

Who gets voted off the island?

From page 14.

explained Frank Zingrone, a professor of communications and senior scholar at York University. "Take that pornographic element away and you have Survivor."

"There is a tremendous impulse to voyeur, we de-personalize ourselves. This is old stuff because I go to the Internet and see what's happening in Red Square in Moscow, so it's only inevitable that people would want to take a look at this. And when a couple want to make love in the woods, Survivor is securing the seamy side of entertainment. These people will submit themselves to a grungy little island for \$1 million, but the reality is the (Internal Revenue Service) has a guy back stage ready to take their whack right off the top."

Voyeurism aside, Olson refers to Survivor as "pretty bad TV," but said his remote control is idle at 8 p.m. come Wednesday.

It's not that he really cares for the antics, but admits curiosity over player elimination simply gets the best of him.

"I don't know if I'd called it quality television, but it has a hook and the hook works. It's a story and the story continues right to the end of each show," points out Olson, a producer with TV Productions. "The human nature element and dynamics of real people doing real things sells."

"This is as good as it gets right now. No one's going to die on the island and they really aren't stranded, but it is entertaining. And it has picked up ratings as it goes along, that normally doesn't happen. It's a phenomena."

Voting off castaways restores memories of grade school, when recess ball hockey teams and squads from gym classes are chosen not often for talent, but for popularity.

But stardom has its challenges. Just ask contestant Richard Hatch, who, after returning home from his adventure, was charged with child abuse after he allegedly made his overweight nine-year-old son run six miles at 4:30 a.m. as punishment for overeating.

And cultural studies professor Christopher Dewdney says the media has played a major role in Survivor's popularity.

"People are extremely fascinated by relationships. We cannot get enough of the inside of another person's life," said Dewdney, a York University professor. "It's the drama that unfolds in all of us."

"This is not a sitcom, but it's the same reason we watched the O.J. Simpson chase and watch football games and the World Wrestling Federation. It's a live spectacle."

Last night's episode included the tribes negotiating an obstacle course built by Green Berets, with betting money on neurologist Sean Kenniff voted off the island if the Tagi tribe lost the immunity challenge, while Joel Klug is in imminent danger on the Pagong tribe.

Ford, meanwhile, had chosen Dirk Been as his early favourite, but after the milk farmer and substitute teacher was booted off the island last week, his allegiance has switched to Greg Buis, the popular Pagong tribe member who spends his time sleeping with Colleen Haskell and talking into a coconut/cell-phone.

"It's a tough call."

ISLAND OF CELEBRITIES

Since the inevitable Survivor sequel will soon follow, we have taken the liberty of selecting the following 16 celebrity contestants to inhabit Pulau Tiga.

Pagong Tribe

- Howard Stern** — The New York shock jock could easily get under the skin of his fellow teammates, a trait any enterprising producer loves to uncover.
- David Wells** — With the largest shirt size in baseball, the Toronto Blue Jays pitcher can donate his jersey to help his teammates fashion a make-shift tent.
- Darva Conger** — The former bride on Who Wants to Marry a Multi-millionaire may win the entire contest but then regret participating in the event.
- Tom Long** — The former Canadian Alliance poster boy for Bay Street could continue to gain valuable ink from The National Post, who appreciate Survivor as much as the former Reform Party.
- Dawn Williams, aka Mary Ann from Gilligan's Island** — The former television star would be ideal on the deserted island, whipping up batches of coconut cream pies.
- Pete Rose** — Bookmakers have listed the banned baseball player at 5-1 odds to win, while Rose placed big money on Stern.
- Ken Dryden** — The Toronto Maple Leafs president would quickly bore his colleagues with long-winded stories of vision and nostalgia, paving tidy island exit.
- The Rock** — A recent Internet poll voted the current World Wrestling Federation champion as a Survivor winner, with Kathie Lee Gifford the first to be yanked off the island.

Tagi Tribe

- Bill Murray** — The actor could reprise his groundskeeper Carl role from Caddyshack, hunting down small rodents for his team's daily menu.
- RuPaul** — The cross-dressing model turned actor could challenge the changing wardrobe made famous by Ginger, another Gilligan's Island castaway.
- Martha Stewart** — The guru of crafts, food and clothing could be a valuable asset, rivaling Mary Ann's pies and producing another immediate best-selling novel.
- Jerry Seinfeld** — With Stewart as hearty fodder, Seinfeld and his comedic routine would be a big hit with the dinner crowd.
- Fidel Castro** — The Cuban dictator would be right at home on the tiny island, hoarding precious rations over his hungry teammates.
- Elian Gonzales** — Already a world traveller, the Cuban youngster could make things interesting for Castro when it comes time to vote at the Tribal Council.
- Marv Albert** — The wig-wearing television and radio broadcaster may form a voting alliance with RuPaul, hoping to extend his stay in the South Seas. Yes!
- John Rocker** — The redneck Atlanta Braves closer may not be at home with this cast of characters, but it beats taking the New York subway.

— compiled by Patrick Casey



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