



Monday, July 7, 2003

OU alumna star of reality TV series

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

Advertising copywriter by day – reality TV star by night.

The woman leading this double life is 25-year-old Lisa Shannon, a 1999 Oakland University graduate who will star in “**Cupid**,” the latest program to hit the reality TV craze. The show, which depicts Shannon’s quest for true love, premieres Wednesday, July 9, at 10 p.m. on CBS and will run for 11 weeks.

“Cupid” promises to be a cross between recent popular reality TV series “The Bachelor” and “American Idol.” In fact, sharp-tongued judge Simon Cowell of “American Idol” is the executive producer of the show.

As the “Cupid Girl,” Shannon will audition eligible bachelors in Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami and New York to find a potential mate. Friends Kimberly Tarter (her co-worker) of Oak Park, Mich., and Laura Restum (her hairdresser) of Birmingham, Mich., each aware of Shannon’s preferences in men, will assist her in narrowing the field. Those auditioning for her affections will have to quickly distinguish themselves from the pack – each has just 30 seconds to make a favorable impression warranting a date.

The skills Shannon developed as a journalism major at Oakland not only helped her win awards for her work on Chevrolet ads at the advertising firm Campbell-Ewald in Warren but also helped her “weed out the losers” during the audition process.

“The guys would do whatever it took to try to impress me,” said Shannon after returning home from a film shoot in Los Angeles. “Some would bring props with them, like a guitar or a dog. Some got eliminated after just five seconds. But we spent some time asking questions of the guys we liked.”

Shannon and her friends will narrow the field in each city to 25, then 10. Viewers will have an inside look at Shannon’s dates with each remaining suitor and vote one out each week, ultimately deciding who will become her Mr. Right.

The man viewers choose also may propose marriage to Shannon in the show’s 11th and final episode. But there’s more at stake than love. If she accepts and the couple remains together for at least one year, Shannon will collect a \$1 million dowry.

“I’m not in this for the money,” Shannon said. “I’m just looking for the guy I want to spend the rest of my life with.”

After the series finale, Shannon plans to return to writing.

“I’ve always wanted to do copy writing and am definitely interested in feature writing,” Shannon said. “I wrote for the entertainment section of ‘The Oakland Post’ when I was a student. I loved the journalism department at Oakland. There was a lot of camaraderie between the students and the teachers. I had a lot of enthusiastic professors who were very attentive. (Professor of Journalism) Jane Briggs-Bunting was a good mentor for me. (Associate Professor of Anthropology) Richard Stamps really got the students interested in his subject matter. (Special Instructor in French) Dikka Berven is the reason why I continued taking French classes.

“I loved the time I spent at OU, and my younger brother and sister also attend Oakland.”

Admittedly, Shannon feels somewhat overwhelmed after the grind of numerous 18-hour film shoots. But she says her sudden stardom hasn’t changed her character.

“I’ll be pretty excited to return to normalcy,” Shannon said. “I don’t feel any different as a person just because I’m in a TV series.

“For me, it’s been very hard to digest this whole process. It’s unbelievable that people are taking pictures of me and interviewing me. I’m really just the same girl. The whole thing hasn’t hit me yet. Maybe it will once the show airs. Overall, though, it’s been a very positive experience.”

A casting director suggested Shannon audition for “Cupid” after she was passed over on a spot for “Survivor.”

“When I applied for ‘Survivor,’ I talked about surviving relationships that never quite worked out,” Shannon said. “I was

interested in doing 'Survivor' because it's so mentally and physically difficult. But when I was offered a spot on 'Cupid,' I paused for a minute and thought it was a great opportunity to meet all types of men from around the country. And my girlfriends will be with me and make me consider men I wouldn't normally think of dating. I've always lived around southeast Michigan and never had the chance to meet men from anywhere else. What could be better?"

Aside from an on-and-off six-year relationship, Shannon said she's had some trouble connecting with the right type of man.

"I've dated great guys, but they haven't been right for one reason or another," Shannon said. "I hate meeting guys at the bar – it's so cheesy. There's no way I'll date someone I work with, and all my friends are married. So, it's really hard to meet people. I don't think I pick the same types of men over and over, but they tend to have the same things wrong with them. They're mostly not stimulating intellectually.

"I think every girl and guy have dating horror stories. One guy I met took me to McDonald's for dinner on our first date. Then he would hand me the entertainment coupon book and ask me to pick out a two-for-one deal. Needless to say, he didn't make a great impression."

So what kind of guy is Shannon looking for?

"Someone who makes me laugh effortlessly. Someone who's an intellectual, has integrity and is close to his family," she said. "I'm just looking for a genuine good guy who's mentally prepared for the things I'm ready for."

Shannon's interests revolve around simple, All-American pleasures: Tigers baseball in the summer, Lions football in the fall, listening to classic rock music, playing board games, cooking and spending time with her family. She currently lives with her grandmother in Bloomfield Hills.

"Cupid" will air Wednesdays at 10 p.m. on CBS. To learn more about Shannon or to access a video preview of the series, visit the "[Cupid](#)" Web site.

SUMMARY

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Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Monday, July 7, 2003
Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Monday, July 7, 2003
Article Start Date: Tuesday, September 30, 2003