

**SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker**

This is *Catch A Break: The Insider's Guide to Breaking Into and Navigating Hollywood* - conceived by CatchLight Films. Whether you are looking to work in film or television or new media, it's all production and it's all entertainment. Maybe you are already in the business but looking to make a change, shift your focus, explore a new area. This is for you too.

In each episode, *Catch A Break* brings you a panel of top experts currently working in the business for conversations you won't hear anywhere else. And we'll provide you with bonus materials you can get your hands on and sink your teeth into. We'll give you samples of paperwork and forms you need to be familiar with, video tutorials and exclusive resources that will all help with your success.

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You can find us at [catchabreakpodcast.com](http://catchabreakpodcast.com) and all the podcast providers. I am your host Julie Harris Walker. You may know me from the podcast *The Other 50 Percent: a Herstory of Hollywood* or even *The Kiss My Age Show*. But today the focus is on you and how we can help you to Catch A Break.

**SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker**

Welcome to Catch A Break. This episode is part two of "Who Are All These People and What Is All This Paperwork?" In our last episode we spoke to our panel about several types of schedules and documents and also we went through the call sheet and talked about all the different positions on a scripted film or television crew. But we didn't talk about what might be different if you are on a reality or unscripted show. So, for this episode we brought in Lasta Drachkovitch who is a reality show runner to explain

it to us. But first go listen to that prior episode because that panel is still sitting at the table and you will also hear their voices. Speaking of which we have James Moran who is a first A.D. on such films as Paranormal Activity 2 through 4 and both movies of the Ouija franchise and he is currently in prep with Blumhouse for the reimagining of Fantasy Island. I won't announce James because his is the only male voice in the room. We also have Denise Poore. She's an assistant director whose credits include Pale Blue Dot, Legion, Under the Silver Lake, Secrets and Lies, Agents of SHIELD and Dexter. And also joining the panel are Catch A Break regulars Marci Brown, who is a film producer and partner in Catchlight Films, having recently worked on Blackkkkiansman and Get Out and Jeanette Volturno who was head of production of Blumhouse Productions and the founder of Catchlight Films. So you'll hear all of them chiming in from

time to time. But this episode is mostly focused on Lasta and her experience with reality and unscripted television.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

Lasta Drachkovitch is a veteran producer who started her career at CNN in Atlanta. After working in news, she moved to Los Angeles where she began a long run with 44 Blue Productions. It was there that she supervised The Lodge and first few seasons of the highly acclaimed series Lockup on MSNBC. Lasta's range of producing has covered the globe and she has interviewed royalty, government officials, foreign dignitaries, athletes, military personnel, police, prostitutes, poachers (I appreciated how that was kind of an alphabetical order), and housewives. Famous housewives, I imagine. Lasta has also worn many production hats from being a production assistant to shooter, editor, post supervisor, show runner, and ultimately executive producer. Now Lasta is moving into scripted content with traction moving forward on a television pilot. If she isn't writing, she is watching her Lakers or searching for the perfect story to tell.

SPEAKER: James Moran Go Lakes!

(Laughter)

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker Welcome Lasta.

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch

Thank you very much for having me.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

What was your very first job and how did you get it?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch

Okay this is gonna date me but way back in the day I'd just

graduated from college and they needed someone to do chyron, which is the typing of graphics, for Love Connection. So, I was, it was like the 20th floor of a building here in Sherman Oaks and I sat in a darkened room with a thick piece of paper, a pad of paper, with you know "Billy, 28, lives with his parents, never going to get married" and I would just be typing all day, just typing these things up and I thought I had made it, you know? And then from there I got a call and went to CNN. But that was my first job and just learning to be, I became a Fontessa, that's what they called us. So I typed up all the graphics for sports and everything. So, that was back the two and two. I remember that just thinking this is the coolest thing ever!

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

You were in the room. That's exciting.

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch

I was in the room! It was very exciting.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

Thank you. So, we got down to business with Lasta talking about hot sheets, beat sheets, and call sheets and if you don't know what these are we have them all on our website available for you to download to go grab them off the website [catchabreak.com](http://catchabreak.com) and have them in front of you so that you can follow along as you listen faster.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

Lasta, I'm looking at a call sheet for unscripted/reality. What do you prefer to call it?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch I've got call it reality.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

Which is kind of funny considering the other reports that you brought.

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch It's all real!

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

Your call sheet looks very different. There are a lot of producer types that do a bunch of different things so, let's go through that for a minute because it looks like you don't even have all the same departments I'm guessing because it's practical locations and you're not necessarily building sets at all.

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch

You know it's a lot of it is just the preproduction and you know you're dealing with quote unquote real people in these scenes so we're basically following them and documenting what they're doing. So, instead of, you know, our scripts are considered beat sheets, we call them beat sheets...

