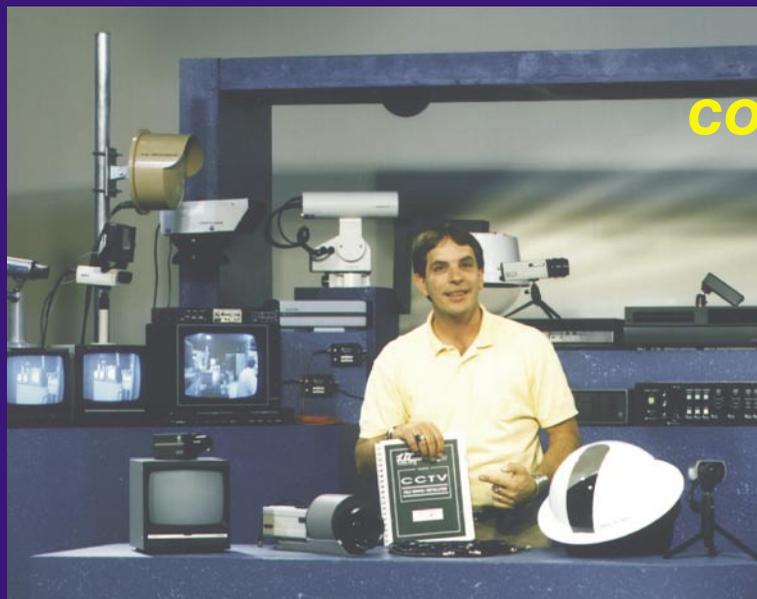


**BIOGRAPHY****Charlie Pierce and his LTC Training Centre  
and LRC Electronics  
companies**

A CCTV authority, trainer and owner of a professional CCTV repair centre. This is Charlie Pierce. Known not only to the US industry but also to the global CCTV village. He likes to entertain, but also educate. He likes to warn you, but also teach you. He is an icon of the American CCTV industry, but also recognised outside of his country. We caught up with him and conducted this interview to see what makes Charlie Pierce the man that everybody knows.

Vlado: Hello Charlie, and thank you for accepting this interview. I have heard a lot about you and your personality before I had a chance to meet you for the first time in Sydney, several years ago, but only after meeting you last year at the ISC show in New York, at the launch of our magazine, I realised how known and popular you are in the US. Not only do people know you, but, it is nice to see, respect you a lot. This certainly hasn't come from above (although I know you do trust in God), but, I am sure, you have worked hard to earn this status.

How and when did you start your CCTV career?

Charlie: I was first introduced to CCTV at Per Mar Security in

Davenport Iowa as an installer in 1977. Nobody else in the company wanted to mess with it so I jumped on and have gone from there.

Vlado: I know that you are running your LTC Training Centre, as a CCTV trainer, but you also have a service business, the LRC Electronics Company dedicated to repairing CCTV products. Are they two separate companies and which one was started first?

Charlie: LRC Electronics Company was founded in 1984 as a repair point for CCTV equipment. I fell into the training about two years later when a customer asked me if I could spend some time with one of his installers. Back then, the only

training available was product specific at board level repair. So learning something about what to expect in the field was practically impossible. Word got out and I found that I was spending too much time working one on one with people, so I founded LTC Training Centre and started giving full fledge seminars. Since there was no such thing as handout material, I wrote my own. That led to the books. Eventually, I was travelling quite a bit and wanted to slow it down so I made two sets of video training tapes in 1991. Today, our tapes, books and seminars are distributed and given out in 50 countries.

