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GLOBE

Vol. 38 – No. 8 February 19, 1991

85¢/89¢ CANADA

Red faces after TO TELL THE TRUTH falls for fake

WHICH TV CONTESTANT IS KING OF THE HOAXES?



Is it contestant number one . . .



. . . contestant number two . . .



. . . or contestant number three?

NONE! JOEY SKAGGS SCAMMED GAME SHOW, TOO

HAPPY hoaxer Joey Skaggs has pulled the wool over media moguls' eyes – again!

This time, he beat the celebrity panelists of To Tell the Truth at their own game by sending an imposter to fill in for "the real Joey Skaggs."

Asked by bigwigs at Mark Goodson Productions to appear on the show as himself, Skaggs sent an old buddy from New York City, writer and bookstore manager Norman Savage.

"They asked me to be on the show," Skaggs says.

"I thought to myself: 'Here's a freebie for me. The only thing I have to do is get someone to pretend to be me – instead of me pretending to be someone else – and I've got 'em cold.'

"So I got Norman to be me."

Skaggs' hoaxes have already fooled Good Morning America, Entertainment Tonight, CNN and a host of newspapers across the country – but not GLOBE!

A few weeks ago, we exposed his Comacocoon scam that mirrored the movie Total Recall, in which he offered to send his clients on "dream" vacations while they slept in the comfort of his office in New York.

Savage, who appeared as Joey on the episode of the popular game show, says it was a cinch to impersonate his pal.

"Joey sent the producers copies of newspaper clippings about previous pranks he had pulled – but my face was superimposed over his," he explains.

"He also sent them a videotape of 'his' appearance on Entertainment Tonight – another time I pretended to be him and fooled everybody.





Game-show host Lynn Swann (left) introduced the "real" Joey and two pretenders. But the honest-to-goodness Joey is at the right

"From the time I arrived in Los Angeles, everyone thought I was the real Joey," says Savage.

"I had a ball for three days, preparing for the show, giving the producers background material on previous pranks and briefing the two Joey Skaggs impersonators on what answers to give the panelists. All the producers had to do was some proper research and they'd have known I wasn't Joey.

"I'm inches taller and several pounds heavier than he is. I've got curly, salt-and-pepper hair and he's got longish, brown hair.

"Besides, I'm not nearly as good a liar as he is."

Host Lynn Swann, the former Pittsburgh Steelers football star, introduced the three Joey Skaggs – one "real" one, he thought, and two imposters – to the four celebrity panelists: Orson Bean, sex guru Dr. Ruth Westheimer, David Niven Jr. and Kitty Carlisle.

After taking seat No. 1, Savage was grilled by the quartet as they tried to determine who was the "real" Joey Skaggs.

SKAGGS had a good laugh when only longtime panelist Orson Bean picked Savage as the "real" Joey.

"I wouldn't trust any of you, but you even less," said Bean as he cast his ballot for "Joey Skaggs No. 1." "That's why I picked you."

Skaggs adds: "What gave me another huge laugh was the letter I got from Mark Goodson Productions on Jan. 28. They thanked me for being on their show and even asked me if I knew of anyone else they could use on the program! Now that's really opening up a can of worms. They'd better watch out!"

When told about Skaggs' latest dupe, red-faced Goodson executive Ellie Bendes told GLOBE: "These things can happen. We're looking into it."



Orson Bean (left) identified Skaggs' stand-in, bookstore manager Norman Savage, as the true Joey. But fellow celebrity panelists Dr. Ruth Westheimer, David Niven Jr. and Kitty Carlisle were stumped