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

We have an example of that on the website also.

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch

And it's basically what you hope to achieve in your filming. So, if it's a follow Doc and you've got an ensemble cast then it's what you want to achieve with each cast member when you're out filming.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

It's the fight you're hoping they're gonna get into?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch

It's the battle with the stripper and ex-wife, and maybe somebody on a boat, and yes. And so when we start out we need to know what we're trying to accomplish so you will come up with a beat sheet. A lot of times the networks will want to see what this is. So, it's the storyline. It's the storyline that you want to capture. So, we set up the beat sheet and network approves. And then let's say as an executive producer or showrunner I will then talk with my field producer or field director who will be running the set as we call it, and this is you know, here's what we want to achieve on Day 1 or day 3 or that, you know, it's because we don't have a full on, as much as you try to come up with an outline for your episodes, A lot of times that doesn't happen.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

Well, you don't know who's going to cry on The Bachelor at the challenge.

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch isn't that everyone?

(Laughter)

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker That depends!

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch

That depends how much champagne.

SPEAKER: Jeanette Volturno

Are most of your crews union or non-union?

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker That's Jeannette

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch

The majority that I've worked with have been non-union. You do have union crews and then that's a whole different beast and where you can film and where you can't film in the hours and whatnot. Unfortunately, with non-union crews there's a little, you know, you try not to go overtime...

SPEAKER: Jeanette Volturno

So there's no minimum staffing?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch

No, there's no minimum staffing. No.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

So, let's just go through it real quick. I have a couple of executive producers...

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch

Producers who either are in office or are show runners or the owner of the company, you know, gets the EP credit. Sometimes your talent gets an executive producer credit simply for being the talent on the show.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

Did they create the show, is it their idea?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch

It's just how they negotiate it. You know, what your agent, either if they want to get that credit on there and get some extra money but it's just a negotiating tool for them so it doesn't necessarily...It's not like in their deal memo that they have to be an EP. But sometimes they are.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

Okay what about executive in charge?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch

Executive in charge of production. They are your money person. They are kind of running the whole, the tip of the umbrella. So, they oversee all the financial aspects, insurance certificates, all of this kind of stuff like the payroll, the business like UPM.

SPEAKER: Jeanette Volturno

I would say your executive in charge is more of your in-house person at whatever company.

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch Correct.

SPEAKER: Jeanette Volturno

So they're not like UPM they're like me they're ahead of production.

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch

Yes. So let's say if we go with that type of template so, yes they stay in house and like I said, beneath them, that would be your line producer who is either back in the office or can sometimes come out on set just to make sure everything's going OK on locations because we're dealing with a lot in reality, you're dealing with a lot of permits because you're at so many different locations. Somebody's home, a restaurant, a strip joint in Vegas on a Saturday night where I tell my crew do not touch the walls.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker Don't touch anything

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch

Don't touch anything. It was, yeah, we actually ran out of hand sanitizer that shoot in an hour

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker Glamorous, Glamorous!

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch

it is incredibly glamorous. No it is...that was very fun and interesting but...

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

I see a production account, I imagine that's the same.

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

The same hand as all the payroll and, y'know, make sure everybody gets paid on time, all the vendors, that kind of thing as well.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker Clearance supervisor?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

Clearance supervisor is a little bit similar, same, but you know sometimes it can also be, depending on the show if it's a clip show, you know, making sure that you have permission to use the music, the visuals, whatever that may be.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

Can you explain what a clip show is?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

A clip show is where you cut together various clips that, let's say, we all watch YouTube, we all watch, you know, or Instagram you have certain clips that you want to utilize in your show whether it's a talking show...I did a Weather Channel series and it was kind of a game show. "What would you do in case of certain bad weather conditions." So, we had to purchase various clips of an ice tsunami, who knew there were ice tsunamis...Oh. So cool. But it's a slow moving terror as it comes toward you and you can't stop it. Yeah.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker Like frozen lava?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

Exactly. So, if you want to use clips of different clips of that or if you want to use different video clips of, you know, burning tumbleweeds.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

So, you're not necessarily clearing the art on the people's walls where you go but...

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

You are as well, you know, which is really difficult if you don't have time to cover it up. Sometimes you know when you're shooting at a hotel and you've got, you know, all the walls are covered with art. So what do you do? So, either you Greek it, Greek it which means you cover it up a little bit with, you know, it can make it kind of blurry. So sometimes you'll see if you are unable to clear

something when you're watching the show you'll see a blurry image in the background. And that's because you weren't able to clear it. That's a nightmare for your clearing supervisor and also for your people in post because you've got to blur. And when I worked on :ockup one of my favorite network notes was "blur the penises" and I was like "OK, well that's good" because it was a shower scene...

