





By Leigh Flayton
Photography by Jeff Newton

ON THE AIR

JERRY DOYLE'S
COLORFUL CAREER PROVES
THAT LIFE IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT

T

HERE'S AN OLD JOKE ABOUT performers who aren't attractive enough to make it on television or in the movies—it's said they have a "face for radio."

But if you're radio talk show host Jerry Doyle ('79, DB), you can do practically anything, and in his case anything is flying an F-16, B-17 and the Space Shuttle simulator; working on Wall Street; running for Congress; and, yes, even starring on TV. Over the course

of a varied and colorful career, the Embry-Riddle alum has proven that he has the Midas touch for much of what he undertakes, although Doyle, 52, chalks it up not to Midas but a touch of ADD.

"I have the attention span of a hummingbird," he recently told *Lift* from his home in Las Vegas. "You get to a certain place. You do a lot of things. You meet a lot of people along the way and people just open these windows from time to time and you say, 'You know what? I'm going to try something different.' And I've tried to stay on that non-flight plan for my life."

This uncharted path has taken the Brooklyn, N.Y., native into places that would make a lesser man stay put. But it all started at Embry-Riddle, a time and place that Doyle recalls fondly.

"I had a blast," he says. "It was back then when the Wright brothers were still flying and we had a trailer out of the flight line and one Ops building and a Stewart sandwich machine ... it was a very cool time to be down there. I love Daytona Beach. When they told me I was graduating I said, 'I can't graduate now! I just learned how to pace myself during Spring Break!'"

GETTING OFF THE GROUND

These days, Doyle still enjoys the airborne life. His eyes aren't what they used to be—he says he'd need charts "the size of the Hubble Telescope" to fly solo—so he usually flies with an instructor or friends. He also frequents NASA sites and Edwards Air Force Base in California, where he co-sponsored the 25th anniversary of the first flight of the F-16.

"To be on the base and hang with the pilots and stay at the VOQ [Visiting Officers Quarters], and to actually see what these guys and gals do every day, that's the stuff for me," he says. "Acting was the bonus. It opened doors. I've been to 15 shuttle launches and about half a

Jerry Doyle starred for five years as Michael Garibaldi in the Sci-Fi hit *Babylon 5*.



Despite his day job behind the mic, Jerry Doyle still feels at home in the cockpit.

dozen landings. It's all because I was on a plywood space station on a sound stage."

Doyle admits he's had some lucky breaks. He started out selling planes for Falcon Jet. Then he went to work on Wall Street, where he spent more than a decade. Next stop: Hollywood. Within a month, Doyle landed a job as an actor in the soap opera, *The Bold and the Beautiful*, which led to his starring role as Michael Garibaldi in the Sci-Fi hit *Babylon 5*.

"When I think of all the people that actually studied acting and did Broadway and off, awful Broadway, and summer stock and paid their dues," he says, "I was the schmuck who showed up and just said, 'I'm here to be on TV.' And the first pilot I auditioned for I got cast in. And the pilot got picked up. And we went to series. And we stayed on the air for five years, which is what the run of the show was supposed to be. It was just, 'Wow!' I was lucky to be in the right place, right time, that role, my day."

AND WE'RE ON THE AIR

There have been some setbacks, though, including an unsuccessful bid for political office, a move that Doyle says effectively ended his acting career.

"I could read the tea leaves," he says. "I ran for Congress in 2000 as a Republican in Hollywood. The big, lovable, liberal tent of Hollywood, once you come out of the closet ... it's easier to come out as a heroin addict than as a Republican. I could see that I was not being welcomed back."

No problem. Doyle soon got a call from Mark Masters, CEO of Talk Radio Network, which broadcasts noted radio personalities like Laura Ingraham and Michael



“ When you’re an actor, you hire a stranger to talk about your problems every hour and you pay a lot of money—it’s called a shrink. Now I get paid a lot of money every hour to talk to strangers about my problems. It’s way better. ”

Savage. Masters was a fan of *Babylon 5* and contacted Doyle about possibly getting the show back on the air, but what happened instead was kismet.

“[Masters] called me one day and asked if I wanted to fill in for a radio host on a Saturday night,” Doyle says. “And I said, ‘Yeah, let’s go.’ So like the new guy, I got there two hours early. And the engineer’s going, ‘Who’s the idiot?’ I went on the air and unloaded. Then I looked at the clock and it was 15 after the hour; I had two hours and 45 minutes left and I had said everything I wanted to say. I just emptied the clip. Then I panicked. And then I slowed down, thought about what I’d said, gave out the phone number to get people involved. I got through it. I was the puppy who just got pulled from the litter. I went home and went to sleep.”

By 2004, however, he had his own program, “The Jerry Doyle Show,” which today averages 3.25 million listeners a week on 230 stations, and is the eighth largest talk radio show in the country.



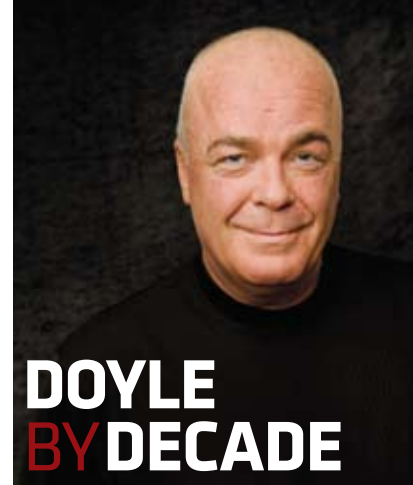
Jerry Doyle takes his friend Bruce Boxleitner, co-star from the *Babylon 5* days, for a ride in an F-16.

Doyle says he’s a different kind of talker, though.

“A lot of talk radio is Republican talk radio,” he says. “It’s there to get Republicans elected. My deal is I go after everyone across the board, regardless of political affiliation. I think it’s a bit like a Howard Beale [from the classic film *Network*] screamed every day: ‘I’m mad as hell and I’m not going to take it anymore.’”

Doyle has been delivering his screed for five years—he famously left the Republican Party on his show about four years ago, calling himself an “Equal Opportunity Exploiter”—and for now the guy who’s always up for trying something different is staying put.

“As long as I find it stimulating and fun,” he says. “When you’re an actor, you hire a stranger to talk about your problems every hour and you pay a lot of money—it’s called a shrink. Now I get paid a lot of money every hour to talk to strangers about my problems. It’s way better.”



1970s

JERRY IN THE PILOT’S SEAT



1980s

JERRY DOES WALL STREET



1990s

JERRY GOES HOLLYWOOD



2000s

JERRY AT THE MIC



The *Jerry Doyle Show* airs live Monday through Friday 3 to 6 p.m. (EST). Visit jerrydoyle.com for a list of participating radio stations in your area or to download a podcast of the show.