

Death Announced of Digital Content Pioneer & Cable TV Marketing Strategist Sheri Herman

Herman was the visionary who spearheaded the world's first online interactive TV show and who in 1996 famously proclaimed publicly: "Eyeballs will move from TV to PC"



Sheri Herman – 1955-2026

New York City - August 26th 2026. The death has been announced of Sheri Herman - the cable TV marketing executive behind the launches of cable channels **E! Entertainment TV** and the **Fashion Channel** – who in the late 1990s devised a successful new strategy for music programming on cable TV that was effectively emulated a decade later by **Vevo**. Most consequently she was also a pioneer of the strategies and infrastructure in the nascent intersect of TV and the internet that subsequently evolved into the present-era digital industry

Her achievements as a pioneer arose from her role as the President of **American Cybercast** – through which she financed, executive produced, launched and marketed **The Spot** - the world's first interactive episodic TV show on the fledgling internet. Herman championed and ushered in elements completely unheard of in 1995 that are standard-issue in today's media universe. [See addendum of summary of digital strategies Herman pioneered that became commonplace]

She became noted for publicly proselytizing what was described then as "new media". On October 3rd 1996 she was quoted in Variety stating unequivocally: **"Eyeballs will move from TV to PC"** - a prediction that seemed fanciful at the time but that 30 years later is our lived reality.

Herman started her career in 1980 as a TV commercials producer in New York at **AC&R** – the famed boutique division of the Ted Bates Worldwide advertising agency. Age just 23 she bonded with one of the firm's primary clients - cosmetics mogul **Estée Lauder** who became her first mentor.

In 1983, following a period in the marketing department of **The Entertainment Channel** she was recruited to join the powerful multi-system operator **United Cable** in Denver as Director of Programming. She was responsible for negotiating carriage agreements between United Cable and many of the new cable networks launching in the mid-80s gold rush of satellite TV following the deregulation of the industry triggered by the Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984.

In that capacity she worked with multiple networks including **the Disney Channel, the Discovery Channel, the Arts & Entertainment Network, Lifetime, ESPN, MTV, VH1, Nickelodeon, TNN (the Nashville Network)** and **the Home Shopping Network**.

In that era United Cable increasingly collaborated with the cable operations of its Denver rivals TCI – run by media titan **John Malone**. The companies eventually merged and formed **Liberty Media**. Malone was famed for fostering and encouraging young executive talent. And he had a reputation for championing women in a then male-dominated industry. Malone spotted Herman's skills early on and became her second mentor - giving her significant responsibilities before she was even 30.

Consequently her role expanded to evaluating new cable networks for funding by United and TCI. She oversaw existing investments including the **Discovery Channel**, **QVC** and the **Fashion Channel**. She was credited with helping save the Discovery Channel from imminent bankruptcy by negotiating over thirty new output deals resulting in millions of dollars of new funding. She also brought over twenty cable TV operators into equity positions in QVC over a 60-day period.

In 1988 she was head-hunted to become Senior VP of Marketing for a start-up cable channel based in L.A. named **Movietime** that ran film trailers 24/7. When former VH1 president **Lee Masters** joined the following year she became one of his key executives in transforming the fledgling channel into **E! Entertainment Television** - one of the most successful new cable channels of the decade.

Herman was responsible for all aspects of brand development, marketing, publicity, promotion and sponsorships. During her years at E! the network's subscriber base zoomed from 2 million to 55 million. In that period her marketing department won multiple awards for campaign excellence.

Herman worked at E! until 1992. She then left the company to undertake other ventures that significantly expanded her skill set to include programming and production. In the late 1990s she was lured back to work at E! in the role of Senior Vice President of Content & Business Development.

Comments **Jarl Mohn** President Emeritus of NPR – previously Founding President and CEO of E! Entertainment Television [and then known as **Lee Masters**]:

“Sheri was a true creative force. She not only could spot great creative talent to engage with us at E! she was wildly creative herself. She also brought passion and conviction to everything she worked on. Indifference was not in her tool kit. That was underscored by her remarkable subsequent achievements as a pioneer in incorporating new technologies and branding in entertainment.”

After her first four years at E! in 1993 Herman joined boutique L.A. advertising agency **Fattal & Collins**. She was brought in to leverage her longstanding personal relationship with telecommunications giant **US West** who wanted to launch a new interactive TV channel. After much creative brainstorming led by Herman, agency owner **Russell Collins** decided to create a new company named **American Cybercast** – with Herman as President.

It was at American Cybercast that she spearheaded the launch of four different episodic digital shows that were viewable on the then nascent world-wide-web – when the internet was still accessed by dial-up connections! She raised over \$7 million in financing from **Intel**, **TCI**, **Softbank** and others.

She was the driving force behind the success of the high-profile first-ever web soap opera titled **The Spot** which launched in 1995. She ensured that the drawing board concept of aspiring filmmaker Scott Zakarin was funded, created, produced and marketed. She conceived the incorporation of paid product placements, advertiser brands, and sponsored hyperlink ties directly into the characters' daily digital journals. She was clear and vocal in the media that this was a future path for entertainment.

