

The “Psychological Warfare” Behind the Scenes of *America’s Next Top Model*

In an *Insider* report, former ANTM contestants and employees recount horror stories from their time on the show: “I felt like my life was being put on the line for ratings.”



It wasn't all sunshine and smizes on *America's Next Top Model*. According to [an exposé from *Insider*](#) published on Monday, the environment fostered by *Top Model* host and executive producer **Tyra Banks** and her fellow producers was, in the words of one contestant, tantamount to “psychological warfare.”

An *Insider* story, written by [Kate Taylor](#), recounted that Banks and fellow producers, including *ANTM* creator Ken Mok, exploited contestants emotionally and physically on the extremely popular reality competition series—which ran for 24 seasons from 2003 to 2018. The abuse, as reported by *Insider*, included but was not limited to producers bringing up contestants’ past traumas in order to play on their emotions, as well as intentionally creating dangerous work environments to and cracked her knee to avoid falling into the water. Sixteen years later, she said she still has visible scars from the incident.

Banks's dedication to the show was often to the detriment of its contestants. Banks' obsession with the show led to increasingly dangerous and outlandish challenges, *Insider* posits, noting that producers said that the supermodel “abhorred repetition” and was constantly trying to outdo the previous season.

[In an anecdote from *ANTM* creative director Andrew Patterson](#), Banks allegedly struck a deal with the Greek tourism board to take the contestants to Crete and have them pose in a “Greek Salad” inspired photo shoot covered in oil. “They looked pretty good,” Patterson recalled. “Except I think we used oil, and the girls ended up frying a little in the sun.”

Renewed scrutiny of the series began in the pandemic. Before Harstshorne's tweet, Banks tweeted a blanket apology for what transpired on *America's Next Top Model* in May 2020. “Been seeing the posts about the insensitivity of some past ANTM moments and I agree with you,” Banks tweeted. “Looking back, those were some really off choices.”

