. Similarly, *The Drunken Journalist* by Howard Good cites enjoyment as the main reason as to why journalists (and Americans in general) drink. “The vast majority of Americans who drink are social drinkers—that is, they drink to relax, to be convivial, to enjoy themselves,”⁴⁶ says Good. The book dates the stereotype of journalists as “drunkards, deadbeats, and bummers,” to the last quarter of the nineteenth century until the early 1900s when “the staffs of the great dailies where the well dressed, well mannered alert young news-gatherers have taken the place of impudent, unshorn, rum-soaked old vagabonds who used to disgrace the profession.” This shift was short-lived—the 1920s reverted to the traditional stereotype of the drunk journalist. Good states, “Every decade from the 1920s through the 1950s produced at least one film about a newspaperman with a drinking problem. In the 1920s it was *Big News*; in the 1930s, *The Sisters*; in the 1940s, *Welcome Stranger*; and in the 1950s, *Come Fill the Cup*.” The author adds, “The stereotype of the hard-drinking newspaperman, however, grew mostly out of other films—scores of them—that showed reporters and editors boozing it up, but socially casually, without complications. Through these films, heavy drinking came to seem a part of the job description.”⁴⁷

This image continues in the 21st century, with Robin and most recently in *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy*. Ron Burgundy is dumb television news anchor in the ‘70s who

throws lavish parties where he gets drunk with his fellow broadcasters. In a widely popular scene, he is sitting at the news desk in front of the teleprompter waiting for the nightly newscast to begin with a glass of Scotch in his hands and says, “I love scotch. Scotchy, Scotch, Scotch. Here it goes down, down into my belly.”⁴⁸

The majority of *How I Met Your Mother* takes place at the same booth at MacLaren’s Pub, where Robin (and her friends) drinks almost every day but is rarely drunk. Robin fits Good’s image of the drunken journalist because of her ability to drink excessively, in a social setting, while remaining competent in her behavior and career. Marshall jokes with her that she can hold her alcohol and she responds that she is Canadian, “it’s what they do.”⁴⁹ Missing home and debating whether to change her citizenship from Canadian to American, she stumbles in her favorite bar, “The Hoser Hut.” Filled with fellow transplanted Canadians (also able to hold their liquor), she drinks excessively and wakes up in Canada.⁵⁰ Despite Robin turning to alcohol after leaving Metro News 1 and being unemployed for some time, she still maintains a relatively composed demeanor. Her slump is not caused by alcohol, nor does it consume her life. It is rather, her apathy and lack of motivation that causes her to become depressed and drink out of boredom. Unlike journalists in popular culture that drink while on deadline or females that drink to compete with their male peers, Robin is always seen drinking with her close group of friends and without much connection to her being a reporter.

Robin, Romance, and the Image of the Journalist

Robin’s love life is core to her character on *How I Met Your Mother*, beginning with her introduction to the series when Ted propositions her on a date in episode one, which she

declines. Unlike a conventional sob sister, Robin doesn't use her sexuality to advance her career by manipulating male co-workers. Unlike Carrie Bradshaw from *Sex in the City*, her love life doesn't dominate her role as a journalist (although it shapes her overall personification on the series). The vulnerability and desire to fall in love is unique to her character because she appears to be insensitive, unemotional, and unaffectionate. The degree of intensity and types of relationships Robin shares with men varies from short-term and based on sex (Ted) to long-term and serious (Kevin).

While many sob sisters have relationships with their editors or co-workers, often playing the damsel in distress card, Robin's relationship with her co-anchor Don does not arise out of needing protection from a man. In fact, Robin denies her feelings for Don simply because she does not want to date her co-worker. Their relationship begins tumultuously with Robin despising Don for mocking Metro News 1. In the episode, "Rabbit or Duck,"⁵¹ Don invites Robin to a Valentine's dinner and their romance begins. Although the series does not focus on the intensity of the relationship or Robin's strong feelings for her co-worker, the episode, "Doppelgangers,"⁵² reveals one of Robin's most intimate and heartbreaking moments as a person and journalist. Offered her dream job as a lead anchor at Metro News 1's rival station, WKNW in Chicago, Robin declines the offer to maintain her relationship with Don. Robin (now living with Don) tells him that she declined the opportunity to finally be a lead news anchor, as he tells her that he will be accepting that same offer in her place, thus moving to Chicago. This is a crucial moment for her character's development because Robin has always put her career before love, in typical female journalist fashion.

Stereotypically, female journalists are either single or struggle balancing a partner and a career. Robin does not mix her career and love life with any of her romantic interests, until Don. Sadly, their relationship ends when Robin uncharacteristically chooses to put her career second to their evolving relationship. While we see many sob sisters are depicted as breaking hearts or rejecting men, like Veronica Corningstone from *Anchorman*, we usually do not see their own heartbreak. Robin's character is stereotypical of a female journalist in love, yet breaks the mold to reveal her vulnerable side when attempting to choose romance over her career.

