

Hawk, Susan

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'SURVIVOR'

Thursday, August 24, 2000

Wisconsin loser likens winner to a snake

*Corporate trainer
Hatch earns
\$1 million*

N.Y. Times News Service

In the words of one of the losing contestants, Eagle's Susan Hawk, the snake ate the rat Wednesday night in the conclusion of the summer TV phenomenon, "Survivor."

Richard Hatch, a 39-year-old corporate trainer from Newport, R.I., won the million-dollar grand prize in the show's two-hour finale on CBS.

Hatch won a 4-to-3 vote among the last seven contestants voted off the island, defeating Nevada river guide Kelly Wiglesworth, 23.

The show ended with hugs and handshakes around the "tribal council" fire, and perhaps with gasps of surprise in living rooms across the United States.

Hatch's victory seemed an upset. Though Hatch said in his final plea to the jury that "I think I played as ethically as is humanly possible," he was the architect of the alliance that ousted most of the players who went on to decide the outcome.

Perhaps the jurors thought of Hatch the same way Martin Balsam's character thought of Holly Golightly in the 1961 film "Breakfast at Tiffany's." "She's a phony," Balsam said, "but she's a real phony."

Hatch had barely survived "tribal council" balloting in the program's eighth installment, when three players voted to eliminate him.

Hatch and his fellow castaways were in Los Angeles Wednesday night for a live CBS "town hall" special after the finale.

The last hour of "Survivor" was marked by sharp acrimony, especially when Wisconsin truck driver Hawk, 38, the first of the four finalists voted out of the competition last night, unloaded on her former friend Wiglesworth.

Speaking to the other jurors and in the presence of the two final competitors, Hawk said Hatch was "a bit of a loser in life," but then called Wiglesworth "two-faced and manipulative."

If she encountered Wiglesworth dying of thirst, Hawk said, glaring at Wiglesworth, "I would not give you a drink of water. I'd leave you to the vultures."

Hawk added that Pulau Tiga, the Malaysian island where the series was filmed last spring, was "pretty much full of only two things, snakes and rats." She described Hatch as a snake and Wiglesworth as a rat, and said that "the snake eats the rat."

Apparently stunned by Hawk's remarks, Wiglesworth argued that "I don't think anybody in this game is without faults."

Acting as jurors, expelled players Hawk, Rudy Boesch, Sean Kenniff and Greg Buis voted in favor of Hatch. Gervase Peterson, Jenna Lewis and Colleen Haskell voted to award the million-dollar prize to Wiglesworth.

Wiglesworth won \$100,000 for finishing second among the 16

contestants who swam to the island at the game's outset.

Hatch, who is gay and an avowed nudist, seemed most to embody the scheming that characterized the reality show in its 13-week run.

"My approach to the game was one of strategy from the beginning. ... For me, instead of who's the better person, it is about who played the game better," Hatch said in his argument to the jurors.

Casting his vote for Hatch, Kenniff said that "Survivor" had become "a contest of who's least

objectionable" and that Hatch was "just an out-and-out scoundrel, but I like him."

Among the four finalists, Hawk was voted out first on Wednesday night's show after Wiglesworth won an "immunity challenge" that involved recalling details about players who had lost earlier.

Wiglesworth also won a second "immunity challenge" by walking across a fire pit and then keeping a hand on a totem pole for four hours and 11 minutes. She outlasted Hatch and the 72-year-old Boesch in that contest.