

Episode 118: Fabiana won The Price Is Right showcase

When it comes to television game shows, there are just a few that have been around for a very long time.

A couple of those are Wheel of Fortune, and Jeopardy! These shows have really become a part of American culture. But there's another one that's been on the air even longer than those two, because it's currently the longest running game show in American TV history. That show is The Price Is Right.

Chances are, you've probably watched it at some point. Just about everyone has. But there are a few things you may not know about this show.

The Price Is Right has been seen on all three major networks – NBC, ABC and CBS. Yeah, that's a bit of trivia from back when there were pretty much 3 channels on television to choose from.

One of the hosts for many years was Bob Barker. And for a long time, his hair was dyed black. But he didn't like the way it looked. At one point, when he was on vacation, he stopped dying his hair and let it go full gray. The producers of the show were worried about how viewers would respond. But it turns out, people loved Bob's new look. And ratings went through the roof.

A couple of well-known celebrities were contestants on TPIR, before they became famous –

Aaron Paul was once a contestant. He played Jesse Pinkman on the really popular series, Breaking Bad. He got all the way to the showcase, but ended up overbidding so he didn't win.

The other one was Vanna White. Long before she became the famous and highly paid letter-turner on Wheel of Fortune, she was just another person on Contestant Row, trying to win something. But she actually never made it up on stage.

If you're a regular listener of this podcast, you know that a lot of the stories we talk about are really intense, and the guest may have gone through a huge tragedy. So sometimes I like to talk to someone who has been through something that's still really unusual, but happy.

My guest today is Fabiana, and she was in the studio audience for The Price Is Right, and her name was called to "COME ON DOWN", and she actually DID make it on stage. But there's more to her story.

Scott

What's your second favorite game show?

Fabiana

Oh, goodness. I'm gonna cheat a little bit because, technically, it's not a game show. I think it's a reality show - The Amazing Race. I watched every episode during COVID. I believe there are 33 seasons now and I would have really loved to be on that show.

Scott

That's a really popular show. I had no idea that there were 33 seasons though.

Fabiana

Yes, it goes way back and it's so exciting. It probably goes against everything that I am - traveling all over the place without planning and leaving my kids - but I love the idea of the obstacles and competition and, of course, winning the million dollars at the end.

Scott

Well, I asked, "What's your second favorite?" because I assume your first favorite game show is "The Price Is Right." Is that right?

Fabiana

It has to be. It just has to be.

Scott

How long have you been watching that show?

Fabiana

Well, I don't get much of a chance to watch it anymore. I am subscribed to it on Facebook, so I'll watch little clips here and there. When I was younger - let's say, 9-10 years old - and I was home alone with my siblings in the summer, we would watch it because there wasn't much else to do. We knew that it would start exactly at 10 in the morning and we would turn up the volume. We'd go upstairs. As soon as the theme song came on, we would start running down the stairs. I would trip on the stairs purposely. We would do all sorts of shenanigans like jumping up and down and pretending we were contestants on the show. So, that was my stepsister, Kathy, and I. That was kind of a routine of ours. I just would love to make her laugh, so I would be the goofiest contestant of them all.

Scott

It seems like their goal on the show is to get people to be as goofy as possible. People just go crazy.

Fabiana

I think so. I have a theory of why we go crazy. We're standing in line for a really long time. So, it's a full-day event. You're standing in line for hours. You've probably gotten very little sleep because you have to be there really early in the morning. You've bonded with all these people - over 300 people - that are in the auditorium with you. So finally, when you get picked, it's a big deal.

Scott

You're in Southern California. How far do you live from where the show was actually filmed?

Fabiana

About 2.5 hours. You're expected to be there at around 5.30 in the morning - the earlier, the better - so that you can get a number. You get a ticket beforehand but that ticket doesn't really mean much. Once you show up, you get another number and that will tell you whether you are in the first taping or the second taping. So, you want to get there as early as possible.

Scott

What was your job at that time? Did you have to plan for time off to do this?

Fabiana

I didn't. I was actually on summer vacation from Chico State. I was home visiting my family. I had gone up to LA the day before to run some errands with my cousin, John. We drove by the CBS studios and just thought, "Oh goodness, let's stop by and get some tickets to The Price Is Right," and we got tickets for the very next day.

Scott

Wow. Okay. I thought you had planned this so far in advance. This was kind of an impulse thing.

Fabiana

This was a very last-minute thing. We got home quite late that night - I want to say we got home at about 11. Then, we had to take off at, maybe, 3 in the morning.

Scott

What instructions do they give you? How do they determine who gets chosen to come down? Do you know? Is it just random?

Fabiana

It's not completely random, no. You go through a line once you get there. You fill out paperwork. There was a whole lot of waiting. Finally, after hours, you come across the producer - usually, he stands on a podium. They've kind of chunked the audience members - the 300-plus audience members - into groups. You are in a group of at least 50 people, up to 100 people deep. Everyone was silent. The producer will read your name tag and say, "Fabiana, tell me about yourself." You have about 10 seconds to really make an impression on this person and that's when he decides. I'm sure there are people who just have a beautiful personality who just gets right on. For me, I figured I really spent all day here. I had gotten in a fight with my cousin in line. So, I thought, "I'm not going to waste all this time that we've spent. I'm really going to make sure that I get on." So, once he asked me, I started jumping up and down. I told him that I love to dance and gave him a little sample of my dance moves. As soon as I was done talking, you could hear everyone in line say, "Oh, she's gonna get picked."

