

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

KATIE COURIC INTERVIEW  
*MAKERS: WOMEN WHO MAKE AMERICA*  
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

**Katie Couric**  
**Journalist**  
**09/12/2011**  
**Interviewed by Betsy West**  
**Total Running Time: 1 hour, 12 minutes and 38 seconds**

START TC: 00:00:00:00

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Makers: Women Who Make America  
Kunhardt Film Foundation

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Katie Couric  
Journalist

**Katie Couric**

**Journalist**

00:00:07:00

BETSY WEST:

I want to start talking a little bit about your family and your childhood. Can you tell me about your upbringing, where you grew up, what your family was like?

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

00:00:14:00

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Katie Couric & Her Siblings

KATIE COURIC:

I was born in Arlington, Virginia in 1957. I was the youngest of four kids, and I had a real *Leave It to Beaver* upbringing. My mom was a stay at home mom, although she worked in the gift department of Lord & Taylor when I was in high school. My dad worked in public relations. He had been a newspaper reporter at the Atlanta Constitution, before that, the Macon Telegraph. Then for United Press, he was a writer and an editor, but he had a hard time supporting, I think, four kids on a wire service salary.

00:00:45:00

So, we did not grow up in an affluent neighborhood. We were decidedly middle class, but I always felt that my parents were very classy. They emphasized the importance of education. We all went to very good schools. We were expected to do well in school, expected to be involved in extracurricular activities. We always ran for office. My dad would help us write our speeches.

00:01:15:00

My mom would help us with our posters because she was artistic. I think my parents were very involved parents, but they weren't pushy. They gave us

enough room to make mistakes, but I think their values really seeped into our consciousness as kids, and then as adults.

00:01:34:00

BETSY WEST:

Did you identify with one of them more than the other?

00:01:37:00

KATIE COURIC:

I think I have qualities from both my mom and dad. My dad is... My dad was... He just passed away this summer... an exquisite writer and a real renaissance man. He could talk fluently about almost anything, and I would marvel at that. My mom is creative, and funny, and kind of a firecracker, so I think I have personality traits from both of them. I love to write, I love words.

00:02:09:00

My dad gave me a dictionary and he inscribed it, "To my fellow wordsmith." I also consider myself pretty creative and quite outgoing. I think I probably got that a little more from my mom, although my dad was exceedingly charming.

00:02:29:00

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Katie Couric

1960s

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

BETSY WEST:

You were growing up during the time of the women's movement?

00:02:30:00

KATIE COURIC:

Yes.

00:02:31:00

BETSY WEST:

Did that impact you in any way, the expectations for you?

00:02:35:00

KATIE COURIC:

Very much so. I think I was very influenced by the women's movement, coming of age during that period of time. I wasn't marching in 1977 in Houston, was that when that big women's march took place, where they wore the blue shirts? But I think it really did have an impact on how I saw myself and my role in the world.

00:02:59:00

I wanted to have a career. My dad was also, I think, a feminist, surprisingly so, because he had a very strong mother. He believed in the value of education, and I think he wanted all of his children, three girls and one boy, to go out in the world and do something.

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

00:03:20:00

BETSY WEST:

Was your brother treated any differently? Or did you ever feel outside of your family environment, any differences in the way you were treated?

00:03:27:00

KATIE COURIC:

My parents always told my brother he was going to be a doctor. He's not. He's in finance, but has done very well. I think that they didn't necessarily articulate what they envisioned for me professionally. But I remember vividly being in college and my dad introducing me to a couple of radio reporters and people who ran radio stations,-

00:03:56:00

-because I think he saw in me an ability to write, an ability to relate, and thought that this would be a good career for me. I was only 18 at the time, so clearly they were thinking about what profession I might enter. I think there were still stereotypical roles, I think, for men and women at that time. But I think my parents kind of quietly encouraged all of us to go to good schools, and not just to get our MRS degrees, but to go to good schools so we could then get good jobs.

00:04:33:00

BETSY WEST:

You talk about them encouraging you. Was there a moment in your childhood when you realized that you might be good as a reporter, or storyteller, or handling stress, or anything that you do?

00:04:45:00

KATIE COURIC:

Yeah. I remember in eighth grade when my teacher read my essay in front of the class. I had took so much pride in that. I realized that I had written a good essay, but more importantly, I had really enjoyed the process of writing that essay. I think writing has always come naturally to me, as opposed to math and science, unfortunately. Don't mean to fit into those gender stereotypes, but I had a real mental block with math especially.

00:05:16:00

I think because I've always been very outgoing and always have felt comfortable with people, and I think what I lack in IQ, I make up for in EQ, I thought to be out there... I was always asking people questions anyway... it just seemed to come together that this would be a good profession for me. I looked at print, I looked at radio. Then I thought, "Gee, if my face doesn't stop a clock, I might as well try to see what I could do in television."

00:05:45:00

I also knew it was more lucrative, and I thought I would give it a try. It was a circumlocutious route, to say the least, but ultimately, I achieved things I never in a million years imagined I would achieve.

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

00:06:00:00

BETSY WEST:

Well, you picked a pretty competitive business.

00:06:02:00

KATIE COURIC:

Yeah.

00:06:03:00

BETSY WEST:

And a pretty macho business, in a way. I wonder if you can paint a picture for me of you as the young Katie Couric, sort of jostling with all the other young 20-somethings.

00:06:14:00

KATIE COURIC:

When I was 22, my first job out of college... I went to the University of Virginia and majored in American Studies... was working as a desk assistant at ABC News in Washington, which pretty much entailed making coffee, xeroxing the rundown, passing it around, and answering the phone, and changing the ribbons on the wire machines. That's how old I am. When I think about the fact that I put white gloves on that they had in the wire room, and would put the ribbon in the machine, I think, "Wow, I started in the Dark Ages."

00:06:45:00

But it was a very exciting, fun, vibrant environment. My first day on the job, Sam Donaldson jumped on the desk and started singing that song, "K-K-K-Katie, Beautiful Katie," at the top of his lungs. I was completely mortified. He whisked me away to a White House briefing, and I thought, "Wow, this is going to be fun." But women at the time were relegated to secondary positions. They were production assistants, they were secretaries. There were very few women in decision making positions.

00:07:16:00

I took that in. It didn't necessarily discourage me. I just thought, "Gee." I think I thought it would take a long time for me to climb the ladder if I were to stay at ABC News. I realized I really wanted to be a reporter. I didn't necessarily want to put together and write what someone else tracked and got credit for, to be brutally frank. If I was a good enough writer, and a good enough interviewer, could become those things, I wanted to do those on my own.

00:07:51:00

I stayed at ABC for less than a year, because, lo and behold, there was this new cable news outlet that was starting called CNN, which we all lambasted at the time as Chicken Noodle News. George Watson, who was the Bureau Chief, was going over to start the Washington Bureau of CNN, or to be in a big position at CNN. When CNN was established, I decided, "Gee, that would be a great place to really learn the craft of television news." It kills me when all these young people say, "Oh, I want to be a TV anchor."