Comments **Russell Collins** - Founder of American Cybercast:

“Sheri Herman was nothing if not fearless. American Cybercast had a steep hill to climb from the popular excitement around ‘The Spot’, its premiere show, to a company structure with close to a hundred employees and \$10 million in funding. Her determination was boundless and fierce, and this is how I will always remember her... sitting at a table with representatives from some of the largest and most recognizable tech and entertainment companies in the world who had invested in us and pulling them all along with assurance and calmness and her characteristic magnetic charm.”

In 1997 she was sought out to become Senior Vice President of Programming & Production of the **Access Entertainment Network (AEN)** a company that traded graveyard hours of cable TV airtime to infomercial companies. The company was seeking a fresh business model.

In the wake of MTV and VH1 abandoning their original core mission of playing music videos Herman identified a new need of both record companies and music fans. Record labels wanted their music to have better exposure. Music-lovers wanted a replacement for their (now comparatively music video-free) MTV. Herman conceived a new paradigm to satisfy both sides. She transitioned AEN into incorporating including major blocks of program time to present music videos and related content with interactive links enabling consumer purchase. A radical first.

She secured financing and full support from all the major record labels. This satisfied the respective needs of the music industry and consumers. She established programs synergized with brands such as Best Buy, Borders and Spin Magazine. This all provided significant revenue to the network. AEN was very successful with this business concept and it ran successfully for several years.

Herman's success at AEN proved that an alternative, interactive conduit could successfully challenge legacy music television. In 2009 new challenges from the success of YouTube caused music heavyweights Sony, Universal and EMI to collaborate in seeking a new dynamic to get their music exposed – **Vevo**. Herman's 1997 business model for AEN had laid the structural blueprint for what became Vevo. It was a framework that Vevo successfully adapted for the internet age of 2009. As always Herman was ahead of the curve...

In 1999 she formed her own consultancy **SLH Communications** offering her expertise in marketing, programming and business development in both traditional and new media. She became in-demand to a diverse range of clients ranging from entertainers and executives to start-ups and major brands.

Her clients included: **TV Guide, Barnes & Noble, House of Blues, Hilton Hotels, The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, The Family Channel, Fox Latin America, US West, Tsunami Entertainment, Body By Jake, Jon Bon Jovi, The Bangles, Erykha Badu, Al Jarreau**, producer/humorist **Martin Lewis**, cultural branding guru **Heidi Richman** and the global beauty platform **Cosmoprof**. She successfully developed and launched new initiatives for these entertainers, executives, personalities and companies that resulted in incremental revenue streams and brand extensions into areas of new media.

In 2007 she was the victim of a traumatizing hit-and-run car accident. Her health was severely jeopardized and she reluctantly decided to end her successful professional career very prematurely. She was just 52. Her working career spanned only 27 years – but she made a considerable mark. In her early retirement she focused her time on several passions including writing and political/social causes dear to her.

Producer, marketing strategist and humorist **Martin Lewis**, whose successful promotional campaigns include the films *The King's Speech*, *Crash* and multiple **Beatles** and **Monty Python** projects, worked as a consultant with Herman during her tenures with E!, American Cybercast, AEN and her own SLH Communications company. He was friends with her for nearly 40 years:

“Sheri Herman was a remarkable, vibrant spirit. She had a relentless thirst for charting new paths forward. She was never satisfied with the status quo. She was inventive, creative, exhilarating. She proselytized new media, new approaches, new everything. In person she was vivacious and generous to those of us who were fortunate enough to enter her circle. She was truly adored...”

Herman was born and raised in Philadelphia. Her parents were Leatrice – a successful classical singer and Bernard – a senior textile technician for the iconic Botany 500 clothing brand. She was a graduate of the Philadelphia High School for Girls and subsequently earned a Bachelor of Arts in Communications, graduating magna cum laude from Temple University.

Herman received her entrée to the advertising world through a fellow Philadelphian - noted director **Lee Tredanari** who in the 1960s had fashioned TV commercials for Presidents JFK and LBJ. In 1980 Tredanari introduced the young Sheri Herman to his Madison Avenue friends Alvin Chereskin and Stephen Jay Rose – the principals of the noted boutique advertising agency AC&R. The partners were instantly beguiled by the young Herman and hired her on the spot.

She was a proud American, a proud Jew and proud of her family heritage Ukrainian (maternal) and Lithuanian (paternal). In her earlier years she studied dance and was a member of the Janosik Polish folk dance company

There is a memorial website: www.SheriHerman.com

Memories & photographs can be sent to: Memories@SheriHerman.com

Sheri Lynn Herman – born Philadelphia May 21st 1955 - died in Florida August 6th 2026 at the age of 71 - peacefully in her sleep of heart failure. She is survived by her sister the opera singer **Nadine Herman**.

Further Information/Photographs:

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***The iconic logo for E! Entertainment TV
art-directed by Sheri Herman***



***The key-art for “The Spot”
spearheaded by Sheri Herman***