



Catfish (2010)

Directors: Henry Joost and Ariel Schulman



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In groups:

- a) Describe the family Nev thinks he knows through facebook and his relationship with them. Give as many details as possible.
- b) Describe the real situation, giving as many details as possible. What is true, what turns out to be wrong?

Questions

- 1) Why is the film called *Catfish*? Who is the catfish?
- 2) Is this a good metaphor for what happens in the film?
- 3) What is the turning-point in the film, i.e. the point when Nev and his friends discover that something is wrong?
- 4) What steps do they take to investigate further? Would you have done the same thing?
- 5) What are their feelings when they arrive at what they believe to be Megan's house and later at Angela's house?
- 6) What, do you think, were Angela's motives for inventing this "living novel"?
- 7) To what extent is a facebook profile ever a true picture of the person behind it?
- 8) Angela says: "A lot of the personalities that came out were just fragments of myself, fragments of things I always wanted to be, never could be." What, in your opinion, does this statement show us about Angela?
- 9) Do you think this film is a documentary, or is it fiction?
- 10) If it is indeed a documentary, do you consider it acceptable to expose Angela to publicity in this way?
- 11) Study the following quotation from David Kirkpatrick's book *The Facebook Effect*:

Several other factors make Facebook unlike any Internet business that preceded it. First, it is both in principle and in practice based on real identity. On Facebook it is as important today to be your real self as it was when the service launched at Harvard in February 2004. Anonymity, role-playing, pseudonyms, and handles have always been routine on the Web – AOL screen name, anyone? But they have little role here. If you invent a persona or too greatly enhance the way you present yourself, you will get little benefit from Facebook. Unless you interact with others as yourself, your friends will either not recognize you or will not befriend you. A critical way other people on Facebook know you are who you say you are is by examining your list of friends. These friends, in effect, validate your identity. To get this circular validation process started you have to use your real name.

Discuss this statement.

- 12) Discuss the joys and dangers of Facebook.



Interview with Angela



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Hot Seat

1. You are Angela. After the publication of the film "Catfish", you are invited to a press conference, where you will be interviewed by journalists.

Prepare yourself for the questions you might possibly be answered during the interview on the "HOT SEAT".

Think about:

- the reasons for your behavior
- how you feel now
- what you would do differently
- if you would act the same way again
- how you feel towards Nev now...
- what would the situation be like if Nev hadn't found out...

Feel free to take notes for the interview.

2. You are a journalist covering the press conference about the film "Catfish". As you have seen the film too, you are keen on meeting Angela and learning more about her motives.

Prepare questions you will be asking during the conference. They can focus on all different kinds of aspects, but especially on the following aspects:

- her motives
- her situation
- her dreams and plans for the future
- what the situation would be like if Nev hadn't found out
- what has changed in her life so far.

Don't forget to take notes.

Feel free to practice the interview in your class. The final interview will be acted out at the meeting in Parma.