

Ripley's 'Reality Shock' spotlights South Florida tales

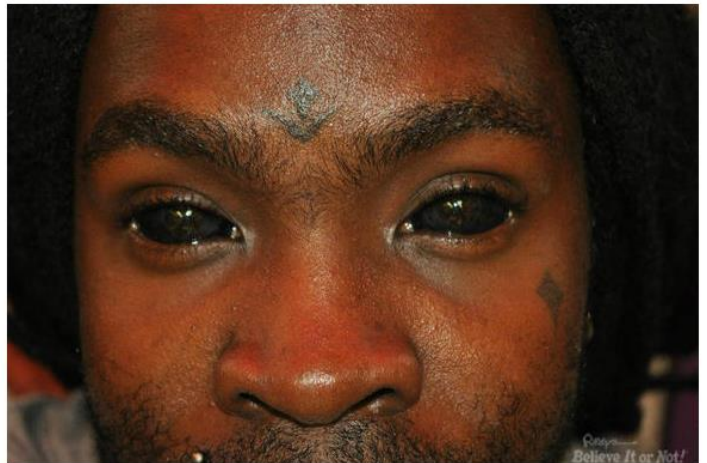
New Ripley's book features local jet artist, poet and more.

By Johnny Diaz

Ripley's Believe It or Not!, curator of all things bizarre and weird, has a new book called "Reality Shock!"

And, naturally, South Florida — with its colorful characters and headline-making incidents — is well-represented in the collection of stories.

"I am convinced that Florida has cornered the market on strange," said Edward Meyer, vice president of exhibits and archives at Ripley's Orlando headquarters, where researchers look for new stories to share each year. "There always seems to be some weird Florida story."



The new Ripley's "Believe It Or Not!" book "Reality Shock!" features Jean Jabril Joseph, a Fort Lauderdale poet who had the sclera (the white part of his eyes) tattooed black through a series of injections; (courtesy/ripleys / September 26, 2014)

"Reality Shock!" (Ripley Publishing; \$28.95), features Jean Jabril Joseph, a Fort Lauderdale poet who had the sclera (the white part of his eyes) tattooed black through a series of injections; and Wanda McGowan, the Dania Beach resident who made headlines last year after she was rescued while clinging onto the railway bridge over Fort Lauderdale's New River for about 20 minutes.

There's also Tarinan von Anhalt, who grew up in Miami Beach and has made a name for herself painting with jet engines since 2006.

Standing about 30 feet away from the back of a Learjet, she uses the thrust of the engines to *splat!* paint onto 4-by-4-foot or 8-by-8-foot canvases. The technique, called Jet Art, was popularized by her late husband, Jurgen von Anhalt. She's produced about 200 pieces that sell for \$25,000 to \$1 million, she said.

Last year, she demonstrated her art on the tarmac at Palm Beach International Airport. She used blues, yellows and purple hues to create 12 paintings. And in 2012, she used the same technique at Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport to paint several pairs of jeans.

"I always love to do painting in South Florida because of the energy, the colors and the excitement, and that kind of feeling that anything goes here," she said.

As for the book, von Anhalt said she was honored to be included. "I think it's exciting in the sense that it's considered something out of the box, different," she said.

Said Meyer of the Ripley brand: "We want someone to look at the story and say, 'Wow, I can't believe that.'"