

## "Baseball Wives": Erika Williams Tells Her Side of the Story

Written by By: Vanja Veric

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The popularity of reality television not only seems to be growing, but expanding at an insane level. There is a reality show for every taste from longtime favorite "Survivor," to dramatic guilty pleasure "Jersey Shore."

But one of the most popular premises on reality TV is the endless barrage of "wives" programs. Everything from the "Real Housewives" to "Basketball Wives," America has become fascinated with the personal lives of the wealthy and privileged.

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VH1 expanded its popular "wives" franchise in November with the new show "Baseball Wives" set in Scottsdale and revolving around the wives and girlfriends of professional baseball players. Erika Williams, wife of retired five-time all-star Diamondbacks third baseman Matt Williams, was one of wives cast in the new show, as well as one of the first to leave the program.

"Producers had come to me two years ago and what was described to me was that VH1 was looking to have a different audience," Williams says. "They described this show as being the 'Real Housewives' meets the [Lifestyles] of the Rich and Famous' where they would highlight our charity and projects."

Unfortunately for Williams, television audiences were in for a slightly different viewing experience. VH1 described the wives as: "No shrinking violets here, these ladies are fiercely protective of their turf and their men and if they have to bring on a little drama -- then so be it."

"When you're a baseball wife, you're representing a larger group and it was an opportunity to show the behind the scenes of this crazy lifestyle," Williams says. "Your husband is gone for a good portion of the season and you have to hold down the fort for your family; it really could have been a great show."

Williams says at first, the premise was to follow these women and see how they take care of not only their families but what they're all doing to give back to their community. That plotline quickly dwindled as she was put into dramatic and, at times, heated situations with other cast members that, she says, never happen in her real life.

"Obviously it's a reality show, I knew that going in, but I was convinced at the last minute by producers that it would be something polar opposite of what it was," Williams says. "I was really upset after the first night of filming; I was upset with how it portrayed wives."

Williams says the baseball wives that she personally knows were nothing like their on screen counterparts. "All the baseball wives that I know are so charitable; they're good wives and good mothers and, unfortunately, you only see them in some over dramatic situations."

It was this creative difference that led to Williams's decision to ultimately leave the show, but producers insisted that she did stay on through the first season.

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Since the show, which just wrapped up the first season, the former news anchor is taking her years of entertaining both on and off screen to a new cooking and lifestyle program. "This is something I've wanted to do for 10 years now but once I started getting into news and starting a family, it was sort of put into the background," Williams says.

The show will follow her as she not only debuts signature creations like her lemon-drop martini, but as she highlights local chefs in Arizona and the benefits of purchasing local food. "We'll go out to organic farms with a chef that really knows what to look for; lots of what's in season is what's for dinner but keeping in mind the state of the economy," Williams says.

According to Williams, the show will begin shooting its pilot episode in the next couple of months.

The reality star says she has also been able to further focus on her family: her 21-year-old stepson, Jake, who just signed with the Diamondbacks rookie league and her and Matt's 8-year-old daughter, Madison.

The family-oriented entertainer says it's always been her and her husband's dream to give their kids the fairytale life and let them truly enjoy their childhood and spend as much quality time together as possible.

"Your husband leaves during spring training time and can be gone potentially through October and you learn to let them focus on the game and not sweat the small stuff while you take care of things at home," Williams says. "When baseball's over you have your husband back and your children have their dad back, we spend every night together making dinner at home and having friends over."

With a new show in the works, an InTouch Weekly spread out this month and an all-star family to care for, the public will just have to wait and see what this baseball wife's next move will be.

Williams says, "It's gonna be fabulous!"