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Surf, Song, and Cricket Blake: Capturing the Emerging Teen Girl Market with *Hawaiian Eye*

As America progressed from the post-war era into the sixties, the idea of teenagers solidified itself within popular culture. Job opportunities during World War II drove young people into the workforce establishing independence from their families and created a new purchasing demographic. Post-war America's abundant prosperity increased leisure time and allowed more young people to enroll in high school. Mass high school enrollment created new social opportunities and further alienated parents from their teenagers. The population skyrocketed as a result of the baby boom, and as the 1960s began, almost half the American population was under twenty-five years old.¹ By this time, teenagers asserted themselves as independent consumers with time and money to indulge in music, movies, clothes, cars, and whatever else interested them. Further compounded by America's fascination with youth (especially President Kennedy and his family), advertisers finally noticed the massive but previously untapped market with time and money at their disposal. Advertisers found that young people could easily be swayed to follow fads and continuously consume more goods. They guided gullible young people towards products to substitute for knowledge or reassurance they could not receive from their ignorant parents.²

By the late 1950s, television networks followed suit by developing programming more inclusive of young people. During its first two decades, ABC featured more teen

programming as a ploy to establish itself as a viable network in competition with CBS and NBC. Mary Kearney explains

“...because of its late emergence, ABC struggled far behind CBS and NBC during the network’s transition into television. In an effort to build its audience and gain more advertising revenue, ABC exploited its reputation as the youthful TV network by programming shows appealing to young families and children.”³

American Bandstand found a national audience on ABC in 1957, and 1959 saw CBS’s premiere of *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*, largely considered to be the first prime-time series privileging teen characters and environments over family centered ones.⁴ In 1958, *77 Sunset Strip* (featuring two attractive detectives solving crimes in Hollywood) premiered and became one of ABC’s early primetime ratings successes. Despite its premise, the show’s most popular character was the jive talking parking attendant Kookie who “...won the hearts and passions of teenage girls. His hot rod... acrobatics, and smooth way with the chicks secured the attention and admiration of the teenage guys.”⁵ The studio (Warner Bros.) and the network (ABC) capitalized on the successful formula by inundating the airwaves with several programs copying the same format: handsome detectives, zany sidekicks, beautiful women, and glamorous locations.⁶ These included *Bourbon Street Beat* (1959-1960) set in New Orleans, *Surfside 6* (1960-62) set in Miami, *The Roaring 20s* (1960-1962) set in 1920s New York, and the most successful offering, *Hawaiian Eye* (1959-1963) set in Hawaii. Most importantly, each of these shows incorporated a Kookie-like element to hook the teen audience in with the general audience suggesting that Warner Bros. and ABC recognized them as significant for success.

Hawaiian Eye centers on partners Tracy Steele (played by Anthony Eisley) and Tom Lopaka (played by Robert Conrad) and their friends Cricket Blake and Kazuo Kim (Connie

Stevens and Poncie Ponce respectively). All work at the Hawaiian Village Hotel: Steele and Lopaka are private investigators (joined in later seasons by Grant Williams' Greg MacKenzie and Troy Donahue's Phil Barton) employed primarily by the hotel and its guests, Cricket is a photographer by day and lounge singer by night, and Kim is a taxi driver who shares his island knowledge and connections with the Eyes. At its onset, the show primarily focused on partners Steele and Lopaka. From its launch, *Hawaiian Eye* encompassed broad demographics through its representation of varied age groups. Young people were more likely to identify with Lopaka and Cricket, and older people with Steele. However, as *Hawaiian Eye* gained popularity as a result of its younger cast members, especially Stevens, Warner Bros. changed the show's focus. In anticipation of its fourth season, Warner teen idol Troy Donahue's Phil Barton replaced Anthony Eisley's Tracy Steele. This change recognized the show's younger audience, and Donahue's casting specifically reflects his popularity with teenage girls. Warner Bros. deftly reacted to teenage identification with the young stars to promote other television shows, movies, and music projects distributed by the label. Although *Hawaiian Eye* went off the air immediately before the teenage market exploded within popular culture, there are clues within the text and studio files suggesting the show was among the first to target an emerging teenage girl market and use synergy in order to capitalize on teen interest. Warner Bros.' recognition of teenagers as a viable market further reassured advertisers that teenagers mattered and helped launch the marketing efforts to reach that new younger demographic.

