

MISSOURI  
**LAWYERS WEEKLY**

Stephanie S. Skinner  
Legal Editor

223 Madison  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

800/635-5297 • 314/634-8300  
FAX 314/634-2287

3/5/96

Joy -

Here are copies of the issue in which the original letter announcing Solomon appeared & last week's "revelation."

We really enjoyed your prank, despite feeling a little foolish!

Sincerely,  
Stephanie Skinner



# MISSOURI LAWYERS WEEKLY

The authoritative source for legal opinions and lawyer news.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# 'SOLOMON Says'...Or How A Computer Will Do Justice

*Editor:*

By way of introduction we are a group of computer scientists and attorneys specializing in the field of artificial intelligence. For the past seven years, we have focused our attention on the process of American civil and criminal jurisprudence.

Like many other experts, pundits and ordinary citizens, we are dismayed by what we see. Our centuries-old model of constitutional law, brilliantly designed to protect individual rights and liberties, has defaulted on the promise of equal protection for all the people. Unlike many who share our view, however, we refuse to wring our hands and walk away. In short, we believe we have a solution to the crisis.

It is admittedly a radical solution, for nothing less will lead us out of the mire in which we find ourselves. We have concluded that a drastic revamping of the current legal system is imperative. The American people have lost confidence in the judicial system, and with reason. From gross disparities in sentencing to the skyrocketing costs and excessive length of trials, mistrials, hung juries, and trials *de novo*, not to mention frivolous lawsuits, we have grievously tarnished the dream of swift and impartial justice.

Enter SOLOMON.

### Computer Is Judge & Jury

The ultimate practical application of artificial intelligence, SOLOMON is a distributed program running on a set of super computers. Judge and jury both, it is uniquely capable of accessing the entire corpus of legal literature and fairly applying legal constructs and principles of equity and fairness to the factual information it is fed.

Our courtroom is virtual. Our justice is actual. SOLOMON combines the wisdom of the ages with a thorough knowledge and understanding of the judicial process. It is

essentially an interactive library of all statutory, regulatory, and case law (constantly updated); ethics and equity principles; and factual precedent.

Imagine human wisdom partnered with the machine neutrality and you begin to understand SOLOMON. We are not turning our back on the founders, but breathing new life into their precepts, ensuring that our constitutional guarantees stand strong for all people.

### How It Works

SOLOMON works as follows: In simple cases, attorneys enter all admissible evidence into SOLOMON under the supervision of a judge. The judge may make rulings regarding the admissibility of the evidence but does not otherwise participate in the process.

All participants, i.e. attorneys, defendants and witnesses are tested using advanced polygraph equipment, sodium pentothal and newer technologies that guarantee the accuracy and the truth of all input.

SOLOMON may ask for clarification or make requests for further information to be provided. SOLOMON then accesses all existing law pertinent to the factual circumstances and relevant evidence and deliberates, utilizing not only the body of evidence and all existing law applicable in the jurisdiction, but also a complex mapping of ethics input by a highly esteemed board of ethicists. SOLOMON then provides a judgment and, where indicated, an appropriate written order or opinion.

Where the facts are in dispute, SOLOMON participates in the deposition of witnesses. As questions are asked of the witnesses for both sides, voice recognition software allows SOLOMON to understand the examination.

Furthermore, SOLOMON's unique fuzzy logic allows it to weigh the answers by

using voice stress analysis and the inputs from polygraph telemetry in addition to the spoken word. This allows SOLOMON to act as a jury and weigh the veracity and credibility of the witness.

One of SOLOMON's unique capabilities is to scan trial transcripts and detect obvious miscarriages of justice. Because of scanning software, a SOLOMON review can be conducted for less than the cost of a single billable hour charged by most attorneys.

If necessary, in the criminal context, SOLOMON will enter a sentence, fine or other criminal penalty. All orders, judgments, sentences or other actions taken by SOLOMON are binding and not subject to further review.

### Eliminates Juries

This process effectively eliminates the need for juries as well as for most judicial duties. Due process and equal justice are served immediately based on unbiased evaluation of facts and law, tailored to each litigant or criminal defendant.

The role of attorney and judge is permanently altered, for they no longer have to preside over long, complicated and costly trials. Their functions become that of overseeing the entry of data into SOLOMON.

The system will serve justice on the local, state and national level. The clear winner is the public. Justice is swift and blind, with minimum cost.

As part of our developmental process, we have successfully retried some of the most highly visible American legal cases of recent years, i.e., Mike Tyson, William Kennedy-Smith, the Menendez Brothers, Susan Smith, Heidi Fleiss, Amy Fisher, Klaus Von Bulow and Rodney King. The results are of great interest and are available from our office. We will re-try the O.J. Simpson case now that the trial is over and will be announcing a public demonstration

in the near future.

