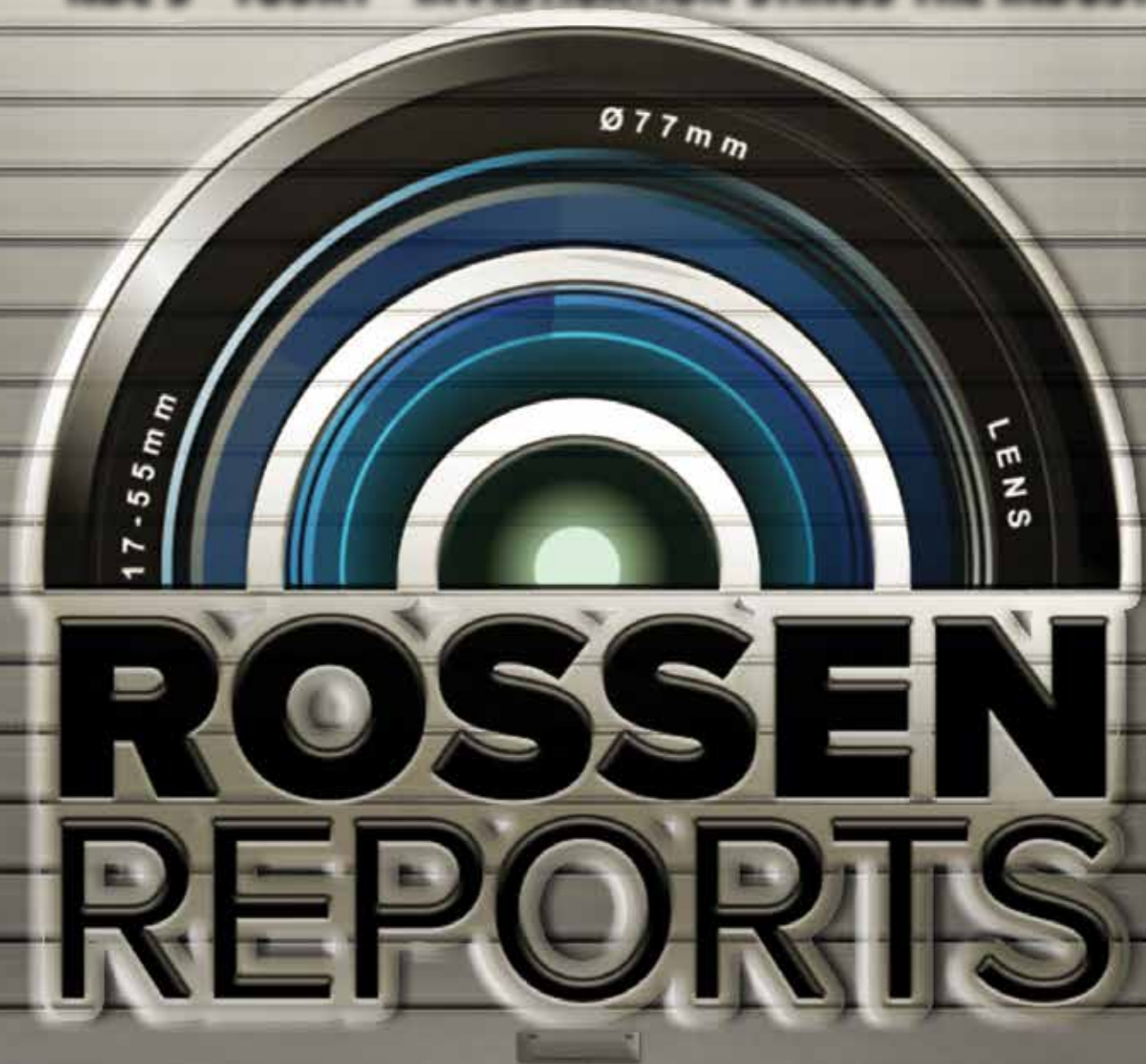


"HOW HONEST ARE GARAGE DOOR REPAIRMEN?"

NBC'S "TODAY" INVESTIGATION STINGS THE INDUSTRY





“It’s a shame. It just absolutely makes me sick.”

That’s the concluding statement of Andy Pomroy, broadcast at the end of a “Rossen Reports” story on NBC’s Dec. 3 “Today” show. Pomroy, of Windsor Door Sales in Albuquerque, N.M., was one of two garage door experts participating in this hidden-camera investigation.

“How honest are garage door repairmen?” was the title of the 5-minute report. The investigation, led by NBC News’ National Investigative Correspondent Jeff Rossen, showed three out of four garage door repairmen attempting to sell unneeded parts and overcharging a customer.

