

# Erika's World

Dear Friends,



...sung to the tune of "Hello, Dolly!" ...

'Hello, **Viki**, well, Hello, **Viki**, it's so nice to have you back where you belong...'

And how true it is — who would have thought our fan club would be conducting another interview with Erika and discussing the return of Viki and One Life to Live! And yet that's exactly the way it was when I interviewed Erika on April 15th.

Erika was enthusiastic and seemed to be overjoyed returning to work after exactly 486 days later — but who of us is counting??!!

I'm thrilled to be back in the saddle once again, along with our wonderful team of AJ and Kit!

Hope you enjoy our chat!

Walter

**how to watch the shows** We are no longer tied to 2:00 pm EST or 1:00 pm PST to watch OLTL and we won't have to worry about setting up our VCR/DVR or the dreaded Breaking News interruptions. Shows will be available in the very early hours of each day beginning Monday, April 29th.

Method	Link	Cost	Notes
<b>hulu</b> USA	<a href="http://www.hulu.com/one-life-to-live">www.hulu.com/one-life-to-live</a>	free	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They do not keep the episodes indefinitely (i.e. 5 to 10 days worth)</li> <li>• Works on computer (Mac or PC) and Apple TV (through Air Play)</li> <li>• Doesn't work on iPad or iPhone</li> </ul>
<b>huluplus</b> USA	<a href="http://www.hulu.com/plus">www.hulu.com/plus</a>	\$7.99 a month subscription to view all <b>huluplus</b> content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Episodes are available to view for a long time</li> <li>• Works on computer (Mac or PC), Apple TV and Roku</li> <li>• Works on iPad and iPhone</li> <li>• Single subscription includes OLTL, AMC and all other shows <b>huluplus</b> offers</li> </ul>
<b>iTunes</b> USA	<a href="http://www.apple.com/itunes">www.apple.com/itunes</a>	.99 cents per episode charge or \$10.00 a month subscription per show	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to download iTunes onto your computer and setup an account</li> <li>• Works on iPad, iPhone, Mac, PC and Apple TV</li> <li>• Can help supplement the free viewing on <b>hulu</b> for missed episodes that have dropped off <b>hulu</b>.</li> </ul>

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Founded  
January, 1972

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Telephone Interview Conducted on April 15, 2013

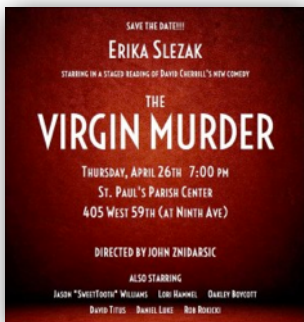
**In some interviews, you had mentioned that you hadn't watched the last week of episodes. Have you watched them yet?** Yes, I have. I had Tivo'd it, and I kept forgetting about it, but I didn't really want to watch it because it was the end. But when this new OLTL came up, I thought I had better have a look at it and see what happened.

**Did you enjoy them?** Yes, very much! Jill Mitwell won a Directors Guild Award for the whole series of Between Heaven and Hell, which was nice.

**That's wonderful!** Yes.

**Is Jill back on the show as a director?** Yes, she is. Thank goodness!!

**Did you enjoy spending the last 14 months tending to home responsibilities, and did you ever explore acting opportunities? Did it take time to get acclimated to not working?** Yes, it did — you know, I slept for a long time! It was nice because I got to sleep in every day! We stopped working in November and Christmas was coming up, so there was a great deal to be done, and I actually had the time to do it. And during the winter, I don't even know where the time went. I know that I never sat down for more than five minutes — I was very busy. And yes, I talked to my agent and he said, "Well, let's look around and see what is going on." But I wasn't really all that anxious to get started, but now I am, more than before.



**You mentioned you had done a reading for a show.** Yes. I did a favor for one of our scriptwriters from many years ago. He had written a play, and we did a reading in New York. We had a couple of days rehearsal and it was fun. It was a very small thing, just for his friends and backers.

