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Unidad 1, Un paso más

The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao

Junot Diaz – The Colbert Report

My guest tonight is the Pulitzer prize winning author of *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. I assume the CliffsNotes are calling it the *Briefer Life of Oscar Wao* (laughter). Please welcome Junot Díaz!

(Cheering)

Thank you, Junot Díaz. Please sit down (to Junot). I already said the name of your book but let’s push some paper here, okay? *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize. Man, that must feel good.

(Junot) Yeah, it does actually.

(Colbert) Do you just carry this book as a pick-up line? “Sorry, can me and my Pulitzer Prize buy you ladies a drink? (laughter)

(Junot) No, I haven´t tried it yet.

(Colbert) Do it, man. You will cut a swath through the literate femininity (laughter). The main character in this book wears his nerdiness like a Jedi wore his light saber, and dreams of becoming the Dominican Tolkien. Is this based on anyone you know? Perhaps someone that

shares your name, physical appearance and social security number? (laughter) Are you this guy?!

(Junot) Including me, I feel like it is almost everybody I know.

(Colbert) So, is this Dominican nerd in this book, is he an American archetype?

(Junot) (hesitatingly) I don’t know but I felt like it was a… there is so many characters out there that are nerdy and I thought “I just use the nerd that I know best, this Dominican kid that was obsessed with… (interrupted)

(Colbert) The one in the mirror?

(Junot) (laughing) Yes!

(Audience laughs)

(Colbert) I know that guy! I have seen that guy in the mirror!

(Junot) Guilty, sir, guilty.

(Colbert) Yeah, Yeah, that guy in the mirror has some shame. He and I have had some talks late at night. You came to this country at the age of six.

(Junot) Yep.

(Colbert) What were the conditions under which you came, and keep in mind that Lou Dobbs may be watching. He could be backstage with a butterfly net, so be careful.

(Junot) God, Lou Dobbs nightmares, man.

(Colbert) How did you come to this country?

(Junot) My father came first. He came over, settled and worked in New York City, and then brought us over. I was six years old, that was the first time that I saw my father when he came back, because he had been away the whole time. And we didn’t go to New York, we went straight to New Jersey, which was back then weird.

(Colbert) It’s a little weird now (condescending laughter).

(Audience laughs)

(Colbert) Here is my one bone to pick with you. Sir, you were not born here. You came here at the age six and took away a Pulitzer from an American writer!

(Audience laughs)

(Junot) Yes!

(Colbert) Couldn’t an American have written about being a Dominican nerd!? That’s a job an American would have wanted to do!

(Junot) (laughing) Well, no, I mean, this is one of those things that I feel like, you know, I am kind of prototypical American, like the super American, which is like immigrant…

(Colbert) (sarcastically) I thought I was the prototypical American…

(Junot) No, no, come on! It’s immigrants!

(Colbert) (insistently) My family came here from Ireland in 1838!

(Junot) Then we share that too! But Joseph Pulitzer came over I think he was seven. It is a typical thing; Joseph Pulitzer is an immigrant, an immigrant gets it. He probably would have been happy.

(Colbert) Here is one of the things why I am very happy. Do your parents understand the level of success that this represents, winning a Pulitzer prize?

(Junot) You know what? I don’t think so. My mom, when I told her I won the Pulitzer, she was very excited, but then, she turned around and said, “what is that?” “What is it exactly?”

(Colbert) You should have said, “it’s like a Peabody” (everyone laughs intensely) And she’d be like, “Ohhh, a Peabody!”

(Junot) That would have been it!

(Colbert) I myself don’t know what the big deal is about winning the Pulitzer, because the hero of the book is a fat, nerdy, depressed virgin, which is the same people who make up the Pulitzer committee.

(Junot) I think I got the vote!

(Colbert) Speaking of Lou Dobbs, is there any chance there is a tracking device in your Pulitzer?

(Laughter)

(Junot) Oh man, don’t say that, because I gave it to my mom!

(Everyone laughs, increasingly)

(Colbert) Your book contains several scenes of brutal beatings in Dominican cane fields. And I took a lesson from that, which is never go into a Dominican cane field. Have you been back?

(Junot) Yeah, I go back a lot. I have relatives over there. I go about three times a year. And cane fields are scary. Any time you drive by the, they are like triffids that just clack in the wind. So I guess as a kid I was always terrified of them.

(Colbert) You are the very first guest to make a triffids reference.

(Junot) I don’t know if that is the saddest thing ever.

(Colbert) No. It’s a great honor. You have achieved a level of nerdom that is heretofore … we might have to check the building for structural damage. You geeked out on me so hard right now! People at home are rushing to Wikipedia to find out what triffids are.

(Junot) Oh man! Okay!

(Colbert) We’re honored that you would come here. The book is *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. My guest is Junot Díaz. Please, congratulate him yourself.

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