“It’s not bad enough that they rip you off,” said “Today” co-anchor Matt Lauer after the report aired. “Then they go and pee on your lawn, too?”

Yes, one of the repairmen obviously urinated on the customer’s lawn.

And it was all on national network television, broadcast to the show’s typical audience of 5 million viewers.

Setting It Up

Why did NBC focus on garage door repairmen? Jeff Rossen told us that the idea came from viewers of the “Today” show.

“We kept getting complaints from homeowners about this problem, so we decided to look into it,” said Rossen. “What we found even surprised our experts.”

For the investigation, Rossen set up hidden cameras at a home in Cross River, N.Y. Four garage door companies were then called to the garage to fix a simple problem: a photo-eye intentionally cocked out of alignment.

Before the cameras rolled, the entire garage door system had been completely inspected by experts to make sure that the only problem was the sensor issue.

Meet the Experts

The two experts were Pomroy and Mark McManus of Door Boy in Berkeley Heights, N.J. Pomroy had also been selected by NBC to be the expert for a similar “Dateline NBC” episode in 2011 in the Phoenix area.

For the New York investigation, Pomroy enlisted the support of McManus, one of the nation’s few IDEA Master Technicians. That means he is certified by the Institute of Door Dealer Education and Accreditation as a residential garage door installer, a commercial garage door technician, a rolling door technician, and a rolling fire door technician.

Both dealers are IDEA accredited. Pomroy has served on the International Door Association board, and McManus currently serves on the IDEA board. Both have also led workshops at the industry’s annual expo.

For this investigation, McManus “completely checked everything” and replaced all the rollers. He said that the homeowner had also recently had a garage door company replace springs, pulleys, cables, and the two openers.

The Selection Process

To find garage door companies to call, NBC relied on input from the experts. McManus said he went online to find local companies that might have a questionable reputation, particularly those that seemed to list a phony location.

Pomroy told us that NBC’s producer Charlie Lravy and Jeff Rossen
continued on page 40

continued from page 39

clearly wanted to help consumers, and they were surprised when so many different advertised phone numbers went to the same company. The phone numbers they finally called likely focused on the perceived less-reputable firms, said Pomroy.

He also recalled that Rossen's team used both the Yellow Pages and online sources to make the final selection. Ultimately, NBC decided which companies to call.

Technician #1

The first technician came in an unmarked truck and no uniform, but he found the problem in less than 25 seconds. He fixed the sensor, charged a service fee of \$80, and went on his way.

Technician #2

The second company arrived with two repairmen, pulling up in an unmarked white van and without wearing company apparel. They told the homeowner that she needed new sensors, and they charged her \$210.

"Hi guys, Jeff Rossen from NBC News," said Rossen as he confronted the repairmen on camera. They denied trying to rip off the homeowner and hurried away.

Later, their company, which was not identified in the report, sent NBC News a

statement claiming that they had a "flawless customer service record."

Technician #3

The third technician also arrived in an unmarked vehicle and without a uniform. He greeted the homeowner, who then went inside the home.

"This time, we capture something so bizarre on camera, we've never seen it before," said Rossen in the broadcast. The repairman obviously needed to urinate, and he did so ... on the customer's lawn.

Returning to the garage, he didn't even inspect the door sensor. But he told the homeowner, "The sensor's no good." He wanted \$410 to replace it.

Rossen, entering the garage with his camera crew, confronted the tech: "Why were you going to charge her over \$400 for a new sensor when it's not even broken?" The repairman then sped away in his truck.

Technician #4

"But this last repairman is about to break the bank," reported Rossen. The technician also arrived in an unmarked truck, but he wore a uniform that said, "Garage Door Services."

McManus, who watched the technician from the control room, said he saw the tech cut the wire for the sensor and re-attach it

with the wires reversed. "In my personal opinion," said McManus, "he did that to show the customer that the sensors were bad."

But that's not all. After telling the customer that she needed new sensors, the technician announced that the pulleys needed to be replaced, too. His total charge: \$683 plus tax.

Rossen confronted him on camera: "Why are you charging this homeowner nearly \$700 for parts that she doesn't need?"

"Well, I'm trying to do a better job, and she does need it," he replied.

This time, Rossen brought out McManus and Pomroy to show the tech that he was wrong. He finally admitted, "We all make mistakes."

"Garage Door Services"

The company name "Garage Door Service" or "Garage Door Services" is such a generic name, it's difficult to identify the specific company behind it. Yet, since 2002, this magazine has reported several other incidents where a "Garage Door Services" or "GDS" has been exposed for similar abuse of customers during repair calls.

