

MAQDANANDA, PSYCHIC ATTORNEY? FAKE TV COMMERCIAL AIRS IN HAWAII!

It was just a 30 second television commercial. But you had to see it to believe it. Believe it? I don't think so. After all, it was produced by socio-political media satirist, Joey Skaggs. And it is, after all, April 1st.

Skaggs produced the zany commercial with the help of a large team of volunteers who gathered the new age wardrobe, props for the set -- lit candles, incense, a prayer alter, a library of new age books, pyramids, lights, crystals, tarot cards and the attorney's diplomas -- and shot and edited the commercial.

The 30 second spot was placed to run a minimum of 40 times on Kauai and Oahu on CNN Headline News. Using the name Maqdananda, Psychic Attorney, Skaggs told the viewing audience, "Why deal with the legal system without knowing the outcome beforehand. Let me tell you whether to sue or settle, if you'll win or lose. I use non-traditional techniques to determine the outcome of legal decisions."

Computer graphics were used to list the non-traditional techniques: Tarot, Hypnosis, Channeling, Numerology, Astrology, Voodoo, Jinxing, Aura Readings, Miracles, Astral Projection, Chakra Balancing, Visualizations, I Ching, Yoga, Crystal Power, Blessings.

The script continued, "Have you been the victim of a psychic injustice? Are you suffering from psychic surgery malpractice? Do you wish to re-negotiate contracts made during past lives?"

Again computer graphics detailed the forms of law practiced: Accidental Injury or Death, Medical Malpractice, Criminal Defense, Divorce, Wills And Trusts, Zoning.

Back to the script, "There is no statute of limitations in the psychic realm. Let me use my psychic abilities to help you rectify injustices of the past and present. No fee unless I win your case. Call me."

The chest caption said: Maqdananda , Psychic Attorney. And a voice-over said: 1-808-UCADADA.

There was an answering machine hooked up to the phone number to record all incoming inquiries.

Says Skaggs, "I would hope that the satirical nature of the piece speaks for itself. I thought the viewing audience would enjoy the portrayal of an loony attorney, offering absurd services and looking like a new-age hustler. The sad part is that there are people who are willing to suspend their critical judgment to support their own wishful thinking. Not just in relation to this commercial, but in far more critical circumstances. People are constantly being exploited by promises made by those who are in a position to advertise and mold public opinion. Hopefully, this commercial will not only give people a laugh but will help them to realize that they should be more questioning of the messages brought to them by business, government and all other forms of authority."

Joey Skaggs, a New York based conceptual performance artist, has been creating news headlines for over 28 years. He is responsible for numerous famous media hoaxes such as the world's first and only windsurf voyage from Hawaii to Los Angeles; the promotion of a wonder cure extracted from cockroach hormones that was to be a panacea for the ills of mankind; the operation of a cathouse for dogs, where for a fee, males dogs could be serviced by bewitching bitches; the auctioning of sperm from famous rock stars at the thriving celebrity sperm bank; the promotion of the Fat Squad through which, for a fee, commandos would restrain dieters from breaking their diets; the scalping of cadavers to transplant their healthy scalps to bald-headed recipients; and the peddling of a portable confessional booth called Portofess at the Democratic Convention in New York.

Throughout the years many prestigious reporters and television personalities have fallen prey to Joey's elaborate satires. He has hoaxed Good Morning America, Geraldo, Entertainment Tonight, To Tell the Truth, CNN, the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Miami Herald, and the Philadelphia Inquirer, to name a few. But there is always a mission behind Skaggs' good-humored chicanery. He forces reporters and viewers to question and enter into dialogue on vital issues concerning truth in news reportage; morality and sensationalism; the effects the media has on public opinion and taste; and the ways in which viewers may become better media consumers.

Skaggs is an instructor of Media Communications at the School of Visual Arts and a lecturer at colleges and universities around the country. He has, for the last 14 years, called Hawaii his second home.

For more information, contact 808-822-3232.