Conclusion

The image of the female journalist personified by Robin Scherbatsky of *How I Met Your Mother* is complex, dichotomous, and draws upon characteristics from popular female reporters in television and film. While her bold and insensitive personality stems from her tomboy childhood, the audience is lead to conclude these are characteristics of a stereotypical, ruthless female broadcaster. Robin breaks traditional images of the female broadcaster because the audience sees her intimate relationships with friends and lovers. The image of the female journalist traditionally draws upon females who are solely focused on their work and willing to sacrifice their ethics and relationships to achieve success. However, Robin merges her driven work ethic with her personal life, showing a multifarious personality and diverse interests to viewers. Her character is important to the current and future image of the female journalist in popular culture because of the widespread success of *How I Met Your Mother* and her relate ability with female audiences. Scherbatsky is a realistic and modern representation for the working woman in our society. In the past women struggled to just get their foot in the door at the workplace and this employed ruthless tactics to secure their job, they are now sought after

because of their gender. While there is still room for improvement for women in the news media, Scherbatsky's strong but vulnerable personality reflects the female journalist that exists in the 21st century and influences the modern image of the female journalist in popular culture.

EPISODE INDEX

Season One

How I Met Your Mother, Episode One, “Pilot,” 2005.

We meet Robin Scherbatsky who is a news anchor at Metro News 1. Ted is smitten with her and asks her out on a date. When he meets Robin and asks what she does she replies, “I’m a reporter for Metro News 1. Well, kind of a reporter. I do those dumb little fluff pieces at the end of the news. You know like, ‘A Monkey Can Play the Ukulele,’ but I’m hoping to get some bigger stories soon.” Persistently, Ted asks Robin to dinner on Saturday and she responds, “No I can’t. I’m going to Orlando for a week on Friday. Some guy is attempting to make the world’s biggest pancake and guess who’s covering it?” When she arrives back to her apartment, the Metro News 1 truck unexpectedly arrives at her apartment, informing her that a man is attempting to jump off a bridge and she is covering it. She leaves Ted to cover her story and mid-way through the episode, as Ted is talking about his love for Robin, she appears on television reporting on the story. Ted blurts out that he loves Robin at the end of the episode.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Two, “Purple Giraffe,” 2005.

The episode begins with Robin leaving MacLarens Pub to “get back to the station.” Ted sees Robin reporting a story about a child stuck in a toy machine and rushes to the location, asking if she is reporting a “news story” to which she responds, “Wow, how sweet of you to call it news” (sarcastically). Her attitude offers the audience insight into her lack of appreciation for her “fluff” stories, which is a reoccurring issue between Robin and her career throughout the series. Ted decides to host a party on the roof of his apartment building, in hopes that Robin will attend. Unfortunately, she is unable to attend because the child was stuck in the toy machine for a long

time. Ted then throws another party but Robin misses it again because of work, explaining, “I feel like I live there.” Lily tells Ted that Robin is not the one for him because he wants to get married and Robin is “not one of them.” Still persistent, Ted rushes to the roof to tell Robin about his strong feelings for her. Apologetically, Robin tells him that she does not want to get married now or “maybe ever,” but kisses Ted and offers a friendship instead. She explains that she only moved to New York in April and is “always working.”

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Four, “Return of the Shirt,” 2005.

“Return of the Shirt” is one of the most revealing episodes in the series, focusing a great deal on Robin’s attitude towards her career as a broadcaster and exposing her inner-conflict with the types of stories she reports. Barney offers Robin \$50 to “say some stupid word on the live news report,” to which Robin initially replies, “But I’m not doing it. I am a journalist.” Barney mocks her seriousness saying, “Journalist? You do the little fluff pieces at the end of the news. Old people, babies, monkeys, that’s not journalism. That’s just things in a diaper.” Robin is annoyed with Barney’s lack of respect for her career and still hopeful to receive a promotion at Metro News 1 she retorts, “For your information my boss is going to bump me up to the city hall beat...so I’m not going to jeopardize my promotion by saying ‘booger’ for 50 bucks.” Upset that her hopes are shattered since the story at city hall is about a hot dog vendor, she gives into Barney’s bet and says “nipple” on television. Barney offers continues to challenge Robin with increasing bets, arguing that this isn’t about the money, but about her being under-appreciated, not paid enough, and still has not been promoted. She knows that Barney is valid in his argument, but leaves the conversation to return to work, telling Barney that she will think about his offer of \$200. While reporting on yet another “fluff” story, an angry Robin gives into

Barney's dare and says, "I'm a dirty dirty girl, ow," and spansk herself on live television. Worrying that she may get fired for her behavior, Joel Adams (her boss) totally dismisses the incident. According to the narrative, "that's when Robin realized that no one, not even her boss watched Metro News 1." Taking advantage of a vulnerable Robin, Barney increases the foolishness and monetary value of the dare with Robin replying, "What do I care? Its not like anyone is watching anyway." However, while interviewing an old man who tells her how lucky he is to have *the* Robin Scherbatsky interview him, "Robin realized just how important her job truly really was." The episode ends with Robin wrapping up her broadcast saying, "Metro News 1 may not be number one in viewership, but this reporter takes pride in..." as she falls into horse manure.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Five, "Okay Awesome," 2005.