“Pineapple and poi melodrama”: *Hawaiian Eye*’s feminine narrative structure

Critics derided *Hawaiian Eye* throughout its entire run. *LA Times* television writer Cecil Smith dismissed the show as a “...pineapple and poi melodrama.”⁷ Melodrama has been historically panned because it values character and relationships (traditionally associated with women’s stories) over constantly rising action (associated with men’s stories)⁸. Like most contemporary critics reared on conventional Hollywood drama, Smith snubbed the melodramatic feminized elements in writing off the show. However, despite the various dismissals of the show, viewers were undeterred. Smith, as a critic and an older man, was clearly not the show’s intended audience. *Hawaiian Eye*’s generic structure featured mystery and action as well as melodrama, which helped Warner Bros. establish a broader audience while simultaneously courting an unknown one; the teenage girl.

Most traditional melodrama relies on seriality to establish and build upon relationships over multiple episodes, but *Hawaiian Eye* episodes tend to rely on self-contained episodes favoring plot over long-term character development. However, Warner Bros.’ frequent cross-promotion helped establish an emotional relationship between viewers and characters. Although not exactly spin-offs, the network and studio promoted *Hawaiian Eye* and its sister shows *77 Sunset Strip*, *Bourbon Street Beat*, *Surfside 6* and *The Roaring 20s* through frequent character crossover between the five shows. Characters appeared in person or in dialogue on other shows, which kept each central in viewers’ minds. Designed to boost ratings for all shows, the concept rewarded those who watched several shows with increased contact with their favorite characters. For example, *77 Sunset Strip* characters often visited the *Hawaiian Eye* offices to solve cases and vice versa.

Although narrative arcs did not travel, the character crossovers provided viewers pleasure because of their preexisting familiarity with the characters.

That said, the series relies heavily on romantic relationships between characters: each episode features one of the Eyes in a mini-romance with a client, a potential suspect, or occasionally Cricket.ⁱ However, the show has no memory, so all relationships exist strictly within the context of a specific episode. Despite this, the show often references prior relationships between the Eyes and the woman-of-the-week as character development in service of the episode's plot. Although not as effective as allowing audiences watch relationships develop over time, invoking past interactions creates a richer, more complex narrative. *Hawaiian Eye* tends to value relationships (even in the short term) over crime solving as shown through the Eyes' intense engagement with the women they work for each week. Although the Eyes are attracted to the women they romance, they are always sincere, which allows female viewers a way to fantasize about these idealized mates.

The Eyes' passion extends beyond their interactions with women. They are further romanticized through their constant drive to absolve any client often in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Throughout the series, their reliance on intuition rather than deductive reasoning represents a break from typical detective series like *Dragnet*. For example, in "The Sign-Off," a wealthy woman is killed in her home and the police arrest a local delivery boy. The delivery boy is coincidentally the fiancé of Barton's secretary, and her pleadings prompt Barton to prove the boy's innocence. Throughout the

ⁱ This happens especially if Cricket is the feature of the episode. Sometimes she will be romanced by one of the Eyes or will have the central romance with a guest star. In the latter, Cricket is still the woman the Eyes are compelled to help, but they won't engage in the weekly romance.

episode, both Police Chief Quon and Eye Greg MacKenzie criticize Barton for being too emotional. At one point, MacKenzie explicitly tells Barton, "You know you're operating on emotion Phil, not logic."⁹ However, Barton ignores this and all similar criticisms, and eventually exonerates the delivery boy. The Eyes are constantly rewarded for following their emotional instincts. Acknowledging and rewarding the central male characters' emotions validates female viewers by enforcing that traditionally feminine attributes have a place in modern society.

