

November 13, 2011 12:31 PM

Dan Aykroyd's high spirits

Dan Aykroyd's HIGH SPIRITS were on full display in the classic 1984 comedy "Ghostbusters" - preparation, perhaps, for the very different sort of spirits he's bringing to market now. Michelle Miller offers this Sunday Profile:

Dan Aykroyd was just 23 years old, the youngest of the "Saturday Night Live" original cast, when he became a superstar ... famous for his brilliant impersonations, bizarre creations, and pitch-perfect comedic pitches.

More than thirty years later, he's pitching again - not for laughs, but for his own Crystal Head vodka, with a bottle that will catch your eye: An actual glass rendering of a human skull.

Aykroyd explained the legend to go with it: "Scientists estimate that it took between 300 and 500 years to carve one of these heads from a single piece of crystal."

Miller asked him if pitching vodka take him back to his "SNL" days pitching the Super Bass-O-Matic.

"Sure, certainly, absolutely. Essentially it was the same pitch, but a little slower, 'cause I want people to hear what we're saying."

The pitch continued - this time with the perfect pairing.

"You're pretty liberal with the caviar there," said Miller.



(Credit: CBS)

She tried the concoction: "Very smooth." "Now eat the sandwich. Yep, just plop it right in!"

"Well, I like to sell, I really do," he said. "I could sell used battery acid and make it fly. But that's not what we have here. The vodka is an award-winning fluid. Our notes are vanilla, sweet dry, crisp, with a kick of heat at the finish."

In fact, Aykroyd's Crystal Head Vodka WAS awarded a double gold medal at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition this year.

"The world's cleanest, non-polluted, non-adulterated, no-additive vodka," he said. "So what better vessel to put it in than a vessel that speaks about purity and enlightenment and positive drinking?"

[Vodka recipes courtesy of Dan Aykroyd and Crystal Head Vodka](#)

The legend of the Crystal Skulls, said Aykroyd, is grounded in his - and his family's - fascination with the paranormal.

Aykroyd's great-grandfather was a spiritualist, and his father, a Canadian government official, wrote an entire book on ghosts.

"The family was into séances, right through the 1950s," Aykroyd said. "We had a family medium, his name was Walter Asherst. He was a locomotive mechanic. American Society for Psychical Research Journals were all around the house when I was a kid."

That fascination, said Aykroyd, gave birth to "Ghostbusters," one of the top-grossing comedies of all time.

"Well, I wanted to treat the material that I was reading as a kid, I also want do to a comedy, just like the old comedies that Bob Hope did, and Abbott and Costello<" he said. "So I thought if we did that flavor of comedy, but use real terms, real vernacular, use the real theories of paranormal research, marry them up together - and there you have it!"

Dan Aykroyd turned another of his passions, blues music, into ANOTHER hit movie, "The Blues Brothers."

John Belushi, his best friend and co-star, died of a drug overdose in 1982, just two years after the movie's release. "I think of him often," said Aykroyd. "I think of him every time I go into a House of Blues, how much he would have loved to have his own nightclub, for instance, in Vegas, or New Orleans or L.A."

Aykroyd founded House of Blues, in part, as a tribute to his dead friend.

"He would have loved it. I miss him a lot."

"What do you miss most about him?" Miller asked.

"His intelligence, how well-read he was. His expertise in theater and movies and plays. I think if he'd lived he would be directing on Broadway right now. He'd probably be one of the leading directors in American theater, oh yeah."

"Does it still - I mean, it must pain you."

"Well, you know, I couldn't be there for him, you know?" Aykroyd said. "People have these addictions, and it helps them through. And his appetites were huge. The fact is, he was killed by mistake. He died accidentally, but he put himself in that situation. And that's just a warning to people out there. Just, you know, stay away from powders and pills. Come on! You know? Have a nice shot of legal vodka, THAT'LL get you through!"

Aykroyd's home life is remarkably stable by Hollywood standards. For nearly 30 years he's been married to Donna Dixon, the actress and beauty queen he met while filming "Doctor Detroit." They have three daughters.

"How do you make it for 30 years?" Miller asked.

"Well, it's communication, really," Aykroyd said. "Women really love for their mate to share, if you come home at night and she says, you know, 'Hi honey, what happened today?' And you go, 'Oh nothing.' No, no! What you want to say is, 'Well, I went down to the Shell station, they got a real nice

special on gas, and I got that jumbo coffee that they have ... oh, and then I went by the video place, and I got those tapes you wanted.' Give all the details. The LOVE that!"

"It's that simple?"

"Well, hygiene is important," he laughed. "That's one of my failings. So I'm always being called on that."

To finish our interview, at Jerry's Deli in Los Angeles, Aykroyd showed us how to make his favorite vodka drink, which he calls the Crystal Driver: "Slowly infuse the orange juice, as if you're breaking an egg in there."

It goes best, he says, with a pastrami sandwich. "Yup. The writer's L.A. lunch."

And, for all of you who've been wondering, "Ghostbusters 3" is in the works.

"I can't really say too much about it," he said. "We really hope it gets made. We're really working to refine the script and we're quite confident. At this point it's kind of like a ship, you know, at sea. You see the beacon, then you go under a wave, you don't see a beacon! So that's what 'Ghostbusters 3' is. I see the beacon today, whether I'll see it tomorrow, I'm not sure!"

Cheers ... to caviar, and pickles. "Life is good," he said.

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