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Jon and Kate don't really rate

Television can be dangerous now and again.

Bias is unfair. News bias is politically based. Bias is so pervasive that there is little real national news anymore, just some hack's opinion of what you should see, hear and think.

The acceptance of junk like "Nurse Jackie" by dull-minded critics and a public too busy to care much what happens can result in a subtle lowering of standards and practices.

And sometimes reality television shows that there's worse than lying and cheating.

Jon & Kate have bait: There's no such thing as reality television.

That's a con to make the bumpkins think they're in on something special.

Pretend no camera is three feet away?

Pretend no boom mike is two feet overhead?

Ignore the tractor-trailer rig full of money and equipment?

People on reality television are actors — amateur actors, but pretenders all the same.

If you have ever wondered how low television can go, forget it: A show called "Jon and Kate Plus 8" has lowered the bar representing good sense to slug-level.

"Jon and Kate Plus 8" could also be called "Kate and Jon Run a Con."

Television is all about ratings, and this one had eight hooks, eight little children, two tots and six toddlers, twins and sextuplets.

Had this show been called "Jon and Kate Without Kids," it would have had an audience of about 11.

What's not to like about adorable children growing up in America's living room?

Well, the futures of child-actor types, for one thing. Show business has not been the most stable backdrop for kids marched in front of cameras.

It's almost a standing headline: Former Child Actor Flips Out.

It's hard to imagine anything more unattractive than using children as your sole source of income.

The 8 aren't so great: Thanks to magic television accessory boxes that let a person freeze live-action and record an entire series in something of a flash, it's possible to catch up to a show that became an institution when you weren't looking.

Until a couple of weeks ago, I wouldn't have known "Kate and Jon" from "Kate and Allie."

Given all the publicity of a marriage in chaos — but not financial chaos, as Jon and Kate live on a high-dollar estate, their millions coming from their breadwinners, the children — I caught up with the popular show over the weekend.

Kate is like a parody of an image-conscious starlet, having morphed from a good ol' girl to the "after" photo in the office of a makeover specialist.

Jon isn't much better — not quite as whiny as his wife — but a scene-stealing pouter.

Child actors and performers are not subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Hopefully some funds will be established.

Trust funds. Shrink funds.

Jury convicts man in 2 killings

• During a subsequent sentencing phase, jurors learn about another slaying attributed to the defendant.

BY BILL BRAUN
 World Staff Writer

Tulsa County jurors who found Raymond Eugene Johnson guilty of murdering his ex-girlfriend and her infant were told during a sentencing stage Thursday about another homicide attributed to Johnson.

The jury convicted him of two counts of first-degree murder for

the deaths of Brooke Whitaker, 24, and 7-month-old Kya Whitaker.

Prosecutors asserted that Johnson, who had a troubled relationship with Brooke Whitaker, beat her repeatedly with a hammer and left her and Kya to burn in the victims' home at 6934 E. Newton St. two years ago.

Johnson, 35, was also found guilty of first-degree arson.



AWAITING PUNISHMENT

Raymond Eugene Johnson: Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty against him.

The trial has moved to a punishment phase, in which prosecutors are seeking the death penalty. First Assistant District Attorney

Doug Drummond introduced evidence that Johnson was convicted of first-degree manslaughter in a Cleveland County homicide more than a decade ago.

Prosecutors presented testimony from witnesses who were involved in the investigation of the 1995 killing of Clarence Oliver, who was shot four times.

Oliver and the Whitakers "shared something in common — they were all killed by the defendant, Ray-

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Helping immigrants find ASYLUM

TU law students offer assistance

BY SHANNON MUCHMORE
 World Staff Writer

Having been physically assaulted and nearly blinded, Joel Lobo fled his home country of India in 2006. He got a job on a cruise ship and followed more job leads until he found himself stranded at a Kansas airport with \$300 in his pocket.

Promised more work, Lobo made his way to Oklahoma, getting \$2 or \$3 an hour for odd jobs at restaurants.

