

## She's a Samantha Harris for all time periods

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Samantha Harris on 'Who Wants to Be A Millionaire?'

Get used to seeing a lot of Samantha Harris this week.

There will be days where Harris will appear on three different shows, in three different time periods.

"That's something I didn't think about," Harris says. "Because I'm constantly juggling, I don't stop to think what I'm really doing."

Not that she has a lot of time to do much thinking, either.

Monday at 12:30 on WABC/Ch. 7, Harris starts a week-long run as the substitute host on "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" - the shows were shot last summer when host Meredith Vieira was on assignment in Beijing for NBC.

Harris' "Millionaire" stint is in addition to her regular gig as correspondent and substitute host for "The Insider" (WCBS/Ch. 2, 7 p.m.) and as co-host of ABC's "Dancing With the Stars" (8 p.m.).

"There are very, very few younger women on television in the hosting world where you can say they're really classy," says "Millionaire" executive producer Michael Davies, who puts Harris and "So You Think You Can Dance's" Cat Deeley in that category.

Davies met Harris more than a year ago in a general talent meeting, and the request to guest-host came out of that encounter.

He had no idea then that Harris would be everywhere when the "Millionaire" episodes hit.

"None of this is surprising," Davies says of Harris' exposure. "I look at Samantha, and she has incredible skill and is very natural on camera."

Harris, the married mom of an 18-month-old daughter, has been working toward this point for 15 years.

She was a student at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism when she landed an internship at "Entertainment Tonight," the sister show of "The Insider."

"My instructors always gave me the squinted eye when I said entertainment journalist is where I'm going," Harris says. "Even as an entertainment journalist, you still have to know how to ask questions, you still have to know how to be a strong presence on camera."

Harris grew up around entertainment. Her father was a rock concert promoter, and her mother a dancer. Together they created one of the country's first Renaissance festivals.

"I always had Broadway in my heart," she says. "I do have a dream of the Broadway stage."

For now, the occasional report for "The Insider" overlooking Broadway will have to do.

As it is now, she's logging 12 to 13 hour days with her current workload.

"Mentally and emotionally I get pure enjoyment from it," she says. "I feel so comfortable in front of the camera and the audience. I want to be able to tell stories and share life with the viewers."

Being in so many places at once this week gives her a chance to do just that.

"To be on three different shows in different time periods for an entire week is very exciting," she says. "It's hard to stop and enjoy it, though. If I don't focus on each moment, then it will all pass me by too quickly."