Robin uses her anchor title to get into the VIP section of a nightclub. Robin tells the group that she is getting them into the hot-club, Okay, because a man that goes to her gym is a fan of her work at Metro News 1. Mocking her self-importance, Ted jokes that Robin is now becoming "a hard to pronounce household name." Robin's confidence in being recognized as a broadcaster is met with embarrassment when she exits the club for a minute and is refused re-admission. She tells the bouncer that she is a reporter for Metro News 1, but the bouncer says he didn't even know that Metro News 1 existed. Feeling defeated, she sits outside alone and tells Lily that she's not important just because was recognized once. Lily and Robin get back into the club because they flash the security guard.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Six, “Slutty Pumpkin,” 2005.

Robin arrives at the group’s annual Halloween rooftop party late because she was covering the parade in the village. She attends the event with her new boyfriend, Mike, who meets the group for the first time. She refuses to let Mike say “we,” quickly correcting him each time and hogs the dessert for herself because she hates to share things with him. Realizing that Robin loves being with herself more than being with him, he dumps her and leaves the party. In this episode, the audience learns that Robin is not into “love-dovey stuff” in relationships. Robin unapologetically explains that she loves to sleep alone, eat alone, etc. but then later contradicts herself by asking Ted if something is wrong with her because she doesn’t want the same things as other girls. She worries that she is too cold and not ever going to be able to open up to another person.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Seven, “Matchmaker,” 2005.

Robin does a story on Metro News 1 called, “Love Solutions,” where she interviews a matchmaker that runs an online dating site. She encourages Barney and Ted to try the website out as well.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Twelve, “The Wedding,” 2006.

Robin is offered her first opportunity to anchor the evening news and leaves Ted as they are about to attend a wedding together.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Thirteen, “Drumroll Please,” 2006.

Ted is still upset that Robin must anchor the news instead of attending a wedding with him as his

date. She decides to surprise him and meets him at the wedding to find Ted with another woman. Realizing that she has romantic feelings for him, she cries alone in a bathroom stall. Robin is confused about how she feels since she insists she doesn't want to get married, yet can't deny her emotions towards Ted. She decides to confess her love to Ted but changes her mind when she sees how happy he is with his new love interest, Victoria.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Eighteen, "Nothing Good Happens After 2 a.m.," 2006.

Robin is a guest speaker and does a presentation about being a broadcast journalist in Lily's elementary class. Robin is excited to talk about her rewarding career but those positive feelings are withered away quickly when the children question why she is still single. Joined by her arrogant co-anchor, Sandy Rivers, the experience makes Robin feel as if she has chosen her career over love. Attempting to take advantage of his troubled co-worker, Rivers propositions Robin to have sex with him. Although she refused Rivers, she calls Ted at 3 a.m. in hopes to rekindle their relationship. Since Ted still has feelings for Robin, he lies about his current relationship with Victoria and shares a kiss with his ex-flame. As Ted goes to the bathroom, Robin answers his phone to hear Victoria on the other line and kicks him out of her apartment.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Nineteen, "Marry the Paralegal," 2006.

Robin is nominated for a story she did on a dog at a broadcast awards dinner, LAME-A, and brings her co-anchor Sandy Rivers as her date. Robin wins for "Pickles the Singing Dog."

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Twenty-One, "Milk," 2006.

Robin tells Ted that she wants "zero kids" in the future.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Twenty-Two, “Come On,” 2006.

Since Sandy Rivers continues to hit on Robin, she agrees to attend a company picnic with him. Still in love with Robin, Ted does a rain-dance in hope that she won't go to the picnic and stay with him. Before leaving for the company event, Rivers tells Robin that he has accepted a job with CNN and she will replace him as lead anchor of Metro News 1. Robin can't go on the camping trip because it rains (Ted believes it's because of his rain dance), and reunites with Ted, officially beginning their romance as a couple.

Season Two***How I Met Your Mother, Episode One, “Where Are We?” 2006.***

Robin takes Marshall to the gun range. Opening up about her childhood, she reveals that her father would bring her to the gun-range as a kid, a place where she finds solace when upset. Although the episode doesn't focus on Robin as a journalist, it reveals a great deal about her father's influence on her life, upbringing, and personality.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Three, “Brunch,” 2006.

Robin meets Ted parents for the first time and lies to them about wanting to get married and have children. Ted's mother asks how it's like to be a journalist and encourages Robin to focus on her career now and worry about marriage and kids later. Although this may seem positive for Robin, she is upset because she knows that Ted's mother does want him to settle down, just not with her.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Four, “Ted Mosby: Architect,” 2006.

