

Saving 'Brooklyn Nine-Nine': Fan Power on Twitter

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ABSTRACT

This text focuses around how and why television fans react to the cancellation of their favourite TV-shows, and which strategies they use to try to save them. Through the study of the specific case of Brooklyn Nine-Nine (2013-present), a FOX show cancelled and revived in just over 24h, I underline the relationship change between fans and networks in an environment where fans have entered the conversation. My analysis includes the fans' reaction on Twitter and the effect it might have had on the decision to save the show. I argue that the digital tools available made it easier for fans to broadcast their opinions, and at the same time that the fast-paced process was forcibly a grassroots outburst instead of an organised, strategic campaign. I also touch on the concept of unpaid fan labour and the ethics of networks abusing fans for their own interests.

Keywords: Fandom, Twitter, Brooklyn Nine-Nine, #renewb99, #saveb99.

RESUM

Aquest text se centra en com i per què els fans de la televisió reaccionen a la cancel·lació de les seves sèries preferides, i quines estratègies fan servir per intentar salvar-les. A través de l'estudi del cas específic de Brooklyn Nine-Nine (2013-present), una sèrie de FOX cancel·lada i reviscuda en poc més de 24 hores, subratllo el canvi de relació entre fans i executius en un entorn on els fans han entrat a la conversa. L'anàlisi inclou la reacció dels fans a Twitter i l'efecte que podria haver tingut en la decisió de salvar la sèrie. Argumento que les eines digitals disponibles van facilitar als fans difondre les seves opinions i, alhora, que el procés de ritme ràpid va ser forçosament una explosió de base en comptes d'una campanya estratègicament organitzada. També toco el concepte de treball fan no-remunerat i l'ètica dels executius que abusen dels fans per interessos propis.

Paraules clau: Fandom, Twitter, Brooklyn Nine-Nine, #renewb99, #saveb99.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Ever since the birth of the Internet, the media industry –be it cinema, television, or others– has undergone massive changes. The whole paradigm of communication, how people interact with media, and with each other, is now extremely different from how it was just a couple of decades ago. The new kind of communication that appeared in the 1960s with what we call *new media* (which got amplified by the Internet and the digitalization process) allowed “information of all kinds in all formats to be carried with the same efficiency and also intermingled” (McQuail, 2010). This triggered a process of technology convergence which is still growing today.

The transformation of TV-watching habits in particular is interesting to note. During the 1950s, after World War II, owning a TV became common practice for ordinary people all over Britain and the United States. After a period of growth both in audiences and number of channels, viewing patterns are now changing once again. According to a study by the Omnicom Media Group agency Hearts & Science (2018), 47% of adults 22-45 years old are watching absolutely no content on traditional TV platforms. Instead, they have adapted and are now spending their time online, where they can consume specific, targeted content on demand.

On top of that, the rise of the Internet and social media in recent years has shifted people’s daily routines. According to a study by TNS, the Internet has become our number one daily media activity – social platforms being where people spend most of their time online (Shah, 2010). With Twitter being at 335 million monthly active users, YouTube at 1.9 billion, and Facebook reaching 2.23 billion (Lua, 2019), it’s safe to say social media is a very present element in today’s society and is not going anywhere any time soon.

The transformation that the digital age has brought to the media industry is not one to be ignored, since every key player, from producers, to audiences, to

advertisers, will eventually (if not by now) have to adapt to the new sphere or become obsolete. In this case, I wanted to focus on a specific part of the media industry, one that might be overlooked by most people, but which can hold tremendous power: the fans.

Communities of fans, or fandoms, are what are commonly known as groups of people who share a strong interest in or admiration for a particular person or thing. They have been around for decades and have surrounded all kinds of things: sports, music, celebrities, etc. Here I focused on media fandom, more specifically television fandom. In the current TV ecosystem, new platforms to distribute content are bringing new ways for networks and their audiences to connect and interact. Fans can now engage through sharing and commenting, as well as using their platforms to promote or criticise shows and programs. They can also get involved through designing and distributing their own material (García-Avilés, 2012).

But what happens when their object of fandom disappears? Part of the lifecycle of any television show is the end, either by conclusion of the story or cancellation from the network. The latter, even though very usual, can be a very painful circumstance for fans. Be it because of low budgets, low ratings, or just low interest from the network, lots of shows get axed before their natural final day was expected.

How do fans react when this happens? What do producers and showrunners, who count on those fans as a valuable part of their story, do in these situations? Who holds the power to decide if the decision is final or if there is chance for salvation? This project aimed to answer these questions, and to reflect on the amount of power that fans hold in this decision-making process. To better understand it, I used a case study methodology to analyse up-close how the show Brooklyn Nine-Nine (FOX, 2013) got cancelled on May 10th, 2018 and was then saved a day later after an explosive reaction by fans on Twitter.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. FANDOM

Fans are, according to Jenkins (1992), the true experts within the realm of popular culture. Even if they don't have recognition or social power, they constitute an elite with a privileged relationship with the media that they're fans of, due to their involvement and knowledge about the material. The media culture today is convergent in the sense that it enables new forms of collaboration and participation (Jenkins, 2006), but it wasn't always like this.

2.1.1. A BRIEF HISTORY OF MEDIA FANDOM

In *A Brief History Of Media Fandom* (2006), Francesca Coppa offers a general overview of fan history, specifically media fan history. She covers the different stages of fandom from the early twentieth century until today. Even though it is told from a U.S. perspective, the text gives a general view of how fandom was born, how and why it evolved, and where it could be going from now on.

Before the word fandom was applied to media (that meaning science fiction, comics, music, soap operas and literature), it was first related to sports and theatre. There is debate today as to what the first media fandom actually was, but there's no doubt that it originated from within science-fiction fandom. Media fandom per se developed during the 1920s on the letters page of Hugo Gernsback's magazine *Amazing Stories*. He encouraged readers to send letters commenting on the magazine's content, and fans not only sent comments but started publishing their addresses as well, which led to them writing letters to each other and, if they lived close enough, visiting each other (Verba, 2003).

During the 1930s, even though there were Sci-Fi magazines being published, they came out rather irregularly. In order to fill in the weeks with no content, fans began to organize, produce art, and publish their own magazines. Thus, the

APAs (Amateur Press Associations) were born (Pohl, 1974). This involvement eventually turned into the organisation of science fiction conventions for fans to attend, the first one being on July 5th, 1939, in New York City (Coppa, 2006).

The 1960s, with the broadcasting of the show *Star Trek* in 1966, were an exploding moment for science fiction fans. These women with high educations, heavy readers, and scientifically literate began to develop enthusiasm for the show, discussing it critically and producing fan art: poems, songs, stories, drawings, etc. (Coppa, 2006). *Star Trek* fans, in comparison to other Sci-Fi fans from that era, had to become activists because of the struggling ratings that the show faced when it was airing (Walker, 2001).

During the late 1970s, some *Star Trek* fans began self-defining as media fans. This was mainly due to two reasons. First, new shows began to air which had a baseline similar to that of *Star Trek*, like *Starsky and Hutch* (1975-1979) and *The Professionals* (1977-1983) – they also focused on friendships of adventurers who, while isolated from mainstream society, aimed to solve problems.

The other reason why *Star Trek* fans broadened their media consumption horizon was the debut of *Star Wars* (1977), which triggered a science fiction blockbuster explosion in the late 70s and early 80s (Coppa, 2006). New shows and movies were introduced, like for example *Battlestar Galactica* (1978) and *Flash Fordon* (1980), and this allowed for the *Star Trek* franchise to return, with the premiere of *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979).

At first, *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* fans collided, but they ended up founding a new convention, called T'CON, in 1978. It presented a new format, since it was a science-fiction/media convention run by fans, for fans, with no paid guests. This con was re-established as MediaWest in 1981, and has been held annually ever since (Coppa, 2006).

The early 1980s represented a golden age for films, with the premiere of better-quality movies like the second *Star Trek* or *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980). Others like *Blade Runner* (1982), or *Indiana Jones and The Temple of Doom* (1984) also came out during that time. The amount of films to choose from pushed the media fandom to really grow.

During this time the Television fandom also bloomed, with shows like *Doctor Who* or *Cagney and Lacey* quickly gaining followers in the U.S. The introduction of more complex narrative arcs and characterization made the fans more invested; so much that *Cagney and Lacey* became one of the first shows to actually be brought back from cancellation by a letter-writing campaign to the network (Coppa, 2006).

The early 1990s were a mixed era for fandoms, because they functioned both using traditional methods (zines, letters, conventions), and in the online world, where they held discussions and distributed fan fiction. Some important fandoms which developed during this period include *The X-Files* (1993-2002), *Xena: Warrior Princess* (1995-2001), and of course the *Star Trek* franchises *Deep Space Nine* (1993-1999) and *Voyager* (1995).