Scott

That's a good sign. I guess. You said you were with your cousin, John. Did he also want to get picked?

Fabiana

He did. He also did want to get picked, and he is even more animated than I am.

Scott

Just got lucky...

Fabiana

I did get lucky. I think it also helped that I was wearing my Chico State sweatshirt because I think they often go for college students.

Scott

Was that planned on your part?

Fabiana

Probably, yes.

Scott

This was back in mid-90s. Of course, back then, Bob Barker was the host. He was the host for a long time. Did you get to meet him ahead of time?

Fabiana

I didn't meet him ahead of time, no. This was 1996. I did get to meet him, but not before the show started.

Scott

All right. Just take us through. You were sitting in the audience. What happened?

Fabiana

I was sitting in the audience. When a person was called, they were excited and ran up. There was a podium and room for 4 people to be called. When the first person was called, you were already losing faith - like, it's not your name. The second person was called and I was like, "Oh my goodness." All of a sudden, when they called the third person, they held up a huge sign that had your name on it. I think they completely slaughtered my name. Luckily, they had it written down. When they said, "Fabiana come on down," I lost it. I had to drink lots of coffee and lots of soda. I had little sleep. Also, I think I felt a little bit of pressure to really be excited. So, I jumped up and down while I was coming down. I never stopped jumping. I almost tripped coming down. I high-fived everyone. I was just elated and so relieved that they had called my name.

Scott

Wouldn't it have been amazing if you had actually tripped coming down the stairs just like how you played when you were a kid?

Fabiana

Yeah, that would have been really embarrassing. I mean, it's already embarrassing enough. It took me a while to be able to watch this video and not cry with laughter because I didn't stop jumping the entire show.

Scott

Obviously, I would say almost everybody has seen The Price Is Right. Can you just explain what's the game for getting up on stage?

Fabiana

What they did was they brought out an item. It could be anything. It could be a bicycle, suitcase, or whatever it might be. The four contestants have to bid on a price and the one that's closest without going over gets to go up on stage. In this case, they brought out an exercise bicycle and I had to bid on it. I was a college student. I had no clue about what an exercise bicycle might cost. So, numbers were just coming to my head. No big deal. I was not really thinking it through because there was really nothing for me to think through. I had never bought this before.

Scott

Plus, this was such an impulsive thing. It's not like you had time to study those episodes and learn prices.

Fabiana

There was none of that. I got to tell you that there are some serious Price Is Right fans who know every detail about everything, so I apologize to them. For me. I'm a fan but a fan with heart. I don't memorize everything that goes along with it.

Scott

You're not the data nerd, right?

Fabiana

No, absolutely not. I'm just enjoying it. They brought out this exercise bike and I got to bid. I bid \$1,150. Once everyone was done bidding, Bob Barker started saying - there's a bell that goes ding ding ding ding ding - "You know what this beautiful sound means? This sounds like someone has bid the exact price." I knew it was me. I already knew it was me. You could see it on my face. I knew. So, I was just waiting for him to say- I don't know. It was just meant to be. Then, he said, "Fabiana. You have won \$100." So, he gave me the \$100 once I got up on stage but then took it back because they would write you out a check.

Scott

Oh, okay. So you don't get to keep the \$100 bill? '

Fabiana

No.

Scott

That's all just for show? Okay.

Fabiana

That's right.

Scott

What's interesting about your initial bid, though, is that there's some strategy in this. I saw that you bid \$1,150, but someone else had bid \$1,000. Then, someone after you bid \$1,151. Of course, you can only get it if you don't go over. So, the only way you could have won is to be the exact price.

Fabiana

That's right.

Scott

You pulled it off.

Fabiana

I'm not a big fan of the "Dollar over", to be honest. It's part of the game, but I don't love it.

Scott

Yeah, I mean, it's strategy. Everybody wants to win but it kind of knocks somebody else immediately out of the running unless they get the exact right.

Fabiana

Super lucky.

Scott

So you're exactly right. You got up on the stage. What were you playing to win in that game?

Fabiana

I was playing a game called "Cover up" and I was going to be winning a minivan Dodge Caravan. There was already a price set and you had to cover up that price because they were the wrong numbers. So for example, under the 10,000th place, there were three options. As you got to the last number, you had a lot more options of what digits you could pick. He asked me, "Do you know how to play this?" I didn't but, whatever, I could figure it out. So, I started hopping along, grabbing my numbers and just putting them in. When he asked, "Did Fabiana get any numbers right?" I had them all correct except for the second to last number, which was actually a bad thing because that meant I only had one chance to fix that price. I ended up switching it to a 7 but it was a 1, so I lost the car.

Scott

So the thing about whether you win or lose— I mean, they have 3 games. Then, those 3 contestants, halfway through the show, spin the big wheel. The idea with the wheel is you have to get as close to \$1 without going over \$1. So how did your spin go?

Fabiana

I spun the wheel and I believe I spun 15¢. I already knew I was not going to win with 15¢. So, I had to spin it again because you are able to spin it twice. The second spin was much better, which was 70¢. So, I had a great total of 85¢. No one was able to beat me without going over. So, that ensured me going to the "Showcase."

Scott

So you were sure at that point that you were going to be one of the two people playing for the Showcase prize.

Fabiana

I think that's the luckiest part of the show because there's really no control right of the wheel.

Scott

It's so big. Was it hard to spin?

Fabiana

It is a little bit bulky to spin but not super hard.

