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RED CARPET DARLING: *an* INTERVIEW with

TERRI Seymour

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WORDS by **KIMBERLY HADDAD**

English entertainment reporter and actress Terri Seymour is a breath of fresh air. A woman with a heart of gold, her gentle spirit and optimistic demeanor is evident as she speaks and flows through her existence. Establishing a flourishing career in modeling at just 12 years old, Seymour found her way into music videos for George Michael and Soul II Soul and quickly transitioned into a hostess for the beloved television game show *Wheel of Fortune*. Since then, her relentless drive and darling personality has landed the actress a notable role as a permanent correspondent for *ExtraTV*. We spoke to Seymour about growing up in a civil parish, the tenderness of motherhood, and her journey into the vibrant world of entertainment.

BASIC: You grew up in Little Chalfont, a small village in England. Talk to me about your family life and what was it like growing up in such an intimate community.

TERRI SEYMOUR: I loved how I grew up. My mom was a single mom and we lived with my grandparents until I was about six or seven years old. Then we moved literally just up the street and eventually, next door. So I was super close to my grandparents and my mom's brother. We were such a close-knit family and that's honestly one of the things I miss now that I am living in Los Angeles. It's just me, my partner, and my daughter. My partner also grew up in a very big family and he is also very close to them, so it's kind of odd for us to be here on our own with our friends and not have our grandparents around. I feel so blessed to have grown up that way and it's one of the most precious times of my childhood. The village I lived in was tiny and everyone knew everyone, everyone knew what everyone was doing and where they were going. It was very different from here. But I loved that so much.

BASIC: How did you get your start in the entertainment world? Did you always have a bit of a performing bug?

TS: I never wanted to be an actress. I have always wanted to be a television host or reporter. It was weird. I used to dance a lot in music videos and did some acting, but I never really wanted to do

that. I wanted to interview the musicians from the music videos and interview the actors and actresses I worked with. I never got that performing bug, but I always knew I wanted to do something in television. When I was modeling, *Wheel of Fortune* saw me and asked me to go to an audition and it was such a fun show to work on. The crew was very tight-knit. I don't think I was the best at it, but I had a really good time and learned so much from the executive producer. After that, I knew I wanted to continue in TV and came to LA to do hair commercials. I was meant to be here for three days and ended up never leaving. I was lucky enough to meet the senior executive producer of *Extra*, Lisa Gregorisch-Dempsey, and asked if I would be interested in doing some red-carpet interviews to see if I liked it. I said yes and I ended up loving it. My first red-carpet interview was with Antonio Banderas and he was amazing. Then I started to get my Visa and just stayed in LA. I went into the Extra office and just watched and learned because I couldn't start until my Visa was taken care of. And that was it. I never looked back.

BASIC: The majority of people who look at your job would probably think it's exciting and glamorous. But I imagine at times, it can be incredibly stressful. What would people be surprised to know about it?

TS: I mean, my job is the best job. I am doing

something different every single day. One day I can be interviewing Sofia Vergara about her clothing line and the next I could be interviewing Robert De Niro or Anthony Hopkins. I go from fashion to more serious interviews to sports. I was lucky enough to interview Kobe a few times and even David Beckham. I actually played soccer with him. I just get to meet some incredible people and go to incredible places like Bora Bora. It really is just amazing. I would say the most stressful thing is when you know you can't ask a particular question during an interview, but the show is expecting you to get the answer. But that is part of the job. I am expected to get the news that everyone wants to hear, especially now with social media and everything getting out there so much faster. You just have to dive in deeper and get to those uncomfortable questions. And you know they won't like it, but it has to be done.

BASIC: Who has been your biggest mentor and why?

TS: I know this might be kind of cliché, but I would say, in some respects, my mom. I say this because she was always working and raised me as a single mom. She always supported me and everything I wanted to do. She has always been there for me even when she financially couldn't or shouldn't, just so supportive. She really kept my feet on the ground. I would also say my dear friend Theresa, who is also one of the producers at Extra. She has taught me a lot and has been there for me every step of the way.

BASIC: Tell me a story of one of your most embarrassing or challenging moments you've experienced on the air.

