

COLE SWINDELL

CHILLIN' IT

"Cole moved to town 6 years ago with a goal in mind. He has earned it the old fashion way by writing and singing his a-- off. I couldn't be more fired up for what is happening to him with his new music. Get ready country music fans, this music is fun!"

- Luke Bryan

"Cole Swindell...is 'Chillin It' this Summer at Y100! WOW! Huge impact in just one week!"

- Jeff Garrison, KCYY/San Antonio

"I thought Cole was amazing in the conference room. Then I saw him on the big stage, full band. I need to invent the word up from amazing! Superb songs, STAR power! "

- Mike Kennedy, KBEQ/Kansas City

"We went straight into Medium out of the box! Cole is hot and all that is right and current with our format!"

- Phathead, WJVC/Long Island

"Cole Swindell has what it takes to be our next breakthrough star in country. This record is just what people want to hear!"

- Jonathan Wilde, KWOE/Denver

"'Chillin' It' is killin' It everywhere, but we were so impressed with the rest of the songs, that we are really all in on Cole!"

- Nate Deaton, KRTY/San Jose

"To understand why this is a hit, you need two things. Ears. Okay, even if one ear didn't work, you should still get it."

- Gregg Swedberg, KEEY/Minneapolis

"Cole represents everything that is great about our format. Great songwriter, great performer, great with fans and great for Country Radio!"

- Steve Stewart, KSD/St. Louis

"This may well be the absolute biggest hit of the second half of 2013. Remember this moment, this song and Cole Swindell. It's pretty awesome to see an exciting new artist flash a future that's gonna be very special!"

- Travis Moon, KAJA/San Antonio





ONSTAGE TO ON-AIR

Inside The Artist To Air Personality Transition

Terri Clark, Chuck Wicks, Sunny Sweeney and Lee Ann Womack had never done radio professionally, but each had exactly what Cumulus and Blair Garner were looking for when they developed *America's Morning Show* for WNSH/New York. And if getting an unproven artist into the groove for morning visits during a short radio tour is tough, imagine the adjustment to a full time wakeup gig. And in the nation's largest market, at that. Country Aircheck sat down with three of the four (Womack was on the road) to hear why they did it, what they bring to the table and what they think about waking up the Big Apple.

Country Aircheck: So let's get right down to it. Who's a morning person and who's not?

Terri Clark: I'm more of a morning person. Chuck isn't as much as Sunny and me are, but...

Chuck Wicks: I've become a morning person. I usually only get up this early to go deer hunting and now it's to talk on the radio. But I haven't missed a day.

TC: You're listener hunting.

CW: I've never been late.

Sunny Sweeney: But they both drink Red Bull and Redline, or whatever those drinks are.

So, we're already throwing back energy shooters?

TC: Just one. And a cup of coffee or two cups of coffee, depending on the day. When I have caffeine, I get extremely chatty.

SS: Time-wise, it's been a 180 for me, because I normally go to sleep at 2 or 3 in the morning. Now I'm getting up at 3 in the morning.

TC: I'm old. I go to sleep at 10 when I'm not doing gigs. I'm asleep by 10 most of the time.

SS: I've never gone to sleep before like midnight in my life. My body's still adjusting two months later to the time thing, but actually, the talking and functioning at 4 o'clock in the morning is easier than I thought it would be.

How were each of you approached about doing the show?

CW: For me, it started more than a year ago. Blair has just been talking to me saying, "Man, you're a lot of fun. If I ever do something, I want you to be a part of it." It just kept escalating and when this show came about, he was like, "Hey, I really want to talk to you. An opportunity came up that I think you'd be perfect for. I think we'd get along great." It was a big no-brainer for me because it's easy to do it with him off-air and on-air.

TC: This all came down in six weeks for me. I didn't really have a lot of time to think about it. My manager Clarence Spalding called and said there might be an opportunity at radio. John Dickey had told Kix Brooks they were putting together a morning show for New

York and that Blair had been looking for one more person. Kix told John he thought I would be great for it. I don't even know if John knew I already had a rapport with Blair, but I had known him for years from his *After MidNite* days. I got on the phone with Blair and we talked through it and it just sounded like something fun. I had been putting it out to God or the universe or whatever for the past few years that something would come along that was more multimedia-faceted that would give me a chance to branch out and expand my brand from what it is musically. So, this was really a great opportunity.

SS: I was at dinner with Blair one night and he said he had something he wanted to talk to me about and [told me about the show]. Then I went and told my manager and he and Blair did the whole business side of it. I just thought it sounded like a good way to, like Terri said, brand ourselves differently and still be able to continue doing what we're doing.

