

OUR STRAIGHT MATES

With Matthew Myers



“I’m Jealous of Grindr!”

Comedian, actor and television host Dave Thornton is preparing for his latest stand-up tour. Matt Myers quizzed him about being a bit camp and a bit of a bogan and why he wants to be Bruce Lee.

DNA: You’ve been filling in for 7PM Project’s Charlie Pickering. Is that television’s equivalent of the substitute teacher?

Dave Thornton: That’s exactly right! I don’t get any respect from the audience and if I turn my back I’m bound to get a screwed up piece of paper thrown at me!

Do you have gay mates?

Yes, mainly from the industry. In fact, our tour manager is a good mate and he showed me Grindr. It’s surprising what result you can get from that in the middle of country Australia! It’s kind of frightening. I’m jealous of Grindr, I think it makes the track a lot flatter for you guys. It’s not really an uphill battle!

“Top or bottom? I’d like to think I’d be a top!”

As a comedian, is there anything about the gay culture you can identify with?

Funny enough, my father was quite camp. He was straight, but he flowered around. I do too a bit, when I perform. I’m just a bit camp by nature.

What’s the campiest item that you own?

I’ve got a pink 1970s body shirt, with quite a wide collar. I don’t mind it at all, but whenever it comes out of the wardrobe people possibly think I’m coming out of the wardrobe as well!

If you were gay, who would you go for?

I’d go with the classics and say Johnny Depp.

Wil Anderson said the same thing. Does that mean you’d like a threesome with Wil?

That’s a scary thought, to be honest! Hmm... Well, I’ve also always thought Michael Holding, who is an ex-West Indian cricket player, is hot. In fact, I think he still commentates. And it’s for the simple fact that his dulcet tones would probably demand that I be his! He could be classified as the Barry White of cricketing commentating.

So do you reckon you’d be a top or bottom?

(Laughing) I’d like to think I’d be a top.

Of all the gay divas, who do you like the most?

Annie Lennox. I’ve got the Eurythmics sitting in my car right now. Also, she played with a guy called Dave Stewart, who was a mate of mine in high school.

Do you think comedians use comedy as a form of therapy?

Yeah, it’s cheaper! Some people think it’s a cathartic process and some of the surreal comedians like Sam Simmons really tell it like it is. I suppose there is something to it... most of us are just recalcitrant, anyway!

Are there any comedians that inspire you?

When I was young, it was Daffy Duck.

Oh my God! I was in the toilets and someone in the cubicle was doing a Donald Duck

voice! Was it you?

Really? I wonder what that was all about?

Maybe instead of Grindr it was Quackr?

So any others?

Groucho Marx! I can’t get enough of the Marx Brothers. Bill Cosby and Richard Pryor, who I loved in *See No Evil, Hear No Evil*. And then when I was older it was Billy Connolly, George Carlin, Louis CK. And the Aussies like Wil Anderson, Tom Gleason, Fiona O’Loughlin, Denise Scott...

Do you see a future for yourself on TV?

I think TV chooses you, rather than you choose TV. I think it’s beyond my powers – unless you want to be on a really bad reality TV show.

If you could zap yourself into a classic sitcom, what would it be?

(Laughing) I’ve been told I look like Eddie Haskell from *Leave It To Beaver*, but I don’t think that would be my choice. If anything, and just from my upbringing, I’d like to be Alex Keating’s mate on *Family Ties*. I’d love to do that chair slide thing that Michael J Fox did in the opening credits. There was a sense of

accomplishment which came with that move.

Your new show is called I Wanna Be Bruce Lee. Is there a meaning behind the title?

I grew up watching Kung Fu movies. But recently I saw a documentary on him and I realised that he passed away at about the same age I am now. He accomplished all these things and, looking back on my life, I haven’t accomplished anything.

Do you really feel you haven’t achieved things?

It’s also about when you get to your thirties and look back at how the generations have changed so much. Our parents, by their thirties, had the house, kids and all the trimmings. We don’t necessarily want that, but you feel like you’ve let down that generation. In those days it was like having a checklist to tick off.

You played an injured AFL player in Bed Of Roses. Did you hit the gym for that role?

I’m very slight of frame and I have the problem where I just don’t put on weight. I heard that Hugh Jackman was in the gym for six months before *Wolverine*, and when you scale it down to the ABC, it was like, ‘We’re filming in four weeks.’ I was like, ‘What?!’ So I did try to hit the gym and I did bulk up a little bit, but it was probably too late by then.

In that role, Kerry Armstrong played your mother. Had you previously seen her in Prisoner or Dynasty?

Yeah, and she would talk about that sort of thing, like when she auditioned for *Saturday Night Live* in New York. She’s awesome. She’s an unbelievable actress and great for advice. And she’s so attractive, too, which is weird because she was playing my mum!

Do people in the entertainment industry ever confuse you with the actor Dave Thornton from The Notebook?

(Laughing) No, I should check out IMDB more often! I don’t know him, but my mates have told me about an Uncle Dave Thornton in *Beverly Hills Cop III*.

Your stand-up comedy has been critiqued as quintessentially Australian. Would you agree?

Yeah. I mean sometimes people think I’m a bogan, which I probably am, but I can’t help it. I think there’s a bit of bogan in all of us.

What is your porn name (your first pet and the street you grew up in)?

Snowsie was my first dog’s name and the street was Laura. Snowsie Laura, I’d dare say, would do things that most people wouldn’t be proud of. We know she’s a slut, let’s not beat around the bush!

You once did a stand-up tour called The No Underpants Show. In fact, are you into jocks, boxers or freeballing?

Fitted boxers! Mate, if they work for Marky Mark, then they should work for me!

I Wanna Be Bruce Lee is at The Adelaide Fringe Festival, The Brisbane Comedy Festival and The Melbourne International Comedy Festival. For more information go to davidthornton.com.au