

ALEX McLEOD

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GUILTY PLEASURE?: “Joe Millionaire’s” **Alex McLeod** admits she had mixed feelings - to say the least - about carrying out her duties as hostess and liar on the Fox reality show in which a group of women are competing for the affections of fake rich guy **Evan Marriott**. The former hostess of TLC’s “Trading Spaces” admits she felt “in a very tough spot” lying to the female participants that construction worker Evan was worth \$50 million as she “looked into their eyes.”

She tells us, “There were times I was thinking, 'What have I done? Will I burn in hell for this?' “ - and she adds that both she and Marriott reached “breaking points” with the show, upon which she won’t elaborate for reasons of secrecy and legality. She does say, “I was twitching from Day 1. When they (the producers) thought I was going to blow the lid on this thing, they sent me to Paris to go shopping. That’s how they pacified me: 'More shopping!'”

McLeod certainly does justify her actions. She figures the reality show-savvy contestants “should have expected there would be curves thrown at them.” And, “They were treated like princesses, better than I was,” while on vacation in France’s Loire Valley. “They had their private butler, plane, chauffeur ... I can sleep at night knowing we forced a wonderful cultural experience on them.”

McLeod shows an icy reserve on the show because “The producers “wanted me to be as cool and neutral as possible, to keep the girls on the edge ... People who knew me as this lively fun person from 'Trading Spaces' wonder what’s happened to my personality. It’s like 'Invasion of the Body Snatchers.’” So she hopes people tune in to see the real her tonight and next Friday on A&E’s “Best of Both Worlds” special, in which she and “The Amazing Race’s” **Phil Keoghan** explore luxury vs. economy travel to Hong Kong and Hawaii.