

Erika's World

Catching up with Erika

Telephone Interview
June 2014

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Founded
January, 1972

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So, tell us – what has the last year been like for Erika Slezak? It's been different. There are days when I get up and think, "What am I going to do today?" because I'm so used to working – and then there are other days when I think, "Oh, I'll just sleep late," and that's fine. I have good days and bad days. I'm never unhappy, but I would very much like to go back to work. Last year when the Prospect Park thing happened, I was very happy, and then it all fell apart.

I want to applaud Prospect Park. They really tried. I think they wanted it to succeed, but it was a new audience for them, and a different venue. In order to get the daytime audience to watch online, they needed to give them daytime, and they weren't. They were trying to change it up and do something our audience was simply not used to. But it may have been too much music, too much loud music, too many new characters (new actors playing existing characters), whom they focused on immediately. Maybe less traditional, and it became a problem. But they really tried, and I commend them for that.

How many shows did Prospect Park produce? I think it was just 40. And I know that they were not finished when the production company was pulling the plug, and they had to scramble to get an ending for the last show. That was when Natalie went to Clint's hospital room and Allison was there. Barbara Garrick (Allison) was never there with us, so they shot all of that afterwards.

That's interesting and how ironic. Allison was in the last scene of the ABC version of the show, holding Todd prisoner, and then she was in the last one on the online show. Yes. Evil wins out!

Where does it stand now with Prospect Park and ABC? Prospect Park has declared bankruptcy and they are in bankruptcy court. That's all I know. They owe a lot of people a lot of money. Now they have to settle that, so we'll see what happens.

And that can take awhile. Yes, a very long time. I've never been involved with this, so I don't know. I get updates periodically, because, obviously they owe me money and they owe a lot of other actors money. So, we'll see.

They published that you were involved in the suit and a couple of other actors. Yes, but they owe ABC a lot more than they owe me. They owe the company that provided all of the lights and cameras, as they had rented all of that from them. They owe the studio too. Well, they just owe a lot of money in a lot of places. That's not to say that they won't pay it, but they are going to have to come up with some money.

Any highlights from this past year? Your daughter, Amanda, became engaged. That is very exciting news! Yes, she did and she's very happy. They got engaged a year ago April, and they are going to wait for about another year.

Tell us about Amanda's fiancé, is he an actor? Oh, he's a very nice fellow. He's an actor, but he's mostly a writer. He writes things for the web. His name is Michael Thurstlic, and they've known each other a long time. They are very happy.

How's your son Michael doing? Michael is ok. He's been with us, and he's terrific to have around the house, and he's fine.

And what about your husband, Brian, and the animals? He's fine. He's doing very well, thank you!

Has any work come up? Have you been offered anything that you have turned down? No, I've auditioned for a bunch of things, and in each case they said the audition was wonderful, and the producers and directors loved me, but they had someone else in mind from the start. So, that happens. My agent said that we are going to have to find a producer who is a good friend of mine, who has ME in mind for a part from the START. Of course, I'm joking! But that's what happens, you know. People have worked with other people over the years, and they see a role and say, "My friend would be great for this," but according to the union, they have to see people audition for it, and they do. But in the meantime, I've been able to meet a lot of interesting, talented casting directors, and directors, and producers, which has been very good for me. Hopefully, something will come out of that.

Has this been in New York or out west? It's all been in New York. I have not had to go out to Los Angeles yet.

Were you nervous in the auditions? Not nervous, but it was a little unusual. I obviously haven't auditioned in 42 years, except for commercials. But you know, you sit back and you say to yourself, "This is what I have to do

now, because everybody else does it." I'm no different from anybody else. I'm just unemployed. So, I wasn't really nervous, but I wasn't used to the routine of it. It was different – you know, driving there, getting a parking place, finding the studio, and wearing high heels, which I hate. On the first audition that I went to, apparently the producers wanted me very, very much, but the director had someone else in mind, so they kind of had a little argument about it, I heard. I don't know if it is true, but I thought that was nice.

Was this for episodic programs? I auditioned for a couple of pilots and some other things.

