

At Ease with...

LARRY THE CABLE GUY

BY DINA SANTORELLI

SPORTING A CUT-OFF FLANNEL SHIRT, armed with a truckload of one-liners and spouting his infamous cry of "Git-R-Done," Larry the Cable Guy has taken America by storm. His recently released CD, *The Right to Bare Arms*, premiered at #1 on the SoundScan Comedy Chart and #1 on the Country Chart. He wrote a best-selling book, *Git-R-Done*, that made its debut at #26 on the *New York Times* bestseller list, and he has been playing to soldout audiences in theaters and arenas across the country.

Last month, in addition to reuniting with his Blue Collar Comedy brothers Jeff Foxworthy and Bill Engvall for a new film, *Blue Collar Comedy Tour—One for the Road*, he hit the big screen for the first time with the new Lionsgate film, *Larry the Cable Guy: Health Inspector*. (Also, look for Larry to voice the character of Mater in Disney/Pixar's upcoming feature film *Cars*, also starring Paul Newman, Owen Wilson and Bonnie Hunt.)

Three sneak previews of *Health Inspector*, along with a recorded message of support from Larry to the troops, opened at the Army & Air Force Exchange Service's Reel Time Theater in Fort Irwin, just in time for the return home of more than 2,600 soldiers from Iraq on the 19th. Next, Lionsgate took the film to Operation Iraqi Freedom's front lines on the 24th, the same day it hit screens in the U.S.

Larry took a few minutes to chat with *Salute* about his latest ventures, his humble beginnings and how he'll never forget that his military fans have been with him all the way.

Hey Larry, we hear you've got a new film.

That's right, *Larry the Cable Guy: Health Inspector*. And if you don't go see it, you're a Communist.

How did this come about?

You know what? I never thought I'd do pic-

tures in my whole life. I never thought I'd be doing stand up. But I've got great fans, and I'm just real thank-

ful that they like to laugh and they like what I do. And once I started doing *Blue Collar TV*, and we ended that, they come along and said, "Hey, let's do a movie." I never thought of it, but I think your fans like to see you do other things, if they're fans. So I said, "Yeah, let's try a picture." And we did this movie, and if you want to see any movie this year where you can just kick back and you're not going to be preached to about politics, and you don't have to worry about it making a social point, this'd be the one. You're gonna sit down and choke on your popcorn for about an hour and a half. I'll tell you what, it is funny, from beginning to end.

What was it like doing a movie? How was it different from being on tour and doing a CD?

Well, you know what. I had to memorize lines! That's what was different about it. When I did *Blue Collar TV*, of course I had to memorize some lines, but a lot of that was just ad-libbed, and if I had to memorize anything, it was only, maybe, four lines, and they weren't that long. But here, you know, every day I'd have to have between 40 and 50 lines memorized. And you get there at 6 in the morning, you start filming at 7:30, and you don't get home until about 11:30, sometimes 1 o'clock in the morning, and then you have to sit there and memorize lines. It was fun to do. It was long and tedious, but I gotta tell ya, it was a blast! It's by far one of the coolest things I've ever done in my life, other than when I used to work in a kitchen for the mentally insane—that place



was called "Soup to Nuts." And that was pretty fun too.

You've always had a very big military fan base.

Oh man, I support the military. Love 'em to death! If anybody likes to laugh and get their mind off stuff, it's military folks, especially in the times that we're living in. And not only that, but people come see my act live, and I let everyone know that I support the military. My dad was in the United States Air Force and my brother was in the National Guard, so I've always been a supporter of the Army and Air Force, that's just the way I grew up. I'm a big Ronald Reagan fan. Whatever he liked, I liked. And I also realized that I wouldn't be doing what I was doing if we didn't have a military to let me do it, so I'm definitely a big supporter, no doubt.

Have you ever performed for the military?

You know what? I gotta tell ya, I've been on constant tour now for the past two years, ever since *Blue Collar* hit, but for years and years I always used to go down to Fort Hood and Killeen, Texas, twice a year and perform for the Army boys down there. I've done other bases along the way, but it was a regular deal for me at Fort Hood starting in the mid- to late 90s. A lot of times I had soldiers come up and say, "Hey, we seen you in Killeen way back in 1997!" I'm like, "Yeah!" So that's pretty cool, and we're filming *Blue Collar*, the third movie, up in Washington, D.C., and I want to go to Walter Reed, and set something up for Camp Lejeune in North Carolina.

Also, your new film is being screened on military bases.

It is. I've got a lot of great fans that are in the military. A lot of units have adopted my phrase, "Git-R-Done!" I got pictures of humvees and bombs and planes and tanks and you name it with "Git-R-Done!" on it. It's just a thrill that they like to use it, and I'm glad they do. It's pretty neat. I can't thank them enough for that.

Where do you get your knack for comedy? Do you come from a funny family?

I wasn't dropped as a kid—I was thrown! I grew up in a small town of 1,200. I was a C-sec-

tion baby—I was born in Section C of a Waylon Jennings concert! So I started out being funny. I don't know, it's just kind of born in me, I guess. Actually, I probably had to do it out of necessity. I couldn't do much else. If I wasn't funny, I don't know what else I'd be doing right now.

What kind of comedy interests you? What comedians have influenced you?

My all-time favorite comedian was Steve Martin, but I kind of pull from four different guys. My style is a mix between Steve Martin, Don Rickles, Henny Youngman and Jonathon Winters. My style is all quick one-liners—set-up, punch; set-up punch. But Steve Martin, I really enjoyed a lot. He was just good being silly, and you sat down and no matter what he did, you knew you were gonna laugh for a good solid hour, and that's what I try to do. That's why I love this movie so much. A lot of movies nowadays try to shove some Hollywood agenda down your throat and trying to let you know how bad a person you are. My movie, you just go, you sit down and just laugh at nonsense, and belly laugh at it. It's just like my act—it's a laugh from beginning to end.

Is there anything you'd like to say directly to the men and women in uniform?

I want to tell them, thank you so much for everything you do and if there's anybody who is a staunch supporter of everything that they do, it's definitely me. If anybody ever says anything bad about them, the first one that will step up is me and all my *Blue Collar* comedian buddies. So we're with you 100 percent, keep doing what you're doing, stay safe and just thank you so much for letting us be able to do what we do, and we'll see you at a show soon! And remember, sometimes you've got to wreck the truck to get the insurance money to make the truck payments. So don't forget it!

Oh, I also have to tell you another bit of good news... I just got married and my wife told me the other day that I can look forward to the sound of little pitter-patters around the house. Yeah, she's leaving me for a midget! Good Lord, I was more upset than a one-legged waitress working at the IHOP! Thank you, and Git-R-Done! 