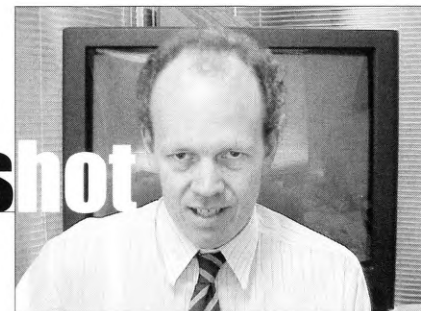


## say something funny, bigshot

**david guthrie**



**David Guthrie left the law in 1996 to become a comedian. He appeared in the Law Institute Journal in 1998. Bracing himself against potential allegations that he is no more than a common "media slut", he agreed to speak to the YLJ...**

**what made you decide to become a comedian?**

I wasn't enjoying the law, and I had an itch that needed scratching. Had that feeling at the time of "now or never". Sundry persons have also referred to the "Saturn returning" theory, but I don't really believe in the stars.

**did people automatically expect you to be funny all the time?**

Yep. Got the "say something funny" line after doing one gig. Also got the "Oh-you're-a-comedian-I've-got-one-for-you-a horse -walks-into-a-bar-etc etc" ad infinitum. Quite weird. It's a completely subjective area of performance - if the audience laughs, you're good - if not, you're a dud. And everyone has an opinion.

**what made you decide to go back to law? was it money or some idiot pang of regret at having left the law?**

Money. Couldn't do the dole thing and I had credit cards to pay off. Fairly pathetic really, although I only went

back 3 days a week. It was a good life - nothing like flexible work practices for mental health...

**have you ever died a sad and lonely death on stage?**

Yes. Did a football dinner that I expected to be all male, so I prepared some stuff that was fairly blue. Arrived to find it was a black tie affair with equal numbers of women and men, many of whom were elderly. Did the blue stuff anyway. Not warmly received.

Another time, I was promised a spot in the middle of the line up at the Armadale one Monday night, but was shunted to the end. Took the stage at 1am after the crowd had dwindled from 150 to 15. Didn't raise a snigger on the first two gags, so I told them they were obviously too tired and should go to bed, then promptly walked off. MC was caught a little bit by surprise...

**has your change in career direction been what you imagined/hoped would be?**

I didn't know what to expect, really. Once you start, you realise how long and hard people who have made it have had to work. People talk about "overnight sensations" who have actually been performing for 5 years.

**what are you doing now?**

I work for the Television Education Network (TEN) producing continuing education products for lawyers, accountants and tax consultants. Also builds websites. I am the Executive Producer of The Education Channel, which produces the videos. 14 programs a month - 7 legal, 7 tax and

accounting - with a "recent developments" and practical flavour. I oversee production of the whole lot and script 6 of the legal programs. I also script the legal programs for our audio tapes. Applied for the job because I could use my legal background with some involvement in writing and production. It's not exactly comedy, but I'm enjoying it. Comedy outside of hours is reduced but continuing.

**do you miss the law? would you ever go back?**

Sometimes. I was in litigation, and there are always interesting experiences to be had there. But go back? Probably not.

**words of advice for young lawyers?**

Eat, drink, be merry - and tell your partner to get stuffed if it warrants it.

**comedic resume**

Four Melbourne Comedy festivals -

1997 "Tinker Tailor Soldier Boofhead" - career crises etc. very autobiographical

1998 "Grindstone Cowboy" - the mail room struggles to survive under threat of privatisation (interestingly, 3 months after that show, I was told that Arthur Andersen privatised their mail room...)

1999 "On the Sly" - three friends doing the dirty on each other - got to hang out with the real stars in the Town Hall and take my shirt off on stage.

2000 Pant-O-Rama II at the Laundry - brother Will makes his debut (dangerously funny - hogs limelight - grrrr).