



Whoa!

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WHOA!!!

Let's get this straight.
He said what? And blamed who?
For what ? ? ?



I got a heads up from someone on the *Exhibitor Wire* about something. The caller: "Marty says, home show promoters caused the deficit."

"Da wha-a-a ?" I asked. "The national deficit? Who caused it? We caused it? What'd he say?"

"He said,

"Our competitors have added to this economy deficit."

I was in disbelief. I tracked it to the source, Facebook. Here's some of Brilliant Marty's posts of October 9, in no particular order:

"They need to stop taking advantage of the small business owner.

**"Showcase, Full House, Tower, Oryan (Ryan) Group,
you know what you've done!**

"I have fun watching them drop shows & lose vendorship!

"I cant wait till I hear that my competitors have applied for public aid. Sooner than later.

"Brilliant Event Planning will be #1! ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVE!

"We are here to clean up your mess!"

We caused the economic crises? Wha-a-at? ... I mean ... WTF ! How'd he come up with his competitors caused the **"economy deficit"**? (*sic*) Has Brilliant Marty extrapolated beyond his range of knowledge? This boy's swallowed no small quantity of flapdoodle in his lifetime.

He goes on to name names. As to "Full House" (The Home ShowS), he claims we (as well as others) take advantage of the small business owner (presumably, exhibitors). [I'm not defending others, though I think the ignorance Brilliant Marty displays extends to all.]

He then says we're all dropping shows and losing vendors. Brilliant Marty has it part right. Over the past few years, the *Other Guys*, including Brilliant Marty, have dumped 36 shows (Dolton, Skokie, Willowbrook, Oswego). The Home ShowS hasn't dropped a show from our line-up for six or seven years.

Brilliant Marty states, **"...you know what you've done!"** Evidently, this is addressed at us, as a "competitor." What intrigued me here was his implied knowledge of some inside information Brilliant Marty possesses about his competitors (including Full House), without actually saying anything. This cryptic message has the intent of guilting parties without further explanation.

Personally, I think the **"...you know what you've done!"** is a simpletons' psycho rap – one that kids play on other kids in the school yard – to embarrass and humiliate them without an actually saying anything. It's a general aspersion like, "You're a bad person and I know you know it."

'Scuse me, Brilliant Marty? Is there any evidence to support your *b-r-o-a-d* imputation of blame? Or, are you just a *puffarian* spewing unsupportable slurs? – lacking substance to for the accusation? What I see is history, resembling himself – drama from his past played out in the present.

In anticipation of his argument, let's assume Brilliant Marty has more than a propensity for blabber – assume he has some greater understanding of economic adversity and how it affects this little universe we share in home shows. Let's assume his arguments are as follows:

**(We, his competitors), have taken advantage of exhibitors
by charging them more for booths at our shows
than Brilliant Marty charges for booths at his shows.**

This presumption generally follows Brilliant Marty's pitch to all exhibitors about his competitors. However, I speak only for The Home ShowS.

Our booth price is \$1095, before discounts (Multi-Show, Multi-Booth, 'Cash for Clinkers', etc.). Anyone has the right to benefit from any discount offered. We don't negotiate after the fact – no back-room deal-making. The same discounts are available to everyone, equally.

Brilliant Marty? He charges what he thinks the market will bear – a couple hundred per booth. Some less; some more.

How do we know?

Aside from our daily conversations with exhibitors; when we created the 'Cash for Clinkers' discount program, we learned about the competition and their pricing. The discount program was designed for exhibitors who found (after exhibiting at the *Other Guys* shows, including Brilliant Marty's), that their shows suffered from a lack of viable attendees (e.g., "*the traffic sucked*"). The exhibitor could receive a discount at our shows based upon the *Other Guys* show invoice.

The results were illuminating. Brilliant Marty made a deal with one exhibitor for \$200 per booth – not at one show or two, but at all of his shows.

Now, I've been involved with home shows as an exhibitor (c 1982 – Brilliant Marty was 4 years old); I was a pavilion show manager (1984-85); and, I became an independent show producer (1986). In 27 years, I can't recall any promoter anywhere in Chicagoland who sold space at \$200 a booth – below cost.

"So what!" you say. "It's a good price" you might think. "Can't beat that deal?!" you could argue.

I will appeal to logic.

John Ruskin said, "*There's nothing in the world that some man cannot make a little worse and sell a little cheaper, and he who considers price only is that man's lawful prey.*" The point: *You get what you pay for.*

It's even more troubling when you realize the prices the *Other Guys* have charged (including Brilliant Marty) are not the same for all exhibitors in their own show(s). By that I mean, the *Other Guys* charge some exhibitors higher prices while bestowing 'gifts' upon others in the form of deep discounts. (Have you ever heard the quip, "*I can give you this tremendous discount because I really screwed the last guy*" ?)