As the Internet became more accessible, media fandoms grew and expanded to new genres and programmes. There were less gate-keeping elements, so people could just join lists online dedicated to their favourite TV-show. The expansion of the Internet also allowed media fans to communicate with other worlds such as comics, celebrities, music and anime (Coppa, 2006).

During the beginning of the 21st century, media fandom grew into something bigger, louder, less defined, and more exciting than ever before, way beyond just Sci-Fi. Some really impactful fandoms like *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings* appeared in this period. The Internet revolutionised how fans interacted between them, and they shifted from mailing lists to personal blogs, where fans could share their thoughts and create art faster than ever before.

2.1.2. A BRIEF HISTORY OF FAN STUDIES

Piotr Siuda, in his 2010 publication *From deviation to mainstream – evolution of fan studies*, glossed over the three main waves that fandom studies have gone through in western culture. Being aware of these different viewpoints is vital to understand what fandom is and how it fits in today's society.

First wave

The first wave is called the deviation wave, and it began when scholars first started studying fans in a scientific manner. This was when the Sci-Fi movement appeared, with the first International Sci-Fi Convention in 1939. During this wave, fans were seen through stereotypes and were given a pathological image. They were described as immature and senile and were thought to need psychiatric help (Siuda, 2010). Hinerman (2002) even described a fan as “someone who needs to compensate for her life traumas, someone who needs help or is mentally ill. She must be if when not able to deal with difficult life situations, she escapes into the world of fantasy”.

The first wave was inspired by the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse), who viewed audiences as victims manipulated by the industry. To them, fans were alienated weirdoes who were easily manipulated, and the mass culture industry gave them banal content to reinforce the status-quo and promote consumerism across audiences (Strinati, 2004; Siuda, 2010). Jay Goulding, in his work “*Empire, Aliens and Conquest*” (1985), even criticized Sci-Fi series and accused them of propaganda promoting sexism, capitalism, individualism and consumerism; therefore enslaving the viewers and preventing them from rebelling (Siuda, 2010).

To put it simple, during the deviation wave, pop culture audiences were portrayed as immature, manipulated and indoctrinated. It is important to note, though, that during this time fans had very low visibility, which influenced the

bad reputation that they had amongst scholars. First wave researchers studied fans individually, instead of treating them as members of communities, which offered them a limited scope on the social dynamics of fandoms.

Second wave

The second wave is known as the resistance wave, and it is said to begin around 1992, since that is when its key texts were published. According to Siuda (2010), scholars during this wave did not consider fans to be manipulated individuals, but instead saw them as creative active subjects, separated from the industry, with their own culture.

The shift from the first wave into this one was based on the fact that fans themselves became more visible. And with the birth of the Internet in the early 1990s, they became more visible than ever. This new tool allowed them to connect and interact, which then led to better organisation. This was when fans began writing and producing amateur work. The Internet offered them many new ways of creating, and also sharing, which made fandoms as communities much more visible to academic researchers.

More and more academics started discrediting the idea of passive consumers of mass culture. Instead, they started seeing fans as subculture groups capable of questioning the status-quo (Harris, 1998). Audiences were now thought of as conscious recipients of media, re-thinking it and using it for their own purposes. Michael de Certeau, one of the second wave's most influential academics, talked about two opposing forces: the mass media industry producers and the resistant consumers who made their own amateur production (Siuda, 2010).

During this wave was when researchers started seeing fans as communities, not just individuals. They stopped seeing fans as people who blindly followed the producers, and instead defined them as content creators with a critical eye on the texts they consumed. John Fiske, in his text "The Cultural Economy of

Fandom”, talks about fan activity as something to be generalised to the average viewer. Although fans have a much more resistant approach to media, “the tendencies taking place in fandom reflect general ones” (Fiske, 1992).

In 1992, Henry Jenkins published one of the most influential texts on fan culture: “Textual Poachers”. In this book, he disagreed with Fiske’s views and instead saw fans as a group of people different from the general public and characterized by a more radicalised resistance (Jenkins, 1992). Jenkins, as well as many other second-wave researchers, identified as a fan himself. He was the one who coined the term aca-fan, a short form meaning academic-fan. These academics involved in fan activity argued that fans should be allowed to speak for themselves.

During the resistance wave, fans were no longer judged as manipulated consumers, but were instead seen in a positive light. Being a fan meant being part of a community with the shared goal of re-interpreting content different than the producers wished. Instead of a polarized division into oppressors (producers) and the oppressed (fans), the victims were now viewed as successful fighters against the system (Siuda, 2010).

Third wave

The so-called mainstream wave began in 2006 with the publication of Jenkins’ “Convergence Culture”. This new approach is not as radical as the previous one. Academics have stopped looking at fans as freedom fighters or rebels, but instead acknowledge that producers have learned from their mistakes, and therefore there is no need for the struggle of the past. Producers today have started listening to their audiences, and fans are now seen as a priority section of that mainstream audience. PR specialists consider fans to be prosumers who, thanks to their activity, can support a media product in a way that no advertisement ever can (Siuda, 2010).

Following the second-wave views, in this third wave fans are still viewed as active rather than passive or manipulated audiences. The exponential growth of the Internet allowed fans for more activity, more interactivity, and therefore, more visibility. This has allowed for this third wave to be more open, and carry out more complex research, with broader horizons, which focuses on the concept of fans more than specific narrow fan groups (Gray et al., 2007). Fans, as mainstream recipients of pop culture, have become crucial parts of the Internet's productive communities, and have therefore, in accordance to Fiske's approach, become representatives of common strategies to deal with pop culture content.

This third wave places fans in the mainstream of popular culture and emphasizes the great diversification and development of fandom of the recent years. It focuses on the relevance of fan activity as an indicator of general viewer attitudes and acknowledges the current importance that fans have gained for industry producers. From a marketing point of view, fans have become both a relevant source of audience information, and a dedicated and powerful consumer, so fans are now seen as a key type of audience.

2.2. TWITTER

2.2.1. SOCIAL MEDIA AND TWITTER

Social network sites are online services which offer their users the possibility of creating a personal profile and a list of other users with which they have connected (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). This phenomenon, which first appeared in the late 1990s, has been developing since. In the opinion of Sundén (2003), a personal profile is a method of "typing oneself into being". Her statement might be old, but it is still relevant today because it taps into the idea that individuality online comes from owning a personal profile, or, in other words, if you don't have a personal profile, you don't exist.

Even though at first social network sites were basic platforms where people could connect to already existing social connections, they became more sophisticated shortly after. There's an important distinction to be made between profile-centric sites, in which people communicate with people who they already personally know (like, for example, Facebook); and passion-centric sites, where people connect with strangers according to their shared interests and activities (which could be the case of Instagram).

One of the more well-known passion-centric sites of today is Twitter. Twitter was born in 2006 and is characterised by its character limit in each post¹. The way this social media site works is through following and being followed, where the relationship doesn't require reciprocation.

Users can follow any public profile to receive all their Tweets in what is called the timeline, a place where all the Tweets from those who one follows appear. Users can then interact with them by replying, liking, or retweeting into their own page to spread that content beyond the reach of the original poster's followers (Kwak et al., 2010).

A key element of Twitter is the use of hashtags. A hashtag is a '#' followed by a word and they're defined on the Twitter website as "keywords or phrases that are included specifically in Tweets to mark them as relating to a topic, so that people can follow the conversation in search" (Twitter, n.d.). These textual markers unify the tweets relating to certain topics, events, programmes, etc. so it is easier for users to track the hashtagged discussion (Highfield et al., 2013).

The tweets with large increases in traffic get featured in the Trending Tab. The algorithm used by Twitter identifies topics that are popular at the moment, taking into account both volume and time, marking as more relevant topics with quick growth before topics with a gradual sustained growth (Needle, 2016).

¹ In the beginning it was 140, but it got expanded to 280 in 2017.

2.2.2. TWITTER AND TV

Twitter is changing the way audiences watch TV, since it has become a backchannel for users to comment in real-time to the content they're consuming (Highfield et al., 2013). Anstead and O'Loughlin (2011) argue that Twitter represents the preferred services to comment on programmes and shows during broadcasting. According to Twitter Statistics (2011), live events such as award ceremonies or sports like the Super Bowl are the ones to concentrate the greatest number of Tweets per second. People feel more inclined to start a conversation about what they're watching because it generates a feeling of a shared viewing experience (Harrington et al., 2013).

