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**TITLE:** Heather Armstrong Field Interview  
**AIR DATE:** May 16, 2008, 8:30 PM  
**TAPED:** May 14, 2008

**TRANSCRIPT**

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**HEATHER**

*00:00*

MY NAME IS HEATHER B. ARMSTRONG, FORMERLY HEATHER B. HAMILTON. MY DAD NAMED ME HEATHER SO HE COULD COME OUTSIDE AND SAY, "COME HITHER, HEATHER HAMILTON." BUT IT DOESN'T WORK ANYMORE BECAUSE I HAD TO CHANGE MY LAST NAME TO MAKE MY HUSBAND HAPPY. IT'S THE ONLY REASON I DID IT. IT REALLY IS. NO. I AM ORIGINALLY FROM MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, WENT TO BYU, GREW UP MORMON, AND CONSEQUENTLY LEFT THE CHURCH FOR MY OWN REASONS, AND ENDED UP BEING A WEB DESIGNER OUT IN LOS ANGELES AND STARTED A WEBSITE BACK IN 2001 THAT HAS BECOME MY JOB. WRITING ABOUT MY LIFE AND MY FAMILY AND MY TAKE ON LIFE. I'M A LITTLE IRREVERENT, BUT I LIKE TO LAUGH AND CARE ABOUT PEOPLE. THAT'S WHAT I WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT ME...I DO, I CARE ABOUT PEOPLE.

**DAVE**

*00:56*

TELL ME WHEN YOU FIRST BLOGGED AND WHY.

**HEATHER**

*01:07*

MY FIRST BLOG I POSTED WAS FEBRUARY 27TH, 2001, AND I HAD SEEN OTHER WEBSITES, OTHER BLOGS, AND I WANTED IT TO BE A PLACE WHERE I COULD WRITE DOWN THOUGHTS ABOUT MUSIC AND LIFE AND WHAT NOT, AND FOR SOME REASON THAT FEBRUARY DAY IN 2001 I HAD THIS POEM ABOUT CARNATION MILK IN MY HEAD THAT I HAD READ IN COLLEGE...AND I HAD IT GOING IN MY HEAD. SO I WROTE IT DOWN TO SEE IF I COULD REMEMBER EVERY WORD OF IT AND I DID AND, THAT WAS MY BLOG POST. THAT'S WHAT STARTED IT ALL. CARNATION MILK.

**DAVE**

*01:43*

CARNATION MILK?

**HEATHER**

*01:45*

THAT WAS IT!

**DAVE**

*01:50*

AS FAR AS BLOGGING GOES, IS THIS KIND OF A NEW FORM OF WRITING? DO YOU SEE THIS AS...YOU KNOW, NEWSPAPERS, BOOKS, SHORT STORIES?

**HEATHER**

02:00

I SEE THIS, BLOG WRITING, ABSOLUTELY AS ANEW FORM OF WRITING. PRIMARILY FROM THE SENSE THAT IT'S EDITED, IT'S SELF-EDITED. IT'S NOT RUN THROUGH A FILTER, IT'S NOT RUN THROUGH A COMMITTEE OF PEOPLE TRYING TO APPROVE THE SUBJECT MATTER OR THE WORDING OR WHAT NOT. AND I THINK THAT'S WHAT APPEALS TO A LOT OF PEOPLE ABOUT BLOGS...THE RAW ROUGH EDGE-Y NATURE OF EVERYTHING ABOUT IT.

**DAVE**

02:28

YOU GUYS SPEND A LOT OF TIME IN YOUR POSTS AND PHOTOGRAPHY DOING THIS. DO YOU THINK BOGGING GETS THE RESPECT THAT IT IS SERIOUS?

