

the nation

Identity hoax vexes TV show

United Press International
MADISON, Wis. — It was a happy, harmless little prank in a humorless world, says zany lawyer Edward Ben Elson, who once announced his candidacy for district attorney in the nude.

But there are some television executives who don't agree.

In fact, Elson's latest caper has enraged officials of the NBC television program, "Real People," Elson said Thursday.

Elson's antics, which included selling seats on the Kohoutek Com-

et, brought him enough national attention to prompt "Real People" to use him on one of their shows.

"I was just up to the same old thing," Elson said. "They should have known it was a hoax."

"Real People" used Elson and his Kohoutek routine in one of its early segments, and invited him to Los Angeles for an anniversary party and another taping last weekend. They sent him a round-trip ticket.

Elson couldn't go.

"But I wanted to give this nice, nuclear-engineering Algerian a pleasant sojourn in Los Angeles,"

Elson said. So, in his place, he sent curly haired Si-Ahmed, who looks very much like him.

"He was happy to go," Elson said. Elson dressed Si-Ahmed in the suit he once wore on "Real People," gave him the airline ticket and gave the Algerian his checkbook and driver's license.

Si-Ahmed arrived in Los Angeles, pulled the hoax off long enough to get wine and dine and stay overnight in a \$125-a-night room provided by the television show's officials.

"He even met a nice woman," Elson said.

Unfortunately, Elson doesn't have an Algerian accent and Si-Ahmed does. A "Real People" researcher who interviewed the real Edward Ben Elson a while back caught on.

"They asked Si-Ahmed to recount a few things for the camera, but Si-Ahmed got flustered and said he couldn't recall anything," Elson said.

Si-Ahmed made his remarks in a thick, Algerian accent, which he tried to pass off as the residue of an intensive course in French.

"Real People" realized Si-Ahmed was not real people. So, the nuclear engineering student was soon on his way back to Madison while officials got on the phone to Elson, telling him he better be prepared to pay for his caper.

"They want \$390 round-trip airfare, and I told them 'sue me,'" Elson said. "They said I perpetrated a fraud. They're absolutely outraged, very upset. But what the heck. I was just up to the same old thing. They could have done a delightful piece on the hoax."

Elevator ride to cost fee in tallest hotel

United Press International
DETROIT — \$1 for an elevator ride?

That's the new policy at the Detroit Plaza Hotel, the world's tallest.

Hotel officials said the \$1 elevator ride to the top of the shining glass building was instituted to reduce the number of people "who aren't serious about the view from going up and to cut down on vandalism."

Manager David Ling said the hotel has been plagued by "kids running around writing graffiti on the walls of the johns and the (cocktail) pods and dropping sugar packets on the people in the restaurant."

The sugar packets, he explained, are dropped from the 72nd floor observation deck, which is between the 71st floor's revolving restaurant and the 73rd floor's lounge.

Do too many cooks spoil the boss?

AG served by staff of chefs

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti has the services of four cooks, two of whom are part time, to prepare breakfast and lunch for him and his top deputies, says a Justice Department employee.

Osbia Hicks said he and another employee prepare Civiletti's breakfast daily in the handsome Williamsburg-style dining room adjoining the attorney general's office.

Two principal chefs come in to cook lunch for the nation's top law enforcement officer, he said.

In a recent survey of the government's 12 departments, UPI reported at least seven Cabinet secretaries and their top lieutenants were being provided with the services of personal chefs who prepare and serve them breakfast and lunch.

The UPI survey also found many Cabinet secretaries, who earn \$69,630 a year, were paying bargain prices for their specially prepared meals.

In that story a Justice Department spokesman said

Civiletti had two cooks, a chief chef who earns \$23,000, and an assistant who earns \$17,000.

The spokesman stressed Civiletti often has "working lunches" in which he meets with top department officials over these meals.

Civiletti and his colleagues pay \$1.50 for a full breakfast that, said Hicks, can include "juice, eggs, bacon, omelets, sausage, pancakes, or French toast, and coffee."

"You can't buy a breakfast for that (price) in a regular restaurant," Hicks said.

For a full, hot lunch, which includes beverage and dessert, Civiletti and his top associates pay \$2.50.

Hicks said he and another employee, William Moss, "cook and serve breakfast every morning for Civiletti and his staff, wash the dishes and do everything."

Two other department employees, he said, also "work in the morning to help clean up. We've been making breakfast ever since Judge (former Attorney General Griffin) Bell came here."

Team to investigate TWA pilot training

United Press International
KANSAS CITY, Mo. — A team of consultants from General Public Utilities, the company that owns the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania, plans to examine Trans World Airline's pilot training center.

The consultants, scheduled to arrive Tuesday for the one-day seminar, want to learn how pilots and line mechanics are trained to work safely and efficiently under constant and changing pressure, and how that training could be adapted to the operation of nuclear power plants.

The GPU consultants will examine the Boeing 707 and Boeing 727 flight simulators at the center and will attend a number of classes on how pilots and line mechanics are selected and trained, what kinds of tests are given, and what new training is given to veteran mechanics and pilots.

William Kuhns, chairman of the utility, formed the 12-member group in July. Its goal is to find methods used by other industries that can be used to improve nuclear power plant safety. Group members, selected from the aerospace, petrochemical, airline and telecom-

munications industries and from the Army and Air Force, are to make a report on their findings in February.

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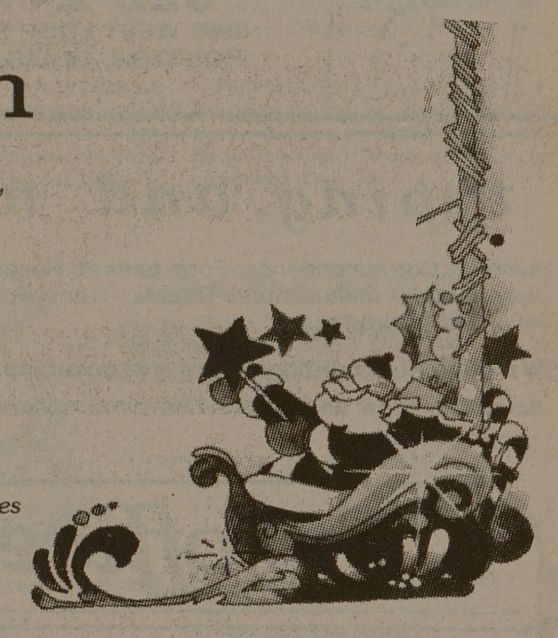
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