Although this episode does not focus on Robin’s career, it reveals her vulnerability and flaws. Robin and Ted have their first fight because she doesn’t listen or pay attention to Ted when he talks, yet he listens to her consistently complain about work. Robin justifies herself by saying that her work-related stories are interesting because she is a “television news reporter.” After realizing she is wrong, she apologizes for not listening to him enough.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Eight, “Atlantic City,” 2006.

Robin is pulled from her job at Metro News 1 as she is anchoring to attend Marshall and Lily’s quickie wedding in Atlantic City. Although this scene is short, the audience can see that Robin is a dedicated friend, leaving her job for an important milestone in Marshall and Lily’s lives.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Nine, “Slap Bet,” 2006.

Robin reveals her teen-persona as “Robin Sparkles,” a Canadian pop-sensation to Barney. She refuses to ever go to a mall because of her hit, “Let’s Go to the Mall” as a teenage superstar.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Ten, “Single Stamina,” 2006.

Robin, Ted, Marshall, and Lily go into “couple-hibernation” mode. As an audience, we see Robin evolving from the anti-relationship girl to a committed, happy, adult in love.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Twelve, “First Time in New York,” 2007.

Although Robin is in love with Ted, she can’t bring herself to admit her feelings since she has never told anyone that she loves them before. Childishly, she says, *falafel* instead of *love* to

describe her feelings for Ted. Robin's younger sister, Katie, comes to visit and the group takes her to the Empire State Building. Katie says that she is ready to have sex, knowing that Robin lost her virginity at 16 years old. Robin reveals that she barely had sex because mid-way during her first time having intercourse, her boyfriend revealed that he was gay. At the end of the episode Ted helps Robin to convince Katie to wait and Robin finally tells him that she loves him.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Thirteen, "Columns," 2007.

Robin fires her makeup artist and in an act of revenge, her make-up artist makes Robin look like a clown. Unknowingly, Robin anchors the news with the eccentric makeup still painted on.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Fourteen, "Monday Night Football," 2007.

Unable to watch the Super Bowl because of work, Lily, Marshall, Ted, and Robin decide to record the game and watch it together the next day, making a pact to not look up the winner. The narrative explains that as a journalist "it was hardest on Robin avoiding the news because she *is* the news media." Committed to the pact, Robin distracts the sportscasters so she does not have to listen to who won on the news.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Sixteen, "Stuff," 2007.

Robin becomes angry with Ted after learning that he is still keeping gifts given by ex-girlfriends throughout the years, although she has several dogs given to her by ex-boyfriends. Continuing to grow as a character, the audience witnesses Robin make a major move in her commitment to Ted—she gives her dogs away decides to move in with him.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Eighteen, “Moving Day,” 2007.

Robin and Ted attempt to live together. He finds out that she smokes and reads a gun magazine and they both decide it's best for him to stay with Marshall and Lily.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Nineteen, “Bachelor Party,” 2007.

Following Barney's advice, Robin gets Lily a “fake penis” as a gag-gift for her Bridal Shower. The party is filled with older women and Robin is mortified when Lily opens the gift in front of everyone. Robin admits that the gift was hers.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Twenty-One, “Something Borrowed,” 2007.

Serving as maid-of-honor to Lily, Robin is supportive and tends to her every need on her wedding day. Despite her masculine exterior, she is a good friend, an unsuspecting feminine characteristic.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Twenty-Two, “Something Blue,” 2007.

Robin tells Ted that she never wants to have kids, but instead, wants to travel the world as a journalist. Ted no longer considers Robin the love of his life for that reason and breaks up with her. Robin cries at the private wedding ceremony of Marshall and Lily's wedding. Robin reveals that although she doesn't want kids, she would want them to be with Ted. The narrative reveals that Robin eventually travels to Argentina, Morocco, Greece, Russia, and Japan but never has children.

Season Three

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Two, “We’re Not From Here,” 2007.

Robin brings her boyfriend, Gael, whom she met on vacation in Argentina to meet the group. Although she finally learns to enjoy life and be more carefree, she realizes that Gael is *too* carefree for her lifestyle and breaks up with him.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Four, “Little Boys,” 2007.

Robin begins to date a man with a child, even though she dislikes children. Despite her aversion to her boyfriend’s son, she is sad when she realizes that the son did not consider her “mommy” in his drawings.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Eight, “Spoiler Alert,” 2007.

Robin’s flaw is over-using the word, “literally.” The group stages an intervention for her to stop using the word.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Nine, “Slapsgiving,” 2007.

Ted and Robin are awkward around each other due to a personal inside joke they used to share when they were dating, but no longer want to engage in at Thanksgiving dinner. Feeling sexual tension, they sleep together but quickly realize they still can’t be friends.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Ten, “The Yips,” 2007.

Robin is the only one in the group who actually goes to the gym regularly and lifts weight like a man. This reveals her masculine side once again.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Eleven, “The Platinum Rule,” 2007.

Robin begins dating another news anchor. She thinks it is going well but realizes that co-workers cannot date.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Sixteen, “Sandcastles in the Sand,” 2008.