**HEATHER**

02:47

IS BLOGGING GETTING THE RESPECT THAT IT DESERVES? I THINK THAT, I DON'T KNOW. PEOPLE SAY THAT OK, EVERYBODY HAS NOW HEARD OF A BLOG AND KNOWS WHAT A BLOG IS. I DON'T THINK THAT'S TRUE. I STILL THINK THAT WE'RE AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF WHAT ALL THIS IS GOING TO PLAY OUT TO BE. AND DOES BLOGGING GET THE RESPECT THAT IT DESERVES? NO. BUT IT'S STILL EARLY. I'M DISMISSED AS "A BLOGGER" AND MOST OF US ARE JUST OUTRIGHT DISMISSED BECAUSE WE WERE NOT GIVEN PERMISSION TO STAND UP AND SAY THESE THINGS. SOMEONE DIDN'T HIRE US, SOMEONE ISN'T PAYING US, AND SOMEONE DIDN'T COME AND SAY "YES, YOU ARE WORTHY TO ACTUALLY GIVE AN OPINION ON THE THING." AND SO, WHO ARE WE TO SET UP A DOMAIN AND START TALKING TO PEOPLE ABOUT OUR OPINIONS AND IT'S FRIGHTENING FOR SOME PEOPLE. BUT I SEE THIS AS JUST THE BEGINNING. I THINK THIS IS GOING TO BE SO MUCH BIGGER AND SO MUCH MORE MEANINGFUL THAN IT ALREADY IS.

**DAVE**

03:43

SO DO YOU FEEL LIKE SOMEONE IS OVERLOOKED AND DISMISSED OUT OF HAND BECAUSE THEY BLOG?

**HEATHER**

03:48

ABSOLUTELY. I THINK THE KNEE JERK REACTION IS THAT THIS IS SOME UNEDUCATED...ODDLY THAT THIS IS SOME UNEDUCATED 14 YEAR OLD SITTING IN HIS BASEMENT BEDROOM, YOU KNOW, IN HIS UNDERWEAR. I MEAN, THAT'S THE VISION. I THINK SLOWLY, SOME OF US ARE TRYING TO CHANGE THAT IMAGE OF WHAT GOES ON BEHIND A PERSONAL WEBSITE. OR EVEN, NOT A BLOG ABOUT PERSONAL THINGS BUT OF POLITICS OR FASHION OR SPORTS OR WHAT NOT.

**DAVE**

04:19

YOU GIVE QUITE A BIT OF YOUR PERSONAL LIFE ON THE BLOG. DOES THAT AFFECT YOU IN ANY WAY WHEN YOU MEET ANYONE WHO'S READ YOUR BLOG, OR WHEN YOU MEET ANYONE WHO KNOWS WHO YOU ARE...KNOWING SO MUCH ABOUT YOU.

**HEATHER**

04:38

YOU KNOW, I GET ASKED THAT A LOT. PEOPLE WILL COME UP TO ME AND SAY "THIS MUST BE SO WEIRD FOR YOU BECAUSE I KNOW EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR LIFE AND YOU

KNOW NOTHING ABOUT ME." AND I GUESS I'M SUPPOSED TO FEEL WEIRD ABOUT THAT, BUT I DON'T. AND I'VE SAID THIS BEFORE...I THINK I'VE ALWAYS BEEN AN OVER SHARER. I WILL TELL YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT ME. REALLY. I HAVE NO PROBLEM, I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF SECRETS, AND SO PEOPLE KNOWING THESE THINGS ABOUT ME, IT'S NOT VERY DIFFERENT THAN WHAT GOES ON IN MY NORMAL LIFE. YOU KNOW, IT'S KIND OF EXPECTED. I PUT ALL OF THIS OUT THERE, THAT PEOPLE KNOW THIS ABOUT ME AND I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED BY IT. FOR SURE.

**DAVE**

05:13

JUST WORKING WITH YOU GUYS TODAY, YOU ARE VERY SAFETY CONSCIOUS. YOU MAKE SURE LOCATIONS AREN'T IDENTIFIED. WHAT ARE YOUR CONCERNS WITH SAFETY ISSUES? YOU LET PEOPLE IN QUITE A BIT, YOUR DAUGHTER IS ALL OVER THE PLACE, I'VE READ THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE CRITICIZED YOU FOR THAT, IN YOUR MIND, WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE SAFETY ISSUE THAT YOU REALLY HAVE?