**Did you go through sad times when the show ended?** I suppose so, but not terribly. You know, I'm very grateful for the 41 years that I had there. And in a way, I was tired. So, I was glad to be home. I know I was sad that the show was gone, because the people really missed it. People would stop me on the street and they'd be really sad, and not know what to do. They missed the show

and they were not happy with the replacements — which is not a surprise. But, no, I wasn't overwhelmed with sadness.

**The fans were — it was hard.** I know. It was very hard. But you know, I was at the other end of it, and I had worked for all of those years, and I am grateful for that time. As an actor, to have a job for 41 years is a miracle!

**Are there any highlights over the last 14 months? Did you take any trips? Did you spend any time in Vermont?** Yes, we spent a lot of time in Vermont. We went to Little Dix Bay this year in February, and we went last year as well — very nice trips.

## a viki moment to remember



*A brand new day of another...Life to Live*

**What was your family's reaction to the news about the reboot?** They were pleased about it. They were happy to get me out of the house!

**I assume they called your agent and then he called you?** No, they called me directly and then I turned it over to my agent.

**What was your initial reaction to the new OLTL, and what helped you make the decision to be part of it?** I

was pleased for them, I really was. Given the way the whole thing ended last year, I thought, "Well, this may or may not happen." I think all of us at One Life felt that way. They said, "Yes, we have the money, we're going back," and we thought, "Well, yes, that is what they said last year." So, I think when they had a producer, writers and scripts — that's when we all started to believe it.

**It's been announced that Susie Bedsow Horgan, one of the head writers, has left the show. With Susie leaving the show will that have an impact on the show?** No, because she was very involved with "long story," and her writing partner, Thom Racina, is staying on. Susie quit because she said it was too much work. It was 24/7-work and she obviously wishes the show very well, but she felt it was too much for her. I think it was the right decision on her part, but she left the show in very capable hands. Thom and the other writers have been working closely together and the show will continue.

**What is your opinion of Thom's work, and have you read any of his novels?** No, I actually haven't. I know Thom has been involved in Daytime — many years ago on General Hospital.

Did you ever dream that you would be a pioneer in this new internet-soap genre? No. I never did!

Being away from the show for fourteen months, did you have any hesitation to joining the show? For instance, was it difficult getting into the rhythm of memorizing lines and the long work days? No, it was not at all.

Did you anticipate thinking, “Oh, my God, can I do this again?” Yes, I did and then I thought, “Yes, I can do this — I did it for a long time.” I don’t think there was a problem for anyone, and we fell into it as if we had never been away.

Just like a long weekend away. Yes.

What is the language that Prospect Park is using to refer to the new OLTL...reboot? 2.0? Revival? OLTL Online? What is the official terminology that PP uses? I have no idea.

How is working for Prospect Park executives (Rich Frank and Jeff Kwatinetz) different from ABC executives? They are very, very present. They are there most of the time, making sure that everything is to their satisfaction, which is very good. They don’t just turn it over to somebody and go away. They’re very hands on, which is excellent.

We understand that OLTL shoots episodes for five weeks and then is OFF for five weeks. Does this schedule appeal to you? Very much so! Actually we just finished four weeks this first time around. Children shot for two weeks, then we shot for four weeks, now Children starts up again and we are off for five weeks.

Previously on ABC, your production schedule allowed you to stay six weeks ahead of the air date. How far ahead will you be with this new production? I have no idea because right now we’ve been just shooting segments. I know that they have 20 shows in the can, but I have no idea how far they intend to be ahead in the future.

When a show is online, like OLTL and AMC, can these shows and actors be considered for Emmy awards? That, I do not know. I think I heard somebody say yes, but I don’t know.

I guess The Academy makes that decision, right? Yes.

Because the episodes will not air on Fridays, how many episodes of OLTL will Prospect Park produce per year? What I had originally heard was that we were going to be on the air for 42 weeks. I don’t know if that is still the plan. There is a lot of stuff that has not been firmed up for us. I’m sure they know it, but they have not told us.

Do you think there will be crossovers between AMC and OLTL? No. I don’t think that is anticipated.

Is Viki in the very first scene of the new OLTL? Yes, she is.

