

24 Hours – Vancouver Edition
Cupcake queens get up close and personal
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TELEVISION

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KATES CHWASS, 24 HOURS—On the surface, *The Cupcake Girls* appears to be just another behind-the-scenes television series about two friends running their Vancouver bakery.

Add in a dash of inviting a bottle with a cholera and a girl who used to be a boy and you have a show that's about more than sugary treats.

"I have a personal struggle in every episode," Heather White says during a phone interview with *24 Hours*.

White admits in the first episode of the show that she is recovering alcoholic and her choice to bake in the show raised eyebrows from friends and family.

"They said, 'You brought that up on television?' she said with a bit of a laugh.

Her business partner and boyfriend, Lori Joyce, is fac-

ing her own problem: She's having trouble getting pregnant. She says during the 23 episodes, viewers will watch her step-by-step process through in vitro fertilization.

White says she was hesitant to talk about it on the show. Joyce says the producers convinced her to let them film it.

"There's a reason why this has happened," she says, adding she hopes her experience will help other women going through the same thing.

In the first episode, Joyce is brought to tears as she talks about her fertility issues.

"I want to be a mom. I want to have a family. And that's more important to me than dominating the world of cupcakes," she tells the camera, wondering if her career was the reason she can't get pregnant.

Joyce said the first time she



Lori Joyce, left, and Heather White are best friends who went into the cupcake business together. Their show premieres Sunday on W Network.

shoots on W Network was another person she was willing to reveal this very personal issue.

"W Network is a fab outstanding woman," she says. "We really revealed ourselves."

Along with watching the two friends' views are introduced to White's parents, who work for the two women, and a transitioning transgender employee named Cadence.

Cadence is a transgender woman with long blonde hair who is confident in who she is despite the questioning looks she often gets from customers. In the first episode a little boy starts at her make as her father looks on.

"He said something about me looking like a man," she says. "Well, he is, he's totally going to happen, but it's like, oh, like now. I'm trying to work on it." She says she had other similar experiences, but she's used to the teasing now.

"You've got to be real tough to go through a lot of things that go through, but you've got to do what you've got to do."

Cadence is often getting in trouble, mostly from not wearing her hair net.

"I have a really nice hair for a reason," Cadence says in the first episode, pointing to the pink hair she puts on. "This is

not it."

Joyce says in one episode Cadence is forced to clean the toilet in the bakery's parking lot. "She said she's never f---ing," Joyce says, adding Cadence wants to become a "bitch" like the transgressive people. That's her quote.

The two women, who grew up in Victoria, B.C., admit they had no business plan for Cupcakes, their growing franchise in Vancouver, when they started it in 2008 and they already had no idea how to bake when they opened their first shop. "The idea struck them when they were living in New York City and were out one day grabbing dessert.

"There was something whimsical and different about buying a cupcake," White says.

The Cupcake Girls premiere with two episodes this Sunday April 4 on W Network.