**HEATHER**

05:35

THE NUMBER ONE SAFETY ISSUE FOR ME IS MORE THAN ONE PERSON HAS SHOWN UP TO THE ADDRESS LISTED IN MY WEBSITE TO COME SAY HELLO. MORE THAN ONE PERSON HAS SENT ME AN EMAIL SAYING "I'M DRIVING THROUGH SALT LAKE, CAN I STOP AT THE ADDRESS LISTED ON THE WEBSITE TO COME SAY HI?" AND THAT'S A BOUNDARY THAT I DON'T WANT TO CROSS. IT'S NOT THAT...I'M SURE THESE PEOPLE ARE LOVELY PEOPLE, AND THEY MAY NOT BE LOVELY, I DON'T KNOW...BUT THAT'S, I'D LIKE TO KEEP SOME DISTANCE AND SOME SPACE AROUND MYSELF. THAT'S THE ONLY THING I'M UNCOMFORTABLE WITH.

**DAVE**

06:08

THE VERY NATURE OF YOUR BLOG, YOU LET PEOPLE IN SO MUCH, THEY MAY CO-OPT YOUR LIFE A LITTLE BIT. THEY FEEL VERY MUCH A PART OF YOUR LIFE. IT'S KIND OF A ONE-WAY THING THERE. I'VE BEEN READING SOME OF YOUR POSTS, HUNDREDS OF POSTS FROM THE NIGHTLINE SEGMENT; YOUR WORK HAS BEEN CALLED ANYTHING FROM AN EMOTIONAL STRIPTEASE, WHICH I THOUGHT WAS FUNNY...

**HEATHER**

06:34

I PREFER POLE DANCE.

**DAVE**

06:34

AN EMOTIONAL POLE DANCE...TO TALENTED, WONDERFUL, AND CREATIVE. HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR WRITING?

**HEATHER**

06:40

HOW DO I SEE MY WRITING? THAT IS A VERY INTERESTING QUESTION. I HAVE NEVER BEEN ASKED THAT QUESTION BEFORE. THAT'S REALLY INTERESTING. WOW. HOW DO I SEE MY WRITING? I APPROACH MY WRITING LIKE I'M SITTING DOWN WITH JON AT THE END OF THE DAY, OR SITTING DOWN WITH MY FRIENDS AT THE END OF THE WEEK AND TALKING ABOUT THE CRAZINESS THAT WENT ON. PARENTHOOD IS CRAZY. THE DAY TO DAY LIFE OF PARENTING, THERE'S A LOT OF MUNDANE THINGS THAT HAPPEN, BUT YOU KNOW, IF YOU'RE LIVING WITH A KID WHO SCREAMS AT YOU FOR FOUR HOURS

STRAIGHT, YOU NEED TO BE ABLE TO COME AND TALK TO SOMEONE AND SAY "IF I DON'T LAUGH ABOUT THIS, I'M GOING TO CRY ABOUT THIS. SO LET ME LAUGH ABOUT THIS." AND SO I APPROACH MY WEBSITE AS I AM LOOKING FOR THE CELEBRATION IN LIFE. AND A LOT OF WHAT INFORMS MY WRITING IS HOW I WAS BROUGHT UP AND IN MY FAMILY...JON HAS LEARNED THIS SLOWLY...WE SHOW OUR LOVE FOR EACH OTHER BY POKING FUN AT EACH OTHER. IT'S LIKE THE KIDS AT SCHOOL, THE KIDS AT GRADE SCHOOL FLIRTING WITH EACH OTHER BY POKING EACH OTHER IN THE EYE. THAT'S HOW I SHOW MY...IT'S MAKING FUN OF MYSELF AND MAKING FUN OF THE QUIRKS OF FAMILY. THAT INFORMS MY WRITING QUITE A BIT.

