

CALL THE FLOORMAN!

by John Blowers

Poker's First TV Game Show

POKER seems to pop up in almost every medium these days. There are countless books and magazines, endless streaming podcasts/web chats/blogs, numerous TV shows airing tournaments and cash games and the forced inclusion of poker in cinema (think Daniel Negreanu in the recent *X-Men* film). Heck, the Venetian in Las Vegas even hosted a poker-themed off-off-Broadway show, *The Real Deal*, for a brief run last year. It almost seemed inevitable someone would breathe life into a poker-themed game show.

Enter Greg Nardo.

Greg is a veteran of the poker world who is the creator of *Call The Floorman*,

a new show that recently filmed its inaugural episode. The show will be airing this month on local TV in L.A. and is slated for national distribution in a few months. I had the opportunity to sit down with Greg and the show's co-host, Tracy Kay, during a break from the madness of the Main Event at the Rio in Las Vegas. Tracy confidently strides into Starbucks looking every bit the part of a beautiful co-host, dark eyes piercing through me while flashing a cheerful smile as she introduces herself. Greg follows, looking dapper in a suit with matching tie and handkerchief. They are clearly excited about their first visit to the World Series of Poker.



Greg: It's like walking amongst legends. It reminds me of the Winning o' the Green.

Tracy: I've only been playing about a year. It's exciting to be surrounded by such terrific talent.

Poker Pro: I get that a lot (a little too much laughter makes it clear they weren't referring to me). Greg, my impression of *Call The Floorman* is it's part *World Poker Tour*, part *The Price is Right*, part *Apprentice*. Is that right?

Greg: To a certain extent, yes. I think of the show as more akin to *Jeopardy*...a thinking person's game show. Players succeed on the show based on their knowledge of the game of poker.

Poker Pro: What inspired you to create the show?

Greg: I was a dealer for six years and now, for the past nine years, I've been a dealer coordinator at the Bike in L.A. I've seen a tremendous amount of variation in rulings from floorman to floorman and from casino to casino. One thing I hope to accomplish through the show is to establish a more generally accepted, universal code of conduct that players and officials can play by.

Poker Pro: What can viewers expect during a typical episode?

Greg: The show is played in three rounds. Round One is equivalent to the \$100 question on *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*. What color are the suits? Does a straight beat a flush? And so on. The second round focuses on facts and history of the game. Who is the last player to repeat as Main Event champion? How many bracelets does Doyle Brunson have? Then the third round deals with strategy. How would you play this hand?

Poker Pro: That last part seems a bit subjective. How do you know if the contestant is right or wrong?

Tracy: This is where I call the floorman. Our guest floorman will

Players succeed on the show based on their knowledge of poker

determine the right answer. We will pre-record a pro's answer and the contestant has to match. For example, one question could be: Phil Hellmuth has pocket eights in late position and calls a mid-position raise. The flop comes A-7-4 rainbow and the raiser leads out for half the pot. What would Phil do?

Poker Pro: You mean after he gives a speech? (laughter) What can contestants win on the show?

Greg: In the final round, known as the All-In Round, players have an opportunity to win a seat at the Main Event. There are also chances to win smaller buy-ins at casinos featured on the show.

Poker Pro: How does someone become a contestant on the show?

Greg: Currently there are two ways. Those who play live can be nominated by a poker room. Online players can be nominated by their site. Nominees are then vetted by a panel via an interview process.

Poker Pro: Tracy, readers may be more familiar with your work on *Tomcats* or *Not Another Teen Movie*. How did you get involved in a poker show?

Tracy: I was invited to a couple of home games in Hollywood and I fell in love with poker. I'm really good at read-

ing people so I prefer to play live.

Poker Pro: What is your role on the show?

Tracy: I cohost the show with Kenna James and Chad Brown. They are the pros and are a blast to work with! I help keep the pace of the show moving, call the floorman when necessary and help draw some new viewers to the show.

Greg: I think that's important. Tracy is relatively new to poker, but really enthusiastic about the game. I hope *Call the Floorman* will help educate those interested in learning more about poker.

Poker Pro: The show will initially air in the U.S. Do you see some international possibilities?

