

# I honestly just couldn't help myself

It said very clearly that if you didn't want to know who was going to get booted off the island that night, as well as the possible eventual winner, then don't read any further.

I couldn't help it. I had to read it. I'm so stupid.

*Survivor* is one of only four shows I watch regularly. The others are *Blind Date*, *Ally McBeal* and *Fraser*. But, now it may be ruined for me, and I did it to myself. Why did I have to keep reading?

I should have known better. Sometimes, on videos, during the previews they will advertise the soundtrack for the movie you're just about to watch, and will show highlights. I hate that. I stick my fingers in my ears, squint my eyes, and hum.

I don't like to know things ahead of time, which is why in my early thirties I stopped watching *Roadrunner* cartoons. Even as a kid, I cheered for the coyote to catch the roadrunner and eat him up, and I honestly thought it was going to happen one day. The same with that rascally rabbit, Bugs Bunny. Nothing was ever going to happen to that long-eared, carrot-chomping pest. Even when Elmer Fudd blasted him in the face with a shotgun, nothing bad happened. There was just no point watching anymore.

In the majority of movies or television programs, it's not difficult to predict the outcome, but I think we force ourselves not to think about it. We enter the fantasy and accept it, at least until something jumps up and reminds us that it's not real life.

I used to watch a soap opera, *Santa Barbara*, every single day. I admit it. I got caught up and couldn't bear to miss an episode. Then one day, one of the main characters was switched and played by somebody else. Just like that.

I said, "Helllooooo!"

That was the last time I ever watched it. I must



## On the loose

with MURRAY TOWNSEND

have known all along that it wasn't real life, but I just didn't want to be reminded of it.

Some celebrated prime time shows have done similar transitions out of necessity. Remember when they changed Darrin on *Bewitched*? That was a shocker. I could never get into the show after that because I couldn't look at the new Darrin without being reminded of the original Darrin.

Incidentally, I watch reruns of that show now and it drives me nuts. How come sometimes Samantha has to only wiggle her nose for something to happen, and other times she has to say a spell? And who in their right mind is going to spend hours cleaning the house when all they have to do is zap it clean. Also, believe me, if my wife is a witch, one with magical powers that is, I'm going to take full advantage. "Zap us to Hawaii to watch the sunset, honey."

Sometimes, they'll switch actors in a series and it won't matter. *Seinfeld's* father at the end was not the original one. It didn't affect the show, so it was no big deal. When they switched a main actor in *MASH* it was okay too, because the new one was as good or better than the old one.

In *Rosanne*, however, they switched Becky, and it did matter, partly because the new Becky was such a lousy actor, and partly because Becky was no longer Becky.

Sometimes a show will ruin itself for me, usually in its latter stages as they try to do something to pump the ratings. In the *Flintstones*, for example, they added Kazoo, the alien. What was that all about? Talking prehistoric animals weren't enough?

Television shows have been known to shoot themselves in the foot for different reasons, often because they're not sure of an actor's availability. *Dallas* was never the same after a new season started with Bobby having just dreamed the previous season. Okay. Whatever.

I'm a little worried about two of my other favourite shows now.

Who is going to want to go on *Blind Date* now when they know that virtually everyone is made fun of? Maybe only the same types that eventually went on Jerry Springer, knowing there was going to be a big fight. In other words, morons.

And on *Fraser*, on last season's finale, Niles and Daphne ran away together. Part of the attraction of that show is that somehow those two never quite seem to connect. Is this going to ruin it?

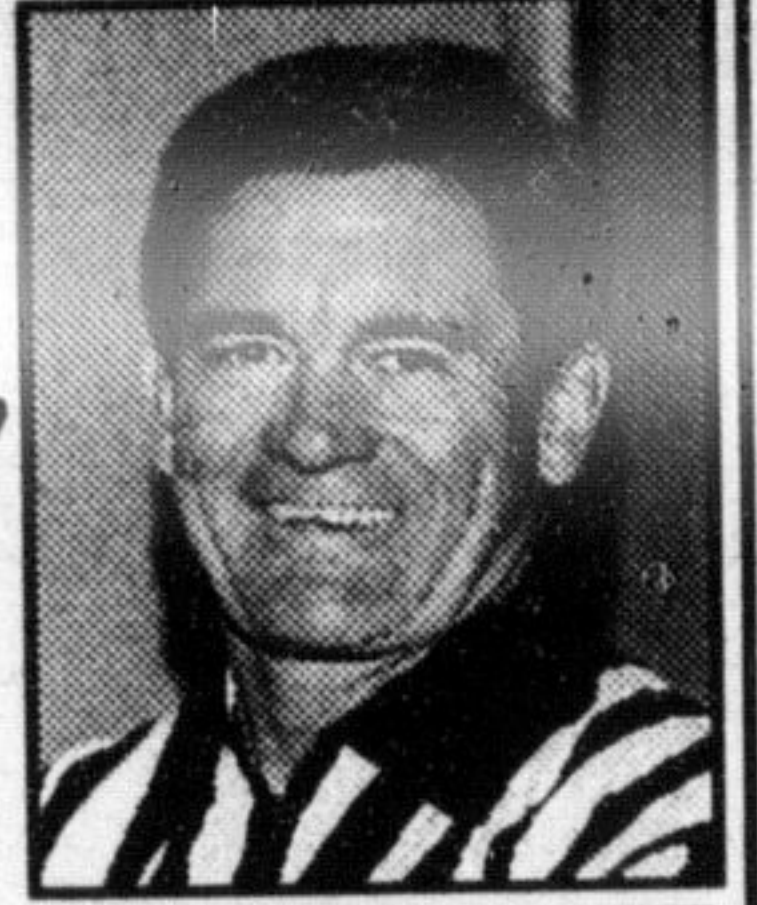
It's an interesting bit of sideshow on some series when they don't allow us to see certain things. It keeps us interested because there's a mystery about it. We will probably never see Nile's ex-wife, Maris, although we'd all love to, and we never saw Norm's wife, Vera, on *Cheers*, or all of Wilson's face on *Home Improvement*.

As for *Survivor*, I'll still watch, but it's not going to be the same, and I won't have to make it the number one priority in my life as it's been for the first month of the show.

If only I hadn't read that article. I wish I was married to Samantha, so I could have her zap my memory banks, and everything would be okay again.

Travel

with Bruce Hood



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