Scott

I wonder if anybody has any strategy for spinning that thing. Of course, without being able to practice ahead of time, you really would have no idea.

Fabiana

Yeah, you would really need to be able to practice with the exact same weight, right?

Scott

Tell us about the Showcase. You were up against a woman named Dorothy.

Fabiana

I was up against the sweetest - I mean this in a very endearing way - old lady. She was just a white-haired petite. I mean, she was the audience's favorite. She had lost her game but, actually, on the wheel, I think she had won up to \$15,000 because she spun a perfect dollar and spun again. When you're in the Showcase, you have the big winner. There's whoever won most and whoever won least. Obviously, I had won the least and she won the most. So, they showed us the first showcase and there were, like, Alpacas, a car, and a trip, and she decided to bid on that. Then, mine were a washer and dryer, barbecue, and a sailboat. So, I had to bid on that. Again, I had no clue.

Scott

I was gonna ask you. You live on the California coast. Did you have any idea of the sailboat price?

Fabiana

No, absolutely not. No clue. Again, numbers were coming to me. I bet \$14,016 because 16 is my favorite number. To be honest, I was just so happy. You really couldn't hear the audience. Everyone was yelling and you really couldn't hear what they were saying. I'm sure people talk about that guy who was sitting in the front who knew all the prices for everything. I wish I knew who he was then, but I didn't know. So, this number just came to me and I just said it. I think I just got very lucky. Dorothy was off by about \$4,000 and I was extremely close. I was off by \$833. The actual price was \$14,849. Had I been within \$200, I would have won both showcases. So, that was actually a really great bid.

Scott

For somebody who had no idea of how to price a boat. John, your cousin was in the audience. Did he know anything about boats? Was he trying to give you some numbers?

Fabiana

No, no idea. Then, a regret I had was - I was just so amazed - I ran off without giving Dorothy a hug or being appropriate and saying congratulations. Later on, she came up on stage and gave me a hug. So, I was happy about that.

Scott

Otherwise, that would have been a long-time regret, right?

Fabiana

Yes. She was the sweetest. She really was. She was very feisty and sweet.

Scott

As the show was ending, you were all on the stage - I should say I know this because I've seen this video. Well, we'll probably have a video of this on the website so that people can watch this episode. You're all on the stage next to the boat. There were you, your cousin, Bob Barker, and the girls. After the music and filming stopped, what happened after that?

Fabiana

Yeah. There were a few other people on the stage with me. Remember when I told you that we were in line forever and you really become friends with the people in line? We had said to one another, "Oh, if one of us wins. You guys can come up." So, you'll see a dad and a daughter that also came up with us. What they did was they ushered out everyone who did not win. Everybody was ushered out to leave. Anyone that has won anything at all or has even been

called up to the Contestant's Row— at that time, you get shuttled into a small room. It almost looked like the bottom part of a stairwell. It was dark. There was this guy that was not very patient, I must say. We all had a lot of questions. Obviously, do we have to keep it? How does everything work? It was just one guy and he was trying to do all of the paperwork.

Scott

Of course, he gets those same questions from the contests in every single filming.

Fabiana

Exactly. Yes. So, I was a little nervous. I just thought, "Okay, I'm just gonna keep everything" because some people were already saying, "Okay. Well, I don't want this." I just thought, "Okay, well, I'm just gonna keep everything." I was quite shy at that time also and he just seemed like he didn't have time for any of it. So that was it. We filled out the paperwork. It does take a while. You fill out your tax forms. Usually, the biggest winner goes last, so you have to wait for everyone to get their paperwork filled out. So, we got out of there quite late. Of course, my cousin was waiting for me outside.

Scott

He deserves something for that, I guess. Right?

Fabiana

He is amazing. I have to say that it's probably because of him that I got on. I think there are certain people in life that you feel very comfortable with, that you could be your silliest with, and he's my person. I could be so silly and not feel stupid around him at all. So he's a great wingman for The Price Is Right.

Scott

Obviously, you don't take the boat home with you. What was the arrangement for getting the sailboat?

Fabiana

You don't get anything at that time. You have just your paperwork. What they tell you is you have 3 months to hear from all of the vendors. Within 3 months, they'll contact you. Then, they'll make arrangements. I think by the time the boat came, I was actually back at Chico State. My amazing mom and stepdad put an ad on the paper and sold the boat to a lovely couple that ended up paying more than they probably needed to because they knew that that would help me pay for college.

Scott

Oh, that's nice!

Fabiana

Yeah, it was very nice.

Scott

What kind of tax issues did this create for you? Because all of the value of all these prizes is considered income for you for that year, how did that affect you?

Fabiana

The total price that I won was worth \$16,098. Keep in mind, I was a college student. I was working at the Chico State Bookstore. I filled out the paperwork. Well, I didn't— the Chico State accounting group did for me. We sent in \$500 or so. Then, the money was mailed back to me. I didn't owe any money. So, that was really lovely.

Scott

The benefits of being a broke college student and a low tax bracket.

Fabiana

For sure, yes.

Scott

You must have been kind of a celebrity in your family. How much later did people have to wait before they actually saw that episode air?

Fabiana

I went during the summer. It aired in October. So, I wanted to say it took a few months before it actually aired. I believe I definitely went in the summertime - July 10 - and then it aired on October 14.

Scott

Did you have, like, a big family gathering? Did everybody get together to watch that episode with you on?

