

MURRAY SAWCHUCK A COMEDY AND MAGIC JOY RIDE

INTERVIEWED BY MARLA SANTOS
PHOTOGRAPHY SANTODONATO



The Laugh Factory at Tropicana has a new fun-filled show starring Murray SawChuck, who describes himself as the Dennis The Menace of comedy and magic. With his platinum blond hair spiked up in all directions, and his black-framed Armani glasses, he is not your typical magician, but the audience just loves him!

His show is filled with laughter, as he experiments with magic in the midst of comedic routines, but then all of a sudden, he'll perform an incredible trick. His close friend, Douglas Leferovich, known in the show as "Lefty", portrays a bumbling stagehand that does card tricks when he thinks Murray isn't watching. It brings a warm and fuzzy feel to the show as "Lefty" imagines

himself as the headlining star. Chloe Louise is Murray's assistant, who's beautiful and sexy, and when she squeezes into a box for a vanishing act, it leaves you amazed.

As a 5-year old living in Burnaby, British Columbia, Murray started taking lessons on the accordion, piano and saxophone, and then learned many dances, including Ukrainian, ballet, break dancing and ballroom. Combining all this with soccer, baseball, skiing and horseback riding, his childhood was extremely full. At age seven, he received a Siegfried and Roy Magic Kit, and the rest is history.

His parents showered him with lessons, but encouraged him to work, to earn

his own money. He had the typical paper route, delivering 260 papers. As he was stuffing his papers with local ads, he had the bright idea to include a flyer of his own, promoting the jobs he was willing to do. Besides raking leaves and shoveling snow, he promoted his magic shows for birthday parties, etc. At 16, the young entrepreneur had an ad in the yellow pages, and a business line, answering machine, and fax in his bedroom.

His list of jobs and work accomplishments are pages long. Murray has performed all over the world, from cruise ships to clubs and casinos. His latest was a stint on "America's Got Talent", where he received standing ovations from Sharron Osbourne, Piers Morgan, and Howie Mandel, for producing a Ferrari from thin air, turning a showgirl into a 450-pound tiger, and making a steam train vanish, all in front of a live audience. Murray now guest stars as the Historical Magic Consultant for History Channel's hit reality series, "Pawn Stars". His job is to determine if the magic-related item is authentic and its value.

This summer, Murray and Chloe were married by their friend, Monti Rock III. Douglas "Lefty" Leferovich was Murray's best man and Chloe had her friend Ashton Nicole (star of "Bite" - Stratosphere) as her bridesmaid. Chloe has also started dancing in the Luxor show, "Fantasy". 2012 seems to have all the stars in alignment for this happy couple. During his recent interview with StripLV, Murray shared with us his journey to get to where he is today: as a headliner at the Tropicana, a man who loves the laughter from the audience, and his fantastic life right here in Las Vegas with his new bride, Chloe.

SLV: How old were you when you recognized that you craved the limelight?

MURRAY: I think I realized it as young as four or five years old. My heritage is Ukrainian/Scottish, so I started dancing Ukrainian dancing when I was five years old. I started doing talent shows and I would play the accordion, of all things, and it was fun getting the attention. I was an only child as well, so attention was obviously enjoyable to get. I loved the limelight and the reaction of people having a good time. It was exciting for me to be the vehicle of that, because I'm not a very serious person, so I love meeting people and giving them a good time and having them enjoy themselves - and thus, taking them away from the problems of life and death, and relationships, and everything we all have in our lives. I didn't realize all that at five years old, of course, but now that I'm older, I look back and see that it was the roots behind all of that.

SLV: Did you push to take all those lessons or did your parents push you?

MURRAY: I think I pushed, but I didn't have to push that hard. My parents were wonderful in the sense that my mother had eight miscarriages, and then I was the ninth pregnancy. We had a twin, but she lost my twin in the first trimester. When I was raised, I wasn't spoiled with the things you have to get. I bought my first car. Any fun things, like toys, I would have to earn. Education-wise, they took care of music lessons, accordion lessons, or dance lessons. The minute I would say it, I'd open my eyes and I'd be there dancing or playing the accordion. If I showed an interest at all, they'd give me lessons.

SLV: Were there any lessons that you didn't enjoy?

MURRAY: Not too much. I tried some things like soccer, and after a couple of years, I was tired of it, because I didn't want to kick a soccer ball around at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday mornings in the rain.

SLV: What are the favorite things you learned as a child that you continue with today?