We’re all hoping that OLTL will be produced next year and in years to come. Has Prospect Park made any firm commitment? Not that I’m aware of but I’m quite convinced that they have every hope of continuing. My guess is that that will depend on how this first season goes.

Is there any chance that OLTL will be rebroadcast on SoapNet or another cable network? Not yet. I don’t know. (Editor’s Note: It was just announced that FX Canada will broadcast the show for Canadian viewers.)

You haven’t done a 30-minute show in years. Given how Prospect Park is producing it (especially if you’re not producing a complete episode everyday), do you notice the difference? As I said, no it is hard to tell because we haven’t been shooting whole shows yet. We’ve shot segments and that was because in the beginning not all of the sets were ready and up yet. So we had to just shoot a lot of stuff in the hospital, in the coffee shop, and various other sets — the Lord Library, Dorian’s house, and sets that were available to us. And eventually they will put it all together and we’ll have 20 shows. But so far there is no difference.

Now, are all of the sets complete or are they still building them? That I don’t know. I know what we shot in four weeks and those are finished. I’m sure there will be more sets as time goes by.

What does Prospect Park actually own of One Life? Do they have access to all OLTL episodes if they choose to show flashbacks of a prior story? I have no idea. I know that they have put out a trailer, which I narrated, but I don’t know whether they own the old shows. They licensed it from ABC for a time for new production, but I don’t know if that includes any old ones.

So, basically, ABC still owns the shows, they have just licensed them to Prospect Park. Yes, they have licensed it to Prospect Park.

How hands on is Agnes Nixon, and has she been on the set? I haven’t seen Agnes since the photo shoot. And I don’t think she is going to come to the set, as there is no need — she’s consulting from her office or desk. I’m sure she reads the scripts and makes notes on them.

Have you heard the new opening that Snoop Lion (FKA Snoop Dogg) has recorded for the show? I heard a bit of it. He’s not singing it — Iza Lach recorded it. We did an opening to it, but I only heard little bits and pieces of it. It’s very contemporary.

Are you happy that Roger Howarth will continue to play Todd? Yes, very much so.



He'll be doing double duty with two roles — one on *General Hospital* and one on *OLTL*. Yes, I'm not sure how that all works out, but I'm very happy, because I worked with him a lot this time and it was wonderful.

When you're on TV, you have advertisers that pay for commercial time, and that pays for production costs. What is the business model for this new *OLTL*? Who pays for the production costs? How will PP know if it is making a profit? They have advertisers, and because we are being aired on Hulu, Hulu has a whole network of advertisers set up, but they are in charge of that.

So, your paycheck comes from Prospect Park, but Prospect Park is making their money through the advertisers. Is that how those things work? I guess. I know that they have backers as well.

Some fans are concerned that the show will become youth-centric. Does it seem that the writers are targeting the young fans and only the young fans? No, the writers are trying to divide it among the three age groups — the older, the middle, and the young. And I think they are trying to divide it equally right now, which is good, because we need new audiences.

Will the studio be dark at any time during the year, or does that change because of the five weeks ON and five weeks OFF schedule? I do not have a clue.

Under *Prospect Park* and with new writers, has the character of Viki changed at all, and has being away from the character for an extended period of time changed how you portray her? No. Viki has not changed — she is still the same person. The dialog is a little more conversational, which is actually very nice.

Are there any former characters that you would like to see included in the new *OLTL* that haven't been yet? Oh yes, I'd love to have my sons back (Kevin and Joey), and I would love to see a lot of the former characters, who are not there right now, come back, because I think that made the whole show so much richer.

I would love for Roxy to be part of this. Yes, very much so. But we'll have to wait and see. I think they want to get it up and running first, and then expand.

And I'm sure the 30-minute format plays into that because there is less airtime. Yes.

Tell us about your first day back at the studio — how was that? It was exactly as if we were at ABC. You show up, you go to rehearsal, you get in hair and makeup, you go onto the studio floor and you tape your scenes. There was really no difference. We rehearsed. Gary Donatelli was the director on the first day, which was great. Jill was the next day.