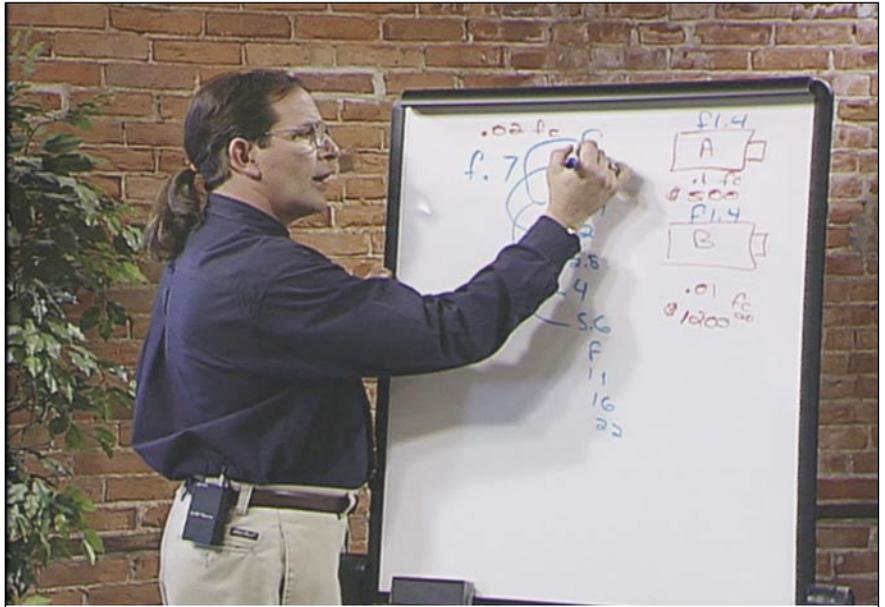
Vlado: This is definitely worth congratulating

you on. How large is your company today and what geographical areas do you cover?

Charlie: LRC Electronics is 48 employees strong and is headquartered in Davenport, Iowa. We have full service branches in Denver Colorado, Van Nuys California, Houston Texas, and Littleton New Hampshire. If all goes according to schedule, we will be opening a new branch up in Orlando Florida in January of 2001. Consequently, we cover the entire United States for repairs. LTC Training Centre is also headquartered in Davenport, Iowa. I perform about 20 - 30 live seminars world wide each year.

Vlado: Your LRC Electronics is one of the very few, if not the only company in the world that specialises in CCTV equipment repairs. What type of equipment can LRC repair and why would the customers come to you rather than the original manufacturers or suppliers?

Charlie: Actually, there are sev-



Charlie Pierce at one of his many CCTV seminars

eral "Independent CCTV service points" throughout the world. In the United States I can name

equipment we repair, you name it, we fix it ... that is, as long as it is related to CCTV. I don't work

on consumer stuff because consumers tend to expect ten times more than what they are willing to pay for. People like to come to us because we are a

Do the best that you can with what you have. Read, investigate, listen and learn. Keep the integrity of our industry high by learning to say no to invasive applications. And last but not least by any means ... BUYER BEWARE!

ten. We stand out because we are the only one with multiple branches and we do more volume than any other five centers combined. As for what type of

one stop point of repair. We represent 17 different manufacturers for warranty repairs and another 10 or so for non warranty work. The average service center represents two to five manufacturers. Consequently our customers don't have to go to two or more places to have all of their equipment repaired. We also offer a full one year "Factory Equivalent" warranty on all equipment that we repair. No one else, that I am aware of, goes beyond 120 days and then they only warranty the work that they have done. We also have a reputation for standing behind our work. If we mess



The LRC Electronics centre at Davenport, Iowa

up, and we do from time to time, we go out of our way to make it right by our customer and more importantly, their customer. We also offer a whole lot of free support for our customers. Questions about equipment, installation, trouble shooting and such. Stuff that they can't find the answers to anywhere else. Bottom line, we work to be the best at what we do.

Vlado: Are you, and if you are, how much are you personally involved in the business of LRC, in terms of fault finding on some specialised equipment?