John Fiske argues that soap opera viewers (whose audiences are primarily female) derive pleasure from sensitive male characters, "[b]ut their macho looks invite a fantasy relationship with some viewers at least."¹⁰ Viewers can also revel in characters' physical attributes. As a consequence of its exotic location, *Hawaiian Eye* features numerous characters (of both sexes) in their bathing suits suggesting a reach for the broadest audience possible. Incorporating male physicality addresses the female gaze. *Hawaiian Eye* establishes the Eyes' appearance early through its opening credit sequence, which features all cast members in bathing suits, and Eisley, Conrad, and eventually Donahue are each shirtless. Episodes like "The Queen from Kern County," depict Lopaka taking a girl surfing, and putting his finely chiseled abs on display for his date and presumably the audience too. The beach becomes a site for flirtation, physical spectacle, and emotional exchange. Regardless of how much naked skin is on display, relationships never progress past kissing. Onscreen bodily display allows for safe private voyeuristic experiences that introduced teenagers to sexuality without consequences. Moreover, scenes like these represented the emerging beach movie craze that kicked off with *Gidget* (1959) and

continued in popularity after *Hawaiian Eye* went off the air. These movies similarly featured singing, dancing, and bathing suits, while ensuring that chastity prevailed.¹¹

The episode “Total Eclipse” typifies *Hawaiian Eye*’s combination of physical and emotional fantasy. Jean Morgan is acquitted of murdering her husband, although the public is not convinced of her innocence. She turns to the Eyes when threatened after her trial. Steele asserts himself as Jean’s protector over Lopaka’s objections, and their relationship quickly evolves into a romantic one. While at the beach (in their bathing suits), Jean dramatically explains that she found her husband’s body and picked up the nearby gun against her better judgment, which led to her eventual arrest. Steele passionately kisses her to calm her hysterics, and their romance continues throughout the episode. Steele erases the professional distance between himself and Jean in favor of his feelings for her. However, their deeper relationship raises the stakes, which drives Steele to work harder in order to protect Jean and restore her reputation.

According to Fiske’s breakdown of masculine narratives, “[t]he masculine characters and narratives ‘live’ in their moments of performance only, and in these moments time is manipulated to maximize the masculine performance.”¹² Despite its melodramatic storylines, *Hawaiian Eye* conforms to this structure – each episode features one Eye’s mystery and romance. The stories center on the male Eye’s point of view suggesting *Hawaiian Eye* wanted a general (male) audience. However, Cricket’s weekly musical number complicates this structure. Each episode is interrupted to highlight Cricket singing. Her presence has no narrative relevance and breaks up the episode’s rhythm. After each performance, Cricket converses with the Eyes, who gathered to watch her perform. Though their conversations may be about the case, they often do not reveal any

new information; rather they serve as a space for the characters to relate to one another. Both the abrupt disruption from the narrative and the interpersonal conversations defy the masculine structure laid out by Fiske. If *Hawaiian Eye* did not have (and value) feminine elements, the entire segment would be cut in favor of more action. Moreover, these segments were amongst the most popular parts of the show, further suggesting that *Hawaiian Eye* also targeted a female audience.

The Teen Dreams – Robert Conrad, Connie Stevens, and Troy Donahue

Hawaiian Eye not only recognized and included female viewership, but also created a space for teenage girls. Steele and Lopaka's ten-year age difference allowed older viewers to identify with Steele, and younger ones with Lopaka and Cricket. This decision acknowledged the existence and importance of the younger set. In addition to consistently bad reviews, critics and publicity materials reminded the public of Robert Conrad¹³, Connie Stevens¹⁴, and eventually Troy Donahue's¹⁵ popularity with teenage girls. Fan interest (through clubs, magazines, etc.) eventually convinced Warner Bros. and ABC to repackage the entire show with teen girls in mind.