00:08:27:00

First of all, I hate that. They should say they want to be a reporter or a journalist. I think that in any profession, you have to learn the nuts and bolts of what you're doing, and you have to learn it over and over again, and do it enough times that you've made enough mistakes to learn from those mistakes. So, I decided to go to CNN and that I would learn much more, and that's when I became a producer.

00:08:52:00

I started as an assignment editor, so I learned the logistics of news gathering. I then became an associate producer, a producer. Ultimately, I started reporting, because the anchor team for whom I worked, Don Farmer and Chris Curle, allowed me to do some things on the air. I was pretty dreadful, at first, and I had some pretty bad performances at CNN back in the day. Luckily Don Farmer and Chris Curle, a husband and wife anchor team for whom I worked, allowed me to do some on air reporting.

00:09:25:00

I'm sure if you uncovered my pieces from the CNN archives, you would be flabbergasted at how bad I was. Certainly, when I was reporting from the White House to talk about the President's schedule, because Stuart Loory, who was the Washington Bureau Chief, decided to give this scrappy kid a break. I was so bad that Reese Schonfeld, who was head of CNN, announced that he never wanted to see me on the air again.

00:09:51:00

So, I think I had to have a pretty sturdy constitution to put up with the fact that people thought I was awful. And I was, actually, I was really bad. Some

# KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

people wonder if I hate the people who told me how awful I was, or wanted to seek revenge. In many ways, they did me a favor, because I wasn't very good. If they had just patronized me or indulged me and said, "Oh, you're great, keep going," I don't think I would've worked as hard. I think it inspired me to prove myself, and I think I've been doing that for most of my life, actually.

00:10:32:00

BETSY WEST:

Why didn't you just throw in the towel, and say, "Okay, I'm bad. I'm going to try something else?"

00:10:36:00

KATIE COURIC:

I think that the way you get to Carnegie Hall, practice, practice, practice, the way you get good on television or in anything is practice. I really think I had enough self-confidence to look around me and see other people who were doing the job, and I thought, "Gee, I'm just as good as these people, or I have the potential to be just as good as these people. I just need to work on it."

00:11:01:00

BETSY WEST:

In addition to just kind of hanging in there, your doggedness, was there a really smart move that you made, something that really made a difference for your career starting to take off?

00:11:11:00

KATIE COURIC:

I don't think I can pinpoint one moment where there was an epiphany in the eyes of all the people around me, and they thought, "Wow, this girl has a future." I think it was just slowly and steadily improving, getting more and more comfortable on camera. I always thought my writing was good. I remember covering a plane crash in Detroit, which was so awful. It was a Northwest flight that crashed after takeoff, and I think only one little girl survived.

00:11:44:00

I remember going there, my local news station in Washington sent me there, and standing on the overpass, and looking at all the remnants of lives lost, like a diaper, or a coffee pot, or a book. I observed that, and I wrote to it, and wrote to each sort of thing that really did make you picture in your mind what was going on, on that airplane, just another day for so many people before they met their fate.

00:12:22:00

I think I have an innate empathy and sensitivity that has enabled me to actually observe things, and feel things, and translate things. I hope. I mean, that's my goal, to be somebody who tells stories with humanity. I think that's

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

something you kind of have or you don't. I think I realized I did have that in me. I did have an ability to communicate people's joy, or sorrow, or disappointments, frustrations, heartbreak, whatever.

00:12:55:00

I think part of that is because I do think empathy is really helpful in doing that.

00:12:59:00

BETSY WEST:

It's very satisfying when you get it right, too, isn't it?

00:13:02:00

KATIE COURIC:

Yeah. Well, I love to write and I think words can be so powerful. I was writing a piece about 9/11. To be able to communicate some of that deep, deep emotion, and to be able to do it well, it is incredibly satisfying for me. To be able to tell other people's stories in a way that gives them dignity and pride, that's such a gift.

00:13:32:00

BETSY WEST:

I was wondering about the Pentagon beat, if that was a way of proving your macho chops.

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

## ON SCREEN TEXT:

Katie Couric, Jeff Zucker & Bryant Gumbel

NBC "Today" Show Set

00:13:37:00

### KATIE COURIC:

I remember when I started reporting for CNN, George Watson told me, "Don't get involved in a lot of soft news, or don't be associated with just features." That always stuck in my mind. I always thought, because I'm short, and perky, and cheerful, and have an outgoing personality, that it would be easy to box me into a corner, and to typecast me as sort of the cute Suzy Q who does the story on the soccer game or whatever, the lost dog.

00:14:15:00

I realized there was more to me than that. I was more multidimensional, I had more depth than that, and quite frankly, that I was fairly intelligent. I think throughout my career, I tried to make sure that, even when I was doing lighter fare, that it would also be balanced by more serious news coverage. I think covering the Pentagon did give me a great opportunity to show my chops.

00:14:43:00

I remember being on my honeymoon, and I was reading *Jane's Defence Weekly* and memorizing the difference between an F-16 and an F-18 A, or talking about tanks. I know my husband was hoping I would be focusing on different kind of hardware, but anyway, but-um-bunch. That was a very

challenging beat for me. I think it won me some respect, even though when I first started, they didn't really want to put me on.

00:15:16:00

I think there were male managers who didn't think I had the chops, and didn't really want to give me a chance, and didn't want to help me grow. I think that's so important. Yes, some people aren't going to be good, but I think there's a responsibility for people in management positions and leadership positions to help the people improve, because nobody comes into those jobs fully baked, and I certainly wasn't.

00:15:43:00

BETSY WEST:

Was there any way in which being there as a woman in the Pentagon was an advantage?

00:15:47:00

KATIE COURIC:

Definitely. It was an advantage being at the Pentagon for me because, let me tell you, I could get a lot of admirals and generals to talk to me. I think I was kind of an unusual person to be a correspondent there at the time. There weren't that many women. I believe it's okay to use your charm, male or female. It's not necessarily feminine wiles, because I think men have wiles, too. I think that they really responded well, and they wanted to help me, and that certainly didn't hurt.

00:16:22:00

I remember walking around the E-ring, and visiting the Secretary of the Navy's office, and going down to the public affairs side for the Army Chief of Staff. I think a lot of it is if you're interested, and you want to learn, and you're personable and respectful, people respond to you. It's not that hard to get people, I think, to support you and cheer you on, if you're a genuinely good person. People do want good people to do well.

00:16:50:00

I think at the Pentagon, because they knew I was a cub reporter and I was new to the job, I think there were a lot of people, men and women, quite frankly, who were really happy to help me. I think how you treat people really dictates how well you do in life. I really do. Ultimately, some people may get ahead by being political, or may get ahead by intimidation or whatever, but ultimately I think that the people who really do well and sustain success are the people who treat other people well.

