

Hearsay

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Serious about comedy

Unlike a lot of attorneys, **Paul D'Angelo** has no problem with lawyer jokes.

He gets paid to tell them.

In fact, as a stand-up comedian, D'Angelo is paid to make people laugh no matter whose expense it's at. The former Essex County prosecutor has appeared on Comedy Central and Showtime, put out critically acclaimed CDs, and opened for George Carlin, Jay Leno and Tony Bennett.

Though D'Angelo gave up prosecutorial work in 1996 to pursue a full-time career in comedy, the 57-year-old Wakefield native says he'll always be a lawyer at heart.

"It's kind of like [being] an alcoholic," he says. "I have to go to meetings. I drive by a courthouse, and I start to get the shivs. I say,

'Maybe I'll take one case.' But I know if I take one case, I'll end up working nights and weekends, and the next thing you know, I'm a lawyer again."

D'Angelo earned his comedy chops in the 1980s moonlighting at night with the likes of Louis C.K. at Boston's Stitches and Nick's Comedy Stop. By day he worked for Essex County DA **Kevin M. Burke**, supervising the jury session in Peabody District Court. Given the serious nature of his daytime work, he wasn't sure how his comedy gigs would play in the DA's Office, so he performed under a fake name.

"Kevin Burke was great about it," D'Angelo recalls. "He said, 'As long as you can do your job' ... I was very fortunate that he allowed me to do it. I did a good job, so he didn't want to lose me."

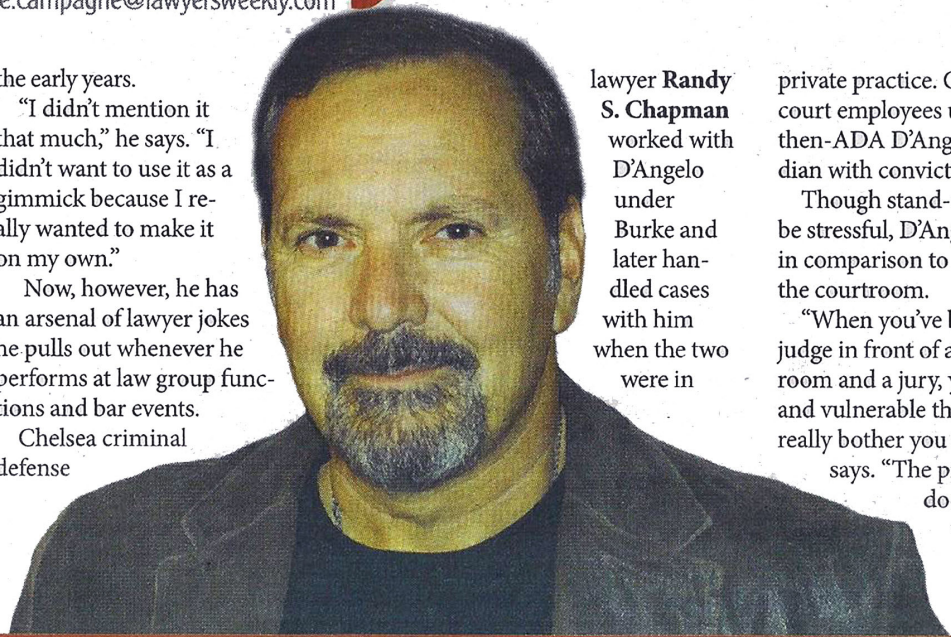
D'Angelo, who recently wrapped up a gig headlining at Laugh Boston, says he rarely talked about his legal background when he was on stage in

the early years.

"I didn't mention it that much," he says. "I didn't want to use it as a gimmick because I really wanted to make it on my own."

Now, however, he has an arsenal of lawyer jokes he pulls out whenever he performs at law group functions and bar events.

Chelsea criminal defense



lawyer **Randy S. Chapman** worked with D'Angelo under Burke and later handled cases with him when the two were in

private practice. Chapman says court employees used to refer to then-ADA D'Angelo as "the comedian with convictions."

Though stand-up comedy can be stressful, D'Angelo says, it pales in comparison to what goes on in the courtroom.

"When you've been yelled at by a judge in front of a crowded courtroom and a jury, you feel so small and vulnerable that no heckler can really bother you after that," he says. "The pressure really doesn't compare."

— DAVID E. FRANK

PAUL D'ANGELO

I don't copy

Attorneys read through enough legal transcripts to recognize a gem when they see one. This month, they need look no further than Cuyahoga, Ohio. Bravo, New York Times, for

tocopying machine" is so ambiguous that you can't picture in your mind what a photocopying machine is in an office setting?

DEPONENT: I just want to make sure I answer your question correctly.

PLAINTIFF'S LAWYER: That's a great point.

DEPONENT: — instead of trying to make me feel stupid.

PLAINTIFF'S LAWYER: If you feel stupid, it's not because I'm making you feel that way.