Television is changing because of streaming services and delayed viewing. Audiences that watch television live have become smaller, and the growing phenomenon of the second screen (using a different device to enhance the viewing experience) might bring new issues to take care of. According to Statista (2019), almost 70% of internet users in the United States use their phones while watching TV. This doesn't have to be a bad thing. On one hand, people can share their viewing experience by commenting on what's happening live on their TV, and spark a real-time conversation with other viewers, which can make watching TV more enjoyable. On the other hand, this shift in TV-watching behaviour can also be beneficial for advertisers.

According to Midha (2014), Twitter is beneficial for advertisers for a number of different reasons. First of all, hashtags are good for advertisers. Brands which add hashtags to their TV spots generate more conversation and higher quality responses on Twitter than those who don't (Midha, 2014). A study conducted by Symphony Advanced Media showed that Twitter also helps advertisers by keeping TV audiences in front of the TV, making them more exposed to ads. If a viewer is using Twitter while watching TV, they are less likely to change the channel during commercial breaks (Harrington et al., 2013; Midha, 2014). The

study also proved that people who use Twitter as a second screen could recall ads better than people who were multitasking doing other activities.

Twitter has become a “complementary channel to the TV broadcast” (Highfield et al., 2013). The fact that people are using social media while they watch TV is forcing broadcasters to understand and adapt to this shift. They are starting to see the potential that this can have. Tracking audience’s behaviour and response on Twitter and other social media can lead to better analysis of their demographic. It can also help with a qualitative focus on the contents: what resonated with people, which moments of the broadcast sparked the most conversation, etc. Furthermore, this analysis is now immediate, no longer will networks need to wait like they did with traditional TV rating systems. The positive approach to the second screen phenomenon showcases how it can actually promote live viewing, thus maximising live audiences and, in return, ad revenue (Highfield et al., 2013).

Measuring audiences

The focus on whether a TV-show is successful or not is still put on the ratings. Since the 1950s, the Nielsen company had the audiencing measuring monopoly, which specifically reported on people who watched live TV, but ignored fan engagement in any other form. The way the Nielsen ratings worked was through analysing what some specific households (the so-called “Nielsen Families”) were watching. Through personal journals and sensors in front of the TV they could tell how many people were watching what, so that gave them a sample that they could then generalise (Guerrero-Pico, 2017; Adalian, 2019).

In 1987, Nielsen introduced to the American market the People Meter, a new audience-tracking device that would measure a sample of 5.000 households faster than previous methods. Before, the ratings were done in sweeps, three times a year. But from that point on, for the first time, networks were able to get overnight rating results (Guerrero-Pico, 2017). At the time, that was a huge step

for audiencing. Nowadays, though, we still don't have a completely accurate method of measuring audiences, since we would still need to account for delayed viewing, streaming, and second screens. However, according to Adalian (2019), the fact that we do not take this into account might not be a problem. He argues that not knowing if a show is number one in numbers can be a good thing, since now people will pay attention to the shows they actually like instead of those that are popular. This is supported by the fact that streaming services such as Netflix are not able to know for sure how many people are watching which contents, since that data is not available (VanDerWerff, 2019).

One might say that disregarding the importance of ratings will negatively affect advertisers, since that's what they base their investments on. And let's not forget that advertising is the main source of income for most networks. But advertisers, as well as producers, are adapting to this new landscape. In the past, advertisers were focused on the younger demographic (18-49-year-olds), but since they began moving to streaming platforms, brands began catering to the ones that were left in front of the TV: the older generation. Brands know that nowadays the Internet is arguably the easiest way to get through to young people and have therefore shifted to an older demographic for their television target audience. It is hard to know for sure what will happen to television in the future. Some experts agree that live broadcasting will die in favour of streaming services, while others argue that broadcasting companies will continue to adapt and find new ways to monetise the people who are still sat down in front of the television set.

2.3. SAVE OUR SHOW CAMPAIGNS

At the end of every television season, network executives get together to decide which of their shows will get renewed and which will get cancelled. There are a lot of factors that go into determining if a show is worthy of staying on the air. Cindy Holland, Netflix's VP of Original Programming, once talked about the service's policy regarding renewals and cancellations:

“The biggest thing that we look at is, are we getting enough viewership to justify the cost of the series? We also look at other things: how beloved the fan community is, how social a title is. [...] But we are deliberate and thoughtful, and there are a lot of things that go into the decision.” (Ofiaza, 2018).

However, most of the time the decision to keep a show running depends mainly on ratings. They could only take into account the overnight ratings from Nielsen's Families or they could also keep in mind the “Live+3” or “Live+7” ratings (which now measure the amount of people who watch an episode within three days or a week of the day it aired). In any case, what matters the most to broadcasting networks is how many people are watching their shows, because at the end of the day advertising is a network's main funding, and more people watching equal more potential buyers (Granovsky, 2018). This does not always mean number of national viewers, since the international appeal of the show can be a turning point for a network to decide to keep making a show, even if their domestic rates are declining (Granovsky, 2018; Ofiaza, 2018).

Before the end of the season, when network executives still have not gathered to decide the fate of their programming, there might be rumours of cancellation if a show has been getting steadily low ratings. In these cases, fans might want to do something to prevent their favourite show from cancellation. The content generated by fans around these media products give them the perception that they own a part of those TV-shows, so they can feel the responsibility to do something to influence the executive's decision towards renewal (Savage, 2014). This is when Save Our Show campaigns happen.

Save Our Show campaigns are actions organised by fans aiming to prove to the network that a show that's rumoured to be cancelled actually has a considerable audience. Maybe that audience isn't watching the show live or maybe they are not very visible, but they care about that show and want the network to know that (Savage, 2014; Guerrero-Pico, 2017). Even with their efforts, these organised actions might not always do the trick in order to save a TV-show from cancellation. Talking about past Save Our Show campaigns, Christina Savage

(2014) notes that “some failed as a result of their inability to organize cohesively; some did not show a network that there was enough support for a show; some that succeeded only managed to bring a show back for a few episodes”.

One of the first Save Our Show campaigns happened in 1968 when the original Star Trek series was rumoured to be cancelled after the ratings had been declining during its second season. To prove the impact that the show really had, fans began sending letters to the network and the producers, which served as a reminder of how many people actually cared about it. The network received over 115.000 letters from fans showing their support for the series, which was then renewed for a third season (Moore, 2012; Savage, 2014). Sending letters, however, is not always an effective strategy, as many TV-shows whose fans wrote letters to the networks to show support ended up getting cancelled anyway. That is the case of Wonderfalls, a FOX show which was cancelled in 2004 after its first season. The low ratings doomed this show despite it being sweet and smart, “which is sadly a combination that doesn't usually last very long on Fox” (Moore, 2012).

Save Our Show campaigns evolved, and some fans decided to no longer send letters but instead send objects related to the plot to prove their commitment to the show. That new strategy, as well as the previous letter-writing approach, had some successes and some failures. The show Witchblade was cancelled by TNT in 2002 after its second season, apparently because the lead actress had entered a rehab facility. However, fans still tried to get it renewed for a third season by sending Pez candy dispensers (inspired by the protagonist's name Sara Pezzini) to the networks, which in the end did not change their decision (Moore, 2012).

On the other hand, the show Jericho was announced cancellation in 2007 after the ratings dropped. Inspired by a line of dialogue in the first season's cliff-hanger ending “where a general faced with harsh odds responded "nuts" to a request for surrender” (Moore, 2012), fans sent over 20 tons of peanuts to the

executives at CBS (McCullagh, 2007; Wyatt, 2007). The network, seeing the implication of fans toward the show, announced a second season (shorter than the first one) to give a proper ending to the story (Moore, 2012; Savage, 2014).

Other fandoms opted for a different approach, like the fans from the show *Chuck*, who, after it was rumoured to be cancelled, decided to appeal to the advertisers, proving their power not only as an audience but as consumers. The Subway sandwich restaurant chain was a sponsor of the show and appeared often as product placement. To showcase the loyalty of the fans to the show but ultimately to the network, they organised a campaign around Subway sandwiches called the "Finale and Footlong" campaign, where fans would buy \$5 footlong sandwiches, telling the employees at Subway that they were doing it in support of the show (Savage, 2014). This creative campaign worked, and the network announced a new season shortly after.

The online world opened a lot of possibilities for TV fans to set up better organized campaigns. A good example of this was the show *Fringe*, which was saved from cancellation after some fans meticulously planned a Twitter campaign which would aim to make the show trend every night when it aired, showing the network that the audience was not only big but also committed. The *Fringenuity* campaign made strategic use of Twitter and the Nielsen measurement system by creating new different hashtags for every episode and posting detailed instructions on how to make those hashtags trend during the show's live broadcast (Guerrero-Pico, 2017).

