



Barbizon
International, Inc.

TO: Lynn Keller
Dateline NBC

FROM: Barbizon International

DATE: March 30, 2009

Thank you for contacting Barbizon International concerning Dateline's plans to do an upcoming story about "breaking into the modeling and acting world." Hopefully this letter will be of some assistance. By way of background, Barbizon International is a franchisor of modeling and acting centers that are owned and operated by a highly dedicated and committed group of independent franchisees. As a sign of their commitment, most of our franchisees have over twenty years invested in their business and, remarkably, many are operating with second-generation ownership.

Founded in 1939, Barbizon International is a 70 year-old company that, while evolving with the times, has always stayed true to its original mission to provide young people with introductory knowledge of both the modeling and acting fields. Our trademark, "BE A MODEL OR . . . Just Look Like One,"[®] introduced in the early-1960s, summarizes this mission. Today, in addition to classic modeling and acting elements such as posture, runway, on-camera techniques, photo movement, makeup and grooming, our programs also emphasize the building of character and confidence and enhancement of self-esteem.. Classes are aimed at the youth market and are specifically meant to provide a vocational experience, providing a mix of instruction, entertainment and fun while providing an introduction into the acting and modeling world.

As your story may be focused on modeling and acting conventions, it is important to note that these conventions are independent of Barbizon International and not part of our curriculum. However, we are aware that a number of our franchisees recommend these conventions as a way to provide ongoing activities to meet the needs of those young people that entertain a further interest in modeling and acting upon conclusion of the basic Barbizon program. *Only approximately 8% of the young people that complete Barbizon's basic program avail themselves of this opportunity.* While Barbizon International does not operate or control the content of the conventions, since our students participate, we do monitor the conventions for quality. Barbizon franchisees work hard to give each participant the best possible experience. We recognize that not everyone will share the same experience at these conventions. Many participants come away awed and exuberant while others might experience disappointments. *However, as a measure of the overall quality of these programs, we note that Barbizon International has not received a single complaint for at least the last five years.*

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No doubt, through your research you have become aware of the many success stories resulting from the various convention programs. However, we feel compelled to bring to your attention, the story of Dani Miura. Dani is someone you are very familiar with. She has played a prominent role in Dateline's series "To Catch A Predator" appearing on several occasions. Dani attended classes at our Schaumburg, Illinois franchise and, subsequently, attended IMTA, one of the prominent conventions available, three times.

Dani, sums up best her experiences when she states in a recent interview about IMTA, *"Well I went 3 times. Once when I was 8, then 13, and lastly when I was 17. All three times I had the most amazing time of my life. I can remember every detail of every time I went. Meeting with so many casting directors, agents, managers, and producers all in one room, it's like a dream come true."*

In summary, a great many young people pass through the doors of our franchisees as well as through various conventions. We can provide many more examples of attendees who felt their experience was incredibly rewarding just as Dani Miura did, some of whom have realized success in the acting and modeling fields while others have benefited from their experience and enjoyed success in other walks of life. We have no doubt that you would be able to find some willing to offer stories of disappointment. In every group experience for young people, some will enjoy the experience and others will not – much like playing a team sport or music and dance lessons. Some will decide to pursue their interests and others will decide this activity is not for them. In each case, the experience itself is valuable, and Barbizon strives to see that all students feel the classes were informative, entertaining, and memorable.

Should you have any specific questions please feel free to contact us at your convenience.

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