

Savini and Me: Part Five, Savini on Letterman

Written by Michael Aloisi

Wednesday, 30 January 2013 13:43



During my childhood my father worked the third shift, meaning he went in at three in the afternoon and came home at eleven at night. Being in the single digits, I was of course fast asleep by eight p.m. Some nights, though, I'd wake up to go to the bathroom or get a drink of water and hear my father down the hall. I would always get excited because my father was usually eating dinner and watching TV.

If I snuck out there, he would let me watch with him and even give me some food from time to time. They were tender moments I treasure in my memories as quality time spent with my dad. What I remember most about those nights are two things, potato chips and peanut butter, which he for some reason ate a lot of, and late night talk shows. Dad would sit there with a big plop of peanut butter and a plate full of chips and dip each chip in the peanut butter. Now and then, he would hand me a salty chip covered in the creamy sweetness. I would savor the chip and stare at the adults on the TV and try to understand the jokes. Mostly, I would just laugh when my father did. It was typically Jonny Carson on the television, but now and then David Letterman and the gap in his front teeth would be smiling at my sleepy face. Little did I know the funny man with the big mustache on the show one night who did "scary" things, would someday become a big part of my life.

In fact, I had no memory of Tom Savini on David Letterman's Late Night until I recently sat down to watch a DVD of Tom's appearances on the show. Before that, I had no clue Tom had even been on Letterman. It wasn't until I was doing a convention appearance with Tom that I saw a DVD for sale on his table. Picking it up, I was shocked to read the title, "Tom Savini's Five Hilarious Appearances on David Letterman." I quickly asked Tom the stupid question that I had the answer to in my hands, "You were on Letterman?" Of course he said yes then told me to take the DVD home and watch it. When I got back from the convention, I eagerly shoved it into the DVD player and watched it with my wife.

Now, I'm not someone who laughs easily. Even in the funniest of comedies I usually find myself with a smile on my face, but only letting out a soft chuckle here and there. Very rarely do I laugh out loud, which is why I was shocked at how much I was laughing at Tom's appearances. All five appearances Tom made, were in fact like the title of the DVD said, hysterical. And they were for a variety of reasons, mostly because of David's reluctance to take part in Tom's crazy special effects. In one episode where Tom was promoting TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE 2, he had Dave try on the Butch mask, which was a creature from an episode of TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE that Tom directed. Seeing Dave with this giant goblin head on was interesting enough (taking it off was even funnier), but knowing that I just saw that actual mask in Tom's

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bedroom a week before, along with the real Leatherface mask he also brought on the show, was even more exciting. When Tom burned the carpet on the set it got even better, but when Tom set up to shoot Dave with blanks: pure late night magic.

{youtube}UUZFCLf2xyY{/youtube}

Other episodes include Tom setting Dave on fire, actually burning him and then making up for it on another episode, as well as tons of other gags that are all pretty funny. While watching one in particular, where Tom shoots Dave in the head, I suddenly had a flash back. My mouth filled with the sweet and salty taste of chips and peanut butter and I could feel my Dad sitting next to me. I had seen this live on air, when I was seven. For some reason, the memory vividly—hearing my dad laugh, being grossed out, scared, but laughing—shot through my head just like the imaginary bullet that went through Dave's. I vaguely recall my dad being worried that he would get in trouble for letting me see something “gross”, but then he went on to explain to me that it was fake and that is how they “do stuff like that” in movies. Having a new memory come back to me was pretty amazing, but knowing that I had seen this episode on TV as a child, and now I was working with this man—it was a pretty amazing feeling.

{youtube}YUHUgMuODFg{/youtube}

After watching the DVD, my stomach and cheeks hurt from laughing. After shutting off the TV, my brain quickly started to race with thoughts of promoting Tom's biography. While the release was over a year away, I couldn't help but wonder if David Letterman would have Tom back on now, over twenty years later. It would be hysterical to show those old clips and have Dave talk about it with him now. Maybe Tom could even put Dave in another awkward situation. Of course, I have to get working on the book before I can start to worry about that stuff, but hey, doesn't hurt to think ahead.

Sadly, it's hard to find these clips online. I could only find a few on YouTube, but Tom has the collection on DVD, so the next time you see him at a convention, make sure you pick up a copy. You will not be disappointed.

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Michael Aloisi, known to most as AuthorMike, is the author of Kane Hodder's official biography, Unmasked. After spending a year with Kane Hodder, the two developed an odd couple friendship. Kane being the fearless, troublemaking stunt man and Mike being a writer out of his element. Together the two had so many adventures, Mike wrote a book about it called, The Killer & I. In addition to his non-fiction, Mike is the author of two novels and two collections of short stories. Currently, Mike is working with Tom Savini on his official biography and just released his first collection of horror short stories called, TALES FROM A MORTICIAN, written under his pen name, Michael Gore. For more information on Mike, visit his website at [Author Mike](#)