It is easy to see how invested fans can become when their favourite show is threatened. The audience's negotiating power has grown compared to the domain that producers and networks used to have over show's fates, and now the frustration they might feel can have an actual impact. Moreover, social media has allowed for easier audience engagement (Jenkins, 2006) which eventually has led to a new climate where networks are willing to listen to audience's concerns and even take them into account when deciding to end a show.

3. METHODOLOGY

The broad objective of this project was to answer –or at least reflect upon– the question of what role do fans have in the media industry and how much influencing power do they actually hold. Specifically, I wanted to dive deep into *how* fans interact with television networks, and *why* they feel so connected to television shows that they're willing to fight to try to save them from cancellation.

After reviewing literature about the methodology of the case study, it became obvious that the study of a specific case would be an adequate way to better understand the state of fandoms in today's context. According to Yin (2009), "case studies are the preferred strategy when "how" or "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context". In this case, I focused on "how" and "why" questions more than "what" questions, while studying an actual recent event which has already ended so therefore I had no control over.

The final purpose of this case study was not only to accurately describe the actual events, but to establish a frame work for further discussion and debate. In order to comprehend the complex social phenomena that is fandoms in their right context, this case study aimed to give insight on a specific decision, why it was taken, and how it was implemented (Schramm, 1971; Yin, 2009).

The reason I chose to study the specific case of Brooklyn Nine-Nine's cancellation and renewal was mainly because of personal experience. I myself am a fan of the show, and I witnessed first-hand how it got cancelled, the response from the fandom, and why it got picked up. I even manifested my own thoughts on Twitter, participating in the flow of communication between fandom and network. Another reason for choosing this case was the impact that it had. The response on Twitter to the cancellation and the speed at which the networks

responded to it² make this case stand out, and since the action went down just a year ago, it is still relevant now, so studying it can help us interpret the fandom phenomenon in today's specific context.

To conduct this case study, I first collected technical data about Brooklyn Nine-Nine, such as number and length of episodes, people in the cast and crew, the main plot, and the show's impact award-wise, in order to lay out a basic overview of the show. I then traced everything that happened between the cancellation by FOX on May 18th, 2018, and the renewal by NBC just over 24 hours later. Through documents and journalistic articles I was able to get a better view of what happened; and reading interviews with the show's creators and producers was a key step towards getting a closer look at the case. I then did a deep search on Twitter using the hashtags #Brooklyn99, #renewb99, and #saveb99 to find out what the fans were tweeting, which Tweets had more traction, and who were the most influential prescribers who participated in the tweeting. The analysis was all grounded on my own prior knowledge of the show, my connection with the show's fandom, and my personal experience with the cancellation and renewal event.

² The show was renewed in just a day and a half.

4. CASE STUDY

As I previously mentioned, I decided to focus on the case of Brooklyn Nine-Nine (from now on also *Brooklyn* and *B99*) since it is both recent and relevant as an example of fan involvement to save a show from cancellation. So, what happened? The show premiered on September 17, 2013, on the American network FOX. On May 10th, 2018, after running for 5 seasons, FOX decided to cancel the show and not renew it for a sixth season (Snierson, 2018a). That set Twitter fans on fire, sprouting millions of Tweets in support of the show and in anger of FOX's decision. The next day, the showrunners announced that NBC had picked up the series for 13 new episodes (Otterson, 2018). This was the shortened-up version, now let's take a closer look at the show, the cancellation, and the renewal.

What is Brooklyn Nine-Nine?

Brooklyn Nine-Nine is a single-camera comedy created by Dan Goor and Michael Schur. It has had 130 episodes so far, all of them 21 to 23 minutes long. The plot revolves around the police officers of the 99th precinct of the NYPD and their newly-appointed commanding officer Raymond Holt (Andre Braugher). The detectives include the silly but dedicated Jake Peralta (Andy Samberg), his perfectionist partner Amy Santiago (Melissa Fumero), the scary and stoic Rosa Diaz (Stephanie Beatriz), and the not-so-gifted but still driven Charles Boyle (Joe Lo Truglio). The cast also includes Dirk Blocker and Joel McKinnon Miller, who play incompetent detectives Michael Hitchcock and Norm Scully (respectively); Terry Crews, who plays their muscly but soft sergeant Terry Jeffords; and Chelsea Peretti, who plays the sarcastic, always-on-her-phone civilian administrator Gina Linetti. The show follows these characters' adventures, shenanigans, and relationships through joke-filled, light-hearted episodes, while also diving into important topics such as racial profiling or LGBTQ+ issues.



(FOX, 2013).

Brooklyn Nine-Nine's impact

The show's ratings have fluctuated throughout its life, but it has always attracted over a million viewers per episode. Its presence on social media is also noteworthy, since as of 2019 it gathers 310.000 YouTube subscribers, 629.000 Twitter followers, over 1 million likes on Facebook, and over 1.3 million followers on Instagram. The show has also been nominated for over 80 awards and has won 12, including two Emmys and two Golden Globes. Even though during its run time on FOX the ratings were not great, the show was critically acclaimed. Regardless, the cast and crew were faced once again with a last-minute verdict on renewal³, although this time the result was not what they expected. Andy Samberg, actor and producer on the show, weighed in on the chances of getting a sixth season: "I'm obviously hopeful. I love making it. I think we've had an incredible season. I feel really proud of the episodes. I feel like we've had a really nice upswell culturally. There was a lot of attention around the 99th episode and we got a lot of love during the Olympics, which was really cool. I certainly feel we're in a good place, but as to whether or not we get more, that's obviously far beyond my reach. But fingers crossed." (Snierson, 2018a).

³ For every season, the showrunners had to wait until the end of the season to know if they were going to be picked up or cancelled.



The Brooklyn Nine-Nine creators and cast after their Golden Globe wins for Best Performance By An Actor In A Television Series - Musical Or Comedy (Andy Samberg) and Best Television Series - Musical or Comedy (Lucy Nicholson, 2014).

What led to the cancellation?

The first ever episode of Brooklyn Nine-Nine to air (on September 2013) had an audience of 6.1 million viewers⁴ (TV Series Finale, 2013). That was one of the highest rating episodes in the entire series, since the rest of season 1 went on to have an average audience of 3.9 million viewers (Table 1). It is note-worthy that, in 2014, this show got renewed while other, higher rating shows, like *Almost Human*, got cancelled.

The ratings throughout the rest of the seasons declined steadily as well (Tables 2-5), going from 3.5 million viewers to reaching just over 1.5 million. Then, in 2018, FOX decided it wasn't worth renewing for a sixth season. Dana Walden, CEO of Fox Television Group, defended the network's decision by stating that it was based on a variety of factors.

⁴ Average based on the final national numbers, live plus same day viewing.

“We love this show, those are great creators, it’s a phenomenal cast. We ordered it throughout five seasons. It’s a great length of time for a single-camera comedy. Ultimately we felt like we didn’t have the exact right place to schedule it this year. [...] We were trying to create a more cohesive program, and scheduling Brooklyn would prevent us from promoting something new. Ultimately we decided we just didn’t have room for it.” (Hibberd, 2018a).

Even though ratings were high on the streaming services Brooklyn was on and internationally, they were not on the Thursday night slot they had at FOX. And since FOX did not own the rights to the show, those other ratings did not matter to them, which was another reason for them to cancel it.

What happened on May 10th, 2018?

On May 10th, 2018, FOX decided to cancel Brooklyn Nine-Nine. The showrunners knew there was a possibility for cancellation, which is why they made a season 5 finale that would not anger fans if it happened to be the series finale. However, the news came as a total surprise to most of the cast and the crew (Jung, 2018). They talked about it in a Comic Con panel on July 2018, and while Dan Goor, creator and showrunner, joked about the fact that he was on the toilet when he got the news, Andy Samberg said he felt terrified and sad to know that it was all ending.

Right after they learned that the show could not continue on FOX, the producers started looking for possible new homes for it. Different networks and streaming services like Hulu and Netflix seemed like perfect candidates to host the show for a sixth season, but talks were non-definitive. Once Hulu dropped out, everything seemed lost, commented Goor.

Meanwhile, as soon as the news broke out that the show was getting cancelled, and as actor Marc Evan Jackson puts it, “the Internet went bonkers”. In the roughly 27 hours it took for the show to be picked up, over 1.4 million Tweets flooded Twitter with sad fans and angry supporters (Roberts, 2018). Using the

hashtags #renewb99 and #saveb99, fans from all over the world expressed their discontent with FOX's decision. Some of them refused to accept the news, and others were angry that a show with so much diversity and representation would get cut off early. They were all hoping the show would get picked up by another network, assuring them that betting on this show was the right move to make.