Greg: Sure. We could incorporate some Chinese games and broadcast in Macao. Poker is huge in Mexico. Latin America is also a hotbed for the game. We've also opened discussions with the big tournaments in France and Australia.

Poker Pro: Once you achieve global domination, what do you hope *Call the Floorman* will have done for the game of poker?

Greg: *Call the Floorman* is really a pioneer. It will introduce the stay-at-home mom to the game. It will introduce the game to the elderly couple who may have seen it on TV, but didn't really understand what was going on. It will help accomplished, but lesser known, players achieve some notoriety.

Tracy: I think that's key. Bringing the game to a broader market and helping remove some of the shadiness some people still associate with poker.

Poker Pro: Do you see an opportunity to advocate or lobby for poker?

Greg: Absolutely. We'd love to give something back to the game.

Poker Pro: Maybe a tagline similar to *The Price is Right's* "have your pet spayed



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or neutered.” The host could say, “Poker is not a crime. Support the PPA today to help make poker legal.”

Greg: (laughing) I love it!

Poker Pro: OK, time for a poker quiz.

Tracy: Oh, no! I’m still learning!

Poker Pro: Greg, a girl tells you she has a heart flush. You:

- fold your straight
- ask for her phone number
- call a doctor

Greg: (laughing and glancing at his wife) I’ll go with A.

Poker Pro: Tracy, a guy tells you he has pocket rockets. You:

- fold your hand
- ask for his phone number
- slap his face

Tracy: Is he cute?

Poker Pro: He looks like me.

Tracy: B. Wait! My husband’s over there! Make it A!

Poker Pro: How often does a pocket pair flop a set?

Greg: 17 percent. (*Editor’s Note: It’s actually 11 percent.*)

Tracy: Not often enough!

Poker Pro: What are the odds of flopping a royal flush?

Greg: 500 to 1. (*Editor’s Note: Are you kidding?!*)

Tracy: I thought that only happened in the movies?!

Poker Pro: OK, here’s an easier one. Chance that *Call the Floorman* will win an award for Best Game Show at the 2010 Game Show Awards?



Show creator Greg Nardo (right) and host Tracy Kay with author John Blowers in Vegas.

Greg: 3-2

Tracy: 1-1

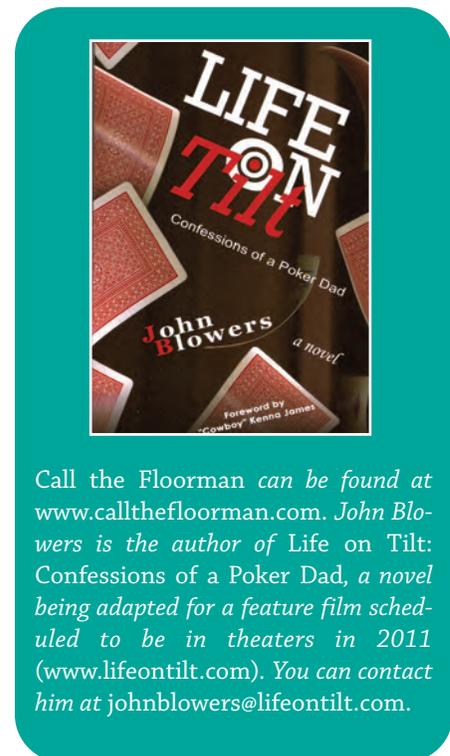
Poker Pro: Those are great odds.

Tracy: We have a great show.

Poker Pro: Last question. Fifty years from now, what will *Call the Floorman* be remembered for?

Tracy: Being the first poker-themed game show on national TV. And, of course, its beautiful co-host. (laughs)

Greg: Engaging players in an interactive way. Pros can be featured in segments. Lesser known players can be contestants. Players can submit questions to the show. Various poker venues will be showcased. It’s a multidimensional way to introduce the game to a new audience. ♠



Call the Floorman can be found at www.callthefloorman.com. John Blowers is the author of *Life on Tilt: Confessions of a Poker Dad*, a novel being adapted for a feature film scheduled to be in theaters in 2011 (www.lifeontilt.com). You can contact him at johnblowers@lifeontilt.com.