From its onset, critics recognized the existence of teen girls and the power they could wield. In an otherwise tepid early review of the show, *Variety* recognized Warner Bros.' foresight for "...turn[ing] up a young glamour boy named Robert Conrad. There is no question that this fellow is going to hype the series prospects considerably by giving it a strong young femme audience pull."¹⁶ Conrad was often cited for his striking physique, but Warner Bros. timidly marketed him as a teen heartthrob. Like with Stevens, Warner Bros. marketed several albums featuring Conrad to teens, and like Donahue, he was an attractive young man. However, Warner's later publicity blitz featuring Donahue seems to

compensate for how they could not market Conrad. Donahue had greater film success, but Warner Bros. could have created similar opportunities for Conrad. However, by the time Conrad signed with Warner Bros., he was married with a family. Press releases show Warner's marketing uncertainty: "Dashing, virile and handsome, he is the teenagers' idea of what is 'dream bait,' but as a matter of fact he has been married since he himself was a teenager and is the home-loving father of two daughters."¹⁷ Warner Bros. recognized his good looks, but quickly extinguished any lustful feelings by mentioning his family. If Warner Bros. knowingly packaged Conrad as a romantic object when he had a family, they would have effectively condoned adultery if fantasies were actualized. Instead of threatening contemporary ideas about marriage, Warner Bros. chose to indulge fans while reminding them he was off limits.

Conrad garnered positive reviews, but nothing like those Connie Stevens received. When all other *77 Sunset Strip* clones failed, Producer Stanley Niss attributed *Hawaiian Eye*'s success to Connie Stevens' Cricket Blake: "...in fact Miss Stevens was often called a female Kookie. Part of her shtick was the nightclub act – the light, bouncy numbers she would sing each week."¹⁸ Comparing Cricket to Kookie stresses the importance of the teen audience because they similarly valued Kookie on *77 Sunset Strip*. Cricket embodies teen girl fantasy and allows them their proxy access into the *Hawaiian Eye* world. As a young, blonde, and single photographer/singer, Cricket lived independently and was the only constant female companion for the Eyes. Cricket showed teenage girls that they could live, date, and work in the world without the pressure to marry immediately.

Regardless, Cricket was a safe role model. She had freedoms, but did not push or test what she could do with them. Moya Luckett argues that teenage girls in the late 1950s

and early 1960s were “supposed to ‘grow up,’ replace best friends with boyfriends and husbands, renounce their girlish tastes and deflect their objects of desire and sexual aims away from the feminine and towards men.”¹⁹ Cricket acts girlishly – naïve, bubbly and innocent – but has no girlfriends on the show. She is friendly with the girl-of-the-week when it is in service to the Eyes, but is not shown interacting with other women on her own accord. Throughout the show Cricket dated and was paired with Barton, Lopaka, or the occasional romance-of-the-week. The show treatment given to potential contract writers further describes her as a little in love with all the Eyes, who in turn tend to view her with sisterly affection. For instance, the treatment describes Cricket as “not the Mata Hari type... she’s a good friend and fun to be around.”²⁰ Moreover,

“[s]he is not immune to an occasional ‘crush’ on an occasional handsome young man, and many young men have thought themselves in love with her, but the two young men she most admires – Tracy Steele and Tom Lopaka – refuse to take her seriously. They regard her as they might a beloved sister – and tease her accordingly.”²¹

Ultimately, the power to begin any relationship starts with the Eyes, and Cricket is set up to reciprocate their desires rather than act on her own. Like the Eyes’ weekly romances, no Cricket romance extended past an individual episode; not even her highly publicized on-screen romance with Phil Barton. Depending on the script, Barton and Cricket could be coupled or Barton would have another romantic interest. If the latter, Cricket was written as if they never had a relationship at all. Warner Bros. addressed this situation by explaining that Cricket was too young to be tied down. Downplaying Cricket and Barton’s relationship permitted narrative flexibility but also ensured their relationship was not serious enough where Cricket could engage in premarital sex. Stevens herself reiterated the official line about Barton and Cricket’s relationship, and explained “Cricket isn’t the

kind of girl who gets seriously involved just yet...I like to think of her as a girl at the stage of being in love with love. But marriage would change things too much."²² Although girls like Cricket carved out larger spaces for themselves in the public sphere, societal mores dictated they protect their virtue.²³ Cricket was designed to encourage other girls to do the same.