00:17:26:00

BETSY WEST:

That's a very optimistic point of view.

00:17:28:00

KATIE COURIC:

I do think it's true, though.

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Al Roker, Katie Couric, Matt Lauer & Ann Curry

KATIE COURIC:

Because I think, ultimately, if you don't have the support of your colleagues, and at least the respect of your colleagues, then ultimately, something is going to happen where you're not going to do well. That's what I think. Maybe it's more wishful thinking, but I do believe that it's easier to certainly climb the ladder if you have people who are in your corner.

00:17:53:00

BETSY WEST:

You were how old when you took over the Today Show? And looking back on that, what was the key to that happening?

00:18:00:00

KATIE COURIC:

I think a lot of it is timing. I was doing well at the Pentagon. I think people at NBC saw that I was a fresh, young face... Those were the days... and they thought, "Wow, this person seems to have potential." So, they started talking to me about reading the news on the Today Show. I was a reporter's reporter. I had really never anchored.

00:18:21:00

I hadn't had that much interest in anchoring, and when I had tried in various local venues, it was bad. I hyperventilated on the air one day, and I was like, "Wow, this is not a very auspicious beginning." But they wanted me to anchor the news on the Today Show and I started doing that, learning how to use a prompter and making sure the pages in front of you coincide with what's on the prompter, because if the prompter goes out, you're totally screwed. And I did a pretty good job.

00:18:49:00

I think I was funny and slightly irreverent. I remember reading a story about a man who was lost on a ski vacation and so he let the money in his pocket on fire and was able to, I guess be seen by the search and rescue people. And I think I threw back to Bryant Gumbel with some kind of comment like, "With my luck, I would've only had change." And I mean think that it was just sort, I was good at the witty repartee a little bit.

00:19:21:00

And I think from there, unfortunately, I think the bad experience Deborah Norville had, through no fault of her own, it was just poorly handled. And I think people create narratives about people on television that aren't necessarily true. But I think because the feeling was Jane Pauley had been pushed out, this beautiful young Deborah Norville had been brought in and it just created a bad situation for her. And I was a beneficiary, unfortunately, of her bad luck.

00:19:54:00

BETSY WEST:

Tell me the key to making a morning show work.

00:19:57:00

KATIE COURIC:

A lot of people have asked me through the years, what does make a good morning show anchor? And I think it's really a combination of qualities. I think Matt has it. I think you have to be able to switch gears and people need to think you're credible when you're talking about serious news. But also you have to have the ability to have fun and be light and I think be genuine.

00:20:19:00

I really believe on television that you can smell a phony a mile away. Maybe some people can't, but I feel like I can. And I think you have to be essentially the same person on camera as you are off camera. You can't like, turn it on. And I think morning television, because you're in every different situation, exposes you for who you are. It shows you in situations that require empathy. It shows you in situations that require humor. It shows you in situations that require toughness.

00:20:53:00

And so I think that being authentic is critically important on morning television especially. Then I think you have to have this split second judgment. You have to be able to be spontaneous, but you can't say everything you'd say if you were with a couple of friends having a beer. You

have to kind of be able to say, "Oh, I can get away with this but I can't get away with that." And you have to do it in a second.

00:21:21:00

And I think you need to know when to hold them and know when to fold them, know when to be funny and make a funny comment. But you don't want to be Don Rickles out there either. So I think those are the things that make a good morning person. And of course relatability. I think people used to say to me, "Gosh, I used to feel like I had to be up and dressed with full makeup on before I watched Deborah Norville because she was almost so beautiful. She was a little intimidating."

00:22:50:00

I took care of that problem. If you look at the old tape and see some of my heinous hairstyles and my pea-in-the-pod maternity dresses, I don't think anyone felt like they had to be fully dressed with all their makeup on when they watched me.

00:22:04:00

BETSY WEST:

You've interviewed so many heads of state, you interviewed George Bush, the older George Bush, he just dropped in, you didn't even know he was coming. I mean, how do you deal with these high pressure situations? You ever get nervous?

00:22:16:00

KATIE COURIC:

Oh yes. I get nervous a lot. My first night anchoring the CBS Evening News, I literally thought my heart was going to jump out of my chest and land on top of my scripts. I get quite nervous at times, but I think if I'm prepared and if I know the subject matter and that makes me comfortable. So I guess I would say be prepared like the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts.

00:22:45:00

But I definitely have had moments when I've been nervous, but I also feel like I'm kind of every woman and that people deserve, I mean, and trying to never forget that I'm serving an audience, I'm serving people who are watching. I'm not serving my own ego and I'm not looking to be stroked by anybody. I'm there to hopefully ask questions of public officials that need to be asked, that should be asked,-

00:23:20:00

-that the American people, I mean they're not all watching I know, but that people want the answer to and need the answers to. So I'm always mindful of that and the responsibility I have. I recently re-watched my coverage of September 11th, which was one of the darkest days in my career and in American history.

00:23:46:00

And I was actually a little thrown by how calm I was and I started kind of analyzing, why was I so calm? Obviously my hand was shaking like this, but I realized that these jobs come with a lot of responsibility and for all those people, those millions of people who are watching and wondering, What the

hell is going on,” “Oh my God, is the world coming to an end?” I had to keep it together. I had to keep my wits about me and get as much information as I could.

00:24:20:00

And I could not do that job if I were hysterical or emotional. I just couldn't. And I think something just clicked in me and I said, “Oh my God, I have got to be a rock for everybody else who's falling apart,” and I'm glad I did it. But in some ways I sound so dispassionate in the coverage. I wonder, gee, “Here are all these people trapped,” and of course we didn't know the magnitude of the tragedy as it was unfolding, but I thought I almost sounded too calm in some ways.

00:24:55:00

BETSY WEST:

How do you approach an interview? What's your philosophy to preparing for an interview?

00:24:59:00

KATIE COURIC:

I think it's really important to remember that the point of an interview is not to listen to me, it's to listen to the interview subject. So I hate interviewers who try to show off everything they know. And I know at one point someone at 60 Minutes told me that the reporter, the interviewer, is just as important as the interviewee.

00:25:27:00

And I understand that for sort of dynamics on television and drama, but I really try to reveal something and I really try to elicit an answer that may surprise people, that will make them understand someone better, that will give them a chance to explain themselves. Now I think every interview is different and the tone of every interview is different. And that's something that my old executive producer on the Today Show, and I talked a lot about how critically important tone is and how you have to almost calibrate your tone depending on the person you're talking to.

00:26:07:00

BETSY WEST:

You're known for your good follow up questions. Do you have a favorite follow up that really elicited a good answer or a surprise?

00:26:15:00

KATIE COURIC:

I think listening is such an important component of doing a good interview and it drives me crazy when I see people on television just going down the list, or not really picking up and being willing to take a conversation in another direction because someone could say, "Oh, and then I decided I would kill my mother," and they'd go on to the next question and sort of like, wait a second. And so I'm very critical sometimes when I hear people doing

interviews on television, I'm like, "Why didn't you ask them this? Or why didn't you follow up with that?"