Fabiana

No. You know what's funny? We weren't really supposed to tell people but they gave me postcards with Bob Barker's picture. So, I did actually fill out the postcards and tell people. I was in a sorority and some of my sorority sisters were making a huge deal about it. So, we did watch it. We taped it on our VHS. My mom and dad taped it on the VHS. So, yes, we did get to watch it.

Scott

Well, as you mentioned, this all happened in 1996. What a great story to tell people. You were on The Price Is Right - not only on there, but also the Showcase. But that's not the end of the story...

Fabiana

No, that's not.

Scott

In 2011, 15 years later, you decided to try it again. Why did you decide to go on the show a second time?

Fabiana

At that point, I was married. I had 2 little ones. I had a 4-year-old and a 1-year-old. I'm a teacher. Things were just really rough at that time. I had a 3% pay cut at work. I was driving this Toyota Corolla. Every time I would drive on this bridge, it would shake at the turn. This was an amazing car but I had just put on way too many miles. On top of that, my brother was getting married in Punta Cana. It just seemed like there was a lot that I needed money for. I wasn't going to get an extra job because I had my babies. I don't know why it just came to me one day.

I just told my husband at that time and said, "I'm going to The Price Is Right to go win a car." I repeated the same thing to my brother, "I'm gonna go to The Price Is Right and win a car and maybe a trip to Punta Cana to go to your wedding," and they laughed at me. At that time, my husband - he's my ex now - was not very happy that I was leaving him for the day with the 2 girls. It was during my spring break time, but that's what I was doing. I said, "I'm gonna go to The Price Is Right. I'm gonna go win a car," and I went by myself,

Scott

When people think of, "Okay, I need extra money. What can I do?" most people would never think, "I'm gonna go into the game show" because the chances of winning are so low. I just think it wouldn't occur to people. But you've already done it once, so why not do it again? Yeah, it kind of makes sense. This time, Bob Barker is no longer the host. It is now Drew Carey. How was this experience different from the first one?

Fabiana

This experience was really emotional for me. I had a really tough time being away from my daughter. Again, it was a really long day. I mean, I had to park my car in the dark on the street and then run to get in line. I was alone this whole time. Again, I met another dad and a daughter and we became friends. I think, at some point, even in line, I started to get emotional, like, "I can't believe I left my babies to stand in line all day." They said, "Oh, it's gonna be worth it. You're gonna get on." Sure enough, when the producer came around, I was sure to be really animated so that I could get called up. This time was actually a lot more difficult to get called up. I was not the first, the second, or the third to be called up. I believe I was the fifth one to be called up. Then, it took me a while to get on stage because people were bidding \$1 over me. The first thing I believe was a bicycle. Someone bid \$1 over and they got on stage. The second one was an espresso machine which I had no clue about. I take responsibility for that one. For the third one, again, someone bid \$1 over me and they got on stage. Then, the fourth thing I got to bid on was some luggage that I had no idea how much it was. I was \$100 off, but no one bid \$1 over me, so I got on stage for that. Thank goodness.

Scott

you must have felt pretty good about that. I mean, it's kind of crazy. You have no idea what the luggage would cost. What is it? A few hundred dollars? \$500 or \$800? Do you know what you bid for that?

Fabiana

Yeah, I bid \$920 and it was \$1,020. I had no idea. I honestly had no idea how much that luggage would be because I would never spend that much on luggage. I was really thinking, "Oh, I'm not going to make it." But in my mind, from the very beginning, I was just thinking, "Okay, first, I need to get called down to the podium." Once I got on the podium, I thought, "Okay, now I need to get called on stage." So, that day, I just had a mission. Thankfully, I was called on stage. It was not looking good.

Scott

It's gotta be disappointing for people. Maybe, like, some of the early ones that were called— they were down there on the Contestant's Row the whole time and they never got up on stage.

Fabiana

You know what's worse about that? You can only be on The Price Is Right once every 10 years. Now, when I was on it with Bob Barker, it was once in your lifetime. Once Drew came on, it's

once every 10 years. Even if you get called up to the podium, that's considered being on The Price Is Right.

Scott

Oh, so you've blown it by just getting up there?

Fabiana

Yes. So that's rough.

Scott

You got up on stage and you knew right off the bat that the first game was for a Chevy Camaro.

Fabiana

Yes, it is.

Scott

You were probably thinking, "Okay, I came here for a car."

Fabiana

Cherry Red Chevy Camaro - not a super kid-friendly car but, whatever, I'll take it. This time, my game was titled Hi Lo. I had to pick 3 of the most expensive items. I believe they had 6 items. I had to pick the 3 most expensive things. I just had a conversation with someone talking about how expensive tomato sauce was at my neighborhood store, so I immediately picked tomato sauce, and that turned out to be my blender. I picked the gum. I forget what else it was that I picked. I picked 2 of the most expensive items but the tomato sauce was not one of them. I should have picked the cake-decorating letters that I just remember getting as a kid because they were so cheap. My mom would have never spent that much on cake decorating letters.

Scott

Once again, you lost your main game.

Fabiana

I lost a second car.

Scott

Did you think, "Okay, well, I came for the car. There goes the car."

Fabiana

Mmhmm. Now my mind is, "I have to win at the wheel."

Scott

It's great to have that goal but, like you said before, it's just chance.

Fabiana

The wheel is entirely chance.

Scott

There's a little bit of strategy though because when you first spin, you can decide whether to spin again or not.

Fabiana

I think so. I feel that one is really based on luck. I had to spin first and I spun 70¢. I decided not to spin again because I could easily go over, but 70¢ is beatable. Luckily, Eli spun. He spun 25¢ and then 5¢. Then, Kelvin spun. He spun 55¢ and then 65¢ - so once not enough, once too much. I got to go to the Showcase again!!