TC: Reba's been a master at that, you know? She has mastered the art of rebranding herself for years and years and years. She had a clothing line and her TV show and movies and yet, she always goes back to making records. She's still Reba, a country artist, at the end of the day. We're seeing an opportunity to grow and expand and do something like that on a smaller scale.

Did radio play a big part in your life growing up and did that make this opportunity that more appealing?

SS: We only had a few stations where I'm from in East Texas. There were a couple of Country stations and a Rock station. I wasn't allowed to listen to the Rock station, so I listened to Country, mostly KYKX/Longview. When I moved away from home, I was like "Oh my god, there's like a whole world out here! It's not just Country radio." So it's kind of cool, because I'm coming back full-circle to Country radio now.

TC: The AM station in my hometown of Medicine Hat was CHAT radio. That's how I learned about Reba, The Judds and [Ricky] Skaggs, who were current at the time. I absolutely began this love affair/obsession with the country music that was coming out of Nashville. Radio had a huge part in forming who I became as an artist, and on the radio eventually, too.

CW: What I knew about country music came from radio. Country radio was all we'd listen to on the farm

Onstage To On-Air



in Smyrna, DE. My dad got me into it. I used to imitate guys like Joe Diffie and Tracy Lawrence. Diamond Rio's early records were my absolute favorites. I heard it all because of the radio.

TC: I was on a first name basis with all the DJs on our local station because they'd hear my voice and go, "Is this Terri? Yes, we'll play Reba." I was probably 13-years-old. I used to babysit their kids! I actually played at the Legion with one of them who had a band on the side, and he helped get me started in my hometown in some talent contest. Ron Larson and The Westernaires. Ron Larson was his on-air name, but that's the group I played with. Jim Deuce was another. I looked after his kids who are now having kids of their own. And he lived right down the street. I actually went out on a date with one of the DJs a couple times when I got older. I was like 18 or 19.

SS: Eww, creeper!

TC: No, he was really, really young. He did nights. He was only two years older than me or something. We're still friends. But yeah, I've definitely got a radio fascination of some kind. But I never thought I'd end up on the radio doing something like this.

SS: Yeah, this was way out of left field.

CW: I didn't even know I was going to be a singer.

How do you view this job in relation to your music career? Are they similar or completely different animals?

TC: I'm looking at it like a completely separate thing. I didn't go into this expecting any kind of extra anything, musically. It's really a whole other entity.

CW: We treat this as a morning show. We're on a talk show that talks to New York City. We talk to the country music fan. We may be different from others in what we can bring to the table because of what we've experienced in music – that's unique. The days of being one-dimensional are over. There's more opportunity now than there's ever been for artists to branch out and do other things, such as being judges and being on reality television shows, or being on *Dancing With The Stars*.

What are each of your commitments to the show?

SS: We got hired and it was "artist-first" because that's what we are. So, they're being supportive in letting us play shows.

TC: We get vacation time like a real job and it is a real job. My commitment is three days a week on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Chuck and Sunny's is five days. It's a little easier for me to scoot out and do gigs than it is for Sunny and Chuck, but it's a commitment.

It's not flighty. We don't show up when we want to. You have to let them know what's going on. Everyone has to communicate about schedules, because the listeners become dependent on hearing a certain person on a certain day. Lee Ann Womack's commitment is for Fridays.

CW: [News anchor] Robin Meade is on-set at HLN and I'm not discouraging that job because she's also doing this job. There are so many people in America that have several jobs. My mom and dad both work two and three jobs, and they treat each job as a different identity because it is. We love this job, but when we leave, Sunny goes to write, I go to write, Terri goes to write. We're all weekend road warriors. We just have more than one job now.

TC: And all of our significant others are in other states, so trying to juggle all of that [is tough]. Sunny's from Austin and Chuck's fiancée is in a different state. The challenge is finding time to nurture a personal life, because we're trying to be artists and writers and gigging and now this.

SS: It's like four full-time jobs!

Each of you have known Blair for a while, but how well did you know each other before the show?

CW: Well I opened up for Terri Clark about three or four years ago and she totally didn't remember me.

TC: Yeah, whatever.

CW: She was like "Oh, you did? Where was it?" It was New Year's Eve at Sea World, but that's fine.

TC: Sea World?! The first time I met Chuck was at Tootsie's Orchard Lounge in 2007. I had a little too much to drink and I just couldn't take my hands off him, because he was so cute. I was just like, "You are so good looking," and his girlfriend was giving me the stink-eye the entire time. Then we lived in the same apartment building for about six months or so. I kept running into him in the elevator when I looked like crap, of course, because that's what happens. He would take his cute little dogs out to walk. And I had never met Sunny in my life. Blair introduced us sort of by osmosis. He would tell me a lot about her personality.