00:26:49:00

I think that I try to listen and as a result, I think I'm able to ask good follow up questions. Sometimes when it's a really, really important interview, I almost say when I ask this question, they're going to say blank, what am I going to say in response? Or this is their position on a certain issue. How can I try to peel back the layers of the onion? So I try to be prepared even when it comes to doing good follow-up questions, because sometimes I think you have to be armed with the material that is going to push somebody a little bit harder.

00:27:23:00

But I remember at the Today Show when I would say, "I'm sorry senator, but you really didn't answer my question." I remember the first time doing that and thinking, wow, that's pretty ballsy. But you can't argue with the truth. And if they were not being responsive or direct or talking about something totally different than I was asking, then I think it's a legitimate thing to say and then to re-ask the question-

00:27:51:00

-because I think especially public officials have to be called on their BS and that I consider to be an important part of my job.

00:28:01:00

BETSY WEST:

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

Do you have a memory of the toughest kind of question you've ever asked anybody?

00:28:05:00

KATIE COURIC:

I asked Pat Buchanan if he was running for president because he was an ego maniac. I mean, that was pretty nervy. I asked David Duke some very hard questions because he was such a slippery guy and it wasn't so much the questions, it was the quotes he had said that I read back to him like, "Jews belong in the ash bin of our society." I have never really cowed from just getting all up into people's grill.

00:28:38:00

People say I'm kind of a velvet hammer because I look nice and I smile and I am cordial. And that's important to put people at ease. But when something is required and I don't hesitate to give them a shot between the eyes when it's deserved.

00:29:00:00

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Katie Couric & Matt Lauer

NBC "Today" Show Set

BETSY WEST:

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

Let's talk about CBS. You're working at the Today Show, things are going great, you've got the number one show. Why did you want to leave?

00:29:08:00

KATIE COURIC:

I never wanted to be the person who stayed too long at the party. I think I never wanted to be in a position where people were getting sick of me and they're like, "Ugh." And they probably already were after 15 years. So I was mindful of that. And then this opportunity presented itself and Les Moonves was very sweet and well, I don't think Les and sweet are two words that are often used together.

00:29:40:00

I mean, he's a very talented, smart business person and I think very creative as well. But he pursued me and he pursued me pretty doggedly. And I was ready for a change. I had done the Today Show for 15 years and I think I loved almost every minute of it. My mom, I remember, said to me, my last day, she said, "You're really lucky because you've had a job for 15 years that you've for loved almost the whole time." But I thought, well, this is a new challenge.

00:30:14:00

And I did think that it would be great to see a woman by herself handling that job. That was sort of the holy grail of television at the time. It doesn't quite hold the place in the cultural landscape it once did, but I still think it was a very prestigious job and I still think it is now. But five years ago certainly.

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

00:30:39:00

BETSY WEST:

So that was me- that part of it was meaningful to you, to be the first woman?

00:30:44:00

KATIE COURIC:

Yes. It was important for me to show young men and women that a female could handle that job all by herself. Barbara Walters had done it with Harry Reasoner. Connie Chung had done it with Dan Rather, but I felt like they were always a little bit second bananas. And I thought, gee, it's an important symbol to see a woman handling that broadcast every night. So that was one of the reasons. The second being, it was a new challenge.

00:31:12:00

The third, I was kind of tired of doing the Today Show as much as I loved it and loved the people and still do. And it just seemed like the timing was right for me to jump into that snake pit, which ultimately it turned out to be. I was so naive.

00:31:32:00

BETSY WEST:

How so?

00:31:33:00

KATIE COURIC:

Well, I just think that the knives were out. I had had a lot of success on the Today Show. I think success breeds resentment. So I think there were more than a few people who were waiting for me to fall, which is always a wonderful situation.

00:31:53:00

I think that CBS is a great place and the network does some terrific work, but I think it's quite a traditional place. And I think if you don't come up through the CBS farm system, it's a little bit challenging because I think you really have to prove yourself. There were some people who were skeptical of my hard news credentials because I had done both things at NBC.

00:32:19:00

And quite frankly, I think people probably remembered me for the more fun things than they did for the serious hard hitting interviews, even though I did plenty of those. I mean many, many, many of those. But I think that people like to put you in a box and it's very hard to be a person who does a panoply of things, for a person who can do light features but also can do hard hitting interviews.

00:32:44:00

And I think that's sometimes confusing for people or they have a hard time wrapping their heads around it. And I think that's a little what happened to me at CBS, but I think it also happened to me externally with a lot of people suddenly criticizing my makeup or my clothes or even women, which was really disappointing. Nora Ephron wrote a scathing piece about me and I think she was trashing me for my makeup and I'm like, Nora Ephron, really?

00:33:16:00

But I'm really glad I did it. I'm really proud of the work I did while I was there. I just think it was tough. But that's in the fine print of every big job. It's not always easy. And I didn't expect it to be easy. I think just when you think about things in theory, it's a lot easier to handle than in the reality of the moment.

00:33:39:00

BETSY WEST:

Was there a particular moment when you thought, a low moment, where you thought, "Oh my goodness, what have I done here?"

00:33:43:00

KATIE COURIC:

Well, maybe when the cover of New York Magazine came out and it made me think that journalism had reached a new low because I had said to the reporter, some days I wake up and say, "Oh my God, what have I done? But 95% of the time I'm really happy I made this move." And of course they put the first part of the quote on the cover with a photograph of me looking very glum and I thought, "Wow."

00:34:11:00

I mean the stars are not properly aligned, when a reputable magazine does that, somebody is not gunning for you out there. But there were some low moments, but I just kind of thought that Boynton coffee cup I used to see on

the desk at CNN with, "Don't let the turkeys get you down." I just thought, people, I think when they sometimes criticize—I think they're legitimate criticisms—

00:34:42:00

And I think there were then, maybe about the broadcast or whatever, but often I think what they say, what the really nasty ones have to say, says a lot more about them than whatever it is they're talking about. So I just kind of kept going and thought I'm going to do the best I can. Something my dad always told me and told all of his kids, Just do the best you can and that what would happen would happen.

00:35:15:00

And as a result, I think I kind of climbed out of the hole, did some really good work while I was there, and ultimately realized that this may not be the best venue for what I have to offer as a journalist. And I think that realization and being able to recognize that and act upon it is the most liberating thing you can do as a person.

00:35:40:00

BETSY WEST:

Well, it must have been satisfying to have all the networks vying for you when it seemed like maybe a year before everybody was predicting your demise. No, I mean you just couldn't turn around and not be reading some speculation. And then a year or so later you did have many suitors.

