James Stephen Donaldson is the most subscribed Youtuber in the world and Youtube's history boasting over 450 million subscribers

He is known for his…

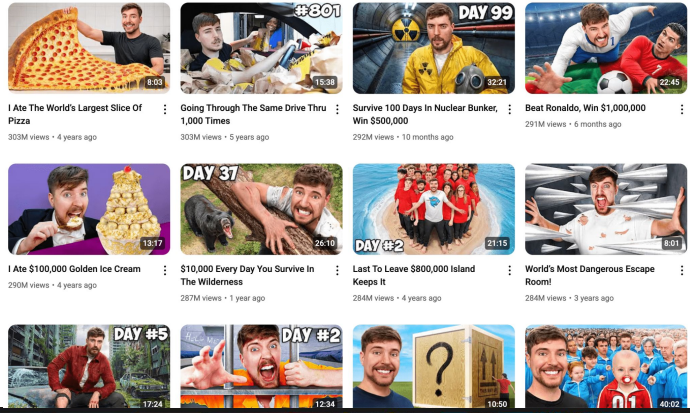
- Big and small charities and philanthropy to communities
- Elaborate and extravagant challenges and videos
- Collaborations with other popular content creators around the world



Elaborate is a small understatement…

Mr. Beast has always been incentivized to make his videos/challenges more extreme than the last.

He has consistently made his most popular videos give out large life changing amounts of money







Beast Games...

In collaboration with *Amazon* and *Off One's Base LLC*, Beast Games was announced. This was Mr. Beast's biggest project yet.

- Weekly episodes starting on December 19th, 2024 and finishing on February 13th, 2025
- Involving 1,000 contestants competing for $5 million dollars
- Involved incentives for contestants that were sprinkled in throughout the production to create drama and tension
- A third season is currently being in production



But It Was Not Without Controversy…

A lawsuit was filed in the state of California with 5 contestants and on the behalf of all other similarly situated for…

- **Misclassification** of Contestants as non-employees (Independent Workers)
- **Failure to Pay** Minimum Wage and Overtime
- **Sexual Harassment** and Hostile Work Environments



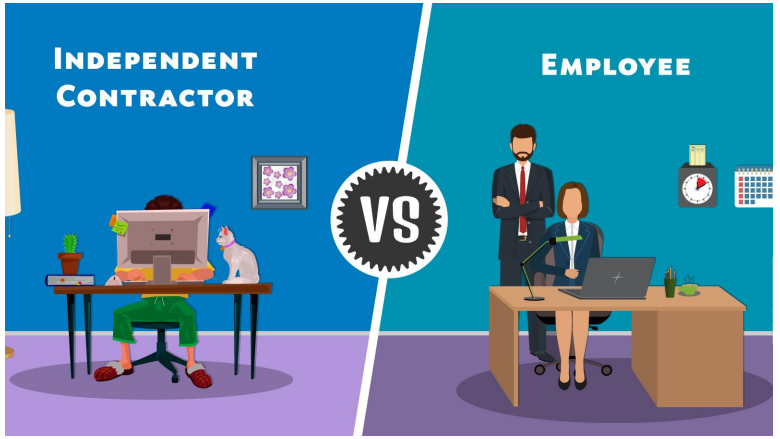


Misclassification of Contestants (Duty of Care)

This is one of the strongest parts of the lawsuit.
Complaints state that:
“Defendants wrongfully and willfully misclassified”

- Under California’s Labor and Workforce Development Agency, an ABC test is used that the hiring agency must satisfy those conditions and prove worker is free from control

- Contestants were controlled on where they ate, slept, wore, and even how they communicated



This level of control argues that they were more like employees than simply independent contractors

Failure to Pay Minimum Wage and Overtime (Duty of Loyalty)

Beast Games contestants were required to be present on specific dates and times “around-the-clock” at different locations.



- California Labor Code section 1196 states that minimum wage must be paid to employees, and paying less than that is unlawful

- California Labor Code 1194 states that any employee to gets less than minimum wage, or legal overtime compensation, is entitled to sue

The lawsuit claims that if the contestants were required to work under production control for long periods and not getting paid, this would violate these two California’s Labor Codes

Sexual Harassment and Hostile Work Environments (Duty of Care)

Defendants claim that production failed to provide a safe and healthy workplace, and female contestants repeatedly suffered from sexual harassment:

- The alleged “How to Succeed in Mr. Beast Production” employee handbooks states that “really do everything you can to empower the boys when filming and help them make content”

- One of the contestants stated “I expected to be challenged, but I didn’t think I would be treated like **nothing**… We honestly **could not** have been respected less as people, much less employees, **if they tried** (Spangler, 2024)



The Ethics Behind the Beast

Beast Games and Mr. Beast have some serious ethical issues that should be addressed including…

- **Profiting** off of people's misfortune
- **Exploiting** contestants for entertainment value
- **Manipulating and Manufacturing** tension and drama
- **Power Imbalances** between contestants and producers
- **Financial Pressure** and coercion
- **Treating Contestants as workers** and denying worker protections
- **Overtime work** and **Sleep Deprivation** (sleep deprivation is a geneva violation)
- **Public Humiliation** and intrusion
- **Exposing Discomfort** of contestants



Who is held mostly liable for this problem? Mr. Beast? Amazon?

But This is NOT an Isolated Incident

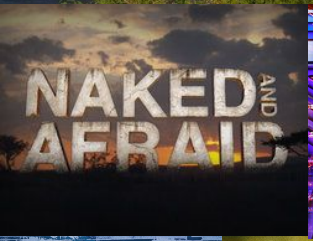
Many, yes, **MANY** of your beloved reality-TV shows have serious legal/ethical problems, whether we admit it or not





































The Reality of Reality-TV

The good majority of the shows on the previous slide all have a these things in common

- **Manufactured Tension and Pressure**
- **Competition**
- **Life-altering Money**
- **Repetitive and Extreme Exhaustion**
- **Trauma Shock**
- **Perpetuating Stereotypes**

While each being unique in their own way, this means that *Beast Games* isn't just a detached situation. It's another repeat of a trend that seemingly has no end; all for the goal of profit

Changes in Law and Policies

There needs to be written policies and laws that apply for all states in digital media production. Three policies that should be implemented are…

- **Blocking or Severely Limit** what is allowed to be broadcasted for safety of contestant
- **Harsh punishments and Repercussions** for organizations who fail to comply to these rules, primarily being financial compensations to the contestants that were impacted
- **Reality Production Participant Protections** with clear informed consent processes, minimum safety standards, labor classification review, no silence clauses, etc.

In specifics to *Beast Games*:

One of the more extreme ethical problems that should be resolved immediately is their treatment of women. Nowhere in their **written guidelines** should they promote “boys being boys” for work culture, profit, or a mixture of both.

Such clauses in writing is more than evident that their leadership needs to be evaluated and revitalized

Thank You!!