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'PRICE IS RIGHT' CONTESTANT

Jessica Sinclitico, 38, stay-at-home mom and former attorney, won big on TV's longest-running game show
 By Wendy Witherspoon

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Los Angeles magazine, March 2010

"I had never won anything in my whole life before. Never."

Growing up in San Diego, Sinclitico loved watching Match Game, Supermarket Sweep, and Wheel of Fortune, often with her younger sister, Molly. "When we were sick, we would watch game shows, and when we were pretending to be sick, we would watch game shows."

The Price Is Right aired from 1956 to 1965. It relaunched in 1972, hosted by Bob Barker (he stayed for 35 years). The first car he gave away: a Chevrolet Vega, retail price \$2,746.

Sinclitico had tried out for game shows before—Match Game, The Weakest Link—and had even lined up for The Price Is Right, though she'd never made it on the air. After her daughter was born last year, Sinclitico and her sister (once a contestant on Wipeout) decided they needed some bonding time, so Molly got tickets.

For two weeks Sinclitico watched "every episode of The Price Is Right I could get my hands on" and took notes on the players, games, and prizes.

Her passion for games could be genetic. "Every year my family has a cutthroat, take-no-prisoners round of Christmas bingo. It's all very serious business."

The sisters arrived at CBS Television City at 7 a.m. in July, hoping to score a seat for the 10 a.m. taping of the show (even with tickets, seats aren't guaranteed), but the studio was filled with people who'd been gathering since 4:30 a.m. The pair had to wait seven hours for the next taping.

Producers trawl the crowd for contestants. "They want people who are going to enjoy themselves, not twiddle their thumbs," so Sinclitico and her sister wore homemade T-shirts featuring images of host Drew Carey and bumped hips enthusiastically.

While Sinclitico doesn't remember hearing announcer Rich Fields call her name and say "Come on down!," she does recollect the excitement of the moment. "I felt like I was winning an Academy Award."

After making the closest guess of the price of the opening item (a \$2,400



Photograph by Dustin Snipes

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Raymond Weil watch she thought cost \$1,300), Sinclitico won a chance to play "Half Off" for a handful of household objects and \$10,000. When it was time to pick which box held the money, she chose number 6, despite yells from the audience telling her to pick 15. "Six has always been a lucky number for me. I just went with my gut."

When Sinclitico won, the studio went crazy, fake money spilled out, and a sign flashed "\$10,000." "I just stood there. I didn't know what to do, and it occurred to me to grab some money and throw it around."

Then Sinclitico returned to the stage to spin the "Showcase Showdown" wheel for a chance at more lavish prizes. "The wheel is very, very heavy. I was thinking, 'OK, just don't fall on national television.'" She spun 80 cents—not high enough to qualify.

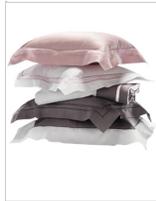
Sinclitico, who lives in Culver City, will put her winnings (\$11,000 before taxes) toward bills and a family trip to Hawaii. She also took home an iron, a blender, a video game, a salad dressing maker, and the diamond-encrusted watch, which doesn't get much use. "Today I went to a play group, and I made strained prunes. A fancy watch doesn't really lend itself to that."

"They say everybody has their 15 minutes of fame, and mine was literally 15 minutes, from start to finish. That was it."

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