Taylor Ross
@tayross24

[Follow](#)

#Brooklyn99 was a great show. It had LGBT badasses, POC in charge, and all of the characters were funny without being offensive or crude. Fox lost out on it and I really hope it gets picked up by a better network.



11:48 PM - 10 May 2018

977 Retweets 2,035 Likes

18 977 2.0K

Tweet from a fan

 **Katie McCosker**
@katiem822 Follow ▼

I refuse to acknowledge this. @hulu please #RenewB99



11:50 PM - 10 May 2018

19 Retweets 38 Likes



 1  19  38 

Tweet from a fan

 **no_detective**
@no_detective Follow ▼

congrats, @netflix or @hulu - you now have a chance to save #brooklyn99 and make some guaranteed superb tv in the process!

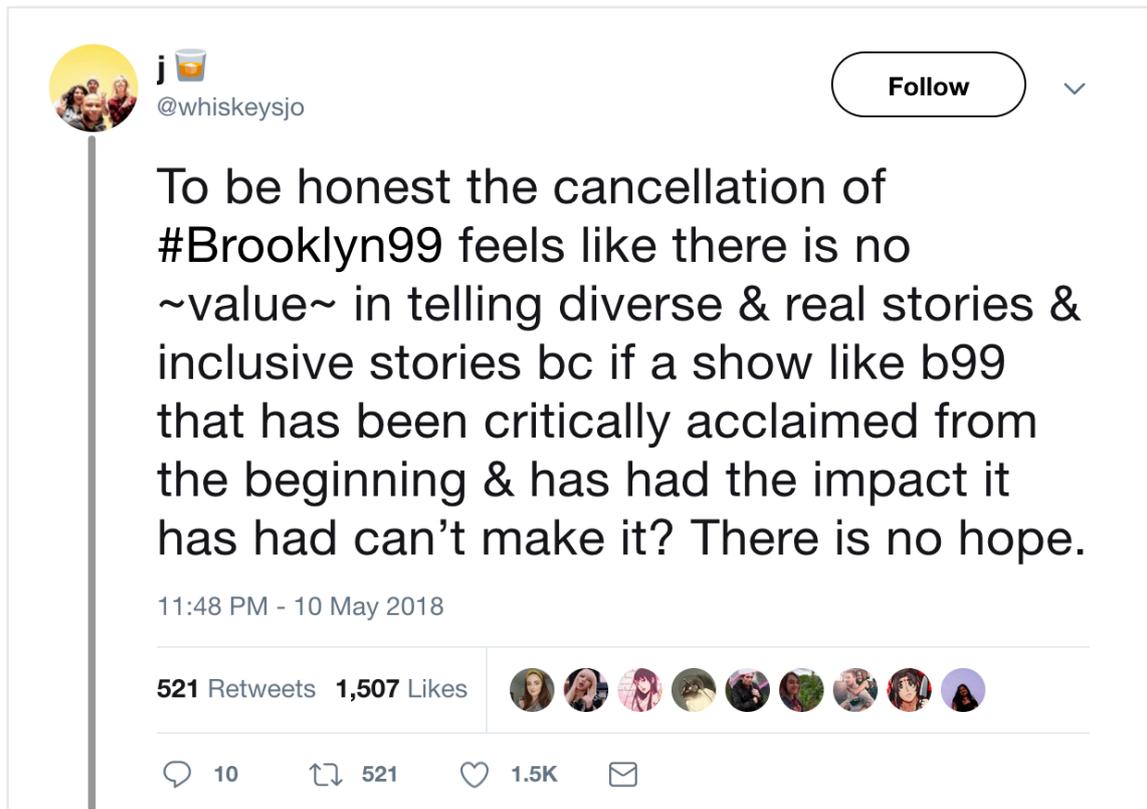
10:49 PM - 10 May 2018

296 Retweets 768 Likes

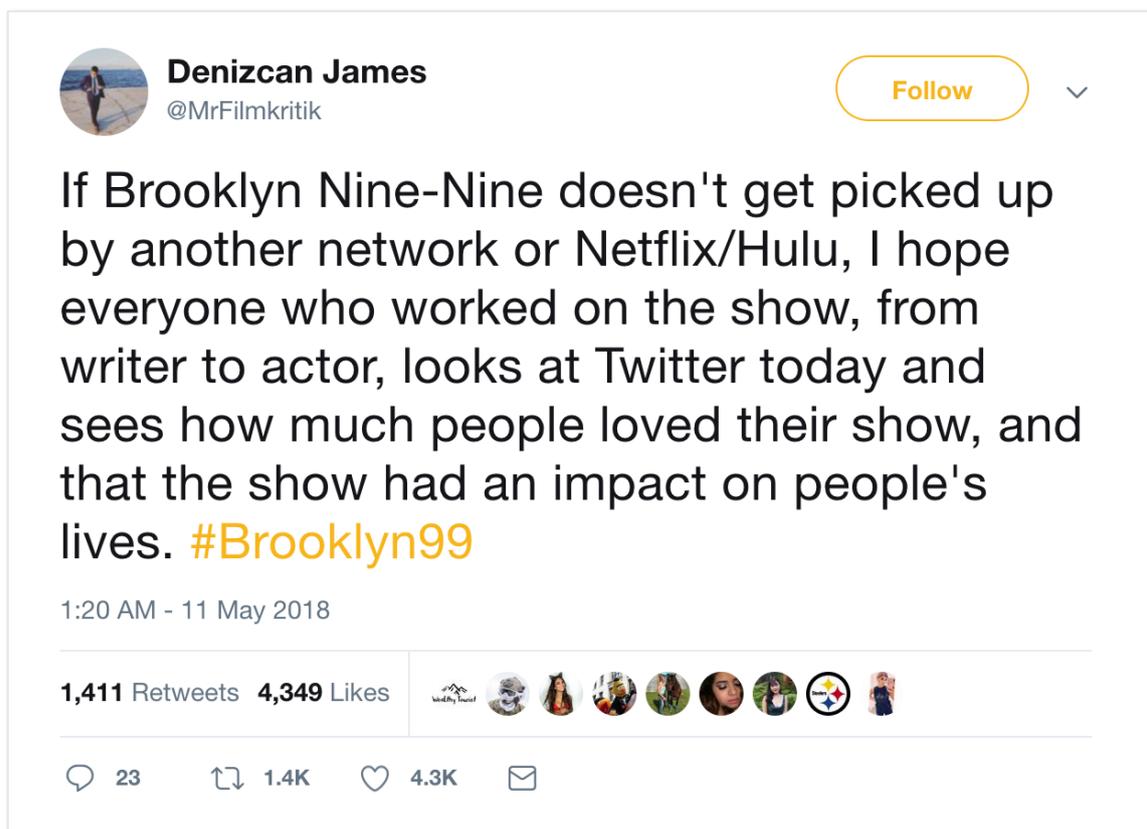


 2  296  768 

Tweet from a fan



Tweet from a fan



Tweet from a fan

 **Selena**
@moonseelie Follow

Brooklyn Nine-Nine was the first comedy I ever watched that truly made me laugh and I will never forget the feeling of "oh wow I REALLY need to watch more of this" that I had watching the first episode and I feel that so rarely with TV nowadays...I'm so upset
[#saveb99](#) [#RenewB99](#)

12:47 AM - 11 May 2018

50 Retweets 135 Likes



  50  135 

Tweet from a fan

 **moni | 19 days until sdcc**
@spicyperalta Follow

we are tired
we are upset
we are angry

we want a 6th season of brooklyn nine-nine

[@netflix](#) [@nbc](#) [@tbs](#)

[#Brooklyn99](#) [#SaveB99](#)

1:41 AM - 12 May 2018

32 Retweets 34 Likes



 1  32  34 

Tweet from a fan

 **h.h.ying (黄慧熒)** @huanghying Follow

stress drawing, because this is one of the only shows i watch 🙄🙄
#SaveB99 #Brooklyn99 #RenewB99



1:52 AM - 12 May 2018

49 Retweets 122 Likes 

Tweet from a fan

 **ikrame hemmoud**
@ikahem68 Follow

You'd better not give up guys, we have a war to win, if you dare give up Boyle will cook you alive(he's in the pic).

[#Brooklyn99](#)
[#SAVEB99](#)

Please consider the offer [@netflix](#).



