

Fact and Opinion

by Stephan MacLEOD



with Fred Rogers, who was developing his *Mister Rogers* program at CBC.

OPINION: Mr Dressup wanted to do a show similar to Mister Rogers's except without the stupid fucking trolley.

FACT: The next season, Coombs appeared in the new Butternut Square program, which later evolved into *Mr. Dressup*.

OPINION: Butternut Square was a much dirtier show. The puppets on that show didn't wear any clothing, and the Tickle Trunk was used for French tickling.

FACT: *Mr. Dressup* went on air in February 1967 and has been on the CBC continuously since that time.

OPINION: The show's longevity over other children's programs like *The Friendly Giant* is undoubtedly due to the fact that kids hate giants.

FACT: From 1967 to 1989, his constant companions were Casey and Finnegan.

OPINION: Finnegan's compulsive use of foul language forced CBC censors to turn off his microphone during taping of the children's program.

FACT: Casey and Finnegan, along

with Alligator Al and Aunt Bird, left the show when Judith Lawrence, their creator and puppeteer, retired. According to Coombs, the puppets were extensions of Lawrence's personality, so there was never any question of anyone else performing Casey and Finnegan.

OPINION: Before retiring, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation had Judith Lawrence's hands cut off.

FACT: Mr. Dressup carried on with several new friends: Chester the crow, Truffles, Granny and her grand-daughter Annie, Alex and Lorenzo the raccoon.

OPINION: I always thought it was a mistake to replace Casey and Finnegan with these inferior puppets. If I were Mr. Dressup, I would have tried to get Lawrence Fishburne or Jimmy Smitts.

FACT: The last episode of *Mr. Dressup* was taped on Valentine's Day 1996, but repeats are still airing.

OPINION: The last episode was a most controversial cliffhanger ending with Truffles getting shot.

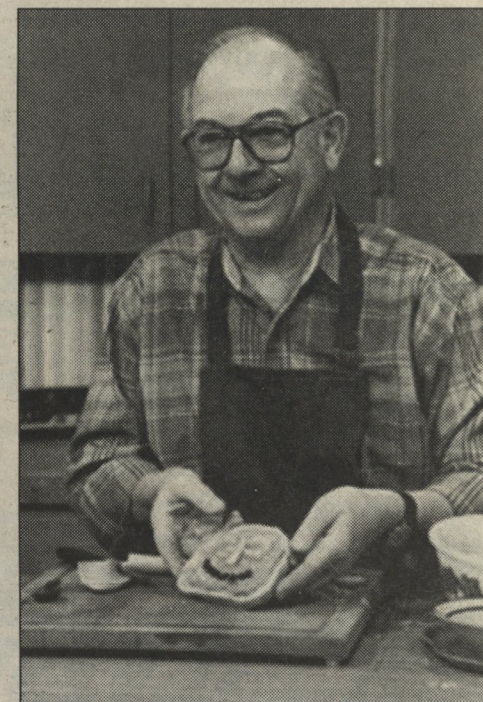
FACT: For many years Ernie Coombs toured all over Canada with a live stage show.

OPINION: Many children were disap-

pointed with Mr. Dressup's live show; there were even accusations of lip synching.

FACT: In 1994, Ernie Coombs was presented with The Academy of Canadian and Television's prestigious Earle Grey Award, honouring excellence in Canadian television.

OPINION: I'll miss Mr. Dressup. He sparked my imagination at an early age, and has always been a source of delight for me throughout my life. Any adult willing to act a little foolish for the sake of a child's happiness will have my deepest respect. Aunt Bird, on the other hand, was a fucking idiot.



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