SS: Other people told me for years that [Terri] and I would get along. My biggest pet peeve is when people go, "Oh my god, you're so going to get along with her." And I'm like, "Probably not." But then we met. It was the first day, and it was like she was my sister.

TC: So, we've all formed a chemistry that's hard to come by, but very naturally and very quickly.

Do you spend a lot of time with each other off the air?

TC: We haven't yet.

CW: Sadly, we have group texting.

SS: We actually have emoticon texting. We usually don't even use words.

TC: We go our separate ways on weekends because that's when we're trying either to be artists or have a life. After we get off the air, it's just about trying to take care of stuff until you have to go to bed at 6pm.

Did you practice at all before going on the air for the first time, or did you just jump in the room and go for it?

TC: We did dry runs for three or four weeks.

CW: We started dry runs in the middle of the CMA Music Festival. We all told Blair, "Really?" That's when we're the busiest. But it actually got us pretty stoked and ready to go.

TC: And he had us in at 4:30! I mean there was *no* pretending. No mercy from Blair.

CW: I feel bad for the girls because I just throw on a hat, t-shirt and jeans.

TC: Thank you, Chuck.

SS: That's the first time you've expressed any sadness.

CW: I feel bad for Sunny and Terri, and Blair, too, because he puts on make-up. (Laughter) I mean, they have to get up and get ready!

TC: The way to do it is bring your make-up case with you. Give me 10 minutes before a camera is going to be on me and I'll go to the bathroom and put on my make-up while you're playing 8,000 Randy Houser songs.

And where does the feedback and direction for you on the show come from?

TC: Mike McVay listens and gives Blair some feedback, and then Blair shares what he feels is pertinent to the overall vibe of the show with us, whether it's what we can do better or to remember to not talk over one another.

CW: It comes from all different directions. Cumulus is really embracing this morning show, so it's coming from John Dickey, Mike McVay, people in the room and fans via Twitter and all the socials. We just take it all in and adjust to it. Blair made it very clear that we're a brand new morning show and that we're going to have our kinks to work out, but he reminds us that we're doing a great job and to keep on going. It's a very supportive surrounding.

Do you do aircheck sessions or critique yourselves?

TC: No. I can't stand the sound of my voice.

SS: I can't either.

TC: I can't stand the sound of her voice either, so I just don't listen to us. (Laughter) You know I'm kidding. Please put that in the right context.

SS: That's the funniest thing you've ever said. (Laughter)

CW: Do you notice that they're starting to laugh the same?

SS: She does a perfect imitation of my laugh and she does it so good that it scares me. Even my mom turned on the radio the other day and goes, "I honestly could not tell if that was her making fun of you or if it was you." She does it so well.

Have you listened to a lot of radio morning shows outside of the show?

TC: Before we got this show, I listened to a talk show on [Classic Rock KQRS/Minneapolis]. It's a Cumulus station [and the show] has four hosts - one female and three males. Tom Barnard is the name of the lead host. We are way cleaner than them. You would not believe what they get away with saying on that station. I just sit there with my mouth gaping open.

Is listening to other shows something you've been encouraged to do?

TC: No. I just naturally listened to it because I spend a lot of time there. I wanted to hear the dynamic and how they talk. We play a lot more music than them though. This is obviously more current country and mainstream stuff.

SS: I haven't listened intentionally because I figure Blair is the one to tell us what we're doing wrong and right because he's the radio guy. It's the same kind of thing as with my band. I don't tell them what to play, but I tell them I don't like that or change that or something. And then it becomes what I want. We do what Blair says to do.

Is there anything about doing the show that surprised you?

CW: I was surprised at the amount of prep that Blair has to do.

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COUNTRY
AIRCHECK

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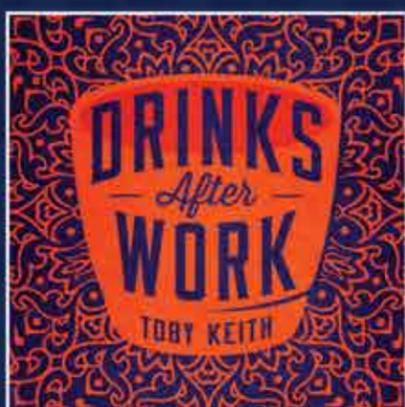
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Everyone Loves "Drinks After Work" With Toby Keith!



New music from Toby Keith in stores October 29!