He lost his home and his family, but in the United States, he is free to practice his religion as he chooses.

And now, thanks to the help of a University of Tulsa legal student and the immigrant law clinic where she works, Lobo has been granted asylum and is working to rebuild his life.

"When I decided to come to America, that was the right decision," he said recently. "The people are amazing."

Michalah Davis, who is going into her third year at the TU law school, helped Lobo, including traveling to Houston with him for his asylum hearing.

"It's definitely the best experience I've had in law school and probably life," Davis said.

The Boesche Legal Clinic at TU became an immigrant clinic in 2006. About 10 law students work each semester, with some staying on longer.

Last year, a grant from the George Kaiser Family Foundation created the Tulsa Immigration Resource Network, which, in addition to taking on clients, has a broader goal of offering education and social services to Tulsa's immigrant community, and promoting their rights and well-being.

Rebekah Guthrie, a recent TU law school graduate who now is a legal

SEE **ASYLUM** A11



Joel Lobo, along with his mentor Hilary Elias, sits in the sanctuary of the Church of St. Mary in Tulsa. Lobo recently was granted asylum with the help of the TU immigrant clinic. MICHAEL WYKE/Tulsa World

'At least I'm not worried about where I will be in two months or four months. I can walk anywhere, really. I feel free.'

JOEL LOBO

who recently was granted asylum

Inhofe's views mixed on transportation plan

• Happy with the law's proposed extension, he doesn't like the price.

BY JIM MYERS
 World Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe on Thursday offered what sounded like qualified support for the Obama administration's proposal for an 18-month extension of current transportation law.

But the Oklahoma Republican refused to accept the administration's \$20 billion price tag for the extension.

That led to an unusually sharp

exchange between Inhofe, a major player on transportation issues as the ranking member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, and Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, a former Republican lawmaker from Illinois.

"We have some very smart people in the department," LaHood said in response to Inhofe's comment that the figure should not be that high.

Inhofe shot back: "Well, I know we are not very smart up here."

The dustup ended almost as quickly as it began when LaHood made it clear that he was not questioning the committee's expertise, and Inhofe cited their friendship.

SEE **INHOFE** A11

Police, fire unions agree to furloughs

BY BRIAN BARBER
 World Staff Writer

Tulsa's police and firefighters will take eight unpaid furlough days with the rest of the city's workforce, while not affecting public safety, union and city leaders announced Thursday.

The contracts, reached after weeks of negotiations, still must be ratified by the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 93 and Tulsa Firefighters Local 176 memberships before they are final.

Mayor Kathy Taylor said the agreements are the result of a lot of hard work and teamwork.

"The unions have all stood up to understand the financial challenges this city is facing," she said during an evening press conference at City Hall.

FOP President Phil Evans and

Firefighters Local President Stan May, who previously had vowed to fight the furloughs, said accepting them was a difficult decision but one that was in the best interest of the city.

Although many employees have scheduled furlough days that about holidays, operations that are 24/7, such as police and fire, will have their employees schedule them as they would vacation days.

Police Chief Ron Palmer and Fire Chief Allen LaCroix said that will be done carefully to maintain required staffing levels but to prevent overtime.

"It's going to require a lot of additional planning," Palmer said. "We can't just close down with City Hall."

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 1180, which repre-

sents many other city labor groups, also has agreed to the furloughs.

The unpaid days for all 4,000 city employees essentially amount to a 3.1 percent cut in pay for each, which is expected to be factored over all pay periods so as to minimize the financial impact on employees.

None of the unions will see any raises in the upcoming fiscal year, which begins Wednesday.

The last city furloughs — four days — occurred in 2002 during Mayor Bill LaFortune's first year in office. Those did not involve police officers or firefighters.

Taylor, whose originally proposed budget of \$578 million had to be trimmed to roughly \$567 million because of plummeting revenue, said city leaders must renew a dia-

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