1:51 AM - 12 May 2018

38 Retweets 89 Likes



 1  38  89 

Tweet from a fan



Kevin Pelton
@kpelton

Follow

▼

Brooklyn Nine-Nine managed to tackle important topics like racial profiling and bisexuality while remaining hilarious and heartwarming. My TV viewing won't be as enjoyable without it. [#RenewB99](#)

1:24 AM - 11 May 2018

46 Retweets

278 Likes



💬 7
↻ 46
♥ 278
✉

Tweet from a fan



Artemis
@Artemidi

Follow

▼

Not done yet. Brooklyn Nine Nine has managed to be funny for 5 years without offending people in order to achieve that. Not only is the comedy not at anyone's expense, it is thoughtful, open minded and **HILARIOUS.**

[#Brooklyn99](#) [#BrooklynNineNine](#) [#RenewB99](#)
[#RenewBrooklyn99](#)

12:40 AM - 11 May 2018

117 Retweets

280 Likes



💬 1
↻ 117
♥ 280
✉

Tweet from a fan

The response that the fans had was not expected by anyone, including the cast and crew. Bobrow, co-executive producer, said:

“I think the Brooklyn fandom really snuck up on me. I thought the Brooklyn fandom would be smaller and quieter. I was really blown away when I joined the show and started seeing them on Twitter on Tuesday nights. They're amazing, and the love they have for the characters is so heart-warming” (Kurland, 2018).

Dan Goor went on to say that it was “tremendous for everyone working on the show to see this amount of love and support” (Comic Con, 2018). He also added how good he felt about the fact that people reacted consciously to the elements they tried to make, like having a diverse cast and not making jokes at the expense of the characters (Jung, 2018).



Tweet from Dan Goor (co-creator)

 **Melissa Fumero** 
@melissafumero Follow 

I am still processing... don't have all the words.. but.. These last 5 years have been incredible. Thank you for all your love and support. We have the best fans. It's been a huge honor to play Amy and be a part of this tremendous ensemble. NINE NINE!
[#Brooklyn99](#)



12:09 AM - 11 May 2018

12,288 Retweets 60,530 Likes 

 1.9K  12K  61K 

Tweet from Melissa Fumero (actress, plays Amy Santiago)



Tweet from Joe Lo Truglio (actor, plays Charles Boyle)



Tweet from Stephanie Beatriz (actress, plays Rosa Diaz)

The outpour of support reached its peak when celebrities of high standard like Mark Hamill and Guillermo del Toro also commented on the cancellation. Hamill and del Toro, along with other big names such as Lin-Manuel Miranda, Sean Austin, and Seth Meyers, agreed that the show was worthy of continuing and that it was a mistake by FOX to cancel it in the first place. These five celebrities felt connected by their love for the show, so they even went on to create a group chat together, which was named The Guardians of the 99. A fan (Twitter user @MulaneySNL) even edited a poster of the Marvel movie Guardians of the Galaxy to feature the faces of the celebrities that came together to save the 99.



Tweet from Mark Hamill (actor)



A screenshot of a tweet from Lin-Manuel Miranda. The tweet is in all caps and reads: "RENEW BROOKLYN NINE NINE I ONLY WATCH LIKE 4 THINGS THIS IS ONE OF THE THINGS #RenewB99". The tweet is dated 10:55 PM - 10 May 2018. It has 75,699 retweets and 215,091 likes. The interface shows a "Following" button and a row of profile pictures of users who interacted with the tweet.

Lin-Manuel Miranda 
@Lin_Manuel

Following 

RENEW BROOKLYN NINE NINE
I ONLY WATCH LIKE 4 THINGS
THIS IS ONE OF THE THINGS
#RenewB99

10:55 PM - 10 May 2018

75,699 Retweets 215,091 Likes

1.4K 76K 215K 

Tweet from Lin-Manuel Miranda (composer and actor)



A screenshot of a tweet from Guillermo del Toro. The tweet is in title case and reads: "Brooklyn Nine-Nine has given us fully human characters, beautiful, powerful, flawed, vulnerable, majestic... In whichever form, B99 must return. It will. And I will be there to watch. And, it is my hope that I hope that, this time, a lot more people do too." The tweet is dated 10:36 PM - 11 May 2018. It has 26,618 retweets and 116,088 likes. The interface shows a "Follow" button and a row of profile pictures of users who interacted with the tweet.

Guillermo del Toro 
@RealGDT

Follow 

Brooklyn Nine-Nine has given us fully human characters, beautiful, powerful, flawed, vulnerable, majestic... In whichever form, B99 must return. It will. And I will be there to watch. And, it is my hope that I hope that, this time, a lot more people do too.

10:36 PM - 11 May 2018

26,618 Retweets 116,088 Likes

536 27K 116K 

Tweet from Guillermo del Toro (filmmaker)

Sean Astin 
@SeanAstin Follow 

Here's the thing about Brooklyn 99 being cancelled, I don't want it to be. I love all of those people & they earned the right 2 have a final season victory lap where I could emotionally prepare. Don't know them. Have nothing 2 do with the show. I'm just a fan who deserves better.

2:43 AM - 11 May 2018

17,414 Retweets **97,181** Likes



 465  17K  97K 

Tweet from Sean Astin (actor)

 **Lin-Manuel Miranda** 
@Lin_Manuel Following 

Oh shoot Seth got Peralta to wave to the group chat [#Brooklyn99](#)

 **Mark Hamill + 3** 



4:41 PM - 15 May 2018

2,217 Retweets **25,265** Likes 

 Mark Hamill, Guillermo del Toro, Seth Meyers and 2 others

 240  2.2K  25K 

Tweet from Lin-Manuel Miranda (composer and actor)

 **Mark Hamill** 
@HamillHimself Following

Thanks for the wave, [@AndySamberg](#) - here's one right back at ya! Btw, [@Lin_Manuel](#) named our fanboy group-chat (me, [@RealGDT](#) [@SeanAstin](#) [@sethmeyers](#)) [#GuardiansOfThe99](#). Better than my suggestion: [#Benign99ers](#), don't ya think? [#Brooklyn99StrikesBack](#)

6:10 PM - 15 May 2018

1,728 Retweets 13,640 Likes 

 197  1.7K  14K 

Tweet from Mark Hamill (actor)



Mark Hamill ✓

@HamillHimself

Following

COMING SOON?!!! Be afraid... Be VERY afraid...

#MarkHamQuill #GrootManuel #GamoraAstin #GuillermoDraxToro #SethMeyeRocket



10:33 PM - 15 May 2018

11,928 Retweets 59,497 Likes



704 12K 59K

Tweet from Mark Hamill (actor)

What happened on May 11th, 2018?

On May 11th, roughly 27 hours after the cancellation, the showrunners received the news that NBC said yes (Snierston, 2018b). The network, who already owned several of Mike Schur's (co-creator) shows, agreed to broadcast Brooklyn Nine-Nine for a sixth season of 13 episodes. The show was already being produced by NBC's studio, so it was a decision that made sense. NBC Chairman Bob Greenblatt stated that ever since they sold the series to FOX he had regretted letting it get away, and that he had always wanted to have Brooklyn Nine-Nine on NBC (Roberts, 2018). The cast and crew, non-surprisingly, were thrilled by the renewal and they shared their feelings with the fans, who they claimed were the key to it.



Tweet from Dan Goor (co-creator)

 **Melissa Fumero** 
@melissafumero Follow 

#Brooklyn99 IS COMING BACK FOR SEASON 6 YOU GUYS ON NBC!!!! You did this!! You got loud and you were heard and you saved our show!! Thank you!! Thank you to NBC!! NINE NINE!!!!

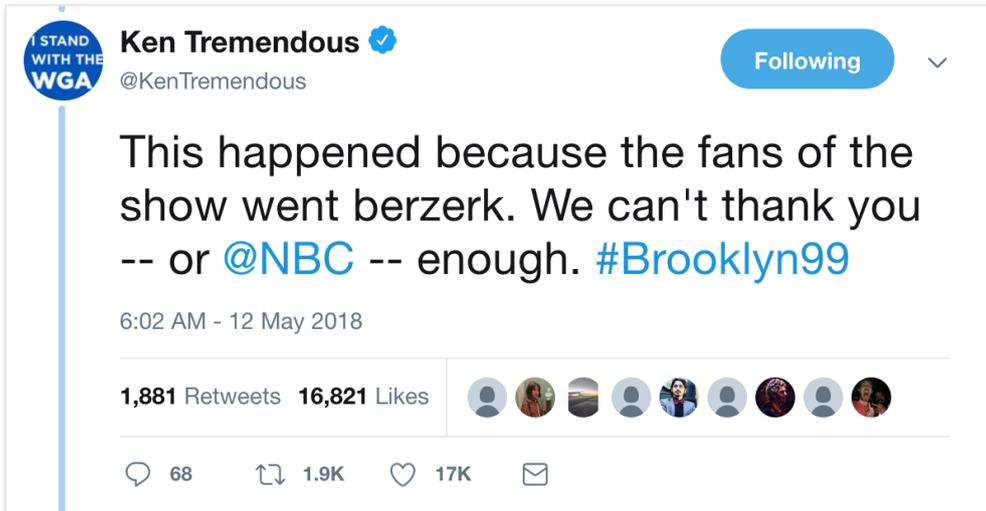


6:02 AM - 12 May 2018

35,702 Retweets 112,563 Likes 

 1.5K  36K  113K 

Tweet from Melissa Fumero (actress, plays Amy Santiago)



Tweet from Mike Schur (co-creator)



Tweet from Andy Samberg (actor, plays Jake Peralta)



Tweet from Stephanie Beatriz (actress, plays Rosa Diaz)



Tweet from Joe Lo Truglio (actor, plays Charles Boyle)



Tweet from Chelsea Peretti (actress, plays Gina Linetti)

After the renewal was confirmed, Greenblatt talked about the fan outrage:

“We love the fans and we love when they’re vocal. I was getting messages from all kinds of people Friday and Saturday saying the show was trending on Twitter. ... It was great to know the fans were outraged, but we were too. We were right there with them. We love when fans yell and scream on Twitter, but we hope that transfers and they watch the show.” (Hibberd, 2018b).

