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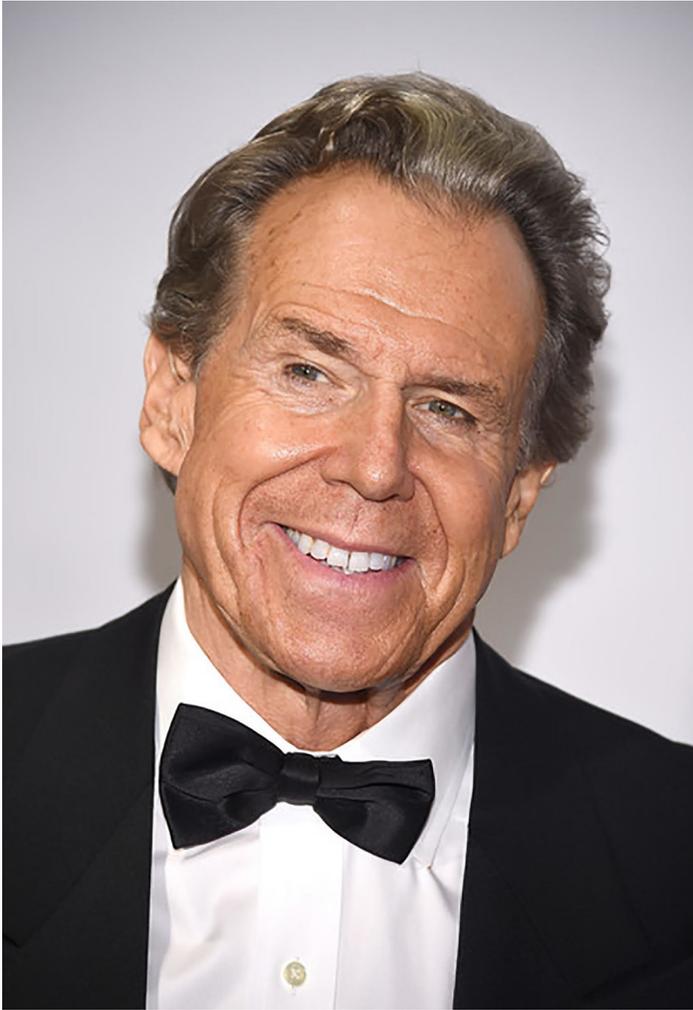
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ARTS

TV icon Bill Boggs's new book to benefit animal rescue

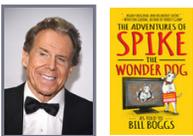


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boggs.jpg)

Emmy Award-winning talk show host and producer Bill Boggs has written a humorous book, “The Adventures of Spike the Wonder Dog: As Told to Bill Boggs.” Proceeds from the book sale will benefit an animal rescue organization.

COURTESY PHOTO



Posted Thursday, May 21, 2020 9:54 am

Linda Leuzzi

Four-time Emmy award-winning TV host and producer Bill Boggs is debuting “The Adventures of Spike the Wonder Dog: As Told to Bill Boggs” as an adult antidote to these challenging times. It’s no small feat to get a “highly original and hilarious satire” review from Winston Groom, author of “Forrest Gump.” The premise: Spike, an English bull terrier, who lives with his TV talk show owner Bud and is a frequent guest, becomes famous, then moves to New York for Bud’s new job. This canine is irreverent, politically incorrect, savvy and... hilarious, especially when relating his take on behind-the-scenes media life, like flying in the Max Ex Lax drone and exiting the “Noonday with Bud” studio

with a guest monkey on his back. Boggs, a part-time Long Islander, incorporated many of his experiences in the book. Proceeds will be donated to an animal rescue organization.

"It parallels the arc of my career," explained Boggs by phone. "I had a dog named Spike who was on my first television talk show, 'South-ern Exposure,' in North Carolina, and there are elements in the book about High Point. Spike became a huge star; he got more mail than I did. Tragically, before I came to New York, Spike was run over by a drunk driver, a horrible experience, and it took place before my going to New York. About five years ago, I said to my partner Jane [Rothschild], 'I'm going to be a writer again.' [Boggs has written two other books.] With this, the idea was, 'what if Spike hadn't gotten killed and in today's world came to New York and got very famous?' I really loved that dog. The first day I sat down to write it, within the first five minutes, Spike's voice transpired on the page as an observational comedian. I was writing in a voice I'd never written before. So that was the origin."

Boggs was asked to comment on a couple of the scenes. "I had been a fan of boxing and covered it at one point, especially a Showtime boxing segment at Caesars Palace," he related. "I was there for two weeks. The whole boxing scene with the Max Ex Lax drone and the boxers was from that. The dog-fighting ring [Spike is forced into] was pure imagination. I had never reported on that, so I had Spike flipping his opponents and other moves." Details like the small Madison Avenue apartment he rented are in the book. "My son Trevor had the idea to include the illustrations. Someone on Facebook suggested I approach an art school in New Jersey. Only one student responded, Jacob Below; he got the job."

The author's career and efforts to try new things offers a gold-standard example of "just do it and do it well." (A big proponent of gratefulness, Boggs is also known as a gentleman in his field.) The accomplishments are prodigious, but here are some: "Midday Live" on Fox; programs on Showtime, The Travel Channel, PBS, ABC, NBC tackling lifestyle, business, food, music, news and celebrity reporting; as well as stage shows and YouTube videos. So fitting in a book, especially after his last one had been written 10 years before, was a risk, but one he jumped into. "I wrote it initially in about 15 months and had a completed manuscript, which I liked and because it was written to entertain, I felt the only way it would be successful is if I made people laugh," he said. "I got 10 people to read it, all friends I trusted, and I looked at it as improv; it's what comedians do before being filmed [Boggs started his career as a comedy writer], so I wanted honest opinions. It took three and a half months to get the comments back. They all loved it and said it made them laugh. Then it took another year. I punched it up and amplified the humor.

"Short of a vaccine, laughter is the best medicine we have and I'm hoping this book will lighten the load. So there will be a sequel. I already have the title. 'Spike Unleashed! The Wonder Dog Returns.'"