

## key west chronicle - key west blog

Tuesday, October 18, 2005

### Judge: Key West Real World Can Continue Filming

This afternoon, Monroe County Court judge Mark Jones decided that MTV can continue filming its reality TV show "The Real World", despite the complaints of wealthy and powerful neighbors. After three days of evidentiary hearings, the Court found that although the neighbors may have had some of their tranquility disturbed (though possibly impossible to please), since the production is temporary and serving a greater value to the tourism-dependent County and that MTV producers have been trying to be a good neighbor, the complaints didn't rise to the level of an injunction to halt filming. The Swifts, who are used to getting their way, looked noticeably disappointed. Their attorney, Jim Hendrick, tried his best to convince the court that it wouldn't be too much of a burden to have MTV move the production to another house. MTV attorneys detailed the large amount of planning, work, and money that go into making a Real World house, and weren't accepting any idea of moving. It would be "so cost prohibitive...we would cease production" testified MTV producer James Johnston. "The house is the eighth cast member." He explained that contrary to Mr. Hendrick's assertions, the difficulties include 6-8 weeks of time needed, losing most of the crew, running into Christmas (which he said wouldn't work with the season's story... "There are no holidays on the Real World"), and he claimed that "we don't have the money". Hard to believe that MTV's producers are short on funding, but that is for them to claim. Johnston was adamant that this was an unscripted documentary, and therefore if forced to change production locations, it would be to the detriment of the story. Johnston stated "to stop taints the documentary", "affects people in front of the camera", relationships change, and the story would be missing a chapter (the eviction) and wouldn't make sense. The Swifts' attorneys argued the show was not unscripted, and wondered why an "unscripted" show would have such a contrived plot, complete with free rents, arranged jobs, and residence that although not actually on the island of Key West is being made to seem like it is a typical "fabulous" Key West home. MTV responded that the house is in the same area code as Key West, and that's good enough for them. Still, Swifts attorneys wanted to know why eviction couldn't be part of the story and said in closing arguments "in the REAL real world, kids get evicted." Both sides presented their argument: lighting evidence. One side had pictures, the other still photos. Swift, a once professional photographer, testified that his photos clearly showed the light monster invading his property. On cross examination, however, he was unable to explain why the photos appeared to grainy and off color, blaming his shaky hands. And he did admit, that since the producers had turned off some lights weeks ago, it was no longer bright enough in his bedroom to read. In the end, the judge decided:

Key West local resident's comments on the island's life, politics, play, and people.

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1. MTV cannot increase the lighting presently being used
2. cannot use the tennis court lighting
3. must refrain from any further use of helicopters or other aviation devices,
4. the lease, which ends December 1 with a 4-week extension option, could not be extended beyond those terms.

Clearly, the show is a temporary thorn in the side of the Swifts, unlike the tours his company sells that permanently wander residential neighborhoods to the annoyance of many residents. MTV has won and Ed Swift has lost. The production will continue, and in the end become the biggest commercial for Key West and benefit the tourism of the island. He will also benefit, of course unless the fans of the Real World organize a boycott of his businesses. Then again, maybe he's losing his mind.

posted by Cayo Dave @ **2:43 PM**

#### **2 comments:**

At **7:03 PM**, Anonymous said...  
Huh?

At **8:25 PM**, Anonymous said...  
Good news for RW. Bad news for Mr. Swift.

Maybe the people annoyed with Swift and his trains can start a Campaign..

-STT-  
Stop The Train  
The Campaign to Stop the Conch Trains

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