### Comments Sought

The purpose of this letter is to solicit commentary from a wide range of legal professionals as well as criminal and law enforcement specialists throughout the judicial and legislative branches of the government. We would like to know what you think of SOLOMON as a solution to our country's dire legal situation. Do you feel SOLOMON represents a viable alternative? If not, why not?

We believe that SOLOMON represents the best interests of the American people and of the legal system. SOLOMON saves time and money and puts an end to the mockery of justice that has so horrified the American public. Once it is integrated into the legal system, SOLOMON will single-handedly re-establish the public's failed confidence in the judicial process. SOLOMON is the future and the future is now.

SOLOMON's function is not limited to the American judicial system. We have simply used this system to create a working model. But, the technology is available to all nations and can function based on the input of any system of laws, morals and ethics. Our ultimate goal is world-wide reform of the judicial process.

Please let us know what you think. If you would like to see a demonstration of SOLOMON, let us know that as well. Thank you for your time and consideration. Our address is: The Solomon Project, NYULAW ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH, 127 MacDougal Street, Box 992, New York City, NY 10012. Phone/Fax 212-598-4919. [Or if you want to print a response send it to: Letters to the Editor, Missouri Lawyers Weekly, 223 Madison, Jefferson City, MO 65101.]

Joseph Bonuso, Ph.D.  
Research Fellow



MISSOURI

# LAWFYERS WEEKLY

The authoritative source for legal opinions and lawyer news.

Vol. 10, No. 6

February 5, 1996

\$5.00/copy \$225/year

## Gotcha...

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** In the November 20, 1995 issue, *Missouri Lawyers Weekly* published a "letter to the editor" from one Joseph Bonuso, Ph.D., who claimed to represent a group of computer scientists and attorneys.

In the letter, Bonuso described SOLOMON, an artificial intelligence computer program designed to render "impartial justice" by replacing judge and jury.

"Our courtroom is virtual. Our justice is actual," wrote Bonuso.

But SOLOMON'S existence turns out to be a hoax perpetrated on news media nationwide.

Our "alert reader award" goes to Kansas City attorney Glenn E. Bradford, who suspected the existence of the wizard behind the curtain and wrote a thoughtful response pointing out the dangers of such a system.

"It is as if George Orwell and the generalship of the Inquisition have met in Hell and combined their talents to propose a futuristic destruction of the Anglo-American system of courts and law," wrote Bradford.

"This concept sounds like someone bolted together a Westlaw terminal and a polygraph machine and now seeks permission to set it loose upon the human race."

*Missouri Lawyers Weekly* published Bradford's letter December 4.

We received the following faxed press release January 30 from Joey Skaggs (aka Joseph Bonuso).

\*\*\*

NEW YORK — January, 1996. Social-political satirist and hoaxer Joey Skaggs has struck again.

Over the last three months, Skaggs, posing as Joseph Bonuso, research scientist and Founding Director of The Solomon Project, publicized a revolutionary computer program called Solomon

that utilizes artificial intelligence (fuzzy logic) to deliver swift and equal justice for all.

Whether for civil or criminal cases, all witnesses, attorneys and judges are subjected to voice stress analysis and other forms of lie detection testing.

All the facts, including the testimony of verified witnesses, are input into Solomon. Solomon then deliberates, having access to all case law known to civilized society. A verdict is delivered and a sentence pronounced. All findings are binding.

This provocative concept is Skaggs' satirical answer to what he perceives to be a crisis of jurisprudence in American society.

"Our legal system was created by guys with buckles on their shoes and curly, powdered wigs. It just doesn't work anymore," said Skaggs.

"I am personally outraged by the fact that criminal and civil court cases are played out before our very eyes as though they are sporting matches. The truth no longer provides the key to justice."

Solomon was conceived to do away with well-intentioned but possibly biased jurists; grandstanding prosecuting and defense attorneys; fallible witnesses; and all-too-human judges. Skaggs regrets that Solomon is not a real technological advance...yet.

He said, "If it were possible to determine the truth via artificial intelligence, why not? Wouldn't it be great, if through technology, we could arrive at a system where justice is real and affordable to all?"

### Hook, Line And Sinker

Newspaper, radio and television news across the nation reported the story as news, including the *San Francisco Chronicle*, New York City's WCBS News 88 radio, CNN TV news and Internet coverage, and numerous law journals.

(See SOLOMON, page 16)



# MISSOURI LAWYERS WEEKLY

The authoritative source for legal opinions and lawyer news.

## Solomon

(Continued from page 2)

The Solomon Project was launched in October of 1995. Letters announcing the new research and soliciting support and/or commentary were mailed to over 3,000 lawmakers including legislators, supreme court justices, deans of law schools, law enforcement officers, and computer and legal publishers.