TS: Oh my gosh. One really great one that went viral—not very embarrassing for me—but it's a great story. I was interviewing Salma Hayek, Maya Rudolph, and Maria Bello about the movie *Grown Ups*. The women were in a group together sitting directly across from me in chairs on the edge of this lake. And all of the sudden, this pretty large snake goes slithering in front of the girls and they all start screaming hysterically. And I'm not sure which chair, but they all ended up on one chair, sitting on top of each other. One of them is literally balancing in high heels on the arm of the chair just screaming. There were even these manly security guards standing there and nobody came over. Then, finally, the hair and makeup artist comes through with his comb trying to shoo the snake away. The interview went everywhere and I had to go on CNN to talk about it. It was so crazy and so funny to watch this video of three

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women balancing on top of each other. And a couple of months later I interviewed Salma again and when she saw me she said, "Oh no, it's snake girl!" That wasn't really embarrassing for me, but it was definitely a funny moment.

BASIC: As a woman who has openly struggled with Lupus throughout her life, what is the most valuable lesson you have learned from it?

TS: Listen to your body. For me, I have been really lucky. My Lupus has been in remission for years, but when it was really bad, I was modeling at the time and I remember one day I was doing an advertising campaign and it was really affecting my joints. I couldn't even lift my hand to my hips. My body was just in so much pain. And of course, I should have never went to work, but I did anyway. I was extremely lucky because I was on medication that didn't work and my bowel burst, which ended up giving me Peritonitis for about five days. It's so important to listen to your body, slow down, and take time for yourself. Allow yourself to heal.

BASIC: What is your why? What is your reason for waking up, your underlying motivation to do everything you do?

TS: My daughter Coco, without a doubt. She just turned six years old and she is literally my world. It's amazing when you have a baby, nothing is about you anymore. It is all about them and everything I do is for her. I love that. I love not being selfish anymore.

BASIC: What is your favorite thing about being a mother?

TS: Watching this little person develop and how she is changing. I just love tiny babies and every year she gets older and bigger. She is this amazing, funny, sassy smart little girl. The things that come out of her mouth just amaze me and the questions she asks and the things she already knows. The way she takes in information blows me away. I'm like, wow, you are six. Time goes by so fast and I have been very lucky because I went freelance after having her, but even through the pandemic, I have been incredibly busy and able to take her to pre-school and do those school runs with her. Those are some of our best times together, just chatting and laughing on the way to school. I turn my phone off and it's just so much fun. Someone once told me that when your kids are growing up, make sure you are the parent that does all the driving and running around because that's when you really hear what's going on, you get to see who their friends are and how they interact. It was the best advice. So yeah, I'm just a driver now.

BASIC: Creating a morning routine is essential to starting off the morning right and setting yourself up for a connected and productive day. What is your morning routine like?

TS: It's frantic! Getting up, getting my daughter ready, making breakfast. There is always something to do, a project to finish like a leprechaun contract. It was for St. Patrick's Day. Then I'm trying to look at my questions before I jump on Zoom. My mornings are always crazy. My partner loves to meditate before work and I'm sitting here making leprechaun contracts! I would love to meditate, but you know, I get my time when they go to bed. I always have so much to watch for my job, so a lot of the time, they will go to sleep and I will put on a movie or Netflix show or read production notes. I'm a night owl and I love having that time to myself. I

also love to exercise. I love Pilates. Coco and I were actually going on long walks during the pandemic to get out of the house and we just loved that. We loved experiencing nature and just stopping to take a breath of fresh air.

BASIC: Tell me one interesting fact about you that most people don't know.

TS: My way to unwind is watching a dark, heavy drama. I also played Eve in a biblical miniseries (you see me for about 30 seconds!)

BASIC: If you could only wear the clothing from one runway designer for the rest of your life who would it be and why?

TS: I'm going with Chloe. I have loved the clothes and bags forever. It's feminine, but sometimes there are utilitarian tomboy elements. They can do a perfect suit and the perfect dress.

BASIC: What two items would you need to survive an apocalyptic zombie invasion?

TS: A bottle of Yes Way Rosé and a blow torch.

BASIC: Do you think happiness is a state of mind or do we need

to act in order to achieve it?

TS: Happiness is a state of mind.

BASIC: How do you eat an Oreo?

TS: I don't bite the top off and then the bottom. None of this taking the top layer off and licking the cream on the inside. I actually just bite into the whole thing. But I don't even love Oreos. I love milk chocolate digestive biscuits. I don't really get the Oreo thing.