Really nothing has changed because for us, it is the same — you are on the set, in a costume with props and stage managers, cameramen, carpenters, and crew. The only difference is how this is being aired. We still have cameras, and as far as I'm concerned, they look exactly the same, but obviously they are not, as it is all digital now.



*Erika on the set at the new studio*

So the schedule is the same with blocking and rehearsals. Yes. They do shoot in blocks of sets.

Do actors receive full scripts of an episode to study, or do you simply receive the pages that pertain to your character's lines? You can have either one. You can get the full script, the shooting script or just your scenes. Whatever you choose.

What do you usually use? I like to see the full script and my shooting script. They are very good about getting that to us.

You have said in the past that you used to enjoy the benefit of having your scenes shot first so that you could be the first to leave the studio after taping. Do you still enjoy that benefit? I do not have that benefit. No, it's too difficult to do that for them.

Do you tape scenes set by set that will air over a number of days, or are you taping whole episodes one at a time? Set by set that will air over a number of days.

Is the viewer going to notice scaled-down sets from what we're used to seeing on *OLTL*? No not at all. The studio is huge and they are building sets that are exactly the same dimensions, just the decor is a little updated, I guess.

Llanfair looks very similar. Did they use blueprints to recreate it? Yes, as much as they could. I don't know that they had blueprints but they certainly knew what the sets looked like. Tim, our set designer, did a beautiful job. The set is almost identical but not quite. There are certain things that are a little different, but you still come in on the left side

and garden is off to the right. We have bookcases and a fireplace, sofa and chairs. All of that is pretty much the same — it looks updated.

**By the little clip they showed, I was amazed at how similar it looked – it's amazing!** Yes, the sets are such that when you look at it the first time you say, "Oh, this is the Lord Library." But then you notice little differences.

**Who is the new set designer?** Tim Goodmanson.

**When you were on ABC, you taped almost the entire year. In that format, you typically took the month of August and other times as vacation, and depending upon pre-tapes, you may not have been seen for an extended period of time. With this five weeks ON and five weeks OFF schedule, will there be scheduled vacations during the five weeks of taping?** No, not for me anyway. I don't need a vacation if I am only working for 5 weeks.

**Do you share a dressing room with anyone?** I do not.

**Have you started to receive fan mail at the new studio yet?** Yes from a couple of people. Christina, Shau and Tina were a few of the first.

**For years, you had a long commute into work. How is it now? And how is the commute going for the other actors who live outside CT?** You'd have to ask them. But for me it is easy! It is about 20 minutes away, and I still get there early because I like that. I have all kinds of ways. The actors that are coming in from California are put up in a hotel nearby, and people in New York either have the option to take the train, and there is a shuttle that picks them up at the Stamford Station, or they drive themselves, or they can take a van that meets at Grand Central and takes them to the studio. So, there are all kinds of ways to get there, and they are all fairly easy. The train from Grand Central to Stamford is less than 45 minutes, so it's really not bad.

**What time does your day typically start, and what time are you usually out of the studio?** That has been different every night, but they are scheduled to go from 8 am to 8 pm. Sometimes they have to run a little over.

**Will you, Erika, become more involved in the social media aspect of the show? For example, will you tweet, use Facebook, etc?** No.

**Are you going to have a watch party on the 29<sup>th</sup>?** Not that I am aware of.

**Recently, you were quoted as saying that the scripts are an easier conversation, and that they can move more quickly. Can you elaborate, and what is your perspective around how**



*Updated Lord Library*

**the writers are writing for Viki?** I think they are being very true to who she is. The language is a little looser, that's all. It's hard to describe or say exactly what the difference is. It's just a little more conversational.

**And being more conversational makes a huge difference?** Well, yes and no. Viki is not a "conversationalist" kind of person. Viki speaks in a very distinct way. She's a journalist and her English is very good, but what they have written for me so far has been lovely. So that's all very right.

**Looking at some of the previews, the show looks a bit racier.** That it is.

**Is there any oversight or censorship at all for the show?** Yes. It is Prospect Park's own sense of good taste in what you can and cannot do or say. However, no we do not have any network censors looking over our shoulders. But, yes, there have been a couple of instances where they have said, "Don't do that – don't say that."