Flashbacks of Robin and her high school boyfriend from when she was a teenage pop-star in Canada. She reunites with him and although he treats her badly (and always has) she is heartbroken when he breaks up with her. As she confides in Barney, we learn that Robin was very different than the person she is now. As a teen (and in this situation with her high school sweetheart), she was vulnerable and love-driven, unlike her anti-love, strong personality with men as an adult. Robin and Barney kiss.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Seventeen, “The Goat,” 2008.

Following their kiss when Robin is heartbroken over a teen crush, Barney and Robin wake up in bed together, worried that Ted will find out.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Eighteen, “Rebound Bro,” 2008.

Barney asks Robin for her help in trying to find a new wingman since he is not speaking with Ted. He asks Robin over Marshall since he considers her more of a man than Marshall.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Twenty, “Miracles,” 2008.

Robin reveals that she does not believe in miracles. She leaves the set of Metro News 1 when she hears Ted has been in an accident.

Season Four

How I Met Your Mother, Episode One, “Do I know you?” 2008.

Robin truly begins to hate her job, saying, “I officially hate my job. I’m not a reporter. I’m just someone that shows up at night and scares people. I’m the boogie-man with a teleprompter.” She is annoyed with the witty puns she is required to say while anchoring the news. Barney realizes he likes Robin.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Two, “The Best Burger in New York,” 2008.

Robin arrives late to Ted’s burger adventure because she is at work.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Three, “I Heart NJ,” 2008.

Robin is sick of her job, since she often reports about trivial topics and is required to make insensitive puns. In hopes of being offered another anchor job she auditions for, she pre-maturely leaves Metro News 1. She makes a farewell speech at the end of her last broadcast with Metro News and learns that she did not get the position she auditioned for earlier. She panics and decides to beg for her anchor position at Metro News back to which Lily and Barney manage to stop her, reminding her of how humiliating it was there. Robin refuses to believe her friends are right and sneaks a call to her producer, getting a second chance at her old job. Robin arrives at the studio, pushing her nervous replacement out of the way, and immediately going on air. Immediately, her first story contains a pun and she realizes she was right to quit and leave. Robin is offered a position as a foreign correspondent and decides to move to Japan.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Four, “Intervention,” 2008.

The gang is sentimental over Robin’s packing for Japan. However, she doesn’t understand how they could be so emotional because she packed all her stuff in half an hour. In the same episode, the group stages interventions for each other—Robin’s centers around her addiction to tanning.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Five, “Shelter Island,” 2008.

Robin goes to Japan, where she assumes she will finally report on serious news. Instead, she is sitting next to a chimpanzee throwing marshmallows at her during the broadcast. Another newscast features a large fan that blows Robin's notes and hair everywhere, as she struggles to report the news. Also in this episode, Ted calls Robin in Japan and asks her to come to his wedding to Victoria. Unsure at first, Robin agrees to attend. Arriving at the wedding, she confides in Ted and tells him that she quit her job in Tokyo and is moving back to New York. She also advises Ted to not rush into marriage because he deserves an amazing ending to his quest for a wife. She also adds that if she ever changed her mind about wanting to get married and have kids—she would want it to be with him. Ted is annoyed by her fickle emotions towards him and he storms off. Robin tries to reunite with Barney as a rebound from Ted but he is also with a woman, causing Robin to leave the wedding.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Six, “Happily Ever After,” 2008.

The group discusses who they would each hide from in their lives—Robin admits that person would be her father. Told through a series of flashbacks, the first scenario with her father shows his disappointed face when he realizes his wife has given birth to a daughter instead of a son (her full legal name is Robin Charles Scherbatsky). Robin’s father takes her on her first hunting trip

at 8 years old and they enjoy stereotypical male activities together (as she becomes a young woman, it becomes harder for her father to accept that she was actually a girl). He refuses to accept her as a female and raises her as a boy. Things got worse when Robin's father finds her kissing one of her hockey teammates in their home at age 14, following a winning game. This scene is the moment when her father finally grasps that he has a daughter and not a son. Robin decides to move in with her mother following the traumatic incident.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Seven, “Not a Father’s Day,” 2008.

Ted asks Robin to move in with him following a long argument about children. Robin vehemently denies her like of children but picks up a baby sock that Lily dropped and puts it in her purse. As an audience, we are lead to believe that Robin doesn’t necessarily hate children, but to some extent she is scared of them. In this episode, Robin is still unemployed, living on Ted’s couch, and admits that she is confused about where her life is going. She becomes unlike her usual driven, ambitious self during this time by not looking for a job, eating ice cream in her pajamas all day, and invading Marshall and Lily’s privacy at odd hours. This is important to her character because while she is a focused and motivated individual, she loses motivation in herself as a person and journalist following her failed endeavor to Japan.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Eight, “Wooo!” 2008.