00:35:57:00

KATIE COURIC:

Yeah, I think some of the chattering classes and the nattering nabobs of negativism as Spiro Agnew referred to the press, I mean a lot of that I think goes through cycles and I think you can't pay too much attention to the noise. I don't think even during that period people thought that I was without talent. I think maybe they thought, gee, maybe this isn't the right venue for her. Or maybe they over promised or over-hyped her coming there.

00:36:28:00

And I don't think anyone thought, geez, she just sucks. I think that they probably had fun tearing me down, because I think that's what some people do for enjoyment. I was flattered that people, that I was still employable and that I still had something to offer.

00:36:48:00

BETSY WEST:

Was there a turnaround moment for you, do you feel at CBS?

00:36:54:00

KATIE COURIC:

I think slowly and steadily. I think people probably started just to respect the work I was doing on a daily basis. I think there's still obviously some sexism in the world. That's no big shock. But I think probably some people thought

after getting this kind of press and people sort of relishing my not doing well, that I was just going to say, "Good evening," and start crying.

00:37:24:00

I think the fact that I didn't and I kept on going and I kept doing my job, I think that won me a little bit of respect. And then I think the fact that I just really put my nose to the grindstone and tried to do good work, both in big news events and whether it was covering the earthquake in Haiti or covering the presidential campaign. And I think I proved my point that a woman can do this job.

00:37:50:00

BETSY WEST:

What about the Sarah Palin interview?

00:37:52:00

KATIE COURIC:

I think that was an important moment, maybe for me, maybe for people who hadn't paid attention to the work that I had been doing sort of on a regular basis. The Sarah Palin interview got so much attention and I think it was impactful in the campaign. And so as a result, I think people maybe were willing to give me a second look or to say, well, maybe she's not as worthless as we thought.

00:38:22:00

BETSY WEST:

When you started at CBS, there was a lot of talk about reinventing the news and a new casual, less pretentious form of news. Did you learn anything from your attempt to do that?

00:38:33:00

KATIE COURIC:

I don't think we ever did that full throttle. I don't think we ever reinvented the format in a very full throttle way. I think we sort of played along around the edges, but I think basically, there was too much fear about changing a format that had been there for so long, especially at a network as traditional as CBS. And I think that people wondered ultimately, "If we build it, will they come? Has the genre changed?"

00:39:08:00

Has the audience changed so significantly, even if we had done a casual, fantastic, more accessible show that didn't have as much news-act, which is what I call it, where sort of everything, all the pieces sound a little alike and it's very formulaic, you know, would people watch at 6:30 at night? Viewing habits had changed so much.

00:39:31:00

I think the one lesson I learned is, yeah, we wanted to re-energize and rejigger the format and do something different, but I don't think it was ever clear what exactly that was, what it meant, and would it work.

00:39:47:00

BETSY WEST:

I was surprised not to see you more on 60 Minutes. Was that a disappointment to you?

00:39:51:00

KATIE COURIC:

I mean, I did a fair amount on 60 Minutes, probably six pieces a year, five or six, and it varied. But my focus really was on the evening news. And I was out there reporting a lot. I was doing stories. I was in the field. I was doing a web show, because I wanted to increase my presence in the digital world. There wasn't a lot of time to do many 60 Minutes pieces.

00:40:20:00

BETSY WEST:

But I heard you had to fight your way on with an interview once.

00:40:24:00

KATIE COURIC:

I think that it's a very competitive crowd over there. And it would've been nice to probably be able to do more, but I think they all fight tooth and nail for everything. And I didn't really have the time or energy, given that I had another full-time job to do that.

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

00:40:44:00

BETSY WEST:

We've been asking every woman that we've interviewed about the work-life balance.

00:40:51:00

KATIE COURIC:

Do you ask men that too?

00:40:52:00

BETSY WEST:

Well, I'm not interviewing any men, Katie, because I know-

00:40:54:00

KATIE COURIC:

I know. But what's interesting is nobody ever asks men about the work-life balance, and I just find that interesting, because, clearly, I would imagine most men also want to be good fathers. And I'm sure they want to be good partners. And I think the work-life thing is interesting to mind, but I always do find it interesting that it always comes up when there's a female interview subject.

00:41:21:00

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Katie Couric with Family

BETSY WEST:

I mean, it strikes me that you faced a particular challenge, obviously, at such a young age to have your husband become ill. You had young children. Can you tell me a little bit about what that was like to go through and how you handled that?

00:41:36:00

KATIE COURIC:

Well, as you can imagine, when Jay was diagnosed with Stage IV colon cancer at the age of 41, it was complete and utter hell. It was life changing, life shattering. To say it was traumatic is not really doing our situation justice. I just lived in constant fear.

00:42:08:00

I had a great husband, who I loved, two wonderful kids. Carrie was one, when Jay was diagnosed, and Ellie was five. And so it was just awful, as awful as you can imagine it would be, to see someone you love get sick, and to not be able to really do anything about it. I think the feeling of powerlessness that I had was almost unbearable, but also humbling.

00:42:43:00

Cancer doesn't give special treatment. Well, it does in some ways, because if you can afford better treatment, in some cases, it makes a significant

difference. But that's not always the case. And suddenly, the life I had envisioned for myself just crumbled before my eyes.

00:43:08:00

I have a lot of empathy for those widows from September 11th. A violent death I think is different than a lengthier process, but they're both just horrific. And it was a terrible, terrible time.

00:43:27:00

BETSY WEST:

So many people have faced tragedy, the 9/11 widows, other women who've gone through what you went through. Just strikes me to have it play out on a public stage must have been excruciating.

00:43:39:00

KATIE COURIC:

It was very hard, because I was a public figure to have this play out on a public stage. I remember when one of Jay's nurses came into the hospital room, and Jay had just had some kind of intermediary surgery. And she brought the National Inquirer. I'm sure she thought maybe that was helpful. And it was, "Katie's personal anguish as her husband battles terminal cancer."

00:44:08:00

And I thought, "Really?" And people do seem to be interested. I think maybe it's your natural primitive instinct of being so grateful it's not you that's going through this. But I have to say, there's a big flip side to that. When Jay died, I

can't tell you the outpouring of support I got. I mean, I kept it very close to the vest, Jay's situation when he was sick, because this was his life, not mine. And I had to protect him in every way I could.

00:44:46:00

But when he ultimately passed away, the outpouring of support was just unbelievable, I mean the cards from so many people who watched The Today Show. And I had them in a big box for so long. And it was so lovely that people really cared and reached out to me in that way. I was very lucky, because it's a very isolating, lonely experience to go through something like this.

00:45:17:00

And to have the support of all those people, of my colleagues on the Today Show, of my friends and family, I felt, in some ways, so comforted by that. And I wish everybody would be able to have that kind of outpouring, because it made a difference. It really did.

00:45:38:00

ON SCREEN INTERVIEW:

Katie Couric & Her Daughters

BETSY WEST:

What was it like to adjust to being the sole parent for your kids? You're it for them. That must have been a tough transition.