If you were offered a terrific role on any of the remaining soaps would you accept? And while we'll probably never see Victoria Lord in Port Charles would you be interested working for Frank Valentini on General Hospital? It would depend entirely on the role, but I would happily work on any thing – and yes, I would love to work for Frank again. He's an awesome man and a wonderful producer.

But your agent is doing his job? Yes, they are absolutely doing their job. I mean – they want to make money too. They didn't take me on to have me sit at home.

Does Paul Martino still represent you? Paul is the manager, and David Lewis at Buchwald, is my agent.

We are anxiously waiting to see you in anything. What about Broadway? Again, I would like to do all that. The problem is that at my age, having been in one job for that long, people have worked with other actresses over the years, and they are going to go with their friends – the people they know can do it – the people they like – the people they've hired before – they are going to go there first, which is part of the business. That is the nature of the business. So, I need to get into that little group and start meeting people and saying, "I can do this!" And I will, but it takes time, and doesn't happen overnight.

You sold your New York apartment. We sold our New York apartment to an absolutely

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delightful young couple. They are going to do some painting and move in. They will be very happy in that building. It's a great building and I'm sorry to have left it, but we never went there, so there wasn't a point in keeping a place that was empty almost all of the time.

When you worked in the city did you use it much? No, not as much as we thought we were going to. We did use it, but last year we went there only 3 times, which is kind of silly.

Did you have a lot to pack? No, we sorted it out one day, threw some stuff away, and then the movers came in. We have wonderful movers. They packed one day, and the next morning they moved everything out in about 3 hours, drove up to Connecticut, and it is all stored in our basement. We have an enormous basement that is finished and heated, so it is all sitting in a corner in the basement. It's not that much stuff, as it was a small apartment.

It was a 1 bedroom? No it was a 2 bedroom. It was built by musicians in around 1910-12 as a place where musicians could practice, because everywhere they would live, people would tell them they couldn't practice, or play, or teach after 6 pm in the evening or before 8 am in the morning. They wanted a place where they could, so they built this building with double thickness walls. You really can't hear anything, as the apartments are so well insulated. There are still a lot of musicians who live in the building, which is very nice.

Have you been in touch which any of our fellow One Life people? Let's see...every once in a while Robin Strasser (Dorian) and I email. I've heard from Jerry Ver Dorn (Clint) a couple of times. He had a bear on his front lawn and he sent me a picture of it! Tuc Watkins (David Vickers) has been in contact because of the children. I had a very nice long email from Brian Kerwin (Charlie Banks) the other day, which was lovely. I'm in touch a little bit here and there. I did hear from Jen Pepperman, as she is doing some work. I am such a huge fan of hers. She really worked so hard, and I think if anyone was massively

disappointed that the show was over, it was she.

Have you seen anything recently that you would recommend or not recommend? We have not been to the movies because we watch everything on the television. We did see some of the Oscar nominated films. We've been watching this wonderful British series called Doc Martin, which has been on the air in England for the last 5-6 years. We watch it through Netflix, and it is terrific. We don't really watch that much TV. I've been reading a lot, which is nice. The house keeps me very busy. I have to say I'm kind of surprised that I ever had time to have a job, because I get up in the morning and say, "What am I going to do today?" and then suddenly it is 6 pm and dinner has to be made. You keep busy.

Have you spent a lot of time in Vermont this year? No, it was so cold over the winter. We went up maybe 4-5 times and each time there was so much snow and ice. I'm happy staying indoors, but Brian gets very antsy, as he likes to be able to go outside. He couldn't go out because it was so cold. It was cold and windy, and even on snowshoes, it was hard. Amanda and Mike (her fiancé) went up a lot to ski.

Have you been on any vacations? No, we were going to go away in March and then the whole apartment thing happened, so we had to stay to get it settled. We'll go away sometime this summer.

This has been a relatively short chat. Well, there isn't a lot going on. I am enjoying myself and my life. I have a wonderful life! I have a family and a comfortable house and I'm enjoying it. And I'm getting things done that I should have done years ago. So, I'm not in any bad shape. And I'm healthy, thank goodness. I would like to go back to work, but if I don't, I can't complain. I had a job for 42 years, which is lot more than most actors can say. I'm not complaining at all, believe me!

We will keep good thoughts and you'll let us know if something comes up? Yes I will. Thank you!