**DAVE**

07:58

THERE'S OTHER BLOGS OUT THERE THAT ARE SIMILAR TO YOURS AS FAR AS DISCUSSING PARENTAL ISSUES AND INCLUDING PEOPLE'S PERSONAL LIVES. WHY DO YOU THINK YOURS HAS STOOD OUT SO MUCH?

**HEATHER**

08:07

WHY DO I THINK MINE HAS STOOD OUT SO MUCH? ONE, I WAS ONE OF THE FIRST...UM...I'VE BEEN DOING THIS A LONG TIME. AND I GOT A LOT OF RECOGNITION AT FIRST BECAUSE I LOST MY JOB BACK IN 2002. SO THAT GOT MY NAME OUT THERE. AND THEN, I NATURALLY STARTED WRITING ABOUT MY DAUGHTER. AND I THINK THE REASON, I MEAN, A LOT OF IT IS LUCK, A LOT OF IT IS BEING IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME, BUT I ALSO LIKE TO THINK THAT A GOOD PORTION OF IT IS BECAUSE I'VE WORKED REALLY HARD AT THIS, AND I'VE PAID ATTENTION TO MY AUDIENCE AND I'VE PAID ATTENTION TO WHAT WORKS, AND LISTENED TO MYSELF AND LISTENED TO...TRYING TO MAINTAIN MY INTEGRITY ABOUT THIS. AND I THINK AT THE CORE OF THIS IS I DO HAVE AN IRREVERENT WAY OF LOOKING AT LIFE. I THINK IT'S INTRIGUING TO SOME PEOPLE.

**DAVE**

09:00

IT SOUNDED LIKE THIS STARTED AS A HOBBY...

**HEATHER**

09:11

THIS WAS A TOTAL HOBBY IN THE BEGINNING. ALL THIS WAS GOING TO BE WAS ME WRITING ABOUT MUSIC AND A PLACE TO STORE THOUGHTS ABOUT DESIGN AND LIFE AS A SINGLE PERSON LIVING IN LOS ANGELES. I HAD NO AMBITION FOR THIS TO BE ANYTHING MORE THAN AN ONLINE SCRAPBOOK. AND IT STILL IS AN ONLINE SCRAPBOOK, IT'S JUST, IT'S BECOME A MUCH MORE ENORMOUS PART OF MY LIFE.

**DAVE**

09:32

AND NOW, THIS IS YOUR MAIN SOURCE OF WORK...

**HEATHER**

09:42

THIS IS THE DRUGS AND THE NAKED MODELS THAT SHOW UP AT THE END OF THE DAY, YOU KNOW? AND REWARD ME WITH A MASSAGE? ABSOLUTELY! THAT'S WHAT'S GOING ON.

**DAVE**

09:54

HAS THAT CHANGED THE WAY THAT YOU APPROACH THE WRITING ASPECT OF IT, NOW THAT YOUR LIVELIHOOD DEPENDS ON IT?

**HEATHER**

09:59

MY LIVELIHOOD DEPENDS ON IT, AND YES, THERE IS A LOT OF PRESSURE. I WILL NOT EVEN HESITATE TO ADMIT THAT. THERE IS A LOT OF PRESSURE BEHIND THAT. SOMETIMES I'VE HAD TO REMIND MY HUSBAND THAT WHEN HE WAS AT HIS JOB, IF THE COMPANY DIDN'T PERFORM WELL, HE STILL GOT HIS PAYCHECK. WHEREAS, IF I DON'T PERFORM WELL, WE DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY COMING IN TO PAY THE MORTGAGE. AND SO, IT'S ALL ON "CAN I WRITE SOMETHING TODAY?" OR "CAN I BE CREATIVE TODAY?" BUT I DO THINK, AND I'VE TAKEN A LOOK BACK AT MY WRITING AND THE EVOLUTION OF IT, AND I THINK THAT TAKING ADVERTISEMENTS SUBCONSCIOUSLY FORCED ME TO TAKE THIS A LOT MORE SERIOUSLY. AND I FEEL LIKE I'VE BECOME, AND I'VE TRIED TO BECOME A BETTER WRITER BECAUSE OF IT. AND I THINK SOMETIMES I CAN BE SUCCESSFUL AT THAT PART OF IT.