Blair Breaks Down The Team

Next time you're out with a few of your best friends, take a moment to look around and imagine what it might be like to do a morning show with them. Scary thought? It certainly wasn't for Blair Garner. Laughing until it hurts, sibling-like rivalries and unbridled honesty is exactly the way he likes it.

It's like a dinner party. You have different people from different areas of your life that get along well with each other. That was the basic idea when we started talking about who we wanted to reach out to. We also wanted to make sure that everyone had their own opinion, their own point of view and that they were respectful of other people's opinions. I didn't want to be surrounded by a bunch of people that would just say yes and laugh at everything, because that's not authentic and that's not where radio is today. It's about communication and also entertainment.

We wanted authenticity and passion. These are guys who are in the thick of the country life group when they go out on weekends and who know what resonates with people who love this music. And they're passionate about it, just like the listeners.

Chuck Wicks is kind of the bouncy little 14-year-old brother that you can't keep seated. He kind of keeps needling the girls like, "Come on, I gotta make you laugh!" He's one of the funniest people that I've ever met, and thankfully that all



Blair Garner

translates on-air. We also make fun of the fact that he's the pretty boy. We learned that at our first station event. The girls just fall all over themselves when they see him and meet him. He's also a guy who is about to begin his life as a married man. It's all that with — and I say this lovingly — the goofiness that's just Chuck.

Terri Clark is the kind of person that everyone at a party tends to gravitate toward, because she's the ball of fire. Her enthusiasm and quick-witted, self-deprecating humor is infectious to the point that you find yourself laughing until your stomach hurts. Her filter setting is perhaps a little lower than other people's might be, but that's one of the things that provides color in the program, and I love the fact that she's so willing to go there. You can always tell when Terri's in the room, because she puts everyone in a good mood. She's my sister by another mother.

The same could be said of Sunny Sweeney. She's one of the most talented girls that I've ever known. She's this Texas girl with a clear voice and clear point-of-view who's never forgotten where she comes from and is extremely intuitive and she just says it the way that she feels it. Either they are that way or they're not.

Lee Ann Womack brings to the table an incredible amount of success, and life experience as a woman who has juggled motherhood and lots of other things that our target listeners are thinking about. She has done it all, from "I Hope You Dance" to singing the theme to *Berenstain Bears*. She's one of a kind; a class act, through and through.

So everyone brings different elements, but also passion and the authenticity. We're pulling back the curtain for our listeners and they're getting to see the inside world of what it really means to be a singer who's out on the road, who's putting music out and meeting the fans. You also wonder what these people are like in their private moments. You're lucky if you catch an interview with them on your local station, much less getting to spend every single day with them.

TC: Oh, he's up way before we are.

SS: He gets up at 1:30!

CW: Honestly, I think we have it easy because all we have to do is show up and be ourselves.

TC: We're the talking heads. Furbies! (Laughter)

CW: But Blair? That guy is a workaholic, man. We show up and we're under his stick, and he guides us well.

To what degree do you know what each show or segment will cover?

TC: He doesn't like to give away too much off the air, because he wants to get our responses to something and be authentic and genuine with it on the air. So,

important. If he came in and wasn't consistent, we wouldn't be consistent and the morning show would be all over the place. He's really the captain of everything.

How hard has it been to drop bad moods or to keep other parts of your life from interfering with your performance on the show?

TC: Today was my roughest day since the show started because I did shows in Seattle and Edmonton and flew back yesterday and didn't get home until last night. So the time change was tough. But when we walk in that room, we're entertaining people, a million people, and you have to really put it aside and power through it.

SS: If you say "no," then he just picks at you more, you know? So there's a natural chemistry with stuff like that that's forming already.

TC: I want to bring sexy back. (Laughter)

SS: But she forgot her receipt. (Laughter) That was a joke I put on Twitter. I said I was trying to bring sexy back, but I forgot the receipt. (Laughter)

What are the benefits of being new to the profession and at the same time, on such a high-profile show?

SS: I think it's a huge compliment since it's never been done with three artists.

TC: It makes it authentic, because we're not so trained to say a certain thing. We're more off-the-cuff because...

CW: We don't know any better.

TC: They just want us to bring ourselves to it. Blair wants us to be who we are on the air, I mean, within reason.

Onstage To On-Air

a lot of times, if somebody brings something up, he goes, "Wait, zip it! Save it for on-air," and we'll just stop talking about it.

Has anything surprised you about working with Blair?

TC: I'm not surprised, but I'm more pleasantly amazed at how good he is at what he does. I really admire people who are the best in their field and he really is. There's a reason he's going to be in the [National Radio] Hall of Fame.

CW: He's very consistent. He comes in with a good energy every morning, which rubs off on us and that's

SS: A million-point-two!