See Clippings on page 63 for another recent exposé of a GDS in the Dallas area. In that case, the technician reportedly charged the customer "\$1,700 for a job that should have cost \$100 or less."

NBC's Tip: Truck Signage

At the end of Rossen's report, he offered advice to consumers who need garage door repair. He urged viewers to always check whether repairmen have signage on their vehicles. None of the companies in the report had trucks with company names on them.

"Experts say that's actually a pretty big red flag," said Rossen on air. "Make sure they have a legit company name so you have some recourse in case something goes wrong."

The Experts' Tip: Phony Location

Pomroy and McManus both told us that checking the company's physical address is also a good idea. McManus checked the

continued on page 42



McManus

Rossen

Pomroy



EASY INSTALLATIONS FOR INSTALLERS

EFFICIENT OPERATIONS FOR DEALERS



**GENIE OPENERS ARE DESIGNED
WITH INSTALLERS IN MIND
HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES:**

RESIDENTIAL ADVANTAGES

- Belt, chain, or screw drive rails are interchangeable between similar models to keep inventory on the truck & in the warehouse to a minimum
- DC motors greatly reduce the weight of the powerhead, in some cases over 50%
- Remotes pre-programmed right out of the box

COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGES

- LCD display provides a user-friendly interface to easily guide installer through quick set-up & trouble-shooting diagnostics
- MultiVolt® Selector allows the installer to select the voltage at the job site
- Tensibelt® primary drive reduction eliminates the need to adjust belt tension

For more ways on how Genie can make life easier for your installers and business, including links to on-line training videos and support, go to:

WWW.GENIECOMPANY.COM / EASY



To become a Genie Dealer, please send a request to TeamGenie@GenieCompany.com.

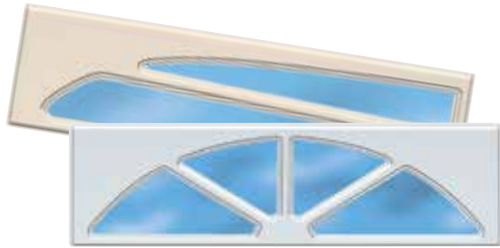
ALWAYS AT YOUR COMMAND



Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Google+, Houzz and Pinterest.

© 2015 The Genie Company
One Door Dr. Mt. Hope, OH 44660

NATIONAL DOOR INDUSTRIES, INC.



Stylecraft™

Genuine Stylecraft™ Insert Trim
Adds Lasting Beauty To Any Home



Carriage Door

H A R D W A R E
Adds An Old World Or Rustic
Look To Any Garage Door



Bevelite

The Elegant "Look" Of Beveled Glass

Serving the industry for
OVER 40 YEARS

www.natdoor.com

NATIONAL DOOR INDUSTRIES, INC.

**Fort Worth, Texas
1-800-628-3667**

continued from page 40



Courtesy of NBC News

four companies in the report and found that none of their advertised addresses were legitimate.

"Two of the addresses were parks, one was a medical building, and I personally went to the other location, and there was no garage door company there," he added.

"We thought the story could have been about companies that list a false location for their business," said Pomroy, "but it ended up focusing on repairmen who take advantage of customers."

How to Respond

McManus was upset that none of the four technicians followed standard procedure to check out the system for the customer. "Even the guy who correctly fixed the sensor problem didn't service or inspect anything," he said. "He could've lubricated everything and explained a few things to the homeowner."

"One thing that disturbed me the most was the way the phone calls were handled," he added. "None of the door companies tried to resolve the problem over the phone."

After the show aired, McManus sat down with everyone in his office to make sure that they understand the importance of helping customers with small problems on the phone.

"That shows the expertise of our company," he said. "It shows that we're there to help."

Worried About the Industry

Since viewers don't realize how the four technicians were selected, many might conclude that three out of every four garage door repairmen are dishonest people who gouge customers with exorbitant prices and unnecessary repairs.

"It's really disappointing," Pomroy told us. "I worry about my industry."

"We have a problem of dishonest repairmen. It's dangerous, and it's eroding our industry," he said. "If we don't take care of this problem as an industry, then the problem is going to take care of us. And it's not going to be pretty."

As often reported in this magazine, the "Today" exposé is only one of many nationally broadcast reports of dishonesty among residential garage door repair companies.

One question remains for the industry to answer.

Have you had enough yet? ■

To comment on this story, send an email to the editor at trw@tomwadsworth.com. You can watch the NBC "Today" video at <http://www.today.com/money/garage-door-repairmen-hidden-cameras-put-some-test-1D80319362>.