**DAVE**

10:50

DO YOU EVER FEEL LIKE THIS IS A BEAST THAT JUST HAS TO KEEP BEING FED?

**HEATHER**

11:01

OH YEAH. SOMETIMES THIS FEELS LIKE IT HAS EATEN UP MY LIFE AND I GO TO SLEEP CRYING AND I TURN TO JON AND I GO "I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS ANY MORE!" AND HE SAYS "POOR LITTLE MONEY." (LAUGHS). THAT'S WHAT WE SAY TO EACH OTHER WHEN WE KNOW WE ARE BEING COMPLETELY DRAMATIC AND HAVE HAD A BAD DAY. EVERYBODY HAS A DAY WHEN THEY'RE LIKE "I CANNOT TAKE THIS JOB ANY MORE." THIS JOB IS NO DIFFERENT. AND TO BE HONEST WITH YOU, I WORK HARDER AT THIS JOB THAN I EVER WORKED AT ANY OF MY OFFICE JOBS. AND THERE ARE DAYS WHEN IT'S LIKE "I CAN'T DO THIS ANY MORE." FOR SURE. BUT, THOSE DAYS ARE MINIMAL. AND THE MAJORITY OF THE TIME I'M LIVING THIS AMAZING LIFE. I HAVEN'T SLEPT A LOT IN THE LAST TWO MONTHS, AND INSOMNIA WILL DRIVE YOU CRAZY PRETTY QUICKLY. THE MEDIA ATTENTION IS REALLY ABSOLUTELY, IT CAME OUT OF LEFT FIELD. AND WE'RE TRYING TO COPE WITH IT AS BEST WE CAN. WE ARE TWO LITTLE COUNTRY BUMPKINS IN SALT LAKE CITY BEING TALKED TO BY FANCY PEOPLE, AND IT CAN BE A LITTLE INTIMIDATING. FOR SURE.

**LIZ**

12:11

A LOT OF OLDER PEOPLE SEE THE INTERNET AS THIS BIG BAD PLACE, AS A SCARY PLACE WHERE THESE PREDATORS ARE GOING TO BE OUT THERE TO MOLEST KIDS OR WHATEVER. I KIND OF WONDER WHAT THE INTERNET IS TO YOU, OR HOW YOU VIEW IT IN THE BLOG COMMUNITY OR THE SUPPORT SYSTEM THAT IS THERE.

**HEATHER**

12:41

I FEEL, ONE THAT THE MEDIA IS VERY GOOD AT MAKING US AFRAID OF EVERYTHING. AND THE INTERNET IS ONE BIG GIANT THING TO BE AFRAID OF AND WE SHOULD ALL RUN AWAY FROM IT SCREAMING, BECAUSE SO MUCH BAD CAN HAPPEN. I WOULD REALLY LIKE TO SEE THE STATISTIC ON HOW MANY MOMMY BLOGGERS HAVE ENDANGERED THEIR CHILDREN'S' LIVES, WHEN SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED TO A

