

CP24's Steve Anthony regales us with tales of tails: Peanut, Dexter & Tadpole

By TOM SANDFORD • "PUPPERAZZI" LOGO BY SHANNON DARCH



VJ, DJ, reporter, host, voiceover artist par excellence, charity spokesperson/supporter: since the mid 1980s Steve Anthony has been all of these. Many will remember him as one of the founding VJs on MuchMusic (1987-1995), while others will doubtless remember his voice from a variety of commercials and radio stations (Q107, CFNY-FM, MIX 99.9 among them).

Currently, Steve co-hosts CP24 Breakfast with Melissa Grelo. While you may have pigeon-holed Steve as a brash, in-your-face kind of personality, what may surprise you is how deeply he (and wife Tanya) care for animals, and the lengths to which they will go to save an animal.

Q. How many dogs do you have?

A. We have three. They're all Chihuahuas. We have Dexter, who's probably five, five and a half, the first one we got as a couple, my wife and I. There's Tadpole, he's a brindle Chihuahua who was a rescue. But we estimate he's like seven maybe.

And then we got a new one about a year and a half ago -- and she was eight weeks old, so she's now a year and seven months -- Peanut. So we have Dexter, Tadpole and Peanut.

Q. Is there any significance to the names?

A. Yes, certainly. Dexter was because -- my wife Tanya, she travels internationally for business, she was on this flight from Switzerland back home and she was next to these two guys, a gay couple, and she was fraternizing with them and talking. And at the end of this long trip they reach underneath their seat and they take out this bag

with a Chihuahua in it. She didn't even know it was there. And he was a little fawn Chihuahua and his name was Dexter. So it was like a virus in her brain from that point forward: she was going to get a dog that's a fawn Chihuahua and name him Dexter.

And then one day she phones me, just casually in the middle of the afternoon, and I hear all kinds of barking and stuff in the background. I go "Where are you?" She says, "Nowhere, nowhere."

I guess she just wanted to make sure I was apprised of it because she wasn't going to deny it, but by hearing the barks in the background, she knew that I knew that she's coming home with a dog. She walked in the door with this little guy, who just took over.

People who say that they don't have favourite children, I always say you know what, you're lying to me. If you say that you don't -- the stock line is "I love them all the same." No, you don't! You have a favourite. You might love them all but you have a favourite.

So I have no problem saying that our rescue, Tadpole, is my favourite. I don't know what it is about him. Regularly, on CP24 Breakfast, we share the limelight with rescue companies for dogs. Cats sometimes, but generally dogs. And so every Friday there's a dog on there. And they're all beautiful and you can't take them all home and you would love to give them a home and all that stuff. And for some silly reason, when I held this Chihuahua in my arms, I don't know what it was, I absolutely fell in love with him. Absolutely. It was like "My god..."

And so I phoned my wife, Tanya. We were on the air at five o'clock. She'll watch when she gets up, say at six o'clock, so she's always an hour behind us. So I phoned her and I said, "Watch live, right now!" So she watched live, and this woman said this dog needs surgery because his front right paw was scrunched and all broken up, so he limps. So they were looking for donations to get the surgery done -- obviously at reduced price, but even their surgeon, their vet, has to get paid something, right? There's anesthesia and...

Anyway, as soon as the segment is over, the phone rings in my pocket and it's my wife, and she's almost angry. She goes, "Give that woman this phone!" I gave my phone to this woman, and her eyes opened up, and she got a little teary, and she went "Oh, thank you!"



Thank you!" And I said "What?" And she said "I'll tell you later."

And I found out later that she volunteered to pay for the surgery and she wanted to apply to adopt him. Then we found out that he couldn't get the surgery done anyway because all the bones in his right paw were calcified. So my wife said "Just keep the money as a donation to the rescue, but we still want to apply to adopt him."

And even after all of that, having had four cats at the time, and we already had Dexter, they were very good about vetting us, making sure we were the right home for him. As it turned out, right after that segment, I think about nine or ten people immediately contacted the rescue people and wanted to adopt him, so...we won! Yay! We won! And we didn't buy him either, it wasn't because we donated it.

Q. So how is his mobility now?

A. He's good. If he's running, he runs like a demon. He runs and keeps up with the other dogs, he's fine. Because that would happen, right? Anybody with a limp, if you're running -- if you're in that motion -- you're fine.

When he's walking with the other dogs who just want to go, go, go, he's really slow, behind and kind of waddles. He looks like an old man when he's doing it. But we're super-patient with him. This nice lady on the Danforth told me this, a couple of years ago. She was out with her big fat little pug -- you know, the ones that look like ticks? You know the ones I'm talking about? She's walking around with him -- a nice British lady -- she's walking around with him and he's really slow. And I go, "Wow, he's really slow." And she looked at me and she said, "You know, this is his walk. This isn't my walk. This is his walk."

And I started thinking about that, how people go out and walk their dogs. It's one thing to get your dog out for exercise -- I get it. But when your dog's going for a walk, it's for their enjoyment, right?

So, ever since then, when we go out with him, if he wants to take his time, it's fine. We don't have him keep up with the other two. The other two are kind of patient, they go "Okay, fine, fine, fine," and we get them to the off-leash park and they can go crazy.

So that's the story of little Tadpole.

And then, my wife Tanya, a couple of Christmases ago, completely blindsided me, On December 23rd 24th, she takes the boys for a checkup at the vets, and then she comes back, they run in the house and she has this little tiny Christmas stocking for me. She hands it to me and says "Be careful!" and I went "No..."

I had to reach inside and find her, because she was so little, in the palm of my hand and take her out. And she goes "This is your Christmas present." And so what am I supposed to say? No?

Guess whose dog it is now? Guess what happens when I say "My dog?" She goes, "It's not your dog, it's my dog."

Q. So what's the dog dynamic at your house? Are there strict rules about no furniture, or sleeping on the bed?

A. Excuse me?

Q. [Laughing]

A. Okay -- just for comfort -- we have a king size and a half just so that you can move without worrying about pushing one of the animals around. We have six animals. My cat sleeps on my head. [Tanya's] cat sleeps on her cheek. So unfortunately for anyone who thinks animals should be on the floor, that doesn't work around our household. They've got kind of free reign.

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