**Do you think there will be nudity and cursing?** Well, only if it is appropriate. Nudity, I have no idea about – certainly not on my set! But, cursing – you know how people talk – they say, "Oh to hell with it or damn it," and that's there, yes. But I don't think it is excessive, and I think that what they have written so far is character driven.

**What crew members were you excited to see return?** Oh, a lot of our camera guys! It was very nice. It was also very nice to see our technical directors and our stage managers, because it makes you feel very comfortable.

**Are you happy that Viki is back at the Banner?** Yes, absolutely!

**With a 30-minute show, how many minutes of an actual episode will a viewer be watching?** I think it is 25 minutes.

**How will you be watching the show? On your iPad, TV, computer?** Well, if Michael is home, then I will watch it on the television – otherwise it will be on the computer.

With the schedule, can you realistically entertain other acting opportunities, or is that difficult in case you are obligated (locked in) to the five weeks on five weeks off schedule? I'm obligated to Prospect Park only for times they have scheduled me to shoot — the five-week blocks. The rest of the time I can do whatever I want.

**So that is ideal for an actor.** Sure. I can't be on another Daytime show, that's all.



*Erika and Corbin*

**Corbin Bleu (Jeffrey King)** had very nice comments to say about you in the current issue of Soap Opera Digest, "...but Erika has really been such a rock...I have nothing but incredible things to say and I told her that. I said, 'Thank you so much for making it so easy for me to just gush about you.' She is so "on" all of the time and whenever I am in a scene with her, it makes my job as an actor so easy because she's just freaking incredible! And then off the set she knows everybody's name — she makes everybody feel comfortable. She has such poise and she is so commanding when she walks and yet she is so peaceful and kind. It is so incredible to watch her and to study. I definitely feel like I'm learning a lot from her." That was very nice of him to say, very sweet.

**What is it like working with him?** He's just a lovely, lovely man. He's a good actor and he is a gentleman, and he works hard. You know, he's just awesome!

Is there any living person in show business that you admire, that you have not met, that you would cross the street and enjoy meeting. I am not comfortable approaching strangers. There are a number of people that I admire, who I think are just lovely actors.

To sum up this interview, and with the first weeks of production just about wrapped, what is your overall impression of the new OLTL? I think it is going to be terrific — absolutely terrific! I have yet to see a full show, and I'm looking forward to seeing that. But I've seen how hard they are working to put this together, to make it as perfect as they can. And I admire that, and I applaud them, and I'm saying, "Good Luck! Let's make this work!" And I think it will.

I believe it will as well.



*Ready to get the show started!*

## Thursday, April 25th

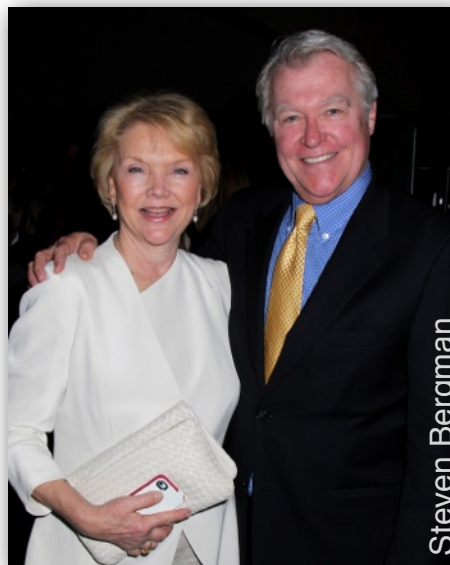
Erika will appear on The View, along with All My Children's Thorsten Kaye and Vincent Irizarry. Check local listings for the viewing time in your area.

## At the Premiere Party Tuesday, April 23rd

Prospect Park hosted an All My Children and One Life To Live premiere party at the Jack H. Skirball Center For The Performing Arts in Manhattan.

We had a chance to talk to Erika and of the premiere of the shows she said, "I was very impressed. I think the audiences will love what has been done. There's a little bit of everything in the first show, which is great!"

Thank you to Steven Bergman for the pictures!



*Erika with Jerry VerDorn*



*Erika with Jeff Kwatinetz*