Robin is still unemployed and focuses her energy on spending time with Lily. Lily suggests they go out with some other female teachers at her school. Lily becomes upset that they are “wooo” girls, who shout “wooo!” at bars to gain attention from men. Robin explains to Lily that she can’t identify with these women they way that she can because they’re not truly happy with

themselves and are lonely (hence why they yell at bars to gain attention). Robin admits that these types of girls “woo” to mask their sadness, including herself.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Nine, “The Naked Man,” 2008.

Robin goes on a date with an unattractive man who waits in her apartment naked, hoping to have sex with her. She says that this is not the first time this has happened to her and the trick always works on her. Barney tells Robin she is better than this guy but commends his skills. She no longer sees him.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Ten, “The Fight,” 2008.

Robin thinks scars from fighting are sexy on men.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Eleven, “Little Minnesota,” 2008.

Robin enters MacLaren's wearing a t-shirt in winter, explaining to Ted that the cold weather doesn't affect her because she's from Canada. Marshall agrees with her and compares New York in winter to a spring day in Minnesota. Noticing that Robin is feeling homesick, Marshall offers to take her to his favorite bar in Manhattan where only people from his hometown go. Robin becomes popular at the bar, causing Marshall to become jealous that everyone likes her more than him. He regrets revealing his favorite hangout and outs her as a Canadian. He feels guilty about his actions and takes her to a Canadian bar called “Hoser Hut,” where Robin is popular and recognized as Robin Sparkles. She sings her hit single, “Lets Go to the Mall,” proudly.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Twelve, "Benefits," 2008.

Ted and Robin become "friends with benefits" to deal with the stress of being roommates (Robin leaves empty milk cartons in the refrigerator and never takes out the garbage which upsets Ted). Whenever they begin to argue, they opt for sex instead to avoid arguing. Marshall catches Robin and Ted having casual sex while he sneaks into the apartment to use the bathroom. He blackmails Robin and Ted, saying that he will not tell anyone of their "friends with benefits" relationship if he can continue to use their bathroom instead of the one at work. However, he is unable to follow through with his own agreement and tells Barney about Ted and Robin's relationship. Barney is in love with Robin and does not want her to have sex with Ted so he begins to solve all Ted and Robin's problems. Ted realizes that Barney is in love with Robin, stops having sex with her, and offers him support. Barney confesses his love for Robin but she takes his submission as a joke.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Fourteen, "The Possimpible," 2008.

Robin receives a great deal of fan mail forwarded from Metro News 1 (months after she quits), mainly from inmates in jail. She also receives a work permit notice from the United States Immigration Office stating that if she does not secure a full-time job in the next 7 days, she will be deported back to Canada. Still reeling from her depressed state, she is uncharacteristically nervous while going out for interviews, fearing the competition. Excited for her first interview in months with News 10, she fails since she has no catch phrase to end her broadcast due to her anxiety. She strings together strange phrases (like, "wear a condom"). Barney (in love with Robin) will do whatever it takes to prevent her from being deported and creates a video résumé for Robin, which gets her a job at Channel 12, hosting a new morning show. The video résumé

includes clips from her days as an anchor in Canada.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Sixteen, “Sorry, Bro,” 2009.

Robin must now wake up at 1:45 a.m. so that she can anchor the morning news on Channel 12 called, “Wake Up New York!” which starts at 4 a.m. The group teases her by saying that no one is even up at 4 a.m to watch her show. She laughs at the joke since she knows it’s true and apologizes for being absent from their lives because of work.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Seventeen, “The Front Porch,” 2009.

Robin is upset that no one, not even her own friends watch her morning news program. The group has not seen one episode but agrees to wake up early to finally watch her anchor. Extreme events occur on Robin's show (she starts crying while showing a picture of her group of friends, saves the host of the cooking segment when he catches on fire, resuscitates the weatherman when he has a heart attack, and delivers a baby on live television). Although the group gathers to watch the show, they miss it once again because they are arguing over Ted’s relationship with Karen.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Eighteen, “Old King Clancy,” 2009.

Robin tells the group about her proposition to have an unusual sexual experience with a celebrity in Canada. Throughout the story, Lily and the group use try to guess which celebrity Robin propositioned. After three days, they finally give up, and Robin explains her story.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Twenty, “Mosbius Designs,” 2009.

Robin begins to sleep with Ted’s new intern, PJ. Barney confesses his love for Robin to Lily.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Twenty-three, “As Fast as she Can,” 2009.

Robin uses being a pretty girl to get out of getting a ticket.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Twenty-four, “The Leap,” 2009.

Barney receives Ted’s blessing to confess his love to Robin. Before he can express his feelings to her, Robin tells Barney that she is in love with him. Since Barney has never been in a relationship before, his fear of commitment causes him to immediately reject her, rather than saying, “I love you” in return. Later, Robin admits to Lily that she is nervous to love Barney and blurted out her feeling to scare him away. Barney and Robin fail at dodging their true feelings and share a kiss.