Scott

You're back!

Fabiana

Yes. Again, as the loser, but I don't care. I am in the showcase. What I didn't mention about this episode was this is a very unique episode - this was a tribute to the Beatles - and the band from Vegas called Rain was there. So, it was a very long episode because they were playing music. All of the prizes for the showcase were based around the Beatles. What I was bidding on was a round trip to London, a 6-night stay at a fancy hotel, a tour around London, and a Mini Cooper, and - I don't know how the video game is connected - a video game as well. So there was a car in there. There was a Mini Cooper in there.

Scott

That's a little bit more like a family car.

Fabiana

It was a 2-door Mini Cooper.

Scott

Oh, it's not that.

Fabiana

That one was not.

Scott

How did you do in that Showcase?

Fabiana

Well, I was up against Donald. Donald had guitars and a Porsche.

Scott

The Porsche would have been even less of a family car.

Fabiana

Yes. So this time, I was not as close. I bid \$24,600. My actual price was \$31,796. So, I was off by a little more than \$7,000. Donald was off by a little more than \$14,000, so he was way off. He's a super nice guy. We were both saying, "Oh, we wish we could both win" because we got to talk to one another during the commercial breaks. We were just saying, "Oh my goodness, one of us is going to win a car by the end of this." We were both very emotional. You could actually see me when I get called up on stage. when I went. You could see that I was very emotional the whole time. I wasn't as carefree as I was the first time this time. It was like I was on a mission to win a car and I did it. I won the car.

Scott

Like you said, there's a big difference between being a college student. "Yeah, let's just go do it and have fun. Maybe we'll win something." But now you really needed this.

Fabiana

I really needed the car. So, The Price Is Right came through for me for college. It came through for me with this car. I didn't realize this but when it was time for me to go to the dealership to pick up my car, it was the first year that the Countryman was coming out. The Countryman is a 4-seater, so I upgraded to that, and that was the car we had for several years.

Scott

So you had to, like, pay the difference.

Fabiana

That's right. That was it. We took the babies to London and we stayed in the hotel. It was wonderful. I still have the luggage also although it is starting to fall apart.

Scott

Well, yeah, this was in 2011, so it has been—

Fabiana

—yeah, 11 years. Yeah.

Scott

When you went on the trip to London, did they cover all of the expenses or did you have to pay for your meals? How much did you actually have out of pocket?

Fabiana

They'll only pay for what they say they're going to pay. So, in this case, they paid for the 6-night stay and for the tour. Everything else was out of pocket. Of course, the round trips were for 2 people, so we also had to pay extra for our daughter. So we did end up spending a lot of money. I went to win the car because we had no money but I wasn't going to pass up this trip to London either.

Scott

Oh, of course. When it's all covered or most of it is covered. They paid for airfare, I assume?

Fabiana

They did, yeah. My daughter turned 5 during the trip. We celebrated her fifth birthday there. So, it's a great memory for her. She still remembers it and loves it.

Scott

This is just incredible. You went back and you won a showcase for the second time.

Fabiana

That's right.

Scott

But you're on What Was That Like. This is a podcast where we talk about really unusual things, and that's not the end of the story. You were actually on The Price Is Right again a third time this year, 2022.

Fabiana

I was, yes.

Scott

What was your reason for going back a third time?

Fabiana

I figured it'd be much easier to get on because the audience is really minimized to - instead of 300-plus people - maybe 30 people because of COVID precautions. It's not a full audience. So, they had people sitting in pods now and there are just, maybe, 2 people in your group or maybe more. You're separated - 2 or 3 people per pod. I thought that, maybe, it would really be easier to get on instead of standing in line for 5-plus hours. So, I sent in my information because I saw, "If you want to be on The Price Is Right, right in here." So I did. Immediately, someone called me back - it was like a pre-screening. They said, "Okay, well, you sound like someone that we might want." Then, I had an interview with another person and it was actually a very lengthy interview. I want to say it was maybe 20-minutes long. He wanted to see me as excited as I could be. It was not an easy interview.

Scott

Did you tell him, "Hey, wait a minute. Don't you know who I am? I've been on this show twice before. Of course, I'm a good contestant!"

Fabiana

They don't have a clue.

Scott

You've never played that card?

Fabiana

No, I didn't. You do have to be upfront with them. You have to tell them that you've been on it before, so he knew. But nobody remembered me at all.

Scott

I mean, if he knows that you've been on before, especially the fact that you've got up on stage both times and won, they must have some idea that you're the type of person they're looking for, right? It must have given you some kind of an edge.

Fabiana

It's possible. My brother and I spoke about it. By this time - which is the third time now - it's the mission with my brothers. My brothers think it's just the coolest thing on earth. So, we had a conversation about it before COVID even hit. We thought, "Gosh, do I tell them I've been on it or do I just not say anything?" Because you do write it down but you don't need to say it at the time while being interviewed. So it could go either way depending on the person.

Scott

Yeah, I saw the video of this. In the beginning, the camera kind of pans across the crowd. It's not an empty room but, boy, it sure is sparse. Everybody was spread out. There are groups of 2 and 3 here and there.