TC: It's four hours and you've got to leave it outside the room and come in and do your job. Then you can go home and bitch at somebody else on the phone or something, but you can't do it in there.

Do you see yourselves as filling any specific roles on the show?

SS: People have pinpointed Chuck as being sort of the "little brother." It's not myself and Terri making him do that, it's just the way he is with us.

CW: I'm naturally immature.

New York City, for many radio people, is the pinnacle.

Since you're new to it, do you truly understand how big a deal it is to be on the air there, and on the first big Country station there in so many years?

TC: Yeah, we do.

SS: We get it.

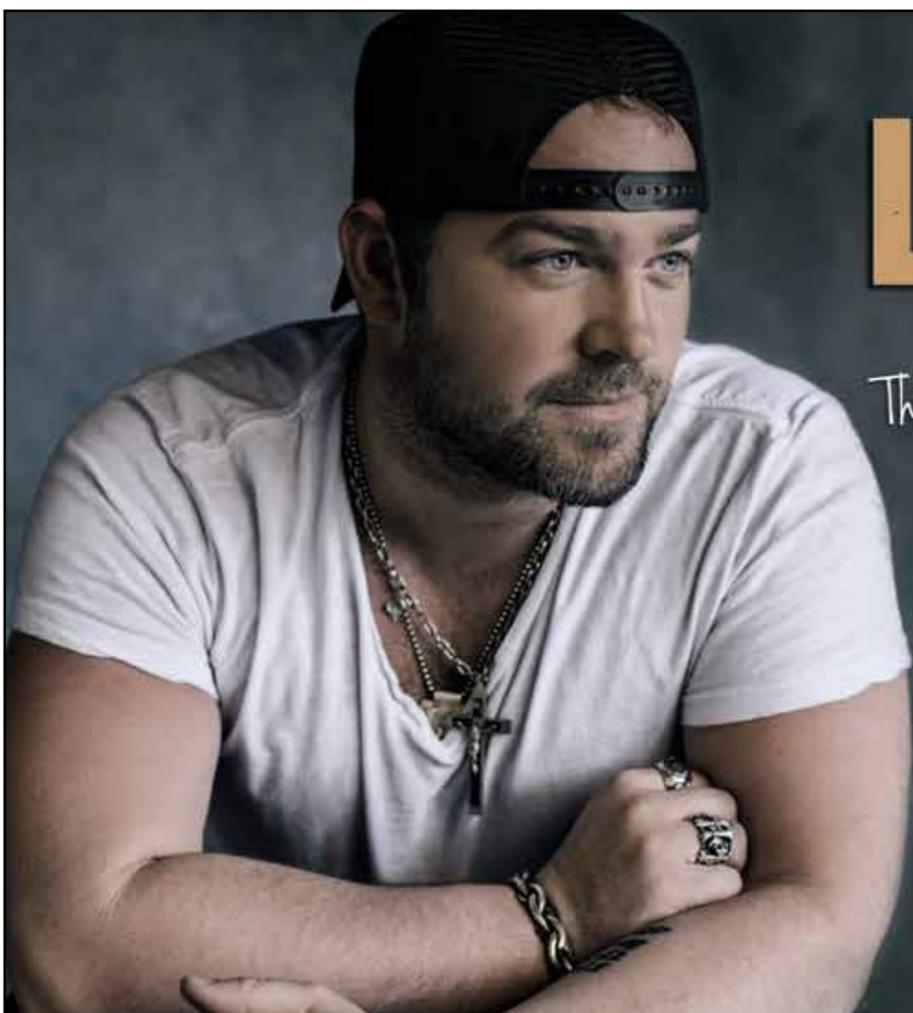
CW: We totally understand. Honestly, I think we would be cracking more under pressure if Blair wasn't here with us.

SS: He's holding the whole thing together like glue.

TC: It's the biggest media market in the world. So, if we can continue to represent country music in New York City as we are and as on-air personalities...

CW: That's pretty cool, man.

CAC



LEE BRICE

This summer has been one hell of a "Parking lot Party"!
Thanks Country Radio —
I couldn't do it without you!

HEADLINING
THE OTHERSIDE TOUR
THIS FALL!

Phoebe's daddy has big dreams for her.

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St. Jude patient Phoebe:
Daddy's Princess

But at this moment, she's fighting cancer.

That's why St. Jude Children's Research Hospital® spends every moment changing the way the world treats children - with pioneering research and exceptional care. And no family ever pays St. Jude for anything. Don't wait. Join St. Jude in finding cures and saving children like Phoebe. Because at this moment, she should be home enjoying story time, hugs from daddy and play dates in the park.

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