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News



Barbara Responds To Dog-Talking Disbelief

(September 13, 2006) -- Since admitting yesterday on her show "The View" that her Havanese dog said "I love you" to her, some have speculated that Barbara Walters has "lost it." While this confession certainly sounds strange, evidence points out that speaking dogs may not be such an unusual occurrence after all.

"You all know I'm a sensible person. I do not exaggerate. I try not to lie," Walters said on yesterday's show, as the New York Post previously reported.

"I was standing at the elevator with my darling woman who has been running my home and my life for 32 years - we were standing there, and Cha Cha had a little dog face, you know, sometimes they sort of look at you?" Walters said.

"I said to Cha Cha, 'I love you, Cha Cha,' and Cha Cha said to me, 'I love you,'" a straight-faced Walters told her bemused co-hosts.

While Cha-Cha most definitely wasn't professing love for Barbara in the English language, she very well may have been mimicking human speech.

According to an interview with professional Hollywood dog trainer Captain A.J. Haggerty, conducted by The Best Friends Newsletter, domesticated dogs can indeed learn to "talk" in human-sounding tones.

"Domestic dogs bark, and wild dogs don't, because the domestic dog is trying to mimic our speech," says Captain Haggerty. "The Basenji is a domestic breed that is closer to wild dogs than most, and it doesn't bark. So when our domesticated dogs bark, they are trying to tell us something about their desire to communicate. There is a big difference between 'speaking' which I equate to barking, and 'talking,' which is when a dog makes non-canine-like sounds like 'wa wa,' or 'ma ma.' With patience and training, you can teach your dog to make these sounds on command. Of course, this doesn't mean that your dog will then carry on a deep conversation with you, but you can incorporate the sounds into tricks that will be fun for you and your pet."

As Barbara proved out on her show this morning with a video clip, a pug appeared on "The Late Show with David Letterman" recently speaking the words "I love you" quite clearly.

And it wasn't a hoax. The pug did the same thing on "The Montel Williams Show"!

Captain Haggerty himself has brought his amazing trained canines on the Letterman show 25 times.

Despite the evidence supporting Barbara's claim, including an alleged eye witness, Barbara's co-hosts enjoyed poking fun at her "hearing issues" and apparent need for "medication."

Barbara stood by her story today as she laughed along with her friends at "The View" table.



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