The response was immediate and Skaggs logged hundreds of phone calls, letters and faxes from curious, sympathetic, and in some cases, outraged judges, lawyers and reporters.

In November, a press release announcing a 15-city tour to demonstrate the computer's capabilities was sent to the press. The objective of the tour was to introduce the American public to the superiority of neutral computer analysis.

Not only were controversial trials such as the O.J. Simpson trial to be re-tried by Solomon, but local law professionals were invited to provide controversial cases of their own for re-trial.

### O.J. Retrial

In December, a second press release announced that at a pre-tour demonstration in New York City, Solomon had found O.J. Simpson guilty.

Results of the re-trials of other highly controversial trials were also announced. Solomon found Mike Tyson not guilty; William Kennedy Smith, guilty; the Menendez brothers, guilty; Claus Von Bulow, guilty; and the police in the Rodney King case, guilty.

When CNN took the bait and requested its own demonstration of Solomon, Skaggs enlisted the support of over 25 designers and computer programmers. Members of Skaggs' own theater troupe were on hand

to help stage the elaborate performance. Together they created a headquarters for the Solomon Project.

Faked computer graphics and bogus computerized voice recognition demonstrations were creatively presented by the team. Award winning producer/director Frederick Marx (*Hoop Dreams*), flew in from Chicago to document the performance. They posed as a second news crew as CNN covered the story. (Marx is shooting a feature documentary on Skaggs.)

The results of CNN's coverage aired internationally on Friday, December 29.

Joey Skaggs, a New York based conceptual performance artist, has been creating outrageous news headlines for 30 years.

### 'Media As Medium'

Skaggs uses the media as his medium, as a painter uses a canvas. His work targets the mass media and the public's gullibility.

He coaxes the media into reporting provocative, sensational, sexational or downright ridiculous stories he has contrived. This affords him a world-wide audience for his elaborate satires.

Skaggs forces reporters and the public alike to question and to enter into dialog on issues he perceives to be vital concerning morality and ethics, truth in news reportage, sensationalism, the effect the media has on public opinion and taste, and vice versa.

Running throughout his work is a constant message to both the media and general public to question authority in all its forms and not to ever trade critical judgment for wishful thinking.

"I use satire to be provocative. My ultimate goal is to create dialog and hopefully have a few people gain some personal insight regarding important issues. Humor

and controversy are the ideal combination to achieve this," said Skaggs.

### How He Operates

His work is done in three stages. The first stage is the conceptualization and production of the hoax, using advertising and public relations techniques such as brochures, letters and press releases, as well as actors, props and convincing locations to fool the media.

The second stage is the documentation of the entire process. Skaggs records the media and the public's responses, and collects the print, audio and video news clippings as he monitors the evolution of the piece. He observes what happens, who does what with the story and how it gets changed.

The third stage is the revelation of the truth and the discussion about the issues underlying the performance.

Frequently, this involves observing how the media have changed the intent, the content and/or the meaning of the message for its own purposes, either by accident or by design — and documenting how the media deal with revealing the truth.

This phase of the work inevitably offers significant insight into issues of media ethics and responsibility and the potential for the media to misuse power.

### A History of Hoaxes

Skaggs' previous hoaxes include:

- The Cockroach Hormone Cure, the promotion of a wonder cure extracted from cockroach hormones that was to be a panacea for the ills of mankind;
- The Bus Tour to Queens, where bearded, beaded camera-toting hippies took a Greyhound sightseeing tour of suburban Queens;
- The Celebrity Sperm Bank, where the sperm of famous rock stars was available for auction;
- The Fat Squad, through which, for a

fee, commandos would restrain dieters from breaking their diets;

- Comacocoon, where Dr. Schlafer (German for sleeper), anesthetized his clients with the help of computers and subliminal programming to create better vacations with better drugs;

- SEXONIX, a sexual virtual reality company catering to the sexually perverse;

- Portofess, the portable confessional booth Skaggs pedaled to the 1992 Democratic convention in New York;

- Hair Today, Ltd., a company offering the total cure for baldness — scalp transplants from cadavers;

- Dog Meat Soup, a Korean company that bought unwanted dogs for human consumption;

- Baba Wa Simba, a new age therapist who healed the wounded animal in us all through roaring and other lion-like behavior;

- The Bad Guy Talent Agency, a bogus agency which became a reality, specializing in venomous vixens, burly bouncers and slimy sleazers;

- Fish Condos, satirical working aquariums depicting condominiums for upwardly mobile guppies;

- The world's first and only windsurf voyage from Hawaii to Los Angeles.

Skaggs has been an instructor of media communications at New York's School of Visual Arts and Parson's The New School. He lectures at universities and colleges around the country about culture jamming and media activism; disinformation, propaganda and media responsibility; and his performance art.

He is currently working on an autobiography and the Voyager Company is publishing a CD-Rom retrospective on his work which will be released later this year.