Fabiana

Yeah, I mean, the odds are there for you. Instead of going up against 300 people, you're maybe going up against 15. You have to go with somebody else so, again, I took my cousin John - my Price Is Right wingman. Who else would I take, right? So, really, 15 people have been interviewed to go. Now, those 15 people that have been interviewed— they said, “This doesn't mean that you're gonna get up on stage.” Once I got to The Price Is Right, you're interviewed again. So the interview process was a lot more rigorous this third time.

Scott

Yeah, I would imagine because they have a smaller group to choose from. They want to make sure they get the right people - the ones that are going to act like they're nuts up on stage, and you did it.

Fabiana

That's right. Yeah. I mean, I just feel like driving. I'm gonna wake up that early. I'm gonna drive. I'm gonna be waiting. I need to bring it. So again, when we sat in a group, everyone was quiet and they talked to me. I just made sure to really bring out my dorkiest personality. You have to channel that 9-year-old that would roll down the stairs kind of thing.

Scott

Are you still a teacher?

Fabiana

I am, mmhmm.

Scott

Okay. This show actually aired in February of 2022 and you had taped that show in January. So you're still a teacher. Did you have to take time off work this time or were you still on winter break?

Fabiana

I was on winter break. Because of everything that had gone on during COVID, that was another reason why I wanted to go on The Price Is Right. At our school, we lost an amazing teacher and also one of my favorite students. During the summer, my mom lost her best friend. I just thought, “Gosh, I just want to go and bring something positive to our school - something refreshing that we could laugh at. I think that was also what motivated me to go this time.

Scott

What grade do you teach? Well, how old are the kids?

Fabiana

At that time, I was teaching 4th grade and a very special group because I had already taught them in 2nd grade. So, they knew me very well.

Scott

Oh, yeah. When they saw you, eventually, when it aired, were they surprised at how outgoing you're being - just jumping around and everything - or had they ever seen you do that before for some other event at school?

Fabiana

They know that I'm fairly silly but I did give them a heads up. This third time, I knew that parents were going to be watching me, so I was very calm. I think we actually watched my second appearance together with my students and my principal, and I made fliers so that they could all watch me. I made sure to give them a shout-out at the wheel. I didn't even give my daughters a shout-out. This time was very different, actually, because you get to do a shout-out when you're spinning the wheel. This time was very different because of COVID. They were playing music. It was loud. There was just a lot more going on.

Scott

Yeah, I saw the video of that. I think Drew said, "Do you want to shout out anybody?" It seems like you mentioned your students. Is that who it was?

Fabiana

Yes, I wanted to say how kinder they were because, honestly, coming back to the classroom after COVID, a lot of the teachers had a really tough time with their classes. My group was just such an amazing, kind, and cool group, so it was just a great year. So, I wanted to give them a shout-out. We have a way that we could message one another. A couple of them mentioned, "Thanks so much for giving us a shout-out" or "I watched you. It was so fun to see you." I still hear from parents, "Oh my goodness, we watched you on The Price Is Right." So I'm really glad that it was a positive for us because we really needed something uplifting.

Scott

Yeah, definitely. That was a long 2 years and everybody needs something to smile about, for sure.

Fabiana

Yeah.

Scott

What did you win to get up on the stage that time?

Fabiana

Oh, this time, I made it look so easy. I was the 4th one called down to the podium.

Scott

So you're right at the beginning of the show then?

Fabiana

Right at the beginning. My cousin was sure that I was going to get called up. I had actually made a shirt this time that said something about, "Dear Drew, I'd like something new for 2022." I had never made a shirt before, so I was hoping that would help. Some Prada sunglasses came out for us to bid on. I had owned some Gucci sunglasses 10 years prior before kids and I had paid \$350 for them, so I knew the Prada glasses were going to be at least \$400 each. It didn't seem like anybody else realized how expensive they were.

Scott

And there were 4 of them, right?

Fabiana

There were 4 of them, yeah. I believe the gentleman that bid last bid, like, \$800 or so. I don't like to do \$801, but I was certain that it was over \$1,000. I didn't want to get cocky, so I just said \$850. I knew that would probably get me on stage. So, I was the first one on stage again.

Scott

That had to be encouraging.

Fabiana

Yes, it was really great. Again, this time, I was having fun.

Scott

You're not desperate for a car this time.

Fabiana

I love it! At this point, I'm a single mom with 2 kids. So yes, still, the money is always welcome with me.

Scott

But in your first game, I mean, you were playing for another car.

Fabiana

I was playing for another car - a Nissan Sentra - and I got to roll the dice. Let's say I roll a 5, I have to decide if the number is higher or lower—

Scott

—all the digits of the car's price.

Fabiana

All the digits. They gave you the first one, which is the 2, but I wrote pretty terrible numbers of 5, 4, or 2 - I don't know. Maybe, that 4 and 2 were the worst. Again, I got all of the numbers right except for one. As soon as my brother saw, he said, "Why would you bid higher and go against the odds?" But my brain just doesn't work that way. The numbers just kind of came to me. So, on that 4, I said higher, but it was a 2. So I lost another game - lost another car.

Scott

So this is the third car that you've played for and didn't win.

Fabiana

They're trying so hard to give me a car and I just couldn't do it. It's always by one number or one thing.

Scott

So you went to the spinning wheel and said "Hi" to your students and you won the spin again.

Fabiana

I won the spin. The two gentlemen that went before me had a tie. Again, it was super loud. I spun. It took me a minute to realize that I had won when I actually won.

Scott

So they were tied and your spin was higher than theirs without going over \$1.

Fabiana

That's right.

Scott

Man. You are a lucky spinner.

