

# Millionaire bride made expensive mistake

■ 'Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire' winner Darva Conger changes mind after the vows are exchanged.

NEW YORK (AP) — The woman who married a multimillionaire on national TV has something in common with other Las Vegas brides: She woke up shortly after her wedding wondering, "what was I thinking?"

Darva Conger described her odyssey on "Who Wants to Marry a Multimillionaire" as a vacation spun out of control. Now she wants her life back.

"I don't think I was thinking clearly," Conger, a nurse, said on "Good Morning America" Wednesday, a week after marrying a stranger in a television spectacle. "I committed an error in judgment."

A few hours later, her new husband, Rick Rockwell, taped an interview across town with ABC's Diane Sawyer to air Thursday morning.

The Fox special Feb. 15 was a ratings sensation that quickly backfired after criticism by women's groups and revelations that Rockwell been accused of threatening an ex-girlfriend. He denies the accusations.

Conger, 34, said Rockwell wasn't abusive toward her, but she said they

didn't spend much time together. They barely spoke on their one-week "honeymoon" cruise to Barbados.

"The honest truth is I was very uncomfortable around him, and I spent most of the time with the girl that chaperoned me," she said. "He's just not a person ... that I would ordinarily have even a friendly relationship with."

She said she was taken aback when Rockwell, 42, kissed her on the lips after his television proposal was accepted. Conger said she was terrified but went along with the wedding because she didn't want to disappoint the show's producers.

She said she only got involved because she wanted a Las Vegas vacation and a chance to wave to her family on TV. Rockwell chose her from among 50 women vying for his nod in bathing suits and wedding gowns.

"Never in a million years did I ever think that I was going to be selected," Conger said. "And somewhere in the back of my mind I thought, OK, if I am selected by the man to be his bride, he's got to take it in the same way that I do. It's a TV show."

"Maybe we'll like each other and get along. Maybe we'll even date, but I never in a million years ever thought of it as an actual marriage."

Within 36 hours, she said she told Rockwell she wasn't attracted to him

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**Darva Conger**

"Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire" winning bride

and that the marriage wouldn't work out.

Conger, who gets to keep her diamond wedding ring and was given an Isuzu Trooper and the Caribbean cruise by Fox, said she just wants a normal life again.

"I have worked my whole life to be a credible person, a person of integrity," she said. "Unfortunately, in two hours I destroyed much of that credibility. And that's one of the reasons that I'm here. I'd like it back."

Conger also found herself enmeshed in a spat between two morning television programs Wednesday.

While she was appearing on "Good Morning America," NBC's "Today" show advertised that Conger would be interviewed after 8 a.m. "Today" had a car waiting by ABC's studio to whisk her away to NBC, but

Conger instead stayed with Sawyer and continued the interview, bypassing "Today."

NBC believes ABC intentionally tried to derail its interview.

"I'm surprised that they would do something like that, but that's OK, because we don't play that way," said "Today" executive producer Jeff Zucker. "In this business, what goes around comes around."

But "Good Morning America" executive producer Shelley Ross said ABC planned all along to keep Conger past 8 a.m. "Good Morning America" believes NBC was attempting to blunt ABC's exclusive story after ABC paid for Conger's trip.

"Competition is very healthy," Ross said, "but you never want to put your guest in the middle of it."

Conger is scheduled to appear on "Today" Thursday.

## — A&E BRIEFS —

### Smashing Pumpkins sue former manager for fraud

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The Smashing Pumpkins are suing their former manager for fraud and breach of contract for allegedly abandoning the rock band at the start of its European tour.

The California Superior Court lawsuit filed on Tuesday contends Sharon Osbourne "reneged without notice or any warning on an agreement to manage the band" and that she allegedly misappropriated \$150,000.

The lawsuit, which seeks unspecified damages, contends Osbourne "conjured absurd expenses" in misappropriating the money.

There were no telephone listings for Osbourne or her West Hollywood, Calif., based Sharon Osbourne Management Co., which was also named as a defendant.

The band is on a 37-city auto-graphing tour to promote its latest album, "Machina — Machines of God."

### Sean 'Puffy' Combs indicted on bribery charge

NEW YORK (AP) — Bribery charges have been added to gun possession counts against rapper Sean "Puffy" Combs following a nightclub shooting in which three people were wounded.

Combs and bodyguard Anthony Jones were indicted on Wednesday, accused of offering \$50,000 and a diamond ring to the driver of the sport utility vehicle in which the three were riding the night of the shooting. Combs' girlfriend, Jennifer Lopez, also was in the vehicle early Dec. 27.

Combs allegedly offered the ring — a birthday present from Lopez — as a bribe to Wardell Fenderson, 41, between Dec. 27 and Dec. 30, Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau said.

Both Combs and Lopez were up for Grammy Awards presented on Wednesday night in Los Angeles.

Benjamin Brafman, Combs' attorney, also refuted the latest charges and criticized the timing of their release.