- Do negotiated discounts have an impact on exhibitors?
- Can deal-making damage the show itself?
- Does this have an impact on the promoter's ability to pay hall rental, advertising, insurance?

(Hint: Choose all of the above.)

At shows known for deal-making, an exhibitor paying the higher rate covers the lions' share of the show expenses. Yet, they're competing with every other exhibitor on the show floor for the attention of the attendees. That impacts the exhibitor's ability to attract leads and sales: few leads = few sales.

Negotiated prices ('deal-making') obviously draws cheap exhibitors – not frugal – cheap! Here's an example listing the 'deal-makers' from a prior Lil' Johnny Paper titled, "Home Show or Flea Market?"

"...the Other Guys have gathered some questionable followers: astrologists; car-wash products; books; pets and pet products; sunglasses; candles; popcorn; mops and chamois (or is that chamois-es ?); lotions; lingerie (not necessarily in the lotions booth – though, maybe ...?!); table pads; investment clubs; diet centers; candy / jerky / chocolate (next to the diet booths, I presume); and ... my personal fav, CrapCustomers.Com."

What do these exhibitors have to do with home improvement shows? A few might add 'color,' but *en masse*, they distract the public from other exhibitors on the show floor – the very exhibitors who've paid a higher price for 'equal' representation. (That's a funny thought, isn't it?! – "equal.")

How do these promoters affect the industry?

When there's insufficient revenue generated by those that promise their shows will be "...heavily advertised ... to ensure mass amounts of qualified attendees ..." (as Brilliant Marty claims), their shows fail to produce results. Their answer? Brilliant Marty once said, "I couldn't advertise because I helped too many exhibitors by giving them deals."

But, when they fail, we stand accused as well. Exhibitors think the whole industry is falling apart. Really, it's just their business model which is engineered to fail. Promoters survive on price competition while Producers rely on results.

Next, when facilities don't get paid on time (or at all), these bottom-dwellers are in breach of their contracts with the halls. Again we're lumped in with them because ... well, we produce home shows too. To the uninformed, we're all part of the same flock – merging completely disparate businesses in a fraternity of frauds. The 'unpaid' facilities/ halls then view legitimate producers as just another jackleg promoter. This mistaken identity is a reality for the home show industry.

Don't believe me? Ask a dozen exhibitors who promotes what shows. Most can't associate the right producer with the shows they manage. The facilities managers are even less aware. They have no idea who does what and where.

Finally, I've heard one promoter ("**you know what you've done!**") faked his insurance certificates when contracting facilities. To that I say, "**I'll have fun watching (him) drop shows & lose (lawsuits)**" when a 'slip and fall' trips him up and the promoter and the facility are named in the suit.

Are you getting my point, Brilliant Marty?!

After Brilliant Marty's slapdash utterings – in some surreal effort to complete his incoherent thoughts, he adds:

"Let's make those millions!"

"Millions" Brilliant Marty? Millions?

How's about, *let's make a living*. Perhaps that seems a trifling task. Not to exhibitors – not to us.

If you're the great benefactor of home show exhibitors, telling all that we as your competitor are "**taking advantage of the small business owner**" by charging more / too much / are overpriced, or whatever languaging you choose, then how does "**Let's make those millions!**" roll off your tongue? Where are you headed with that? Does your altruism have a kink in it?

As to his hopes and dreams "**that my** (his) **competitors**" end up on "**public aid**", that's sounds more like a personal predisposition than a business plan or model. Maybe he's worried he'll be living in his car. Times *are* tough, even for a millionaire wannabee.

Brilliant Marty misses the point of this "**economy deficit,**" as he refers to it. He doesn't understand this industry and how intricate the financial workings are between attendees, exhibitors, facilities and producers. And, most important, he doesn't get how the impact his former career as a mortgage marketer had (and still has) on his current career as a promoter.'

Yet, Brilliant Marty's arrogance is more troubling than his ignorance.

I fear that will lead to a another crises for this industry — a mess we'll have to clean up.

(Not so) Cordially,

Lil' Johnny

P.S. Brilliant Marty's posts on *Facebook* were prolific.

Stay tuned for follow-ups.

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A NOTE REGARDING SUBSTANCE (i.e., getting down to the real nitty-gritty):

With regard to the Lil' Johnny Papers, all papers are supported by conversations, emails, documents and articles dealing with the subjects covered. Before I write, I confirm the facts, as I have here.

I think my writing is as pertinent as it is pointed.

The reader must decide.

Send comments to:

John@ChicagoHomeShow.Net

*And yes, I'm certainly seeking comment from
Brilliant Marty and Allen Deutscher.*

So, babble on, boys.