Fabiana

Yes, I am a lucky spinner. That's when I thought, "Oh, my goodness, I just did this a third time." I could not believe it.

Scott

Getting to the Showcase... Of course, you won the first 2 Showcase. What was your Showcase? What were you bidding on this time?

Fabiana

It wasn't as exciting, I gotta tell you. The young lady that was the bigger winner— she and I had been chitchatting. She said, "Fabiana, if a boat comes up, I am not bidding on a boat because I have no clue of how much a boat is." There was a trip to Santa Barbara, a 3-night stay with a limo ride - let's see what else was on there - a smartphone with a camera, and a sailboat. As soon as I saw the sailboat, I knew I better start thinking about the price because I had no idea how much a sailboat was.

Scott

And you knew that she was going to pass that to you.

Fabiana

I knew that. She had already warned me that if a sailboat popped up, she was not going to bid on it. So, this time, like never before, because it's such a small audience, I could actually hear people. There was a contestant named Rocco - he was an older guy. I just had a feeling that Rocco would know. So, I was not even looking at my cousin because I knew that he knew nothing about boats. I was pointing at Rocco and I was like, "Rocco, how much is a boat?" I think Rocco said something around \$25,000. They really prep you not to go over. So, when you're going to the Showcase, they say, "Guys, it's really lame when people go over. So, really, try not to go over."

Scott

So what they're saying is it just makes for bad TV because everybody's sad about it?

Fabiana

Right. If nobody wins, that's not fun. Right? That might be also why some people really underbid because you don't want to ruin the show. Right?

Scott

I guess if both people go over, nobody wins anything.

Fabiana

Nobody wins. Nobody wins.

Scott

That's kind of a downer way to end the show.

Fabiana

That's right, yeah. So, I think that gets into your mind and you don't want to go over. Rocco said \$25,000, so I was thinking. I was trying to calculate everything. I believe I said \$23,600 - just a little bit under - and the actual price was actually above Rocco's. It was around \$28,800. So, it was about a \$5,000 difference. That was enough to win because the other contestant had gone way over and she knew it. They even recorded her saying, "Oh, you got it."

Scott

When I watched the video, I saw her mouth the words to you, "Oh, yeah, you got it," when they said how far off she was.

Fabiana

She knew she messed up. She did. So, I could not believe it. John ran up to the stage. We hugged each other. We were jumping up and down. I could not wait to tell my brothers that I had won a third time. My students didn't know about this, but I was just so excited that I would be able to share this with them.

Scott

What did you do with the boat this time?

Fabiana

This time was a little bit different. The dealer contacted me and said, "Hey, you're gonna have to pay this, this, and this. You're gonna have to try and sell it. Why not just sell it to me?" I know he probably made a lot of money off of it, but he's right. I am not a salesperson. So, he just paid me for the boat, probably, how much I would have made trying to sell it on my own.

Scott

Well, that's fair, and it saves you all the trouble.

Fabiana

It saves me all the trouble. So yeah, I did try to negotiate with him a little bit because I think he came out a little bit more on top. I know that I still have to pay taxes on everything, so it would all just be a profit. So that's what happened to the boat. I took the Santa Barbara trip. It came with a wine-tasting tour that was wonderful.

Scott

On your second trip, you were off to London. But Santa Barbara is only about 3 hours or so from where you live. It was still a trip this time.

Fabiana

Right. It was still a trip. I don't leave often. I don't go on trips often, so that was a nice perfect little trip for me. Boy, they do have really great food in Santa Barbara, so it was very nice. It was nothing like the London trip, of course, but I think it's what was right for me this time.

Scott

It probably cost you less money out of pocket than the London trip, though.

Fabiana

Yes, for sure.

Scott

That's just unbelievable. 3 appearances and 3 showcase wins - that's just crazy. When you enter some kind of contest like a raffle or a drawing or something like that, do you expect to win? I mean, do you normally win these things?

Fabiana

I don't. I really don't. I always say I win the lottery when it comes to my family because I have the best and the most amazing humans around me - even at work. In that case, I feel like I'm a very lucky person. As far as raffles and those things go, no, I am not. Everyone tells me that this is my luckiest year. This year, I won The Price Is Right. I was Teacher of the Year at school. I see this as a plus. I actually almost died this year. I had an anaphylactic shock hiking down a mountain and the doctor said, "Yeah, you could have died." So this was a very lucky year for me. I've been buying lottery tickets more than ever, but I don't even get one number!

Scott

Yeah, but the odds of winning The Price Is Right are a lot better than winning a lottery.

Fabiana

Yeah. I guess I'm lucky just in life in other ways more than most people - I don't know.

Scott

Are there any plans for a 4th appearance on The Price Is Right?

Fabiana

Well, that would be really, really silly not to, right? You have to expect me to try again, of course.

Scott

But when are you able to go back? Didn't you say it was 10 years?

Fabiana

10 years, yeah. We'll have to wait patiently for 10 years and then I'll have to try again. Hopefully, they don't have a picture of me with an X over it, but I would love to go again. I just love everything about it. If I didn't have to have my teaching job, I'd love to work there. I love the energy. It's just great. It's a great atmosphere. I did mention that the guy was really grumpy when getting us through our forms the first time that I went. This time, there's a nice room. You sit in chairs. There are a couple of ladies that really go through the paperwork and explain everything so nicely. So, that really changed from the first time to the third time. Actually, during the show, there's a snack bar backstage. They offer you water. So, it's so different now than it was at the beginning. Everyone was just so nice. It was just a great place to be, I think.