Season Five***How I Met Your Mother, Episode One, “Definitions,” 2009.***

Robin and Barney have sex for the entire summer but their relationship is still not defined. Robin agrees to go out with one of Marshall’s friends from work, but feels guilty because she has strong feelings for Barney. Lily, being the peacemaker and romantic, locks the two in a bedroom so they can discuss their relationship status. They agree to lie to everyone and say that they are dating but keep their options open, but still maintain their romantic feelings for one another.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Three, “Robin 101,” 2009.

Robin and Barney are officially dating, but Barney has trouble adjusting to couple life. He sneaks out of bed after sex, a habit he is accustomed to because of his one-night stands with various women. In another act of habit, he avoids consoling Robin when she has a bad day, instead propositioning sex. When he begins acting evasively, Robin is afraid that Barney is cheating on her. She breaks into his briefcase and finds a notebook full of notes about her mannerisms, characteristics, and habits. Barney is taking night classes from Ted: “Robin 101: How to date Robin Scherbatsky”. In “Robin 101,” Ted teaches Barney which topics will distract Robin from being angry—which include hockey, guns, and emperor penguins. At first, Barney plays the part of the uninterested and bored student, but after Ted tests the knowledge he's given him, Barney asks him to stay (showing his dedication to Robin and desire to please her). Unfortunately, Ted’s successful classes with Barney are interrupted when Robin catches them and storms out of the classroom, furious with both of them for manipulating her. Barney throws away the notebook apologizes to Robin.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Four, “The Sexless Inkeeper,” 2009.

Robin and Barney begin to double date with Lily and Marshall. Initially bored by doing “couple things,” they eventually begin to enjoy it until Ted informs Barney that he had sex with a sexy blonde-haired woman the night before. Being a womanizer, Barney begins to question why he is in a relationship.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Five, “Dual Citizenship,” 2009.

Robin gets into a bar fight and faces deportation. She is torn about whether to remain in the

United States and become a citizen or stay true to her Canadian roots. Robin realizes that she still loves her Canadian roots and takes dual citizenship.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Seven, “The Rough Patch,” 2009.

Robin and Barney break up.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Eight, “The Playbook,” 2009.

After breaking up with Barney, Robin vows not to date for a while and focus on work. Marshall insists that the next man Robin meets will be her new boyfriend. She is preparing at the news desk of Metro News 1 and meets her new co-host, Don.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Eleven, “Last Cigarette Ever,” 2009.

Robin’s morning show is on very early. Robin asks the group if any of them have watched it and no one has. Robin thinks her new co-host Don is going to be great for the show. While Robin takes the show seriously even though no one really watches, she is upset that Don makes a mockery of it. Robin hopes that the mayor will come on the show and is optimistic that one day she will be on a major network. Don tells Robin she will never be a network anchor. She tries to ignore him tearing her and the morning show down. The group is watching her about to smoke a cigarette on live television and she realizes that her job is important and she continues to take it seriously.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Fifteen, “Rabbit or Duck,” 2010.

Don parades around the morning show drunk in his underwear while Robin is very professional regardless of his behavior. Don asks Robin out on a Valentine’s Day date on the air. While she insists that she hates Don, she begins to develop feelings for him.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Seventeen, “Of Course,” 2010.

Robin is upset that Barney never treated her like a true girlfriend (such as doting on her).

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Nineteen, “Zoo or False,” 2010.

Robin asks Marshall to be on her show because a monkey robs him in Central Park. He requests that she present the story in a way that doesn’t make it seem like a monkey mugged him. Marshall ends up leaving the morning show and Robin brings Ted in to fill in last minute.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Twenty-one, “Twin Beds,” 2010.

Don asks Robin to move in with him. Ted and Barney both realize they love Robin and go to her window to win her back. She decides to move in with Don.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Twenty-four, “Doppelgangers,” 2010.

Robin is offered her dream job. Don tells Robin that before he met her, he had given up on everything including his career, and that she was the reason why he overcame his slump. The executive producer of a major network offers Robin a lead anchor job in Chicago. Debating between love and her career, she asks Ted for advice. She declines the offer to be with Don (she

finds a picture of them at Metro News 1 which influences her decision). Don tells Robin that the same job was offered to him and will be accepting it. She wishes him luck but realizes that she let her dream job go for a man she loved. Ted assures that she is not getting dumber, but more courageous.

Season Six

How I Met Your Mother, Episode One, “Big Days,” 2010.

Robin lets herself go after her break up with Don.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Three, “Unfinished,” 2010.

Robin sees Don on his new show and begins to drink excessively out of depression. She drunk dials him and leaves a message threatening to kill him.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Four, “Subway Wars,” 2010.

Robin proves that she is a real New Yorker. She argues that she is just as much of a New Yorker as they are since she has been living in Manhattan for 6 years and sets out to do things that the group think are quintessential, “New York.”

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Six, “Baby Talk,” 2010.

