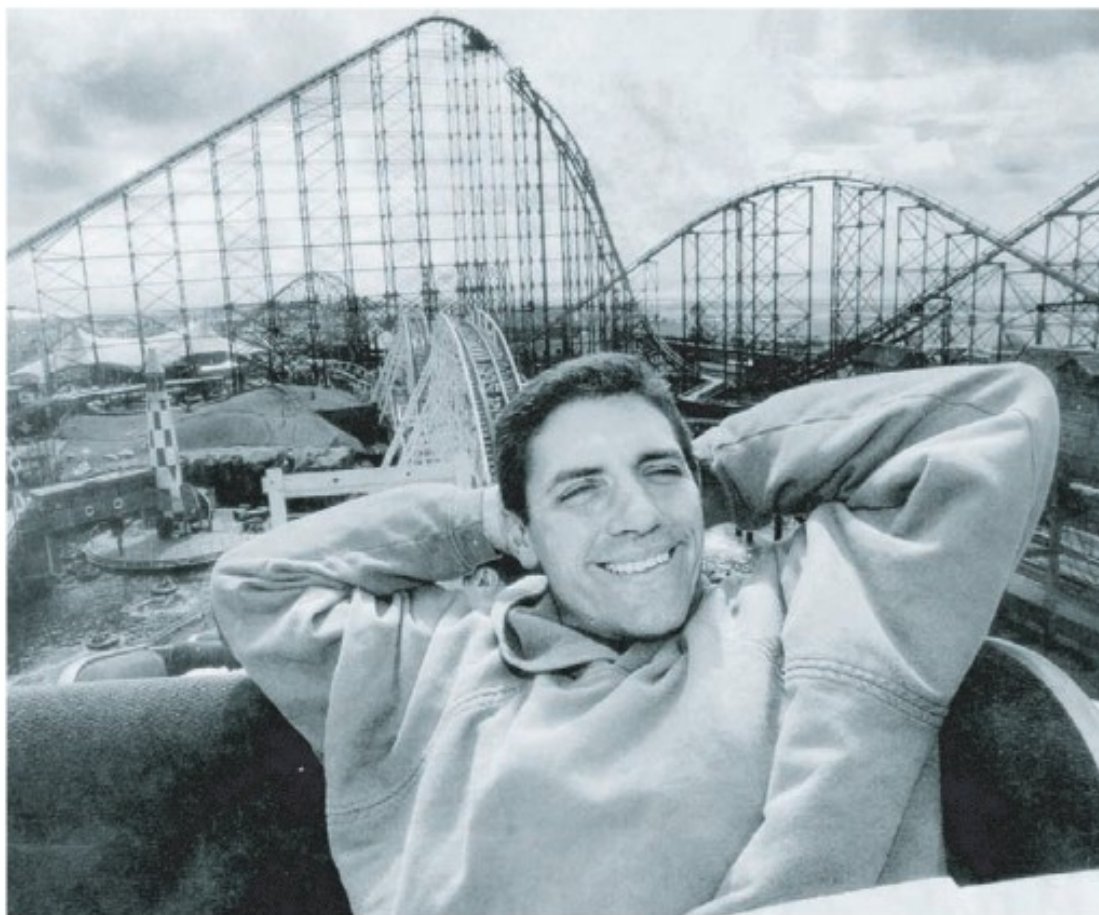


Can't stop now – I'm on a roll



Richard Rodriguez on one of the many high points of his continuing battle in Blackpool to hold on to his roller-coaster-riding record

1 Richard Rodriguez, 39, from Miami is very
tired but he keeps going. He has already broken
the world record for riding a roller coaster, but
he won't get out of his carriage at Blackpool
5 amusement park. At the same time Normand
St Pierre is riding a roller coaster in Montreal,
trying to break the world record too. "That roller
coaster in Montreal is a killer," says Rodriguez.

2 The wind blows away his words as the roller
10 coaster car makes a dip. "I can't say when I will
stop. First I have to know what St Pierre is
doing." Mr Rodriguez's supporters are keeping
an eye on his rival via the Internet but there's no
sign that St Pierre is giving up.

3 15 The roller coaster marathon started in
Blackpool on 18 June when Rodriguez, who has
held the world record since 1994, began a non-
stop ride with only a five-minute break every
hour. St Pierre started his record attempt in
20 Montreal 48 hours later.

4 Rodriguez broke the world record last
Wednesday, but he's still on the ride which throws
him 70ft into the air and then drops him to
ground level, reaching speeds of 35 miles per hour.

5 25 He gets about five hours' sleep per night in the
carriage which has been specially changed for
him. He can stretch his legs because the iron bar
in the middle is removed and two side panels
have been put in so his belongings won't fall out.

6 30 There is plenty of foam-rubber and a piece of
canvas to protect him during the night. He wears
car plugs to be sure he gets some sleep. In the
morning he spends about an hour – all his five-
minute breaks put together – out of the carriage
35 to take a hot shower and eat breakfast. He eats
snacks and other meals on the ride. He reads
newspapers between dips when his carriage is
not going so fast.

7 "The weather hasn't been too kind," Rodriguez
40 said, looking tired and worn out. "I haven't been
getting a lot of sleep because of the wind and
rain." He was afraid of roller coasters as a child
but overcame the fear at the age of 16, when he
made a ride in Coney Island. He set his first
45 roller coaster record on that same day in 1977.

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