Before the show aired, Warner Bros. conditioned audiences to associate Connie Stevens with Cricket through promotional campaigns. Initial promotional stills primarily paired stars Anthony Eisley and Robert Conrad or occasionally featured them with Connie Stevens and Poncie Ponce reinforcing Eisley and Conrad's position on the show. However, only months into its first season, Cricket's status on the show was already changing. For example, a December 1959 publicity still features Stevens looking directly into the camera flanked by Conrad on the left and Eisley on the right, each leaning in and kissing her cheek.²⁴ Stevens' direct gaze into the camera allows for direct interaction with the viewer. Moreover, Conrad and Eisley are not looking at the camera at all. They complete focus on Stevens, which emphasizes her primary status. Although Stevens was not the center of all subsequent publicity photos, her increased presence suggests Warner recognized increased demand for Stevens. Stevens gained popularity portraying Cricket Blake (especially because of her musical numbers) as well as through her extratextual recording and theatrical successes.

However, by the fourth season, there is no doubt that Warner Bros. saw *Hawaiian Eye* as primarily a teenage show. In addition to Stevens, Warner Bros. had another major teen idol under contract: Troy Donahue. After a star making performance in Warner's 1959 film *A Summer Place*, Warner Bros. pitched ABC a series featuring Donahue to

capitalize on his exposure. ABC's sponsors enthusiastically agreed, and Warner Bros. created *Surfside 6* as a vehicle for Donahue in 1960.²⁵ In addition to his television role, Warner Bros. paired Donahue with Connie Stevens in the films *Parrish* and *Susan Slade*. Their resulting onscreen chemistry was so popular with fans that when *Surfside 6* was cancelled, Warner Bros. reunited him with Stevens on *Hawaiian Eye*.

In anticipation of the fourth season, Warner Bros. repackaged the entire show. They replaced Eisley (coincidentally, the oldest character), and introduced Donahue as a love interest for Cricket (suggesting more prominent storylines for both characters). The fourth season marketing campaign exclusively features Stevens and Donahue while mentioning Conrad, Williams, and Ponce peripherally. Production stills feature various scenarios with Donahue and Stevens with accompanying text exploiting on their onscreen popularity. Several photos create a honeymoon atmosphere by depicting the stars vacationing together in Hawaii. Showing them playing on a sailboat or walking down palm lined promenades simultaneously connects the stars to Hawaii as well as with each other. Other photos stiffly pose Donahue and Stevens in ways reminiscent of wedding or prom photos, which further solidifies their status as a couple. For example, one photo features Donahue standing behind Stevens with his arms wrapped around her waist, and both are positioned in three-quarter profile towards the camera. Overall, most photos feature Stevens looking directly at the camera whereas Donahue focuses on her or dreamily gazes towards the horizon in her direction. Another photo features Stevens and Donahue in eveningwear. On the left side of the frame, Stevens cradles her chin in her right hand and looking directly at the camera. Donahue faces Stevens with his eyes closed, and his head practically rests on the side of her face almost kissing her on the cheek. Although he is not

kissing her, he smiles a soft romantic smile.²⁶ Accompanying text further reinforces their onscreen romance as the principal selling point. For example, text for one photo reads:

“ROMANCES – Troy Donahue and Connie Stevens, co-starred in motion pictures, will romance each other on TV for the first time in “*Hawaiian Eye*,” beginning with the opening segment of the Warner Bros. series, “Day in the Sun.” New season begins Tuesday (instead of Wednesdays, as formerly), Oct. 2, on the ABC-TV network. From: Warner Bros. Studios Burbank, Calif.”²⁷

These photos position Stevens, not Donahue, as the object of affection, which reiterates her central position on the show as well as a stand-in for female viewer fantasies. Stevens’ positioning and direct address throughout the promotional campaign allows fans to simultaneously envy and admire her relationship with Donahue. Moreover, the series of promotional photographs allow fans to put themselves in Stevens’ place and imagine Donahue as their boyfriend.