MOMMY BLOGGER'S KID BECAUSE SHE POSTED HIS PICTURE. I DON'T KNOW IF THERE'S ANY DATA OUT THERE. BUT I CAN POINT TO AT LEAST TWO STORIES IN THE PAST YEAR WHERE A KID WAS KIDNAPPED BY THEIR NEIGHBOR, AND THEN FOUND TWO DAYS LATER DEAD IN THE BASEMENT OF THEIR NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE. AND IT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH POSTING PICTURES ONLINE. I THINK THERE'S A LOT OF FEAR AROUND THIS AND IT'S A LOT OF UNFOUNDED FEAR AND IT'S A LOT OF THE UNKNOWN WEIGHED AGAINST SO MUCH GOOD THAT HAS HAPPENED AND WILL HAPPEN IN THE COMMUNITIES THAT ARE FORMED AMONG THE WOMEN WHO ARE OUT THERE WRITING THESE STORIES. AND FEEL THAT A LOT OF US FEEL LIKE WE'VE CREATED, OR RECREATED THE CAMPFIRE SCENARIO WHERE PREHISTORIC MOTHERS WOULD SIT AROUND AND WIND DOWN AT THE END OF THE DAY, AND TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER'S CHILDREN, AND FEEL LESS ALONE. AND WE'VE SORT OF TRANSCENDED THE DISTANCE THAT MODERN LIFE HAS CREATED BETWEEN PEOPLE WITH THESE STORIES AND WITH THIS TECHNOLOGY; HERE IS MY STORY...WHAT IS YOURS? I REALLY THINK THAT THIS MOVEMENT, SO MUCH GOOD CAN COME FROM THIS MOVEMENT. WHEN I LOOK AT THE INTERNET, I SEE POSSIBILITY AND I SEE PEOPLE BECOMING HAPPIER WITH THEMSELVES AND MORE UNDERSTANDING OF OTHER PEOPLE AND MORE UNDERSTANDING OF HUMANITY AND THAT MAY BE COMPLETELY NAIVE OF ME, BUT I'VE SEEN IT HAPPEN ALREADY. THE INTERNET...THIS IS GOING TO SOUND SO RIDICULOUS...I REALLY DO BELIEVE THAT THE INTERNET WAS CRITICAL IN SAVING MY LIFE, AND GIVING ME THE SUPPORT THAT I NEEDED TO CHECK MYSELF INTO THE HOSPITAL. AND I WILL TELL THIS TO ANYONE...MY WEBSITE SAVED MY LIFE. IT WAS THE SUPPORT OF MY READERS WHO REACHED OUT TO ME AND SAID, "YOUR STORY HAS RESONATED WITH ME AND I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT WHAT YOU'RE FEELING IS COMPLETELY NORMAL, AND I'M HERE FOR YOU.

**DAVE**

14:43

ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO ADD?

**HEATHER**

14:51

YOU HAD ASKED JON A QUESTION ABOUT IS THERE ANYTHING THAT PEOPLE ARE MISSING WHEN THEY COME TO MY WEBSITE. I WAS LIKE "I WANT TO ANSWER THAT ONE!" I THINK THERE IS, MY MOM AND I TALK ABOUT THIS A LOT. MY MOM'S PROUD OF ME. AND SHE KNOWS THAT I AM SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE I HAVE HER DNA IN MY BODY. I HAVE MY DAD'S SENSE OF HUMOR AND SO...I'VE SAID THIS BEFORE; I HAVE MY DAD'S SENSE OF HUMOR AND MY MOM'S ABILITY TO WIELD IT. AND SHE HAS SAID TO ME, SHE GOES "YEAH, YOU'RE IRREVERENT, AND A LOT OF PEOPLE STILL THINK THAT MY FAMILY CAN'T COMPREHEND WHAT I'M DOING, WHICH IS FUNNY BECAUSE I CALL MY PARENTS ALL THE TIME AND WE TALK ABOUT WHAT I'VE WRITTEN. AND SHE'S LIKE "YOU KNOW, A LOT OF PEOPLE TAKE YOUR IRREVERENCE AS SOME SORT OF CYNICISM ABOUT LIFE, AND CYNICISM ABOUT HUMANITY" WHEN I REALLY DO WANT MY WEBSITE A GOOD PLACE IN THE WORLD, AND I AM TRYING TO UPLIFT PEOPLE. AND SO I DON'T EVER TRY TO WRITE JUDGMENTAL THINGS ABOUT CELEBRITIES OR JUDGMENTAL THINGS ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE IN MY LIFE BECAUSE I DON'T WANT THAT ON ME, AND I DON'T THINK THAT'S DOING ANYTHING, THAT IT'S HELPING ANYONE. SO, I DO MAKE AN EFFORT TO BE REALLY POSITIVE AND PROGRESSIVE IN MY IDEAS AND IN REACHING OUT TO PEOPLE.