Charlie: In the beginning I did all of the technical repair work. However reality sets in after a while and I had to hire better qualified technicians to do the bulk work. My job has evolved into being the idea man. I think up the new programs, design and then implement them. Things like our one year warranty. I have an incredibly qualified staff of managers, technicians and customer service personnel that work very hard to make everything right. If there is a problem with a specific customer or a complaint or a new product line to



A technician at LRC servicing a VCR machine

review, I am very hands on and will be the ultimate final point of handling. I like talking with my customers and I like to think that they like to talk back.

Vlado: Most of the people that know you, usually know you from one of your seminars that they have been to. How many people have gone through your CCTV training programs and in how many countries?

Charlie: We recently completed re-shooting both of our certification video training pro-

grams. As part of the process, we had to sit down and do this very calculation. Overall between the seminars at shows, seminars for manufacturers, books, video training programs, we estimated that in excess of 250,000 individuals have been trained by our programs over the last ten years. This is a rough guess, but

it expands over fifty countries. The pleasure of being the only one doing what I do (up until about five years ago) is that there was a huge demand and nowhere else to go.

Vlado: Is there any particular seminar that you will remember by its attendees or perhaps the questions being asked at the training?

Charlie: Actually, there are several. Not so much for the questions. These tend to be pretty much generic no matter where I go. I remember seminars because of the people. Africa plays the most games and jokes on me and seems to have the most fun. India and the Eastern shelf in general tend to be the most gracious and appreciative of the distance that I trav-



The LRC Electronics centre

elled on their behalf. Australia, just a great group of guys and gals. South and Central America and Mexico tend to work very hard to show me the sights, the real sights of their countries. Europe is laid back. I have the most trouble not standing out in these countries because of my obvious American tastes in clothes and food (Ice Tea and blue jeans). Canada and America call me son and welcome me home always. This is a question that I am asked often and have the hardest time with. I love what I do because I get to see the world and meet the people. I find that it is almost impossible to pick my favourite memory but I do have a large pack to choose from.

Vlado: As we all know, the CCTV industry does not have any binding standards on various equipment communications and control formats yet. What is your opinion on standardisation of formats and protocols in CCTV?

Charlie: BUYER BEWARE. This is a phrase that I coined a few years ago and just keep repeating. Without standards for formats and protocols, we will never be comfortable purchasing tomorrow's "Pierce Arrow". It worries me that we can grow so

fast and adapt new technology untested and untried so easily. I worry because I feel that in the end, there will be a whole lot of people spending a whole lot of money to redo what they tried to do right the first time. As long as we are bragging about our advanced technology, we are blowing smoke without proper standards.

Vlado: I am in favour of such opinion and hope that our magazine can slowly become a reference platform

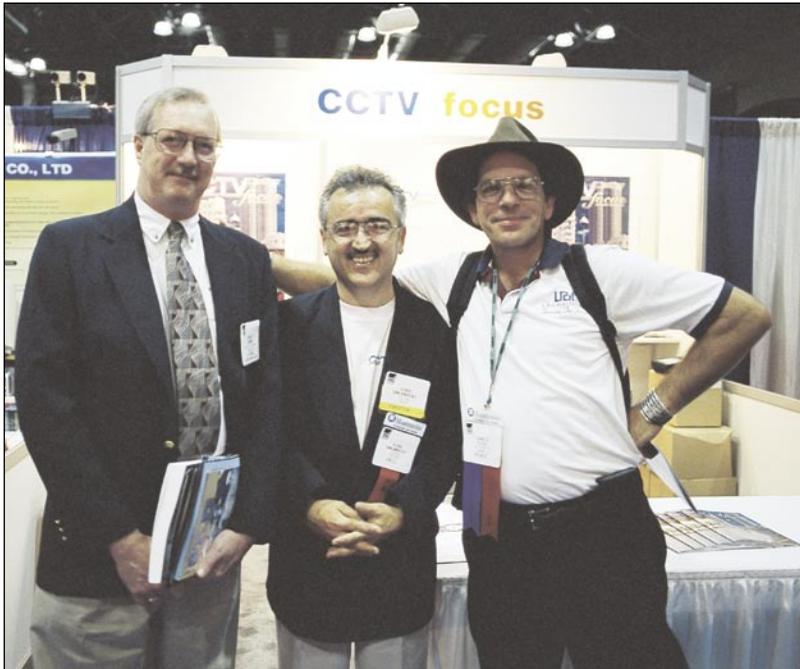
in today's world, educating the CCTV industry?

