

The Montel Williams Show

9 mai 2002/*May 9th, 2002*

Veillez noter que cette entrevue est disponible en anglais seulement. Il n'est pas dans mon intention de la traduire, vu la longueur.

Please note that it not not my wish to translate this article in French, because of its lenght.

Interview: Ripley's Believe It or Not!; Dan Jbarba of "Ripley's" shares stories from the program
HOST: Montel Williams EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: Montel Williams, Diane Rappoport

RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

MONTEL WILLIAMS: You will not believe what you're about to see.

(Footage of upcoming segment)

WILLIAMS: Told you. How about a man covered in 1,000 cockroaches...

Unidentified Man: (From upcoming segment) I think I've still got one down there in the lower 40 somewhere.

WILLIAMS: ...or a cat that actually eats with a fork? The most unforgettable stories from "Ripley's Believe It or Not!," including the inspiring story of Barb. She lost her arms when she was two, but that didn't stop her from accomplishing more than most people ever will.

Announcer: Don't go away. That's coming up right now on MONTEL.

WILLIAMS: Welcome, welcome, welcome, and thank you so much for joining us today.

You know, today you're going to see some things that I know you will not believe and, I guarantee you, you will not forget. Why? I want you to please welcome from the hit series, "Ripley's Believe It or Not!," executive producer Mr. Dan Jbara. Welcome him to the show. Dan, it's so funny that "Ripley's Believe It or Not!" is even on right now because, I mean, there was a time period where everybody was fascinated with things that they thought were just obscure and--and odd, and then it went away, and then it came back, and then it went away. And now it's back, and I'm glad that it's back.

Mr. DAN JBARA (Executive Producer, "Ripley's Believe It or Not!"): Yeah. It's--it's--there's enough stories out there of real people doing these crazy and inspiring things that it--it was enough to make a show out of.

WILLIAMS: Well, you brought some wonderful stories here for us today, and some of the people on "Ripley's Believe It or Not!" are inspirational, and I want you to take a look at this.

(Excerpt from "Ripley's Believe It or Not!" courtesy of Columbia Tri-Star)

WILLIAMS: Absolutely amazing. You know, something I forgot to say--before I introduce our guest--but your host and that voice is the voice of Superman.

Mr. JBARA: That's right.

WILLIAMS: Dean Cain is now hosting "Ripley's Believe It or Not!" So that's a wonderful thing that you guys have.

Mr. JBARA: It is...

WILLIAMS: Please welcome...

Mr. JBARA: Yeah, do...

WILLIAMS: Let me get her out here. Please welcome Barb to the show. How are you? How are you? Good. Have a seat. Have a seat, have a seat, have a seat. Talk to me. So, first off, I'm sitting here looking at--at the clip of you with your--your baby, and I noticed one thing. Now how old was--was that your little boy? How old was he?

BARB (Electrocuted In An Accident At Age 2 1/2): My youngest one. He's 19 months old now.

WILLIAMS: Nineteen months. He almost instinctively knows to put his arms around your neck.

BARB: Mm-hmm. Both of my boys did that.

WILLIAMS: And did they do that? Did you have to say--Mommy have to say, 'R--grab me by the neck'? Or...

BARB: I started picking them up like that when they got a little bit bigger and a little bit stronger, you know, where they could hold their heads up. And after awhile, they just--they both learned.

WILLIAMS: Just to grab a hold of you and pick you up. This is--I mean, somebody would say why not go through and get prosthetics? Why not do...

BARB: I tried that.

WILLIAMS: And?

BARB: It was uncomfortable. The prosthetics were heavy, and I had to, you know, learn all over again how to use the hands. And I'm just--I'm more comfortable using my feet. It's more natural.

WILLIAMS: What do you want people to think about you?

BARB: I just want people to be inspired and know that you can do whatever you set your mind to do, no matter what kind of disabilities you have. I think everyone has limitations. Mine are different than yours. You know? But you can do whatever.

WILLIAMS: Please welcome Barb's mom, Tricia, to the show. All right. You know, let me do this. I got--I gotta take a little break, but when we come back, I wanna talk to you about the fact that--that a doctor told you--the words were, 'Try your best to sit on your hands and make her do things.' But, come on, any mother of a two-and-a-half-year-old, three-year-old that's just gone through the trauma that this child has gone through--if I'm a parent--I have four kids. I would have told that doctor, 'Yeah, you're right. Uh-huh, yeah, right.' And as soon as I got home, I would have been doing everything I possibly could. How did you stop yourself from doing this? Tell me when we come back from break, OK? We'll take a break. We'll be back right after this.