***Hawaiian Eye* beyond the islands: Music, Movies, and Comics for purchase**

Beyond traditional promotional techniques via photos, personal appearances, etc., Warner Bros. utilized ancillary products to promote *Hawaiian Eye* to teenagers. *Hawaiian Eye* themed stories appeared in a paperback trade novel and a comic book. Commissioning the comic directly addressed the teen audience since they were the primary comic consumers. Released by Gold Key in 1963, there is only one *Hawaiian Eye* comic, most likely coinciding with the show’s 1963 cancellation. The comic features two short mysteries focusing on Phil Barton. Unlike the television show, the comic seems to be addressing teen boys primarily especially since Cricket only appears tangentially. Furthermore, Cricket is outwardly jealous of Barton’s relationships with the women central to each case. Barton is the primary access point to enter the story, and there is no room in the short space to allow or admit entry for a female reader.

Within its empire, Warner Bros. cast its television stars on other Warner shows feature films. Anthony Eisley, Robert Conrad, Connie Stevens, Poncie Ponce, Grant Williams, and Troy Donahue each appeared in character on *77 Sunset Strip*. Likewise, characters from *77 Sunset Strip*, *Bourbon Street Beat*, and *Surfside 6* appeared on *Hawaiian Eye*. Warner Bros. synergistically bolstered each show and encouraged viewers who watched one to watch them all. All shows filmed at the Burbank studios, so it was efficient and inexpensive to drop actors into guest roles. Furthermore, Warner Bros. cast its stars in films. Connie Stevens appeared as a love interest in teen dramas *Parrish* and *Susan Slade* with future *Hawaiian Eye* co-star Troy Donahue. Teen pregnancy drama *Susan Slade* also featured *Hawaiian Eye* star Grant Williams. After the popularity of beach movies like *Gidget* and Elvis Presley's *Blue Hawaii*, Warner Bros. released *Palm Springs Weekend* in 1963, starring Donahue, Stevens, and Robert Conrad, which is considered the first teen spring break movie.²⁸ The casting and subject matter for all these films show Warner Bros. cashing in on a teen girl market hungry for its products.

Warner Bros. further extended their stars' popular reach via its music division. By the late 1950s, Elvis Presley had already transformed popular music and created a divide between music produced and distributed for teenagers versus adults. Teenagers flocked to rock-and-roll, and became primary music purchasers. As a result of Presley's successful appearances on prime-time variety shows, "TV executives further integrated this new music into programming in order to attract the teen demographic."²⁹ Shows like *American Bandstand* appeared featuring teens dancing to the live performances of the latest popular songs.³⁰

In an effort to cash in on the music trend amongst teen buyers, Warner Bros. seized the opportunity to connect their popular in-house young stars with Elvis Presley. In 1959, as *77 Sunset Strip*'s popularity approached its peak, Warner Bros. Records released an album featuring star Edd Byrnes as his alter ego entitled *Kookie: Star of 77 Sunset Strip*. Although Byrnes was not a singer, the album produced several popular singles, including the Billboard top five hit "Kookie, Kookie (Lend Me Your Comb), a duet with future *Hawaiian Eye* star Connie Stevens.³¹ The two promoted the song on *American Bandstand* on August 18, 1959.³² The song combined Kookie's signature gimmicks: jive talk and running a comb through his hair. Their *American Bandstand* performance replicates the recorded version while adding visual cues further connecting Byrnes and Kookie. Byrnes talks through the song and repeatedly runs his comb through his hair as Kookie does on the show while Stevens pleads for the comb so he will stop grooming himself and kiss her. The primarily teen girl audience screams for Byrnes throughout their performance.³³ In a precursor to her role on *Hawaiian Eye*, Stevens acts as a conduit between teenage girls and Kookie. The female vocal on Byrnes' song allows girls to imagine that they are singing with Kookie. Although Byrnes is the primary draw, Stevens' presence on the song and on *Bandstand* promotes her as well. *Hawaiian Eye* premiered a month after their *Bandstand* appearance and Stevens already released her first album for Warner Bros. Records (1958's *Concetta*), so this appearance further promoted her recording career and created an association between her, Byrnes, and the upcoming show.