00:45:46:00

KATIE COURIC:

Well, I think if you talk to anybody, who becomes a single parent unexpectedly, or people who get divorced, you do what you have to do. I didn't have the luxury, like Sandra Bullock in that movie, *Hope Floats*, and I don't know why I'm bringing that up, but where her husband left her on a talk show, and she just stayed in bed for weeks and weeks and weeks.

00:46:15:00

And I didn't have the luxury of staying in bed and pulling the covers over my head. And most people don't. You make a decision to have children, and you are responsible for those children. It's not like they're puppies, and you can have them go live in a farm in Virginia. And my children gave me such strength, and that responsibility was so helpful to me.

00:46:42:00

And I think at some point, after getting dozens of books about grief and loss, I've often said this quote by Thomas Jefferson, kind of made me realize that we're all terminal. We all have a finite amount of time, and you have to make the most of it. And it was very simple. He just said, "The earth belongs to the living." And if I were to die, I wouldn't want Jay to spend his time grieving.

00:47:12:00

I would want him to spend his time loving, whether it was our kids or to find another love or his family. And that's what I set out to do, while honoring his memory and missing him every day. I think what I set out to do was to create a good life for my kids. They could be happy and healthy and productive, even though they had a big piece of their life stolen from them unexpectedly.

00:48:47:00

BETSY WEST:

Do you feel good about that now, how that's worked out for your kids?

00:47:50:00

KATIE COURIC:

Yeah, I mean, I still feel so bad that Jay's not here. I feel so bad when Ellie's taking a course about the Civil War in college, and Jay was a Civil War reenactor—I know it's kind of crazy—but he loved history and it just breaks my heart that he can't take her to Gettysburg or talk to her about what she's studying. Breaks my heart that he can't hear Carrie sing. She has a beautiful voice just like Jay's mom did.

00:48:21:00

And it breaks my heart that they can't lean on him, that they can't have this other really important parental relationship, because, just as I got certain things from each of my parents, you can't get everything from me. And Carrie so much like Jay, that it's just such a shame that they were never able to form a bond. So you just do what you have to do.

00:48:53:00

BETSY WEST:

Well, it was about... I wanted to take you back to the colonoscopy idea. Tell me about that.

00:48:59:00

KATIE COURIC:

One thing I realized when Jay got sick was how little I knew about colorectal cancer. Yes, I had known that Ronald Reagan had a polyp removed. I remember that from covering that. But it was just one of many news stories, and it wasn't that serious. But I didn't know it was the number two cancer killer of men and women. I didn't know, with early detection, there's a better than 90% cure rate.

00:49:22:00

I didn't know the symptoms, rectal bleeding, bloating, weight loss. I thought, "If I didn't know these things, and I'm a relatively well-informed person, there's so many people who don't know these things." And I felt like I had an obligation. I was in a position where I help people hopefully understand things better every day. Why wouldn't I take this and help them learn about this disease?

00:49:49:00

Very few people understood or really knew what a colonoscopy was. And of course, I had gotten a crash course in everything about colorectal cancer. And if people didn't know about it, they didn't understand what went into it. And I thought, "You know what? I'll get one. I'll take everyone through it. I'll take them through the prep. I'll take them through the procedure. And I'll explain to people why they need to get this test."

00:50:15:00

It was taking reporter involvement to a new level. I realized that. But I didn't do it for some look-at-me reason. It was actually because I thought it would be the very, very best way to educate people. They were already invested in me, as someone they watched, hopefully, regularly. They knew what had happened to me, so they knew that this was coming from a very pure place. And so that's why I did it.

00:50:43:00

And I think I'm proudest of that over everything I've done in my career. And to the day I die, I hope that's the lead in my obituary, that I was a cancer activist that helped educate people and increase awareness about cancer and particularly colon cancer. And as a result, I was able to save lives.

00:51:07:00

To be able to say, "There are people walking around today that are doing so and are able to provide for their families or children or be there for the people they love and the people who love them, because they listened to something I said." I mean, how cool is that? People still come up to me today and say, "I got screened for colon cancer, because of you," or, "They found a big polyp, because of you."

00:51:34:00

And I say, "Great. I'm glad you got screened. Great. You were able to nip this in the bud. And you were able to go on with your life." My assistant's dad just got a colonoscopy, and they found a pretty sizeable flat polyp that they couldn't excise and he had a bowel resectioning. Now if he had not tended to that polyp, who knows what would've happened?

00:52:06:00

I hear stories like that almost on a weekly basis at least. Shortly after I did my colonoscopy on television and the whole awareness campaign, the University of Michigan did a study and found that it resulted in a 20% increase in colonoscopies. And they called it the Couric Effect. So I was actually in, I want to say, the Anals of American Medicine, but was the Annals.

00:52:35:00

So it was really, really gratifying to hear that more people were getting screened, because you think of 20% as a statistic, but within that 20% are a lot of mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, who are walking around, able to be there for their families, because they got screened. I consider it just a great gift that I was able to pay it forward and have an impact.

00:53:06:00

BETSY WEST:

That's a great legacy. It is.

00:53:09:00

KATIE COURIC:

I remember once Ellie was in the kitchen, and she was in fourth grade. And she said, "Mom, I am so proud of the work you've done with colon cancer," I mean completely unsolicited. And I thought, "Gee, I must be doing something right that Ellie is watching me," because I hope that what I give my girls is the

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ability to deal with life's curve balls, because nobody goes through this life with a perfect batting average, to continue the sports metaphor.

00:53:41:00

And everybody needs that ability to be resilient, that ability to have an obstacle or a setback and to pick yourself up and keep going.

00:53:53:00

BETSY WEST:

It seems like every time you change jobs, you start to break the pay scale. I know your parents taught you never to talk about money. I've heard that, but-

00:54:02:00

KATIE COURIC:

I'm very frugal, which is sort of funny too. You know?

00:54:06:00

BETSY WEST:

What's it mean to make that kind of dough for a woman? I mean, how important was it to you to make money?

00:54:12:00

KATIE COURIC:

It wasn't that important, but I have to say, now that I have, it's very simple. It gives you one less thing to worry about. I think money is kind of like health. If

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

you have your health, I think that's the most important thing, because if you don't, you have nothing. And I think if you have financial health, it's one less thing to worry about. I think about people who are struggling all the time, and who are trying to figure out how to feed their kids or how to pay the electric bills and feed their kids or what's going to have to go.

00:54:45:00

And certainly in this current economy, there's so many people who are having such a hard time. So yes, I feel so lucky. That's one thing I do not have to worry about.

00:54:56:00

BETSY WEST:

Polls show that women still shy away from ambition. You obviously were ambitious. You were very, very smart in how your career moved forward. What do you think about women and ambition?

00:55:09:00

KATIE COURIC:

I think society still has a hard time dealing with ambitious women. The Lady Macbeth thing seems to kind of permeate people's attitudes. And I think it's a shame, because I think, "God, women have so much to offer." Stylistically, I mean by the way, we're not monolithic, but I think it's more than half of the population. And we do have so much to offer.

