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# COUCH POTATOES

**Sitcom review: The Surreal Life**  
Thursday nights at 8p.m. on the WB  
MC Hammer, Emmanuel Lewis, Gabrielle Carteris

When the producers of "The Surreal Life" came up with the idea to place seven former superstars under practical house arrest without transportation, cell phones or other personal items, the concept was novel enough. Unfortunately, when they put the cast together, it seems like they missed the whole point. On a show in which the plot rests on clashing egos of former superstars, spare MC Hammer, the whole cast is made up of former pseudo-celebs and practical nobodies. Perhaps the execs thought they could pull a fast one on the audience when they cast "stars" such as limey man Corey Feldman, former playmate Brande Roderick, typecast child star Emmanuel Lewis, and former "Beverly Hills 90210" prude Gabrielle Carteris to name a few. Perhaps they knew exactly what they were doing. They even included the "ever-popular" Jerri Manthey from Survivor—of course everybody's heard of her, right?

What could have been a potentially fun reality series falls apart due to the lack of a strong cast and a plot that doesn't live up to its promise. The fact that the entire cast shares an annoying and impossible behavior guarantees that this show is a potential disaster. If the audience wanted to watch a bunch of fussy people with big egos banter around in a huge mansion, they would just watch "The Osbournes."

As dormant as "The Surreal Life" may be, it does have its moments. Most of the "superstars" are still caught in the illusions that somebody out there still actually cares, which makes for amusing television. It also gets points for getting Hammer on the show.



—Nishat Fatima

**"Greetings from Tucson"**  
Friday nights on the WB at 8:30 p.m.  
Pablo Santos, Julio Mechoso, and Rebecca Creskoff

Although there is nothing that is vastly different about the plot of "Greetings from Tucson," its Latin twist gives it enough edge to be a breath of fresh air. The story is a re-enactment series of creator Peter Murrrieta's teenage years, with 15-year-old David Tiant (Pablo Santos) starring as the central character.

The show provides a humorous chronicle of how David survives growing up with an unemotional, yet overly self-assured, father Joaquin (Julio Mechoso), and a sweet and loving Irish mom, Elizabeth (Rebecca Creskoff), who is 6 feet tall while the rest of the family hardly cracks 5 feet 10 inches. Other key players include easygoing Uncle Ernesto, an animal control officer, and a three-time divorcee who now lives with David's family, and Maria, the snooty and popular older sister that every televised teen dreads.

David struggles with his dysfunctional family, but is still tremendously proud of his mixed ethnic background. While plot lines are clear, "Greetings from Tucson's" situations don't focus solely on one character, and each of the cast members is comical in his own unusual way. It also shows constant clashing between David and Maria, which leads to some hilarious sibling rivalry. With witty wordplay, convenient mix-ups and comic relief

from disastrous situations, "Greetings from Tucson" has all the elements of the typical situational comedy about an atypical family. Let's hope the WB decides to move it up on the time slot.



—Nishat Fatima

**"High School Reunion"**  
Thursday night at 7 p.m. and Sunday nights at 8 pm on the WB  
17 1992 graduates from Illinois Oak Park and River Forest High Schools

The latest addition to the increasing list of ridiculous reality series is the WB's recently launched "High School Reunion." As the name suggests, the show is about a high school reunion of a number of people who, despite being out in the real world for almost 10 years, are still hung up on high school issues. Courtesy of the WB, the reunion is in an exotic location, complete with lavish food, activities and the good 'ol element vital to reality television — producer-created situations. Each ambiguous member of the cast has been pegged with a ridiculous title such as "The Bully," "The Popular Girl" or "The Nerd" and so on, in a desperate measure to keep the audience involved in the show.

The best and only way to describe this moronic and hormonally-driven excuse for entertainment is a very bad spin off of "Beverly Hills: 90210." Having the word "high school" in its title is about as intellectual as the show gets. If you were ever curious to see what the offspring of "The Real World" and "Saved by the Bell" gone bad would be like, then this is the show for you. There is one positive aspect to the show: one glance at the cast members can be used as an example of exactly how people should not end up 10 years after high school.



—Nishat Fatima

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