Warner Bros. translated their successful Kookie novelty album idea into the premise for *Hawaiian Eye*, *Surfside 6* and *The Roaring 20s*.³⁴ Music is fundamental to the show, and as early as April 1959, *Hawaiian Eye* story treatments stated Cricket was a part-time singer

and that each episode should break for a musical number.³⁵ Cricket, occasionally backed up by Kim, performed up-tempo rhythm numbers, romantic ballads, or Hawaiian tinged songs.³⁶ Over the series' run, *Hawaiian Eye* recycled songs from its catalogue in order to save money, and in deciding which episodes to rerun, song choice often trumped the episode plotlines.³⁷ Producers were right to be concerned about the musical numbers, because they were one of the main ratings draws for the show. *Hawaiian Eye* struggled initially because it was broadcast against the popular *Perry Como Show*.³⁸ Como's show featured an established popular entertainer and was in color whereas *Hawaiian Eye* was not. However, as the season progressed, *Hawaiian Eye* generated stronger ratings largely due to audience reaction to Connie Stevens' character and her musical numbers.³⁹ Even though both shows featured singers, a considerable part of the audience chose the younger Stevens as an alternative to the established Como.

From the beginning, Warner Bros. articulated their interest in musical tie-ins through casting decisions. Already a contract player for both Warner Bros. Pictures and Records, Stevens had successful outings with a singing role in the Jerry Lewis comedy *Rock-A-Bye-Baby*, her 1958 album *Concetta*, and the appearance on Byrnes' single in 1959. In addition to Stevens, Warner Bros. also signed Poncie Ponce and Robert Conrad to recording deals. Warner Bros. owned the rights to all the music performed on the show so they could easily and cheaply release it for purchase.⁴⁰ In 1960, Warner's released a *Hawaiian Eye* soundtrack album featuring tracks by Stevens, Conrad, and Ponce.⁴¹ Subsequent solo albums further tied the artists to their characters. Ponce released a successful album of Hawaiian style songs.⁴² Conrad's albums featured ballads, which injected his rugged masculine appearance with sensitivity, and emphasized the complexity of his on-screen

persona.⁴³ Connie Stevens released several albums during the show's run, and her songs were similar to Cricket's. Tellingly, her biggest hit "Sixteen Reasons" was featured on 1960's *As Cricket*, signaling the peak of her popularity and viewer identification with her, Cricket, and *Hawaiian Eye*.⁴⁴ Although Warner Bros. reports that Ponce's album did well in Hawaii, it is difficult to determine where the album was promoted.⁴⁵ Conrad and Stevens did far more publicity for their albums, especially in teen venues. Both made appearances on *American Bandstand*, and sang together on a similar show called *Dance Party*.⁴⁶ Regardless, Stevens' albums sold more copies. At the peak of her popularity, Warner Bros. capitalized on Stevens' talent as well as teenage girl identification with her. They also tapped into a larger musical trend. Susan Douglas argues, "In the early 1960s, pop music became the one area of popular culture in which adolescent female voices could be clearly heard."⁴⁷ Buying the albums in a sense allowed teen girls to communicate who and what they wanted to be.

Tangentially, Warner Bros. also used its stars' lives as another cog in their publicity machine. For example, Connie Stevens and Elvis Presley dated in 1961. The studio constantly leaked their relationship through press tips and releases. One press release reported that the two spent a long weekend together near Lake Tahoe where Presley was on location filming *Kid Gallahad*, a remake of a Warner's film.⁴⁸ Although her relationship with Presley had nothing to do with the show, reporting on it simultaneously associates Presley, Stevens, his movie, her show, and their respective music careers. Connecting Presley with Stevens increases her musical credibility with teenagers who already love Presley, and can also bring potential viewers to the show.