00:55:39:00

And I think it's getting less and less uncomfortable for people to deal with successful women. But even Sheryl Sandberg recently said something like, "The more successful men get, the more they're liked and admired. The more successful women get, the less they're liked and admired." I'm paraphrasing, but it was something along those lines. And I think we still see women as the Earth, Mother, Madonna, nurturer.

00:56:07:00

And sometimes, I think that doesn't jive with some of the other qualities that are required for you to become successful, i.e. hard work, a certain inner toughness. And so, I think that we're still slightly schizophrenic about the whole thing.

00:56:27:00

INTERVIEWER :

I mean, despite the success and the power of the female anchors like yourself, there don't seem to be that many female executives at the very highest levels of the media. Why is that, do you think?

00:56:37:00

KATIE COURIC:

Well, I still think women are expected to do the lion's share of the caregiving in their homes. I think that's changing. I really do. And I applaud that. I'm so thrilled. But I think ultimately, it's the woman who feels like, if she spends too much time at the office, she's being inadequate in the parenting department. I

think men don't feel that as much. As a result, I think that it's harder for a lot of women to fully commit to careers that are incredibly demanding.

00:57:14:00

I understand that, by the way, having done both. I'm lucky, because I was able to do the Today Show and be home a lot during the day. Jane Paul used to say it was the perfect job for a mother. I don't know if I could be a White House correspondent and raise two girls. Certainly not on my own. I think, I've been very fortunate in the choices I've made and in the opportunities that have presented themselves to me.

00:57:43:00

I think, that it is very hard to do both for a lot of women. I think, that's why it's really important that employers have some understanding that women in particular are walking this very difficult tightrope in trying to manage the very difficult balance of being an uber mom and an uber employee.

00:58:11:00

BETSY WEST:

Do you consider yourself a feminist?

00:58:13:00

KATIE COURIC:

Definitely. Proudly. The definition of feminism is people who believe in the social, political, and economic equality of men and women. How can you not be a feminist?

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

00:58:26:00

BETSY WEST:

Do you have memories of the movement in any way? The Battle for ERA or Geraldine Ferraro.

00:58:32:00

KATIE COURIC:

Oh yeah.

00:58:33:00

BETSY WEST:

What are your thoughts about it? Yeah.

00:58:36:00

KATIE COURIC:

When I was offered the Today Show, Michael Gartner, who was then the president of NBC News, was talking to me and I said, "I would like to do this job, but having covered the Pentagon I don't want to be relegated to cooking and fashion segments. If I'm doing this show I want to be a full partner of Bryant Gumbel's or I don't want to do it."

00:58:55:00

Now, where I got the chutzpah to say that. I said, "I want it to be 50/50." He said, "How about 48/52?" I said, "Okay, you're on." I thought even if it wasn't

codified, once I was there I was going to fight for an equal role. I don't think I would've done that without the feminist movement. I don't think I would've had the awareness to say, "Wait a second."

00:59:25:00

A lot of it was because I knew people were watching and I was an example for little girls. If they saw me doing fashion, and food, and those kinds of things, and never saw me toe to toe with a political official, or a CEO, or a criminal what are they going to say. "Wow, I guess, I have to do cooking and fashion. That's what I'm going to be thinking about and focused on for the rest of my life."

00:59:57:00

That's why I fought for it and that's why I did it. I think I was able to achieve that.

01:00:02:00

BETSY WEST:

Why do you think that so many young women seem to think of feminism as a dirty word?

01:00:07:00

KATIE COURIC:

I don't really think that's true anymore. I think that was the narrative for a few years. I think most young women appreciate what's come before them. I think it is about being able to make choices. I am a big proponent of women

maintaining their financial independence. I think it's born of my own personal tragedy. If Jay had died and I had stopped working, I think, it would've been very difficult for me to become the sole breadwinner when I wasn't earning anything.

01:00:46:00

I believe that as much as the fairy tales tell you that people live happily ever after. Guess what? They just don't all the time. People get divorced, people die, people lose their jobs. A book called *The Feminine Mistake* really solidified that for me. I think it should be required reading for every young woman in this country.

01:01:11:00

I hate to be a Buzz Killington, as my daughter says, but things don't always work out. I believe you have to have a certain something to fall back on and to call your own. I tell that to my daughters and I tell it to every young woman I know. That's not to say that staying at home, taking care of children, isn't a noble endeavor. I really think it is.

01:01:38:00

In many ways, sometimes I wish I could have done more of that, but I always think you have to be mindful, just like you put money away for a rainy day, you have to be thinking about yourself and providing for your family when the skies get cloudy.

01:01:56:00

ON SCREEN TEXT:

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

Katie Couric & Sarah Palin

September 29, 2008

BETSY WEST:

You've prepared for a lot of big interviews, when you're preparing for the Sarah Palin interview, what were you thinking? What were you doing?

01:02:01:00

KATIE COURIC:

I think when I interviewed Governor Palin she was an unknown commodity. She was scrappy and governor of Alaska, but people didn't know that much about her. Really what made her tick and her take on various policy issues. It was really important for me to give her a forum to, basically, express herself. I asked fairly open ended questions that weren't softballs. It irks me when people say, "Oh, they were such softballs."

01:02:31:00

I would ask her about nation building and what happens when you try to spread democracy and Hamas is elected. There are weighty issues that we discussed, but I think, what my goal in that interview was simply to let Americans get to know her better. I remember talking to, I think it was Sam Nunn, because I called a couple of people from across the political spectrum to talk about their area of expertise. I was talking to him about nuclear proliferation and biological warfare.

01:03:09:00

I was interested with terrorism, to talk to him about some of the biggest threats. I think it was Sam Nunn, or it might have been someone else, who said, "You need to just let her talk, because we haven't really heard from her." That was my goal, to let her express herself and to ask policy questions that I would've asked any candidate, whether it was about energy policies, social policies, the economy, the financial meltdown. That's what I did.

01:03:48:00

BETSY WEST:

Was tone important in that interview?

01:03:51:00

KATIE COURIC:

It was. I was very unfrontational, very steady and I thought I was... I made sure that I didn't say anything, do anything that would take attention away from her and suddenly put it on me. I didn't want to look at her askance. I didn't want to be too encouraging, or cheerful, or supportive. I was very straight.

01:04:24:00

BETSY WEST:

Matter of fact.

01:04:25:00

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

KATIE COURIC:

Yes.

01:04:26:00

BETSY WEST:

You're potentially a target yourself?

01:04:29:00

KATIE COURIC:

Well, I knew... People say don't shoot the messenger, but often they do. Nicole Wallace, who was a friend of mine, was working on the McCain campaign, really really liked Governor Palin. I was excited to be able to talk to her and hear from her. I think she was less excited after the interview was over.

01:04:53:00

BETSY WEST:

What was the most revealing moment do you think from her?