Charlie: This is the easiest question that you have asked. I am dyslexic. I spent almost half of my life reading at a fifth grade level. The second half of my life, I have spent in the pursuit of faster, better, easier points of investigation and information. I learned a long time ago that a truly wise man doesn't know all of the answers but rather where to find the answers when the questions are asked. I write

for all of the magazines and such because I like to put things into perspective. Speaking in technical terms is OK if you have a degree... speaking in layman terms is better because you have a larger audience. I like and support the various magazines (such as this one), books, and websites because they open up the future to anyone and everyone that is willing to take the time to

learn. None of this was available twenty six or seven years ago when I and several others needed the help. We had to rely on our wits and each other. Today, we have open forums for information established by pioneers such as yourself.

Vlado: Thank you for that "plug." In your opinion, which area of CCTV seems most



Bob Wimmer, the Editor and Charlie Pierce at the launch of "CCTV focus" at the ISC Show New York, August 1999

for implementing such ideas. You have produced quite a few books and videos on CCTV, as you just said earlier. You are a regular contributor to our and many other magazines. I don't want this question to seem like asking for promotion or advertising, but I am sincerely interested in how you see the role of books, magazines and web sites

## Company biography

confusing for the new-comers to CCTV and why?

Charlie: The equipment in general is the most confusing. Its been that way for the past forty years and it's only getting worse. This is because new comers and old timers alike are thrown at the equipment by all of the manufacturers. Each one claiming that they have all the answers and the best equipment around. What really hurts is that none of it is necessary.

If the old timers would teach the newcomers that the application drives the equipment, all confusion is gone. The problem is that the old timers never learned it themselves and so the generation theory falls into place. If my grandfather

ploughed the field from right to left, then so does his son and his grandson. Not realizing that the reason for the direction had to do with wind and erosion, they just plough it the same old way with bigger, better equipment.

Vlado: A very interesting analogy indeed. I am sure you have seen a lot of CCTV systems around the world. What was the most impressive system you have seen, where and why?

Charlie: This would depend upon the field. Casinos, campus style, government, industrial, etc.

The most impressive system that I have ever seen was two cameras mounted to a specialized lens designed to project the image of a person's retinas and optics nerve on a single screen side by side. Two reasons this was the most impressive. One, because I was directly involved with its design and operation twenty years ago. Two because it was instrumental in saving my 17 year old son's right eye five

lution downloading via Internet or satellite. I don't think that in another five years, you will need to see the camera on your computer or phone. I think that you will have a small, clear bubble on the monitor frame, telephone, or television and everything is imagination from there.

Vlado: Is there any advise you want to give to the younger members of our industry, or perhaps, even to the more experienced ones?

Charlie: Do the best that you can with what you have. Read, investigate, listen and learn. Keep the integrity of our industry high by learning to say no to invasive applications. And last but not least by any means ... BUYER



years ago. God really does work in mysterious ways.

Vlado: Amazing detail I was not aware of. One, perhaps, very typical question we ask - where do you see the future of CCTV going? What are the advancements you wish to see?

Charlie: Actually an easy prediction. For one thing, we are within five years of totally digital systems. This seems obvious but the implications are huge. No more coaxial cable. Signal scrambling over wireless transmissions. Immediate, high reso-

BEWARE!

Vlado: Charlie, thank you very much for your time and this interview, and also for the support you have been continually giving to "CCTV focus." We sincerely appreciate it. All the best to you and your companies and, as always, we are looking forward to reading some more articles from you in the near future. •