(Excerpts from "Ripley's Believe It or Not!")

(Announcements)

WILLIAMS: So you're sitting in the emergency room, and then they came back and said to you, 'I'm sorry. We're gonna have to amputate your daughter's arms.' What went through your mind?

TRICIA: Well, they told us they were gonna have to amputate her arms, and that if she lived, she'd be a vegetable all her life. So I asked God just to take her home if she was gonna be a vegetable. But otherwise, I'd do whatever it took to make her into somebody special. So--not realizing at all what that was. So when we took her home from the hospital--I had a brand-new baby. I had a two-month-old baby myself, and I would sit on--I didn't know how to do this, so I got easy foods like chicken, and I'd give her a chicken leg and stick it between her toes and say, you know, 'You gotta learn to eat,' and she'd cry, and she'd scream, and she'd say, 'I can't do it.' And I wanted to feed her, but I knew that I had to make her do this herself because one of her therapists had said, 'Sit on your hands and make her do it.'

I always made her try, and as long as she put forth a little bit of effort, and she tried--I mean, I was full of praise and would say, you know, 'Way to go,' you know, and then I'd help her with the rest of it.

WILLIAMS: Excellent.

TRICIA: And then the more that she saw accomplishments, the more she'd try, and the easier it got. The worst thing that any parent can do if you have a handicapped child is to do for them. If--because they'll never learn to do for themselves if you keep doing it for them. And then, you know, they grow up, and mom and dad--and something happens to mom and dad, and then where is that child now when they can't do anything for themselves?

WILLIAMS: Mom kept that philosophy for you when you were in school, too, didn't she?

BARB: All my life.

WILLIAMS: And you remember some of the things the kids used to try to do to you, right?

BARB: Oh, yeah. Kids...

WILLIAMS: Tel--tell--say some of them.

BARB: Kids are cruel. I had one boy in, I think, eighth grade, that used to knock my bag off my shoulder every day 'cause there was a stampede of children coming down the hall, you know, changing classes, and he knew I couldn't sit down to pick it up with all those kids. I'd watch my bag get kicked all over until there was enough room that I could sit down and pick it up.

WILLIAMS: Pick it up.

BARB: He did that every day. He used to come over, you know, at the cafeteria and say, 'Do you always eat like that?' 'Yeah, you see me every day.' And--kids are cruel.

WILLIAMS: This woman can do probably more than all of us together with one toe. With one toe. I want to thank you. You know, Dan, you feature stories about people's worst fears, too, do you not?

Mr. JBARA: Yeah, and unlike the other show that there's a fear in it, everybody who faces their fears on our show, they're not paid. It's not for cash. It's either they do it because they do this every day, and we happen to capture them doing that, or they want to overcome a fear, and it's a real fear that you want to overcome.

WILLIAMS: Take a look at this.

(Excerpt from "Ripley's Believe It or Not!")

WILLIAMS: I'm gonna take a break. When we come back, we'll meet a man who never met a cockroach he didn't like. Yeah. We'll be back right after this.

(Excerpts from "Ripley's Believe It or Not!")

(Announcements)

WILLIAMS: You know, most people are completely disgusted by that little thing that crawls around in your kitchen late at night. You know what I mean? Especially here in New York. You know, that thing--What's it called?--a little cockroach. Yeah. I can't--there's not a cockroach I haven't seen in this--in my life that I have not attempted to kill, and if I chased it into a closet, I was trying to kill it there. Tell me about this guy.

Mr. JBARA: Well, the funny thing is, he's an exterminator, but it's one of those strange relationships. He kind of fell in love with roaches, and that led to this.

WILLIAMS: I see. Take a look at this.

(Excerpt from "Ripley's Believe It or Not!")

WILLIAMS: You--did--did they ever try to convince you to try some of these things just 'cause, you know, you're executive producer, or do you do it first before you get somebody else to do it?

Mr. JBARA: No, no, I stay objectively, you know, at a distance.

WILLIAMS: All right, we're gonna take a little break. When we come back, we're gonna meet a man with an eye for talent. You'll tell us what that means when we come back. We'll be back right after this.