01:04:57:00

KATIE COURIC:

I think she was very nervous and inexperienced. Truth be told. I think she hadn't been on this... She was thrust on this national platform. She hadn't really been asked some of these policy questions, which I think you really

have an understanding of after years in government and after working in a lot of different areas.

01:05:18:00

I know people say governors are better presidential candidates, because they're executives and administrators, but I feel like sometimes the intricate policy issues are only gleaned working day in and day out on foreign policy, or on commerce, or on all these different committees. Where you really have to have a very complete understanding of some of these issues, which are very complicated.

01:05:47:00

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Katie Couric Working With CNN

Havana, Cuba, 1982

BETSY WEST:

What did you want to be when you were a girl?

01:05:50:00

KATIE COURIC:

When I was little, I used to take a pipe cleaner and pretend like I was smoking. Oh, isn't that terrible? I used to think I wanted to be... This is so embarrassing. A model. First of all, hi. That's never going to happen. I think for a while... This was when I was really little, a ballet dancer I think I wanted

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

to be. I think I wanted to be an Olympic gymnast for a time. I think I wanted to be... I don't know, probably a movie star at some juncture. These fantasy jobs.

01:06:26:00

BETSY WEST:

I like the cigarette.

01:06:30:00

KATIE COURIC:

Oh god. I know that was before...

01:06:31:00

BETSY WEST:

We used have those Lucky Strike Cigarettes. Those little candy...

01:06:34:00

KATIE COURIC:

Candy cigarettes. I still get candy cigarettes once in a while.

01:06:37:00

BETSY WEST:

What was your first paying job?

01:06:39:00

KATIE COURIC:

My first paying job was I scooped ice cream at Gifford's, which was an ice cream store in Arlington. I was a hostess at Pizza Hut, but I got fired, because I didn't do enough side work. I think it was because the manager kept asking me to come over to his house and do his laundry and I wouldn't do it.

01:07:04:00

BETSY WEST:

This is another one of these questions. Do you have three adjectives to describe yourself?

01:07:09:00

KATIE COURIC:

Determined, funny, occasionally I think I'm funny, and hopefully, kind, caring.

01:07:22:00

BETSY WEST:

Not perky.

01:07:24:00

KATIE COURIC:

Perky is fine. That is become... It's interesting. I think someone should do a feminist thesis on the word 'perky.' I think there was a subtle desire to put me

in my place. I hate to say that, because I do think that word has sexist overtones. Bob Costas is short and cute, but nobody calls him perky.

01:07:53:00

I think, I don't mind bubbly, even though that has a tinge of sexism too. Or outgoing, or effervescent, even though that should be for ginger ale. I think that perky is slightly demeaning. I think that's why it is always irked me. I think people know it's demeaning and I think it's a little bit of eeh-eeh.

01:08:22:00

I think that's sometimes why they use it. I do believe the statute of limitations on perky ends when you're 40. It's hard to be. Although, I guess, there's some actresses. When I think of Jane Powell, is that the one who does the dentures commercial? I think she's probably still pretty perky. I think I am in good company in some ways, but in other ways I think people use it to needle you a little bit. In a not very nice way.

01:08:50:00

I think I do have an outgoing personality. I'm upbeat, I'm positive, I like to laugh, I like to have fun and enjoy myself, so sue me. I think because of that people make the mistake of saying I'm not a serious person, but I really truly believe that people are all those things. I feel very comfortable showing all sides.

01:09:14:00

BETSY WEST:

Is there a person you've never met who's had a huge influence on your life?

01:09:18:00

KATIE COURIC:

I think Eleanor Roosevelt has been a real role model for me. I think she was somebody who took a lot of personal attacks, and did incredible things, and I really admire her. I haven't channeled her. I remember when Hillary got in trouble for saying that. I think Hillary Clinton actually has had a big influence on me, because I admire her so much.

01:09:48:00

I admire her intelligence and her tenacity. Politics aside, I think, she's has extraordinary strength and I just am in awe of her brain power. When I talk to her and she... About complicated policy and she effortlessly constructs sentences, which blow my mind. I have such an appreciation for her intelligence and her eloquence.

01:10:23:00

BETSY WEST:

Alright, I'm going to give you some one of these, choose this or this. This is the last thing we're doing. Okay.

01:10:29:00

KATIE COURIC:

Okay.

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

01:10:29:00

BETSY WEST:

Early bird, night owl?

01:10:31:00

KATIE COURIC:

I'm definitely a night owl, but I learned to be an early bird.

01:10:35:00

BETSY WEST:

Spontaneous, methodical?

01:10:38:00

KATIE COURIC:

Definitely spontaneous.

01:10:40:00

BETSY WEST:

IPad or Notepad?

01:10:42:00

KATIE COURIC:

IPad, but I'm still learning how to use it. I'm in transition.

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

01:10:48:00

BETSY WEST:

Diplomatic or direct?

01:10:50:00

KATIE COURIC:

Direct. I can't be diplomatic, but more often than not I'm direct.

01:10:56:00

BETSY WEST:

Type A or easygoing?

01:10:58:00

KATIE COURIC:

What do you think? Type A.

01:11:00:00

BETSY WEST:

Higher math score or higher verbal score?

01:11:03:00

KATIE COURIC:

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

Higher verbal score. Without question. I got a two instead of a one in math in first grade. I remember running down the street, once I got off the bus, crying hysterically to my mom. I think it ruined me for math for the rest of my life.

01:11:19:00

BETSY WEST:  
Prada or Gap?

01:11:21:00

KATIE COURIC:  
Gap. Definitely Gap.

01:11:24:00

BETSY WEST:  
Introvert or extrovert?

01:11:27:00

KATIE COURIC:  
Oh. Gee. Introvert.

01:11:27:00

BETSY WEST:  
Gee. Yeah, I know. You're so quiet.

01:11:31:00

KATIE COURIC:

Extrovert.

01:11:33:00

BETSY WEST:

Domestically skilled or domestically challenged?

01:11:34:00

KATIE COURIC:

I'm actually domestically skilled. That doesn't mean I do it that much, but I'm actually a pretty good cook. I like keeping house. I don't like vacuuming and things like that.

01:11:50:00

BETSY WEST:

Yeah. 10 minutes late, 10 minutes early?

01:11:52:00

KATIE COURIC:

10 minutes late. Definitely. I'm trying to change that, because I think it's actually really rude to be late. I think it says I care more about my schedule than yours.

# KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

01:12:02:00

BETSY WEST:

Book smarts, street smart?

01:12:04:00

KATIE COURIC:

Little of both. I think I'm book smart slightly, but I probably more street smart than book smart.

01:12:11:00

BETSY WEST:

And the last one: patient or impatient?

01:12:14:00

KATIE COURIC:

I think the older I've gotten the more patient I've gotten. I think I'm inherently impatient. I'm very solution oriented and I want things to work now not later. I would say impatient.

END TC: 01:12:38:00