Scott

10 years from now, we're going to be looking for you. Maybe you'll come back on the podcast and tell us about how it went.

Fabiana

I'm gonna come back on the podcast and tell you how I did on The Amazing Race, I think.

Scott

Oh, yeah, that'd be fun too!

Scott

You heard Fabiana talk about this one man who was really obsessed with The Price is Right, and more particularly, the actual prices of all the prizes. I mean, he tracked the data by watching and documenting each episode of the show, kept it all in a spreadsheet, and he had most of the prices memorized. And he would go to the show and be in the audience, calling out the price to whoever was on stage trying to win something. There was a whole documentary done about this guy, and I watched it a while back, and it's really interesting. I'll link to that in the show notes.

And if you have a question for Fabiana that I didn't ask, she's also in the podcast Facebook group. You can discuss this episode with her and the other listeners, by joining at [WhatWasThatLike.com/facebook](https://www.WhatWasThatLike.com/facebook).

Now, a couple of things before we get to this week's Listener Story.

First is a call out to a listener, Courtney – Courtney, you sent in a story about your dad, and also something that happened to your fiancé – but the email address you included must have had a typo because it bounced back to me with an error. So please, message me again so that we can connect.

And the other thing I want to tell you is that every episode of What Was That Like has now been transcribed. This was a really big project that took most of this year to complete.

I've had some other podcasters ask me, "Why are you spending all that money for transcribing?" and that's a fair question. It was several thousand dollars, because I hired a couple of actual humans to do the work in order to increase accuracy, and one of them is doing the transcription for all of the episodes going forward.

I wanted to do this because some people just prefer to read rather than listen to audio. But more importantly, there are people who love these kinds of stories, but they have hearing impairment, or they might be completely deaf. This is kind of personal with me, because I myself have some hearing loss. And I don't want to exclude anyone from being able to enjoy the stories that we do here, so I decided that it was worth it.

And having said that, I have an offer for you. For anyone who wants to, you can go to the show notes page for each of the 118 episodes, and you can see the full transcript of that episode there. But, if you would like to have your own copy of every transcript of every one of those 118 episodes all in one place, I've done that work for you, and you can get that on the website as an E-Book for just \$10. That's at [WhatWasThatLike.com/transcripts](https://www.WhatWasThatLike.com/transcripts).

This is a digital download in PDF format, and it's almost 2000 pages. Eventually I'll be dividing it up and having a separate E-Book of transcript for each year. But until that happens, you can get ALL of them in one E-Book for \$10, and you'll also be helping to offset the cost of that project,

which I really appreciate. So if you'd like to get a copy for yourself while this is available, go to WhatWasThatLike.com/transcripts.

And here we are at this week's Listener Story. Every episode ends with a Listener Story, so if you have something that you can tell in about 5 minutes, record it on your phone and send it to me at Scott@WhatWasThatLike.com, and you just might hear your story in a future episode.

The story you're about to hear is from a listener whose wedding anniversary is the same as mine – July 7.

Stay safe, and I'll see you in 2 weeks.

Caroline

My name is Caroline. I was listening to podcast number 110 - Jen is a professional bridesmaid - which was really a fun lesson. That shows that there's a niche for everyone. My attention was drawn to the listener story at the end of the podcast, which was about Scott's own wedding. My husband and I share the same anniversary date - July 7. It brought up some memories for sure. We were married by the Justice of the Peace in Maine on July 7, 1977, which makes our anniversary date very easy to remember 7/7/77. The truth is we really didn't pick that date.

We had arrived in Maine on a vacation in early July. At that point, we had been together for two years and we had been talking about getting married. So, we thought, "Wouldn't it be great to get married in the quaint beautiful town of Bar Harbor, Maine?" So, we went to the town hall to get our license and figured that we would get married that day - July 6. However, Maine has this quirky law that a couple must wait a day after getting a license to actually get married. I guess it gives couples a chance to change their minds. So, the next day was July 7. Obviously, we didn't change our minds - we did get married - but that wasn't the end of the story.

On the way back home, we stopped by my new in-law's cottage in New Hampshire. Out of the blue, my husband's father blurted out, "Isn't it about time you two get married?" My poor husband was taken off guard and stammered, "Well, yeah. That's a good idea." So right off the bat, again, the family's plans for a wedding. We didn't have the heart to tell him that we were already married. They wanted a full church wedding and all that goes with it. One problem was I didn't have a family. I grew up in foster homes and there was no one to help me. I was on my own. I had to make decisions the best I could and be my own support system. I knew nothing about the protocol and planning a wedding. Also, we didn't have much money and I had schools to pay off. So, finally, I spoke up and insisted on a simple wedding. I found a pretty dress off the rack and the reception was in my husband's family's backyard. Fortunately, the wedding went well and his family was happy. We were happy. It costs us only \$2,500.

So, that wedding date is September 3, 1977, which was two months from our first marriage date. I can't believe that it actually took us only two months to plan this wedding. Anyway, we have two marriage certificates and 2 dates. Later, we heard through the grapevine that there were some who thought our marriage would never last, probably, because I'm 13 years older than my husband, but they were wrong, of course. 45 years later, our marriage is still alive, well, and going strong. We're truly suited for each other. What we do know for sure is that we have each other and a soft place to land when things get tough. It's been a wild 45-year adventure. I

say good luck to all those who are planning a wedding. I know, for sure, that plans don't always go as planned. So, be flexible and accept that change of plans and go with the flow.