SPEAKER: James Moran

Sort of the general rule I think.

(laughter)

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

I think in life with the generals at least in the States.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker All right, post producer?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

Post is considered post. It's post filming. And so, in post you have a post supervisor who basically runs your post department of your editors and your assistant editors and your DIT people. And it covers scheduling and, you know, you can also have some of them are technically inclined so it also will help with the equipment but your Post Super organizes everything, Makes sure the equipment comes in, gets digitized into the system, you know, editors have a schedule. So you work with them as a show runner, you work with them.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

OK, so how about story producers? Whenever people tell me their title, what kind of story producer they are, I can never figure out what the hierarchy is. So, is supervising story producer the top one?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

Well it's interesting in, you know, titles have evolved so much in unscripted. It's what used to be a executive producer is now a show runner is now a supervising producer. You say, have a supervising producer in post, you have a supervising producer in the field. I mean there's so many different titles but story producer is your creative side in editing in post. So you have a supervising story producer who basically is in charge of their story producers beneath them who are watching all the footage making string outs, saying, you know, "Oh my god I wish we had this soundbite" in case you have the luxury of pickups. Sometimes you don't and that's where frankenbites come together and can pretty much hear frankenbites all the time. People do not talk like this...

(Laughter)

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker Sometimes on podcasts, just saying!

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

But there's a way, not that you know, I've seen shows that I've been completely Frankenbit but I have. It's like wait a minute. They never said that but sometimes...OK well it works though.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

So there's a producer who's overseeing all the episodes and then do you have staff producers on each on each episode?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

Each episode. Some are each segment depending upon the project. So if it's a docu series like a Housewives then you have, sometimes you have story producers who are responsible simply for a specific housewife in her storyline. And then yeah. And then you have others, you know, if it's like I said. when it was. you know. a prison show you know you'd have story producers who are responsible for a specific episode. So, it just depends on what the show is.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

And, you know, that show Unreal? is it a pretty good depiction of how the whole thing works?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

It's fabulous and I'm pissed that I was not the one who came up with it. I'm sorry.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

They have a producer for each one on there. The talent.

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

And sometimes you know you need to have talent producers for docu series. You have somebody that has to wrangle, It's like wrangling cats obviously or catching clouds. You know, it's crazy how high maintenance some of these can be people can be but, you know, it's the nature of the business I guess.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

OK, so then you have a production manager in the field...

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

So a production manager, they will be responsible for making sure everything runs smoothly quote unquote on set and they will actually be in charge of the PAs, production assistants. Permits in case the cops show up and "oh whoops we didn't get permission." "You don't have permission to film here on the sidewalks of Pasadena." Sorry Pasadena.

SPEAKER: Jeanette Volturno Same for us.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker Same for everyone!

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

Gosh and it's just beautiful to film there. Oh my gosh. You know you are in and the vans have to be moved, everybody has to be inside and you're like oh my gosh.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

So there's a nice quality of life in Pasadena.

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

I don't want to live there but...so your production manager would be, you know, we'll be running kind of like your set and working in hand-in-hand with your production coordinator and the production coordinator also will be in charge of the PAs and making sure that, you know, lunch is there, that the audio guys get their lunch order first.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

Sort of managing logistics rather than story?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch: Correct.

SPEAKER: Jeanette Volturno

And the cour...the production coordinator is working on set?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

A lot of times they are on set. They are in the field. They are in the field yes. And you know we are very, traditionally it's a very lean machine out there on the field. Reality shows don't pay a lot unless you're doing some of these bigger ones. I mean even Amazing Race when you think about that. Which I'm fascinated with, they are lean, you know, camera shooter, sound does everything, I mean and a producer taking care of releases.

SPEAKER: James Moran

They don't want to have to move a crew that big, it's way more logistical.

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

Yeah. So we're pretty, you know, we're not that big of a crew but, so you wear a lot of hats more you know. You really have to kind of chip in and be ahead of the game.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

So, you have a director of photography and then a bunch of camera operators.

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

Yeah. Director of Photography is basically your A camera. You know if you have the luxury of being able to light? To shoot in

reality that...Wow. That's nice. But usually you run, you know, you have half an hour for equipment setup time, you know, ESU and that's usually, it's kind of run and gun. You've got to get going. You've got to get jamming and it's

just kind of running gunning, camera on your shoulder and you're off to the races.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

So I don't see any grips or gaffers. Do you have any of those?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

You know the only times we would have is for bigger shoots what we're doing is set up, we know we're going to be in one location for a long time. When I did wedding shows, we would. of course, everything had to be lit beautifully and we would have good grips and gaffers and electricians running around everywhere and it looked beautiful but most is run and gun and you are using daylight, a couple of filters, and a Sun Gun and "Go," you know? In interviews and if you're doing OTS which is on the fly interviews, you just go out there kind of hoping that the person looks good...