From Cricket Blake to Hannah Montana: *Hawaiian Eye's* enduring legacy

Although *Hawaiian Eye* has been off the air for nearly half a century, it marked an important turning point in modern marketing schemes for capturing teenagers, especially teenage girls. When the show first broadcast, the idea of teenagers existed, but popular culture and marketers did not know quite what to do with it. Concurrently, television was in its infancy, without an ingrained sense of how or what to program. Advertising pioneers saw how teenagers dragged their friends and families to movies affecting their profits, creating fan clubs, and reading magazines, and realized the untapped market could generate millions upon millions of dollars for their clients.⁴⁹ As a fledgling network, ABC gambled on teenage-centric programming in order to generate the quick advertising dollars it needed to get itself off the ground. Although *Hawaiian Eye* was originally created for a general audience, Warner Bros. and ABC adroitly recognized that their primary audience was teenager girls, and had the audacity to market the show directly to them. Commercials advertising family cars, cigarettes, and coffee makers were later replaced with ads for Sunbeam hair rollers as well as Cover Girl and Neutrogena cosmetics. Ads for products like the hair gel and gum also targeted teen boys but featured them using the products in order to attract teenage girls further suggesting that the ads were the girls as well.

Although sponsors only tasted the teen market brought to them by *Hawaiian Eye*, it is important in the evolution of teen television and teen marketing practices because as Susan Douglas reminds us:

“Eight days after *Hawaiian Eye* went off the air, on September 18, 1963, *The Patty Duke Show* premiered. The teenage girl was now so important to advertisers and producers that entire shows were built around her and her zany antics.”⁵⁰

Teenagers affirmed that they were the market by purchasing the commodities Warner Bros. commissioned from multiple platforms, whether film, music, comic, or something else entirely. *Hawaiian Eye* is an early model for the idea of the television show as part of a multi-media insurgency platform allowing for the greatest possible production creation and consumption in compact space and time. Each time Warner Bros. released one product or star vehicle, they reminded viewers of the other. Connie Stevens' album promotions reminded viewers to watch her alter ego on *Hawaiian Eye*. Each film or record becomes another opportunity to the television show and each helps create a larger brand. Although *Hawaiian Eye* went off the air almost fifty years ago, its legacy is alive the creation and exploitation of teen centric shows from *The Monkees* to *Hannah Montana*, which utilize onscreen characters and gimmicks to promote products and personalities offscreen.

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- ¹ Edward J. Reilly, *The 1960's: American Popular Culture Through History*, ed. Ray B. Browne (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), 39.
- ² Grace Palladino, *Teenagers: An American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 98.
- ³ Mary Celeste Kearney, "Teenagers and Television in the United States," in *Museum of Broadcast Communications Encyclopedia of Television*, ed. Horace Newcomb (New York: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2004), 2277.
- ⁴ Kearney, "Teenagers and Television in the United States," in *Museum of Broadcast Communications Encyclopedia of Television*, 2277.
- ⁵ Lynn Wooley, Robert W. Malsbary, and Robert G. Strange, Jr., *Warner Bros. Television: Every Show of the Fifties and Sixties Episode-by-Episode* (Jefferson, NJ: McFarland & Company, 1985), 114.
- ⁶ Wooley, *Warner Bros. Television: Every Show of the Fifties and Sixties Episode-by-Episode*, 98.
- ⁷ "Other 6 -- No Title." *Los Angeles Times (1886-Current File)*, July 6, 1960, <http://www.prquest.com> (accessed October 27, 2008).
- ⁸ John Fiske, *Television Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1987), 217.
- ⁹ "The Sign-Off," *Hawaiian Eye*, ABC, November 20, 1962.
- ¹⁰ John Fiske, *Television Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1987), 187.
- ¹¹ Thomas Lisanti, *Hollywood Surf and Beach Movies*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2005) 13.
- ¹² Fiske, *Television Culture*, 219.
- ¹³ "'Hawaiian Eye Review' from November 4, 1959," in *Variety Television Reviews 1923-1988*, edited by Howard H. Prouty, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1989.
- ¹⁴ Press release to Bob Hull, Publicity Department File, November 23, 1962, Folder 678A, *Hawaiian Eye* special box, Warner Bros. Archive, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, pg. 1.
- ¹⁵ Press release to H. Hefferman, Publicity Department File, December 13, 1962, Folder 678A, *Hawaiian Eye* special box, Warner Bros. Archive, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, pg. 1.
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