Can your relationship outlast a Corey Holcomb comedy show? If so, bring your date to the Improv this weekend!

By FELICIA C. HANEY and BAKARI SIMPSON

“Ask me anything. Don’t be shy, ‘cause I aint,” were the words of comedy’s hottest up-and-coming star Corey Holcomb to kick off a candid Call & Post interview recently as a prequel to his upcoming performance at the Improv Comedy Club and Restaurant, 1148 Main Ave., on the West Bank of the Flats this Thursday thru Sunday. In a doubles match of Corey and his larger-than-life personality vs. CP2 reporters Felicia C. Haney and Bakari Simpson, he won us over with love for his craft, honesty in relationship faults, how he’s taking advantage of the breaks he’s been given and throwing the deuces to life as a Hollywood comic.

We’re glad to hear you say “ask me anything” ‘cause in interviewing comedians we’ve found that some of them are jerks in real life. Just not cool people. And we’d even venture to say a**holes.

You gotta understand with this comedy game there are a lot of perpetrators that find their way into positions where they’ve gotten a little notoriety. They're not really comedians. Most of these guys are hacks; they watch the real comedians and they know how to imitate what they see. They’re really insecure people, so when you ask them certain questions they’re really on the spot. That’s what it is. You puttin’ mutha fuckas on the spot. It’s a very insecure business. It’s rare that you’re going to find people in the entertainment business that are, what I would say, “regular.” They’ve got issues. I’ve got respect for any comic that does their own act. A lot of guys don’t do their act; they do somebody else’s act.

So in your own words, what makes a real comedian?

Somebody who is like… I call 'em trendsetters, people who actually bring something to the game. The personality of an original comedian that I respect is when you go see them, it's not a variation of what somebody else do. That's my main problem with the entertainment business. You're out here in the riff raffs until you start to excel with your notoriety. Red Foxx had that problem back in the day. It's in his book. A lot of those guys would watch him and then hit the road doing his act. That was demoralizing to him. And that still goes on today, but worse. Back in the day there wasn't as many television channels so people would actually search for talent. Now they don't actually search for talent, they're just looking for stuff to fill the networks because there are so many. So people who don't actually have talent get an opportunity to make it to television.

When do you earn your stripes as a comedian? Is there a year mark?

I think you earn your stripes as a comedian when you hit the stage and you are really bold enough to be you. There's a lot of comedians in the world. The only thing that distinguishes you from the pack are your own experiences. Once you are bold enough to talk about your own experiences, in my opinion, you graduate. And I don't know how long that takes a comedian to realize. Richard Pryor was bold enough to say he did cocaine. And if you notice, a lot of these comedians go on stage and they claim weed… [laughs] that's because they're ashamed to say they do cocaine. Just admit it and you'd have a whole new hour's worth of material!

Any jokes you just won't do?

Even though I'm bold, I stay away from gay jokes because gay people have a lot of power. And, when you make a joke about them – some of them, not all of them – some of them are insecure, take it very seriously and try to do things to derail your career. I stay away from politics for the

most part because politics split the room more than gay jokes. People are very passionate about their politics. I do a lot of male/female jokes and even though I say things that some women may not agree with, they still laugh. Because in my opinion if you are a realistic person, my jokes are funny anyway.

In your last stand-up you were kinda going at the females hard. Have you had any backlash for going at the ladies whether they want to hear it or not?

There's always somebody that tries to take it too far, trying to make you be who they want you to be instead of who you are. I get just as many females who like me and come to my shows as I do men. Confident women… I think they're fans of mine.

As far as the male/female dynamic and dealing with relationships, you pretty much own that, hands down. Is that something that just developed over time in your comedy? If so, how did that develop? Was it from being in a lot of relationships?

I haven't necessarily dealt with a lot of relationships, but I have dealt with a lot of women. And especially as I've gotten older I've learned that some women don't want to deal with the truth and some women just don't want to deal with your truth. I had a girl back in the day and I told her "hey, I got a woman. I just wanna mess with you on the side. I'll take you to Red Lobster every once in a while." So she was like "naw, I aint doing that. That aint good enough…" and all that. Then there was this dude who played in the NBA – I aint gone call his name out – he was married, but she was *his* side girl. Needless to say, I was very jealous that she wouldn't be my side girl because I can't do all the stuff he do. But at least I was gone take you to Red Lobster. My side girl benefits just didn't cut the mustard for her. And I would say that's the circumstance with most females in this country. A female may not be your side broad, but there is a situation

out there where she will be somebody else's side broad.

I say this to men though: It is your job to be able to find a woman that is worthy of being able to be on your arm and really got your back and loves you. If you don't know how to find that, you will always be in bad situations with ladies in this world. It's not all the woman's fault. I know dudes who go to jail and the biggest fear they have about going to jail is who's going to be f*cking with their girl. Wow, you're worried about that going to jail? And the reason you're worried about it is because you know your girl is a whore!

We heard you giving relationship advice on the "Rickey Smiley Morning Show" so that must make you an expert. Is that something you'll be doing on a regular basis?

I'm on there sporadically. I'm a little edgy for Rickey's show and he let's me be edgy but he doesn't really have the audience for that. He has a lot of church folk listening to his show. He's a friend of mine that's trying to help me get into the radio world where I have a syndicated radio show that is on one of the FM stations. Rickey Smiley gave me my first road gig. He continues to help me out and I appreciate him for that.

Are you still doing the Foxxhole Radio show?

I still do the 5150 show over there, but they're having issues that I hope they sort out.

Is film more so your focus now?

Film brings about more notoriety and when you’re more famous, more people come out to see you. So, I’m definitely doing film, I just want to make sure it’s right. I’m not putting on no dress or lipstick, none of that. And I’m not offering my fans a watered down version of myself.

Will you ever give up stand-up?

I’m always going to do stand-up and I’m always going to be relevant because I’m always going to stay with my ear to the street. I’ll tell you this… Cedric the Entertainer is one of the funniest comedians I’ve ever seen in my life. Cedric is in Hollywood now and he’s not in the streets. When he does his stand-up now, I see a difference in who he used to be. I know how good Cedric the Entertainer is as a comedian, I just wish he would go back to his roots so he can be that guy that I know he’s capable of being. At one time Eddie Murphy was the top comedian but he lives in Hollywood, on the hill. He’s not down there with the people. I’m always gone be with the people. I’m always gone do stand-up that’s relevant.

What else do you have up your sleeve?

Well, I’ll be in Cleveland this weekend, so come and check me out. And, what a lot of people don’t know is I’m coming out with this R&B album and if you like my style of comedy, you’re going to like this album! I got this song called “I Don’t Think Yo’ B*tch Mean Well By You.” I think I’m gone shock the nation. Even Dr. Dre’s waiting on me to finish the project.

Cleveland, this is one of those do-not-miss opportunities. Tickets for the show and more info are available by calling the Improv box office at 216.696.IMPROV (4677)

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