MURRAY: I don't pick up the accordion. It's funny, I Ukrainian danced and played the accordion and I wanted a girlfriend, so I quit playing the accordion. (laughter) I mean come on, really! I was destined to be a complete nerd, come on now, really! I loved fishing as a young kid, and I didn't realize how much I loved it until I went and did it a while ago when we were camping. It's something I stopped doing for years, because I had to work and pay the bills. As a child I wanted to be one of those fisherman guys on TV. After the Ukrainian dancing and accordion, becoming one of those professional fisherman... are you kidding me? But fishing is fun, and I also enjoy landscaping and working in my yard. I used to work with my dad, cutting trees, and I hated it, but now that I have my own house, I love doing it. That's my kind of yoga.

SLV: When you look in the mirror, who looks back at you?

MURRAY: A guy hiding behind messy hair, glasses and a blue suit.

SLV: So you see your persona. Do you see yourself inside that persona?

MURRAY: Sure I do. It's the guy who, on the weekends at home, wears a baseball cap, ripped jeans and a t-shirt. I'm well aware of that when I walk on stage, I look like I do, and what I do, and that look like a clown. Ha! (laughter) I think indirectly I'm a very shy person. You'd never notice that or see that, but if you knew me well enough and spent 4 or 5 days a week with me, you'd see that I have my moments where I'm extremely shy. I think having the hair, the glasses, the persona, the look, and the brand... I can hide behind that. It works. Look at Liberace, Howard Stern, Lucille Ball... any "great" has some sort of a look. Maybe they're born with it, or it may be unnatural.

SLV: I loved the story about you putting your fliers in the newspapers you delivered. Where does that ambition come from?

MURRAY: I think I was born with it, to be honest. I saw people at garage sales and swap meets, and they were selling and people were buying. I realized it went back to the old system of bartering. I thought that some people needed their leaves raked or snow shoveled or whatever it might be, so I printed the fliers at a print shop. It started off with the snow shoveling, because it was winter, and then progressed to my magic shows in my teens. I put up advertisements for \$50 for my magic show at the local recreation center where I took swimming lessons.

SLV: When was your first visit to Las Vegas?

MURRAY: I came when I was in my early 20's with some friends and we were headed to Idaho. I believe we pulled off right here at the 15 and Tropicana and saw all the different acts in lights down the Strip. I said: 'How do you get from this person driving this truck, (which we know this town sees thousands and thousands of every day)... how do you turn that into getting your name up in lights?'

SLV: And that's when you knew what you wanted?

MURRAY: Yeah, I knew as soon as I made that left turn at Tropicana onto the Las Vegas Boulevard. That's when it happened.

SLV: You opened for Amazing Johnathan as one of your first jobs here. How was that?

MURRAY: I got to know Amazing Johnathan and we became friends in the business. He was a big star before I was even around. We met at Magic Castle, when I was performing, and we had Thai food together. He needed opening acts and I thought it would be a great stepping-stone to be associated with him in that capacity.

SLV: You also performed in "La Femme". Any funny stories about that?

MURRAY: There's a very funny story between "Lefty" and me that we laugh at now. "Lefty" is one of my best friends and also an act in my show. In "La Femme", I did a solo act with CD's and compact discs. It was an act I invented years ago, when I was 17 or 18, to become a name in the business. Nobody had ever done it and that's the act "La Femme" wanted. It was a live audition in the evening. Lefty had a job performing at the Hooters Casino, but he needed to help me take my stuff off the stage. The girls that work there had no idea I was there auditioning. They're used to the same music and acts every day, and all of a sudden there was new music and a new guy. I'm on stage and performing to all the executives along with a live audience. Now I'd done the act for years, but as I'm performing, all of a sudden I see "Lefty" on the ground in the wings, ready to pull my stuff off stage. As he's crouched down, I see one set of eyes. It was like the Scooby Doo, where the eyes pop up in the dark, and it's eyes and breasts. Eyes, breasts, and you're naked! As I'm performing, I then see three beautiful naked women to my right and "Lefty" is surrounded by breasts. I look to my left and there are four more girls over there. All of a sudden it dawned on me that I wasn't trying to impress the audience, but the pretty naked girls. Who cares about the audience?! (laughter) I'd never thought that in my life. By the end of the act, I had the whole cast in the wings completely naked, watching me! The audience couldn't see this and all I could think was, 'Do the act well and get the job. Don't screw the damn thing up!' I knew there were more naked women around me than I'd ever seen in my entire life, but I stayed focused. I finally ended the act and the curtain closed, and of course, they all went away and I never saw them again! (laughter) What are the chances? It was like a dream and then I woke up. True story.

SLV: Were you nervous when you were on "America's Got Talent", doing those huge magic acts?

MURRAY: It was probably the most nerve-racking experience of my life, and something I'll never do again. It was also the most rewarding and thrilling, because what that taught me, is that if somebody asks you if you