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

what are you holding in your arms, a bounce?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

Yes. Thank you. Sorry you can't see me, I'm just I'm gesturing. I use my hands a lot

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

And then I don't see editors on the call sheet but I assume you have a bunch?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

You do have editors. You know, editors are after obviously you've shot everything, you've been you've had a chance to string out your sequences and they put their finishing touches to it. You know it depends on, like I said it depends on what the show is. How many weeks you get to edit it, if it's an hour or half hour, but...

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

Does the bulk of the work happen in editing?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

For reality? Yes. Yes. I would say. I mean it's putting the story together. I mean you are getting footage fast and furious from the field as much as you try and go out and shoot with something in mind. You'd hope, hope they get what you want. And we also have something called a hot sheet that your producer will, your field producer, director will put together at the end of the day which is the highlights of what you shot that day. And that is given to your editors as well and your story producers and sometimes you are working on a beat sheet for the next day and also doing the hot sheet that night.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker You're up late and you're tired.

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

You are super tired and super tired but hopefully your production coordinator or production manager are there with you because they're obviously organizing everything for the next day and batteries are getting charged and...

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker You also have walkie talkies.

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

Yes we do. We do. Yes. And that is you know. And you should I know you guys have done a whole walky episode. Yes. Make sure you stick to walkie protocol. I do not need to hear a PA talking about "where are the garbage cans?" on channel 1. And if I could also say one thing for the PAs is always be cognizant of where the camera is and where the camera's shooting.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker Oh, tell the sandwich story!

SPEAKER: James Moran I'm not aware.

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

We were filming a cooking segment in this beautiful, beautiful winery and, you know, it's this huge kitchen, copper plate everything. And there's my talent and my couple there who are learning how to cook and I'm sitting in video village and I'm looking up and I've got four cameras on this and I've got a field director and I've got an army of people watching and I'm sitting there and I'm noticing "hm. No one's noticing that my production assistant is standing outside the kitchen window which is in camera and he's making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich! And I'm like OK. And I'm just sitting there like, "Look, he's making another sandwich. He just ate two sandwiches" and no one yelled cut, nobody's... And he is just enjoying the view in the window of this cooking segment eating a PB&J. So finally I had to just go OK, that, you know, guys, "cut!", you know. And poor kid. He felt so bad. But I was like, you have to be aware. You always have to be aware. You know, he's not sitting in front of video village so he can't see the shots. But at the same time, you know, you know, the lights are on and there's people talking and you heard over the walkie that were rolling so please. Be cognizant.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

But I'll tell you the most alarming thing was the 10 other people watching that scene didn't know it is completely clueless.

SPEAKER: Jeanette Volturno

And where was the lockup? Where was the camera operator  
"going get that guy out of there!"

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker who's considered the director  
on...

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

It's a field producer/director. You know you're the one out  
there who's telling everybody what to do and.

SPEAKER: Marci Brown:

How long does it take to shoot an episode?

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker That's Marci.

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

Well it depends onm let's say, if I say with the  
Housewives, you know, you will have maybe 6 shoot days for  
an hour,

SPEAKER: Jeanette Volturno

It's not always Monday through Friday is it?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

No no no no. You could be shooting, you know, Monday here  
Tuesday in New York. So, you know so depending on the show  
it's, it's not fluid. If you're in one location like with  
Lockup. You know that was five days at San Quentin or  
Pelican Bay or

whatever or international shoots. Those are always a joy  
for sure.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

And I think everyone's probably like into their third hour  
of listening to this episode, so I think we should wrap it  
up!

SPEAKER: Marci Brown

I love to hear those stories from the trenches.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

So, Martini Shot, which is our last shot of the day. What  
is everybody's final takeaway about call sheets?

SPEAKER: Lasta Drachkovitch:

Well. my final word is don't lose your call sheet. And also  
it has a lot of private information on there, so don't lose  
your call sheet. Sorry to keep picking on the PAs but make  
sure you have multiple copies of the call sheet because  
somebody is always going to lose it but guard it with your  
life.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker Thank you everybody.

SPEAKER: Julie Harris Walker

This has been Catch A Break the insider's guide to breaking  
into and navigating Hollywood. I'm Julie Harris Walker. We  
want to thank our panelists Lasta Drachkovitch, James

Moran, Denise Poore, Marci Brown, and Jeanette Volturno.

And

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