(Announcements)

WILLIAMS: Well, now, Dan, some of the stories that you do feature some people who show off, you know, let's say, their newly discovered talent, right?

Mr. JBARA: Right.

WILLIAMS: That's what we're about to see with this guy?

Mr. JBARA: Yeah, we say their unique physical abilities.

WILLIAMS: Unique physical abilities. Now, hold your seat. You ready? Take a look at this.

(Excerpt from "Ripley's Believe It or Not!")

WILLIAMS: Wow. Dan, now you feature it because Ripley--Ripley went around the world trying to find different things and bring them back so people can be introduced to different things. You're still doing the same thing on the show, right?

Mr. JBARA: Absolu--actually now, we're trying to go to them. I mean, Ripley traveled the world and would bring back shrunken heads or, at that time, whatever was unique that Americans didn't know about. We send crews all over the world to now find those things. The clip we're about to see--I don't know if people have heard of, like, the neck ring women of Burma.

WILLIAMS: Explain that. You--you've seen the pictures in "National Geographic." People wear the--they stretch their neck. Right. A...

Mr. JBARA: It--yeah, it's like a classic still image of "Nat Geo." Well, for "Ripley's," that's not enough. We wanted to find out if someone was willing to take it off so we could see how it affected their body, and--and culturally what that would mean to take off the neck rings. So we take it one step further.

WILLIAMS: Let's take a look at this.

(Excerpt from "Ripley's Believe It or Not!")

WILLIAMS: Wow. Let me take a little break. When we come back, a courageous teen who is one of the only people ever to survive this. Is that correct?

Mr. JBARA: Absolutely.

WILLIAMS: One of the only people that--that is known to man to ever survive something that's known as mermaid syndrome. You'll get a chance to meet her when we come back. We'll be back right after this.

(Announcements)

WILLIAMS: Well, you know, here's one young teen who shocked an entire medical community because she really is the only person that they think of--a record that's ever survived this malady.

Mr. JBARA: It's usually fatal.

WILLIAMS: It's usually fatal right at birth. Take a look at this.

(Excerpt from "Ripley's Believe It or Not!")

WILLIAMS: Please welcome 13-year-old Tiffany to the show.
How are you?

TIFFANY (13; Born With A Rare Disorder Where Her Legs Were Fused Together): Good.

WILLIAMS: Good. Thank you so much for being here.

TIFFANY: Oh, my pleasure.

WILLIAMS: Talk to us a little bit. This is--you are, first off, a medical miracle. You know that.

TIFFANY: Oh, thanks.

WILLIAMS: So we're blessed to have you here, but this has been hard on you, right? In some ways?

TIFFANY: Well, growing up, I got a lot of--I got teased a lot by teen-agers, boys a lot. But that just made me want to be normal even more. You know, I got a basketball, so I play wheelchair basketball. And I can't run, so I do wheelchair races, and I do gymnastics. I win first place every time.

WILLIAMS: There you go. Good for you. You know, see, I can't--I can't, you know, miss the opportunity to talk a little bit more about what you were saying about people making fun. What would you say to a parent to make them understand that they need to have a conversation with their kids so that when they go to school, they won't pick on someone like yourself? What would you say to a parent?

TIFFANY: Well, I think that everybody is special. Everybody

has something wrong with them, and just because someone has something more wrong than you doesn't mean you have to make fun of them. Because, I mean, a lot of people can walk and stuff, but I think I can do better than them sometimes, like wheelchair races and things like that.

WILLIAMS: Now you also one time--you--you had mentioned to my producer about walking into a store or something or going to a restaurant, and you will see older people--it's not just their kids. Adults have the nerve to say something to you. It was so funny when you--I heard what you said back to somebody.

TIFFANY: Younger people stare at me all the time, and I'd just look away. But finally, I just got so tired of it, so I just turn around and say, 'Excuse me, do you want to know what's wrong with me? I mean, do you--want to sit there and stare at me, you can, but if you want to know, just ask me.'

WILLIAMS: Let me take a little break. We'll be back right after this. Thank you.

(Announcements)

WILLIAMS: Well, please welcome Tiffany's grandmom, Jane, to the show. Welcome her.

JANE: Thank you.

WILLIAMS: And, you know, I--I think--I think this is important just to say, because people need to understand. You're a grandma, but you've been raising Tiffany, and we should talk about it 'cause I'm not sure if everybody really understands how special Tiffany really is. There have not been any children that survived this malady to where she is at.

