

Features

Chatting with Chuck

Berel Wetstein
Terry Van Lyuk

The *All Night Show*, seen on MTV Cable 4 at 2:00 a.m. nightly, flickers through the night, offering a rest from dull reading, a new experience for those too young to remember *The Twilight Zone*, and for die-hard fans—a treat—Full Contact Karate.

Thursday's show brings heavy metal music, Freddie and the Dreamers, or maybe a vintage 1927 cartoon. The whole eclectic collection is brought to you by Chas Chuck the Security Guard Lawther, the hero of thousands of York students, who spend their weeknights glued to the screen.

Sorry, but he isn't really as a security guard.

After meeting this introspective man, you soon realize how fine an actor Lawther is, how different he is from his on-screen persona.

In this *Excalibur* interview, Lawther outlines his feelings about the show, and his approach to it.

Are you finding the show demanding?

The show is a bit more demanding than I thought it would be. With acting you get up your energy everyday to do another show. The energy you get from doing the show is more than I expected. For example the kind of energy you get from the Telethons—it brings a lot of energy to the show.

Do the late hours tire you as the week progresses?

Each week varies, but it is like any other job. So, by the end of the week I'm looking to get a break. At the same time, Saturday is so different from say Friday or Tuesday there is always something new.

How much longer do you see yourself performing as Chuck?

As long as the role grows. I don't see an end to its growth right now and that's very exciting. A TV series



Chuck Lawther auditions for Mr. Dental Canada Pagent.

is very finite, what you learn is finite, but this is so different. The possibilities with Chuck are limitless.

How do you envision the character of Chuck?

Someone who anyone could relate to. Someone straight could find something just as somebody very stoned can. The uniform makes him very distinct. In being a security guard is something people look at with contempt—

the bottom of the barrel. Now with his own show—he has some dignity.

Were you surprised that a number of people latched on to the idea? They want to believe Chuck actually is a security guard.

Yes and yet it is very gratifying. It

means I am acting well. I understand the character and the job because I've done those jobs myself. So, no it didn't surprise me. I became Chuck on the shows. It's good for people to take part in the fantasy too.

What, as an actor did you have to go through to decide to take this job?

For the past 8 years in the theatre and TV. I haven't had artistic control. In the purest sense I wanted to become other people, and I think I've done it. This is the ultimate of that. I was given this. I have the final say.

How long have you been in Toronto?

I moved here in '74 from the West Coast. I had been working there.

Out of the shows that you run, what are your favourites?

Probably *Outer Limits* or *Twilight Zone*, although some bands are great, like *Nine Below Zero*. The guy blowing himself up, *The Snake One*.

Are there any other areas of performing that you'd like to explore?

About eight or nine years ago, I wasn't satisfied being an actor. I wanted to create my own world for myself—to become other people. There were people inside me. I couldn't act in a Shakespeare play. Although I appreciate them, I hadn't the desire to be one of those people. I wanted to play the people inside me.

Besides acting, other experiences I've had helped, for example, working on a crisis telephone.

Do you see the people phoning you as the same type as those on the crisis line?

Yes, there seems to be an hour where there's a lot of young stoned boys phoning in. A lot of heavy metal kids watching, new wave, old people later. Old ones til about 4:00—then the hard core people that go all night.

Thank you.

Exec. Producer wants your films

York filmmakers are you frustrated by spending days, maybe years making your masterpiece, only to have no one ever see it. Well, your days of suffering are over. Jeff Silverman, Executive Producer of the *All Night Show*, will show your film or tape and even pay for the privilege. Silverman, former manager of Yuk Yuks brought all night television to Canada and although he relies on a stable of old series and imports to make up the bulk of the nightly telecast, he says there is a great need for fresh material every night.

Silverman complains that one of the problems in acquiring films are the pros who say: No, you make money from this so you can't have it." All the problems, however, are not caused by the pros, "Students say great, great, but they never supply the film." I would love to have more home movies or student films. We have all the equipment to show any medium, 8 mm, 16, Beta, VHS. We'll show anything as long as it meets our standards and those are pretty wide ranging."

York students can now look forward to the 'second season' of the *All Night Show*. Some of the news shows are the *Prisoner*,

Abbott and Costello, early *Andy of Mayberry* and *Sgt. Bilko*.

Asked why he chose Chas Lawther to host the show, Silverman replied: "I watched all the people going through Yuks Yuks and I knew that Chuck was the right person after watching him for a long time. It has worked out very well.

The Production of the show is a bigger affair than it appears. It employs eleven people of whom four or five are just learning (Good news Fine Arts Students). This staff is needed to transfer all the material to video tape. Silverman is keeping this staff as he expects to go national soon. The ratings indicate this wish will be granted, but ratings are causing Silverman some small problems. "The advertisers say it's because we are the only show on, but the distributor says 'Yours is large and you should pay through the nose for material.' If this is the worst of Silverman's problems then don't feel sorry for him.

(If you wish to submit some material to the *All Night Show*, send it to: *All Night Show*, 545 Lakeshore Blvd., Toronto. Attn: Ms. M. Ross.

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