

Hawk's sharp tongue no surprise, though co-workers say she's nicer in real life

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Just like the rest of us, even the people closest to blunt-talking "Survivor" castaway Susan Hawk had to tune in to the show's nail-biter finale Wednesday night to discover that the cement-hauling trucker they call Susie wasn't a millionaire after all.

Her parents and brothers, who were glued to the tube and surrounded by local TV crews at their modest home in Waukesha, tense at first, then deflated.

Her co-workers, who were packed into a cement depot in Menomonee Falls and gave Susan a standing ovation as her island flame was extinguished.

Her fans and foes, who parted heartily at a nightclub on Milwaukee's northwest side.

They had waited all summer to discover her fate, but they didn't have to wait long Wednesday night. About a half-hour into the two-hour CBS show, Susan, 39, got the boot.

"She still did good," her father, Denny Schefus, said wistfully after her island-mates voted her out. "I'm still proud of her."

But a few minutes later, as Susan launched into a tirade accusing co-castaways Richard Hatch of being a snake and Kelly Wiglesworth a rat, Schefus

raised his hand to his head in mock pain.

"Oh, Susie," he moaned.

"Susie's got a harsh tongue," her brother Mark Schefus said.

A few miles away at the Fantazia Night Club, 11400 W. Silver Spring Drive, a grass hut beckoned revelers from the parking lot. Staffers lined cocktail tables with grass skirts, installed festive potted palms and whipped up batches of Rudy's Rice and Stingray Sticks.

As the show went on air, the crowd of about 100 settled in, sipping drinks named Pagong Punch and Immunity Challenge. Alliances formed quickly, with most rooting for Rudy Boesch. Several quickly went sour on Susan.

When she was voted off, a dozen hands waved flippant farewells.

"She's a back-stabber," said Sally Stevens, 27, of Milwaukee.

But the tie-breaking vote was a heartbreaker for a few.

"I liked her almost from the beginning," said Jessica Belott, 23, of Milwaukee. "She's so bold, and she's a woman who thinks what she wants."

Over at the Sonag Ready Mix headquarters, about 100 of Susan's colleagues held forth valiantly through potential victory and sudden defeat. They had decorated the dusty three-bay warehouse with balloons and banners, and Susan's orange-

and-white cement truck was parked nearby as a sign of solidarity. Door prizes included autographed photos of their co-worker, a woman they know as a hard worker with a soft heart.

"It looks like she's conniving and devious on the show, but that is not how she is in real life," said co-worker Barb Thompson. "She just knows how to play the game for television."

After Susan's demise, the festivities wound down rapidly.

Before he departed, truck driver Robert Sergeant said television editing left the impression that Susan is "hard-nosed, tough and cruel." In real life, he said, she's a sweetheart — and a good sport.

Sergeant said he was looking forward to ribbing Susan when she gets back to work.

Denny Schefus said his daughter would be making the rounds of TV morning and late-night shows for the next few days and wouldn't return home until Sept. 3 or 4. He didn't know of any endorsement deals she might have struck. But after hearing her farewell monologue, he had a suggestion:

"With her speech, she should go into politics."

Mary Louise Schumacher and Kevin Murphy of the Journal Sentinel staff and correspondent Luke Klink contributed to this report.

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Mark Schefus, Susan Hawk's brother