JANE: As far as we know, none.

WILLIAMS: And there are--there are other--we were just talking about it for a second. There were other complications that Tiffany was born with. One kidney. Heart problems.

JANE: Yes.

WILLIAMS: You've already had how many heart surgeries?

TIFFANY: Oh, I can't even remember.

WILLIAMS: Three. Three heart surgeries.

JANE: She was born without a bladder, so they had to build one out of her intestines ov--under her stoma, which is her navel. And that's how she gets catheterized.

WILLIAMS: Catheterized. So, I mean, there--there are many maladies, but she keeps plugging away, every day. So what--what is it--what's in store for Tiffany? What do you want to do in life?

TIFFANY: I want to be an actress or a model or a nurse.

WILLIAMS: Or a nurse.

TIFFANY: Yeah.

WILLIAMS: And I will say to you, all three of those are achievable. And don't let anybody tell you that it's not achievable. Ripley's"--you know, I'm gonna go to a--"Ripley's" features some amazing stories about other people, too, like this one young girl who stretched her talents beyond the limits. Take a look at this.

(Excerpt from "Ripley's Believe It or Not!")

WILLIAMS: That is a talent that could go--she could make billions delivering packages in Manhattan. Let me take a break. We'll be back right after this.

(Announcements)

WILLIAMS: Well, now, you have--this is--What?--your third season now?

Mr. JBARA: Third season, right.

WILLIAMS: Third season. You've got some exciting stuff coming up this season.

Mr. JBARA: Right.

WILLIAMS: Tell us a little bit about the stuff we might see coming up this year.

Mr. JBARA: Right. Well, the thing about "Ripley's" is we do have these world exclusive stories. We have great researchers who find stories that you won't see anywhere else. One up--upcoming episode, there's a wolf boy syndrome where there's a genetic--where they basically look like a wolf. And this

boy grew up. He just got married to a beautiful woman. And on "Ripley's," they just had a baby, and they're gonna bring the baby out for the first time. So no one has known what it would be like to have a--a--a wolf man and this beautiful bride, and see what the baby looks like.

WILLIAMS: And the baby could have the same disorder?

Mr. JBARA: They didn't know until the baby was born, so...

WILLIAMS: Well, we'll see that, and then you also have something really cool. This is...

Mr. JBARA: And then--yeah. We brought you a special clip just for your audience.

WILLIAMS: Exclusive. Exclusive on THE MONTEL WILLIAMS SHOW.

Mr. JBARA: We have--we have some great animal stories. This one's self-explanatory.

WILLIAMS: It's a cat with really good table manners.

Mr. JBARA: Exactly.

WILLIAMS: Let's take a look at this.

(Excerpt from "Ripley's Believe It or Not!")

WILLIAMS: And I have a feeling Tessa will become a movie star.

Mr. JBARA: Oh, yeah.

WILLIAMS: She keeps that up. Let me take a little break. We'll be back right after this.

(Announcements)

WILLIAMS: Well, "Ripley's Believe It or Not!" airs on Wednesday night at 8 PM on the SuperStation TBS. And you don't want to miss it. And I will tell you what's very funny is that clip that we showed you, which is our exclusive--what you didn't get to see was Tessa eating with chopsticks. Watch "Ripley's" and you'll see Tessa actually do that. Thank you so much for being here.

Mr. JBARA: Oh, thank you.

WILLIAMS: Good to see you. Thank you for being here. Thank you.

I--you know, I'm out of time, but I think--you know, af--after watching--now we've seen a lot of different things, but for me,

the most inspirational thing that I've seen this--are the two of you, Barb and Tiffany. And there were people who told you that you couldn't be the mother that you are. Is that correct?

BARB: Oh, there's people who still probably think that. But...

WILLIAMS: You know what? Mother's Day is coming up.

BARB: ...(*Unintelligible*).

WILLIAMS: In fact, I've got to put you right up there on the list of one of the top mothers in America, without a doubt.

BARB: Thank you.

WILLIAMS: All right. Two, three. ...(*Unintelligible*). I'm out of time. Again, thanks so much, Dan. Tell Dean I said hello.

Mr. JBARA: I will.

WILLIAMS: And we'll be watching. Join us on the next
MONTEL.