Combs, Fenderson and Jones were arrested after one of Combs' proteges allegedly shot three people inside Club New York. The gunman, Jamal "Shyne" Barrow, 19, was arrested separately and charged with three counts of attempted murder.

Combs pleaded innocent to the weapons charges earlier this month. The bribery charge carries a maximum penalty of seven years in prison.

### Monks perform Vegas act

#### to raise monastery money

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Only so much meditation and prayer can help a 1,500-year-old monastery in dire need of a face lift. The Shaolin have come up with a more worldly solution.

They packed up 20 Buddhist monks skilled in martial arts from their secluded monastery in the mountains of central China and headed for Sin City.

The monks didn't count on winning any jackpots — the monks, after all, don't gamble — but they did bet that a show featuring sword fights and walking on knives would sell in Las Vegas.

After all, everything else does. "Las Vegas is not just a city of gambling," said Jian Wang, the monks' manager and interpreter. "It's a city of entertainment."

For this month's two-week run at the MGM Grand hotel-casino, the monks perform kung fu in unison, walk on knives, break granite with their hands and snap iron bars over their heads.

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## MTV celebrates millionth video with giveaway

NEW YORK (AP) — MTV is promoting a countdown and \$1 million giveaway this weekend celebrating the music video that's been aired the most during the network's 19-year history.

Just don't ask how much that video, Peter Gabriel's "Sledgehammer," has been played.

MTV won't tell you.

MTV said its closed-mouth policy is a way to avoid alienating record companies. It never tells how much it plays a video — even one like "Sledgehammer" that was made in 1986 — to avoid anyone building a case that it favors one artist or company over another.

"There's an incredible amount of interest in exactly how many times a video gets played," said David Sirulnick, executive vice president for MTV news and productions.

Video play, particularly on a popular MTV show like "Total Request Live," can make or break a disc's popularity. Video time is even more prized as the number of opportunities for them to get played has shrunk over the past few years.

Nine of the 10 most-played MTV videos are from the 1980s, including the first one ever played on MTV, the Buggles' "Video Killed the Radio Star." The only 1990s video to make the cut was Pearl Jam's "Jeremy."

Other well-worn videos are the Aerosmith collaboration with Run DMC on "Walk This Way" and Dire Straits' "Money for Nothing," a song about MTV.

"Sledgehammer" used stop-action editing and claymation, both innovative for its time, to create some arresting images, Sirulnick said on Thursday.

The song also coincided with the peak of Gabriel's popularity and was hard to categorize in any one genre, he said.

"It really was one of the most unique videos ... that had ever been seen on MTV," he said. "It was one of those videos that people wanted to see again and again."

To coincide with the one-millionth video to be played on MTV — sometime on Saturday between 3 and 7 p.m. ET — the network will borrow another popular TV idea. It will give away \$1 million in the form of an annuity to a viewer.

## Have you never voted in an ASUN election?

*If you haven't, the A-Team Party doesn't blame you. Student politics has become a joke on this campus and when people complain that there isn't much difference between the two established parties, we have to agree. In an effort to provide a legitimate alternative and involve new voters, we offer this platform for your consideration.*

**Bringing students back into student government.** The intentions and dedication of the two established parties should be commended, but they have categorically failed to involve more students in student government. During every election, lip service is paid to increasing student participation and every year the two established parties are unable to do so. They have failed in the past and they don't deserve another chance.

**Establishing an On-line voting process for student elections.** Voter turnout in recent elections has been an unmitigated disaster. An On-line voting process must be established to encourage voter participation among non-traditional and off-campus students.

**Abolishing credit-card solicitation on campus.** Students have enough financial problems without also having to endure the predatory marketing tactics of credit-card corporations. Student credit-card debt is of disastrous proportions and is rising every year. In our modern economy, credit-cards are a necessity, but those students who wish to obtain one should talk to their banker or their family, not to a fellow student at a card table in the Student Union. We need more credit counseling and useful consumer analysis, not more credit-cards.

**Improving freshman orientation.** All too many entering freshman feel like anonymous numbers amidst the thousands of students here at the University. The current orientation process has failed to build a sense of community among new students, and this failure is reflected in low grades, clinical depression, loneliness, and an unacceptably high drop-out rate. We must learn from the many schools which have implemented successful orientation programs by improving and expanding our own program.

**Focusing on ecology.** As a matter of general principle, ecological concerns must be a priority in all decisions on campus. Caring for the environment means more than recycling: it means applying the principles of ecology to every relevant policy decision on campus.

**Involving international students.** The thousands of foreign students here at the University face special problems not experienced by other students. To guarantee that these issues are addressed, an international student should be selected through a well-organized application process to specifically represent foreign students as a non-voting "shadow" senator in the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska.

Empower yourself as a new voter. Impact your campus.

**Vote A-Team on March 1**

ASUN Student Government Elections, March 1, 2000.

A paid advertisement of the A-Team Party, Christina Riesselman, Treasurer.