

Okay, I was hooked by osmosis

As of Wednesday morning of this week, I feel like a free man again, released from a five month sentence. You see, Tuesday night marked the broadcast of the two hour finale of *Canadian Idol*, and I watched, with some emotion as Kingston's Ryan Malcolm was named the winner.

It was the culmination of me being glued to the damned TV for the past five months, during which time I've hardly missed an episode.

Before I endure rolling eyes and shaking heads from the male population out there, my addiction to the show wasn't entirely voluntary.

It was forced upon me—and I faltered. I'll explain. Back in the spring, (hot on the heels of the wrap of *American Idol*), my youngest daughter's best friend decided she'd take a shot at the *Canadian Idol* competition.

Asking my daughter Jen to accompany her to the auditions in Toronto (for moral support and company) the two travelled downtown for that shot at stardom, waiting in line overnight, camped out at Toronto Convention Centre.

Jen's friend was called back for a second audition—no surprise to me, cuz that kid can sing her heart out. Unfortunately, she was eliminated. With that personal connection to the show, the TV was tuned in whenever Jen was at home.

Simultaneously, my third daughter Maggie returned from university. Already a devoted *American Idol* junkie, it was a foregone conclusion we'd watch the show whenever it aired.

In a short time, I became familiar with the final 11 performers, watched them sing, watched them revel in their triumphs and sympathized when they crashed and burned on stage.

I got to know the judges—Jake, Sass, Farley and Zack—and found myself agreeing with their comments at the end of each performance.

In short, I was hooked—hooked by osmosis.

Maggie returned to university the end of

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August, and with her out of the house, I wasn't really forced to watch the show.

But what if she called to discuss it?

I had to watch it, just to make intelligent conversation on the off chance she called.

And she did—each and every week.

Maggie, Jen and I were all rooting for Calgary's Billy Klippert throughout the process, and when he appeared to be in trouble one week, well, I er, ehem.. okay, I voted for him.

Maggie called later that night, saying she'd been having problems getting through to vote—I said I had no problem at all.

"You voted?" she asked.

"Yup, I voted for Billy," I confessed.

"That is sooo cool Dad," she gushed. (I might add that Maggie long ago decided she would willingly bear Billy's children.)

But Billy was eventually voted out so we had to swing our allegiance to our next choice, Ryan.

Monday night of this week, as Ryan did his thing, I was out on assignment, but I rushed home in time to see the recap, before the credits.

Once again, I voted—okay, twice this time.

But it's all over now, and Ryan has been proclaimed Canada's official *Canadian Idol*.

So what am I to do on weeknights now?

I see *Survivor* began this week. And I expect the *Amazing Race 5* will be starting soon.

So I'll probably follow one of them.

After all, ya never know—one of the kids just might call to discuss it.

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