

WORKING WOMAN

Cashmere Mafia? The 'Real' Life Of A Working Mom

As an HBO Sex & the City fan, I eagerly awaited the launch of the new television series Cashmere Mafia on ABC. What could be more entertaining than high fashion and girl-time cocktail hours mixed with power-careers, relationship roller coasters and a few kids thrown in for good measure?

It didn't take me long to be hooked on "the Mafia." It's not Emmy-worthy writing or acting; it's just the escapism of

it all. I love to watch the world of high-fashion and dynamic career women on television ... because the contrast between those women and my working mom's life is so dramatic.

TV: The Mafia gathers regularly in chic New York establishments for drinks and gossip. These pow-wows come together via instant message on their "crackberry," and of course, everyone can drop everything and be there on a moment's notice!

Reality: It takes my friends about a month and dozens of email exchanges to pre-plan a night out together. Then on "Girls Night Out," at least two of us drop off due to sick kids, a babysitter cancelling or plain old exhaustion!

TV: The Mafia ooze fashion elegance.

Reality: Their clothes scream 100 percent silk, easily stained and impossible to dry clean. As much as I would love to wear those items, I work from home most of the



Working Woman

Kim Leistner Little

time, and my drooling, shedding dogs don't appreciate my fancy attire.

TV: Everyone has the latest \$5000 purse in varying styles and colors.

Reality: I am a sucker for high fashion, but I create my own version of things on a much reduced budget. My latest accessory splurge was found at Target while buying groceries, dog food and diapers.

TV: Fabulous blow-outs and perfectly

The Mafia gathers regularly in chic New York establishments for drink and gossip ... It takes my friends about a month and dozens of email exchanges to pre-plan a night out together.

styled hair at school drop-offs, during client meetings and of course at their cocktail hour.

Reality: When was the last time I could take a long shower, blow-out my hair AND apply full makeup?

TV: The nanny quits because the family across the street offered her \$900 a week and 3 weeks paid vacation.

Reality: You can find (and afford)

private nannies?

TV: Fast-paced days filled with business development, client meetings and a never-ending inbox, but absent are the visible signs of guilt or missed obligations.

Reality: All of the above, plus bill paying, homework review, errands, school events and dreaded domestic chores. Bonus: the feelings of guilt of not doing enough for everyone come daily!

TV: Lucy Liu's character is publisher overseeing 12 magazines; yet, she is easily flustered when her mom comes to visit her office and sets her up on a blind date.

Reality: Actually, it's the same on both ends here. Moms are always looking out for their kids no matter what successful job you have!

Working moms have a lot to juggle, and we do so with family budgets, scheduling conflicts and those rare days when it all comes together beautifully.

Although two out of the four women in the Mafia have children, you rarely see them on the show. I guess that would burst the bubble of escaping from reality!

But, as much as I love a few days away from the homestead every once in awhile, my days begin and end with my kids, and I wouldn't trade that for any Prada bag.

Kim Leistner Little is founder and president of SpringfieldMoms.org