



Fox
Mr. Personality

By: Liane Bonlin

Mask Appeal

We answer "Mr. Personality's" burning questions -- Here's what to expect from Fox's looks-don't-matter dating show

Who knew the Fox network and mothers everywhere would have something in common when it comes to dating? With "Mr. Personality" (debuts 9 p.m. Monday, April 21), the net known for "Joe Millionaire" and "Temptation Island" is following mom's age-old wisdom that "looks aren't important" by challenging one woman to find her perfect man from a field of 20 eager bachelors who are each swathed in a full-coverage head mask so not even hair color can factor into her decision. Wonder how dating with the ultimate barrier method will work? Here are the answers to some burning questions.

Are any of the guys really ugly? "There was no prototype that the producers were looking for," says co-casting director Katy Wallin. "We were open to all sizes and looks." The biggest factor in picking bachelors was finding men whose priorities and interests matched those of the bachelorette. "If the men had a great personality and a real sense of who they were, looks were not the ultimate factor." In other words? You bet.

What kind of woman is willing to date guys dressed like Power Rangers? Hayley, a successful stockbroker who's into golf, was willing to give the show a go after realizing she'd become all work and no play. "After putting so much of herself into her career, she was looking for love, and she's someone who's open to adventure," says Wallin.

Did these guys have to go out in public looking like crayon heads? Not often. "When they had dates in restaurants, we'd get them a private room, that sort of thing," says executive producer Brian Gadinsky. "But on one of our dates, since Hayley's a golfer, she got a chance to get on the golf course with a guy in a mask, which got some interesting looks."

Was it hard finding men for this show? No more so than any other dating show. "Now that it's commonplace for people to find dates through the Internet, where you might be meeting someone without even talking on the phone first, something like this didn't seem so scary," says co-casting director Sheila Conlin. "And as we like to tell everyone, we've done the picking for you, so you're getting the cream of the crop." She's not kidding. Bachelor contenders included Olympic athletes and millionaires. As for the guys, once they met Hayley they never looked back. "You know how people say women are catty?" asks Gadinsky. "When these guys met her, it got really competitive. You've never seen anything like it."

Is there any way for Hayley to get a feel for the men's appearances and financial stability? She will be able to grope their faces in "the dark room." But that's all the help she'll get: Producers have banned the men from discussing their job titles.

Weren't those rubber masks kinda sweaty? Designed by Tina Haatainen Jones, a mask maker whose work has covered up the casts of Cirque du Soleil and "Babylon 5," the "Personality" masks weren't so bad. "They were actually comfortable," says Conlin. The men were also allowed to doff the masks when they were together without Hayley, so the rubbery monsters weren't a 24/7 commitment. "Actually, the men were so thrilled to wear them," says Conlin. "It was like Halloween for them, and the masks really seemed to be freeing. In some cases their personalities got bigger behind the mask." Who says it's clothes that make the man?