Robin hates her co-anchor Becky, who doesn't care about the news and has become popular among the crew and audience of Channel 12 because of her looks. Robin gets upset when Becky announces that her bedroom is messy on the news, arguing that it is irrelevant to the news.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Seven, “Canning Randy,” 2010.

Becky does a commercial for a local boat company. Robin says, “You did a commercial? You’re a journalist. Don’t you want to be taken seriously?” Robin does a commercial for adult diapers because she sees how much everyone likes Becky and she wants to be liked as well.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Eight, “Natural History,” 2010.

Barney and Robin go to a gala at a museum and spend the night daring each other to touch restricted things.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Nine, “Glitter,” 2010.

Another video by Robin Sparkles emerges. Although it was made as a happy, innocent, teenage pop-song music video, it is highly sexual. In the video, Robin and a friend are in outer space singing about solving math problems, but don’t realize the adult words and actions the director asked them to do/say.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Twelve, “False Positive,” 2010.

A flashback to New Years’ Eve shows Robin vowing to Ted that in a year’s time, she will be working for Worldwide News Network, her dream job. She is offered a low-paying research job with Worldwide News Network, but feels that it is beneath her to work as an assistant and considers doing a novelty game show instead. Robin breaks her new years resolution and takes the job as the host of the game show and Ted reminds her that she moved to NY to work at Worldwide News Network. Ted forces Robin to take the job and she is beaming with joy at an

orientation while getting her work badge. Robin thanks Ted for leading her back to the right path and asks him to be her best man if she ever decides to get married.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Thirteen, “Bad News,” 2011.

Robin begins her new job as a research associate at Worldwide News Network, where her ex co-host, Sandy Rivers, is an anchor. Anytime Robin says something at work, Sandy ruins her moment by embarrassing her (horse poop story) and telling everyone that they have had sex. Teased by her co-workers and called, “Scher-poop,” Robin takes Ted advice to laugh along with everyone, hiding her embarrassment. Sandy makes it worse for her and shows a montage of all of Robin’s embarrassing clips, including Robin Sparkles. Being upset for days, Robin decides to “steer into the skid,” wearing her old Robin Sparkles jacket to the office.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Fourteen, “Last Words,” 2011.

Robin comes fully prepared to Marshall’s father’s funeral, being the perfect friend during his time of need. We see a clip of Robin’s father calling her a disappointment, unaccomplished, and lying to his friends that his daughter is in a coma. Discussing last words with their father’s, Robin decides to reconnect with hers, despite her painful past. Calling her “RJ,” Robin is happy to hear her father’s voice again.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Sixteen, “Desperation Day,” 2011.

Robin decides to spend Valentines Day with her single, female, co-workers instead of “some dippy guy with roses” (Ted). Robin and her co-workers wear purple, protesting the clichés

associated with the holiday. “We don’t care about some corporate sexist holiday,” she says. The other women leave to spend time with their partners and Robin says, “What about the sisterhood, the solidarity, the color purple?”

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Seventeen, “Garbage Island,” 2011.

Robin claims she is in a “dry spell” because of her new job.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Eighteen, “A Change of Heart,” 2011.

Robin feels like the 7th wheel because everyone around her is in a relationship. She dates a man who acts like a dog because she is lonely and needs a companion.

Season Seven

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Twelve, “Symphony of Illumination,” 2012.

Robin fears that she is pregnant with Barney’s child. She goes to the doctor to have a pregnancy test done to learn that she is unable to have children. Although she outwardly happy and celebrates not being pregnant, she inwardly heartbroken that the option to reproduce is gone. Ted knows that something is wrong with Robin and attempts to cheer her up. She insists that she is not a damsel in distress and he does not need Ted to save her. She says, “So I cant have kids. I have no one to hold me back in life. No one to stop me from traveling wherever I want no one getting in the way of my career,” hysterically crying in his arms. This episode is significant because we see such an immensely different side to Robin. For 6 seasons, she denies the desire to have children, yet in this episode that is all shattered.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Thirteen, “Tailgate,” 2012.

Robin is called into work on New Year's Eve because Sandy Rivers (her rude co-worker) is drunk on-air (because a producer at World Wide News breaks up with him). He eventually disappears entirely, causing Robin to break her plans and scour Manhattan to find him. She calls her boyfriend, Kevin (a psychiatrist), who convinces her to take Sandy's place. Robin takes his advice and Kevin, Ted, and Barney watch Robin as she anchors the New Year's Eve broadcast, as the narration reveals that this moment became the turning point in her career.

How I Met Your Mother, Episode Sixteen, “The Drunk Train,” 2012.

On a weekend trip away from Manhattan, Kevin proposes to Robin. While she wants to accept his offer, she faces the struggle of telling him that not only does she not want to have children—but that she is physically unable to. Consulting Marshall and Lily, she finally tells Kevin, who still wants to marry her. However, because Robin does not want Kevin to regret marrying her, she firmly tells him that she does not want to have children ever, not even by adoption, forcing Kevin to truly reflect on the issue. He then takes back the proposal and they break up.

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