The sixth season of the show was supposed to have 13 episodes and was scheduled to premiere on NBC in early 2019. At everyone’s surprise, in September 2018 NBC ordered an additional five episodes for the new season, bringing the total to 18 episodes (Petski, 2018). When the new season premiered in January 2019, the ratings went up 71% from the previous season, gathering 3.6 million viewers (Hibberd, 2019). The rest of season 6 went on to have an average of 2.2 million viewers, which represented the biggest ratings in 3 years for the show (Table 6). NBC clearly saw the potential of the show and announced the renewal for a seventh season on February 2019 (Otterson, 2019).

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The cancellation and renewal of Brooklyn Nine-Nine represents a perfect example of Jenkins' (2006) convergence culture, since it displays how consumers became active participants of the media gears and showcases the multiple ways that commercial culture and grassroots culture can intertwine. However, it greatly differs from past campaigns to save other TV-shows. In this case, the campaign was purely digital, and made strategic use of Twitter's features such as the short length of the messages and the use of hashtags. Past, more analogue campaigns, like the Star Trek campaign in the sixties, didn't have these resources, so they worked with hand written letters and mailed items. This was a clear obstacle against speed and efficiency, which is why it took months to save Star Trek, but Brooklyn Nine-Nine did it in just over 24 hours (Savage, 2014; Roberts, 2018).

This particular case also differs from other more recent campaigns in the fact that it was not organised, but instead emerged from grassroots individual fans who shared a feeling of anger and disappointment. As an example, the Fringenuity campaign in 2010 was coordinated strategically for months by leaders who organised the actions to be taken, the timings, and the hashtags to use (Guerrero-Pico, 2017). In contrast, the Brooklyn campaign didn't have the time to do that, since the cancellation was sudden and didn't build up from previous rumours. The limited-time factor defined the campaign and therefore restricted it from having a strategically organised baseline. Instead, the protest snowballed from upset fans who all agreed on the fact that the cancellation was a mistake and rooted for another network to come to the rescue.

Since the middle of the twentieth century until today, fans have become attached to media products, and therefore have felt compelled to take action when something happens to them. The fact that Brooklyn Nine-Nine specifically has such a dedicated following comes from the fact that the stories they tell are real and human and relate to emotions that audiences can connect with. This show

and its diversity and representation have actual impact in the lives of the fans, and as Jill Macklem (one of the people leading the current #FightForWynonna campaign to try and save the show Wynonna Earp) puts it,

“when fans speak passionately about the wider impact of how this show is more than just a show — that it is impacting lives, that it has made a positive impact in the world at large, that it is an important statement in a broader social issue — I absolutely think that is something that executives cannot and do not get from pure numbers.” (Clarke, 2019).

Perhaps the most relevant part of this case comes down to the concept of earned media. The show itself (and NBC once it picked it up) got an amount of publicity that has incalculable value. The fans worked *for* the show when they decided it was worth saving and started protesting on its behalf. The reach that the campaign had affected the show directly in the sense that it made it known. People talked about it and recommended and defended it which in turn caught the attention of non-fans who slowly became interested in it too, hence the higher ratings on the new season.

Furthermore, NBC took this opportunity to grab this known and loved show and turn it into the successful hit they knew it could be. A possible hypothesis could be that NBC was planning on picking up the show regardless, since Greenblatt had always wanted to, but the outpour of support that the cancellation sprout gave them the confidence they needed to actually do it. What I mean by that is that even if the network was willing to bet on this show, it is possible that they had doubts, seeing the ratings drop on FOX for the past seasons. This is why I argue that the fidelity that the fans showed for the series could have given them the confidence and the security that the show could do well. And it did.

However charming one may find the love fans have for the show, it is important to note that what they did was, essentially, unpaid work. The fans promoted the show like no marketing campaign could, and it cost the network a total of \$0. It is debatable whether the network had this in mind or if it just *happened* to help

them, but I would not rule out the possibility that NBC saw the FOX cancellation as an opportunity for free advertising. Even if the fans did it out of pure, uninterested love (Jenkins, 1992), they should probably consider who do their actions benefit.

It is impossible to know how much the Twitter outrage actually influenced the decision to save the show (at least without direct contact with the people in charge of that), but one could argue that maybe the campaign had little to nothing to do with it. As I said, it looked like NBC was looking to get the show on their network *anyway*, so it's possible that they knowingly used the eventual reaction to the cancellation as a marketing tool before saving the show and proclaiming themselves as heroes.

Regardless of the network's intentions, it would be fatal to ignore the impact that the fans have when it comes to a show (in the decision-making or just as a following base). The show would not exist in the first place if there wasn't an audience and a fandom dedicated to watching it and recommending it to others. The media ecosystem has become emancipatory, and in this bidirectional conversation where everyone has the potential to be a transmitter (Enzensberger, 1974), fans are now a valuable player. McQuail (2010) claims that "the communications revolution has generally shifted the 'balance of power' from the media to the audience", which perhaps is inaccurate: fans do not hold the power. At least not yet. But there's no denying that fan power is increasing, and they will soon become more and more influential in deciding whether a show lives or dies.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE LINES

This text was developed as a way to establish a frame work for discussion and debate around the topic of fan power. The methodology used and the nature of the sample lack generalizability, although they function as a baseline for any further work that could be done with more resources. It would be interesting, in the future, to do a qualitative analysis of the actual 1.4M Tweets, which I was unable to do due to shortage of resources. It would also be valuable to discover the amount of impact these campaigns to save TV-shows actually have on the decision-making process, but that seems unmanageable. Even with the necessary contacts to materialize what goes into saving one TV-show, the results might not be generalizable, since it is a complex process that depends on multiple variables.

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APPENDIX

TABLE 1

FOX scripted shows 2013-14		18-49 demo	Year-to-year change	Viewers (mil)	Year-to-year change
1	Sleepy Hollow (renewed)	2.60		7.46	
2	Bones (renewed)	1.72	-19.61%	6.61	-14.75%
3	24: Live Another Day	1.76	-39.90%	6.33	-31.74%
4	Almost Human (cancelled)	1.88		6.24	
5	The Following (renewed)	1.76	-33.05%	5.19	-34.84%
6	The Simpsons (renewed)	2.21	-11.14%	5.02	-7.24%
7	Family Guy (renewed)	2.34	-13.26%	4.71	-13.18%
8	New Girl (renewed)	2.09	-9.02%	4.31	-2.16%
9	Surviving Jack (cancelled)	1.13		4.30	
10	Brooklyn Nine... (renewed)	1.74		3.98	
11	Dads (cancelled)	1.39		3.50	
12	American Dad! (renewed)	1.63	-23.87%	3.35	-23.77%
13	Glee (renewed)	1.22	-44.86%	3.28	-43.97%
14	Bob's Burgers (renewed)	1.47	-24.07%	3.17	-22.75%
15	Rake (cancelled)	0.75		3.11	
16	The Mindy Project (renewed)	1.27	-18.99%	2.55	-16.65%
17	Raising Hope (cancelled)	0.65	-59.09%	1.97	-47.85%
18	Enlisted (cancelled)	0.59		1.77	

Table 1: ratings for FOX scripted shows 2013-2014 (The Nielsen Company, 2014. Retrieved from TV Series Finale, 2014).

TABLE 2

FOX scripted shows 2014-15		18-49 demo	Year-to-year change	Viewers (mil)	Year-to-year change
1	Empire (renewed)	5.09		12.97	
2	Gotham (renewed)	2.19		6.10	
3	The Simpsons (renewed)	2.15	-2.73%	4.82	-4.03%
4	Family Guy (renewed)	2.13	-9.09%	4.20	-10.90%
5	Brooklyn Nine-Nine (renewed)	1.69	-3.07%	3.54	-11.02%
6	The Last Man on Earth (renewed)	1.63		3.99	
7	Sleepy Hollow (renewed)	1.55	-40.36%	4.57	-38.73%
8	New Girl (renewed)	1.31	-37.17%	2.72	-36.86%
9	Bones (renewed)	1.24	-28.01%	5.37	-18.83%
10	Bob's Burgers (renewed)	1.22	-16.78%	2.58	-18.71%
11	The Following (cancelled)	1.12	-36.59%	3.45	-33.45%
12	The Mindy Project (cancelled)	1.05	-17.02%	2.31	-9.54%
13	Backstrom (cancelled)	1.01		3.99	
14	Red Band Society (cancelled)	0.85		2.81	
15	Gracepoint (cancelled)	0.84		3.63	
16	Mulaney (cancelled)	0.71		1.74	
17	Glee (ended)	0.67	-45.15%	2.02	-38.27%
18	Weird Loners (cancelled)	0.62		1.53	

Table 2: ratings for FOX scripted shows 2014-2015 (The Nielsen Company, 2015. Retrieved from TV Series Finale, 2015).

TABLE 3

FOX scripted shows 2015-16		18-49 demo	Yr-to-yr change	Viewers (millions)	Yr-to-yr change
1	Empire (renewed)	4.42	-13.14%	11.463	-11.62%
2	The X-Files	3.19		9.534	
3	Bones (renewed/ending)	0.99	-20.35%	4.868	-9.36%
4	Rosewood (renewed)	1.34		4.787	
5	Lucifer (renewed)	1.15		4.562	
6	Gotham (renewed)	1.40	-35.89%	4.091	-32.94%
7	The Simpsons (renewed)	1.74	-19.24%	3.999	-17.03%
8	Family Guy (renewed)	1.47	-30.94%	3.091	-34.37%
9	Sleepy Hollow (renewed)	0.83	-46.65%	3.065	-32.94%
10	Scream Queens (renewed)	1.09		2.788	
11	The Last Man on Earth (renewed)	1.15	-29.62%	2.747	-31.17%
12	Brooklyn Nine-Nine (renewed)	1.21	-30.38%	2.733	-31.34%
13	Grandfathered (cancelled)	0.92		2.728	
14	New Girl (renewed)	1.12	-14.74%	2.517	-7.48%
15	Second Chance (cancelled)	0.64		2.430	
16	Bob's Burgers (renewed)	1.05	-14.01%	2.288	-11.32%
17	The Grinder (cancelled)	0.75		2.176	
18	Minority Report (cancelled)	0.72		2.075	
19	Cooper Barrett's Guide (cancelled)	0.76		1.755	
20	Bordertown (cancelled)	0.70		1.702	

Table 3: ratings for FOX scripted shows 2015-2016 (The Nielsen Company, 2016. Retrieved from TV Series Finale, 2016).

TABLE 4

FOX scripted shows 2016-17		18-49 demo	Yr-to-yr change	Viewers (millions)	Yr-to-yr change
1	Empire (renewed)	2.74	-37.93%	7.616	-33.56%
2	Lethal Weapon (renewed)	1.57		6.536	
3	24: Legacy (cancelled)	1.40		5.124	
4	Star (renewed)	1.34		4.222	
5	The Simpsons (renewed)	1.77	1.54%	4.146	3.67%
6	Lucifer (renewed)	1.04	-29.21%	3.654	-19.90%
7	Shots Fired (ended)	0.88		3.477	
8	APB (cancelled)	0.78		3.427	
9	Gotham (renewed)	1.08	-23.18%	3.325	-18.72%
10	Bones (ended)	0.81	-18.52%	3.226	-31.16%
11	Son of Zorn (cancelled)	1.29		3.032	
12	Pitch (cancelled)	0.83		3.032	
13	Rosewood (cancelled)	0.66	-50.88%	3.030	-36.70%
14	The Mick (renewed)	1.10		2.959	
15	Family Guy (renewed)	1.29	-11.94%	2.785	-9.91%
16	Prison Break (ended)	0.96		2.615	
17	Bob's Burgers (renewed)	0.94	-10.61%	2.103	-8.10%
18	The Last Man on Earth (renewed)	0.89	-22.90%	2.124	-22.70%
19	Brooklyn Nine-Nine (renewed)	0.86	-29.23%	2.109	-22.84%
20	New Girl (renewed)	0.93	-16.56%	2.059	-18.22%
21	Sleepy Hollow (cancelled)	0.50	-39.81%	1.918	-37.44%
22	The Exorcist (renewed)	0.68		1.914	
23	Making History (cancelled)	0.67		1.550	
24	Scream Queens (cancelled)	0.61	-44.50%	1.445	-48.16%

Table 4: ratings for FOX scripted shows 2016-2017 (The Nielsen Company, 2017. Retrieved from TV Series Finale, 2017).

TABLE 5

FOX scripted shows 2017-18		18-49 demo	Yr-to-yr change	Viewers (millions)	Yr-to-yr change
1	9-1-1 (renewed)	1.65		6.318	
2	Empire (renewed)	1.84	-33.01%	5.656	-25.73%
3	The Resident (renewed)	1.02		4.543	
4	The Orville (renewed)	1.25		4.327	
5	Star (renewed)	1.32	-1.69%	4.120	-2.42%
6	Lethal Weapon (renewed)	0.99	-37.22%	4.113	-37.07%
7	The X-Files (ended)	0.96	-69.90%	3.742	-60.75%
8	The Simpsons (renewed)	1.42	-19.61%	3.450	-16.79%
9	The Gifted (renewed)	1.01		3.305	
10	Lucifer (renewed by Netflix)	0.83	-20.45%	3.297	-9.77%
11	Gotham (renewed/ending)	0.77	-28.67%	2.563	-22.93%
12	Family Guy (renewed)	1.13	-12.72%	2.496	-10.39%
13	LA to Vegas (cancelled)	0.73		2.316	
14	Bob's Burgers (renewed)	1.01	7.38%	2.237	6.36%
15	Ghosted (cancelled)	0.84		2.164	
16	The Mick (cancelled)	0.73	-34.02%	2.100	-29.03%
17	The Last Man on Earth (cancelled)	0.79	-11.48%	1.950	-8.18%
18	Brooklyn Nine-Nine (renewed by NB)	0.74	-14.39%	1.758	-16.66%
19	New Girl (ended)	0.58	-37.63%	1.475	-28.35%
20	The Exorcist (cancelled)	0.41	-39.01%	1.322	-30.95%

Table 5: ratings for FOX scripted shows 2017-2018 (The Nielsen Company, 2018. Retrieved from TV Series Finale, 2018).

TABLE 6

NBC scripted shows 2018-19		18-49 demo	Yr-to-yr change	Viewers (millions)	Yr-to-yr change
1	This Is Us (renewed)	2.01	-34.38%	8.317	-25.31%
2	Chicago Med (renewed)	1.20	-1.64%	8.236	24.50%
3	Chicago Fire (renewed)	1.21	11.57%	8.103	35.52%
4	Chicago PD (renewed)	1.10	-8.72%	7.097	10.96%
5	Manifest (renewed)	1.25		6.482	
6	New Amsterdam (renewed)	1.06		5.922	
7	The Enemy Within (cancelled)	0.74		4.401	
8	Law & Order: SVU (renewed)	0.85	-32.30%	4.175	-29.77%
9	The Village (cancelled)	0.66		4.122	
10	The Blacklist (renewed)	0.57	-38.42%	4.003	-29.21%
11	Superstore (renewed)	0.83	-17.91%	3.056	-17.42%
12	Will & Grace (renewed)	0.74	-49.83%	3.018	-45.13%
13	Blindspot (renewed/ending)	0.46	-23.95%	2.782	-14.67%
14	The Good Place (renewed)	0.85	-25.36%	2.746	-29.22%
15	I Feel Bad (cancelled)	0.56		2.514	
16	Good Girls (renewed)	0.55	-45.78%	2.320	-47.82%
17	Brooklyn Nine-Nine (renewed)	0.70	-4.93%	2.242	27.54%
18	Midnight, Texas (cancelled)	0.40	-45.77%	2.117	-29.30%
19	AP Bio (cancelled)	0.49	-31.82%	1.951	-26.29%
20	Abby's (cancelled)	0.40		1.687	

Table 6: ratings for NBC scripted shows 2018-2019 (The Nielsen Company, 2019. Retrieved from TV Series Finale, 2019).