



Q&A: Reverend Bob Levy Talks Howard Stern, Blue Cheese and Killers of Comedy

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Though they aren't really well known in mainstream stand-up comedy circles, among the millions of fans of Howard Stern's radio show, they are superstars and like family...albeit a hugely dysfunctional one. The Killers of Comedy are an amalgamation of stand-up comics (including a racist clown), Stern show staffers, and sideshow freaks of nature like ex-WWF wrestling star The Iron Sheik and horny black dwarf Beetlejuice.

The ringmaster of this twisted troupe for a comedy show unlike any other is the comedian Reverend Bob Levy. He's one of the Stern show's more frequent and funny contributors, and now a comedy club entrepreneur. Houstoned spoke with the wonderfully politically incorrect good Rev. for a preview of the group's upcoming show at Planeta Bar-Rio and a glimpse inside Sirius radio's "Studio 69."

Houstoned: Of all the people who get their balls so severely busted on the Stern show, you are among the worst victims. They nail you about you poor spelling, bad pronunciation, career level, and living in your ex-wife's basement. So how tough is it?

Levy: I don't mind it. It takes awhile, but you develop a thick skin. And it's better if they're talking about you than if they're *not* talking about you. Howard likes you if you amuse him. I think he really likes me. And he's helping people make a living. He's a *saint*, goddamnit!

Houstoned: Listeners can only imagine what it's like really being in that studio with all the chaos. What's the most surprising thing you think people should know?

Levy: Well...Robin [Quivers, co-host] is actually white. They do a *great* make-up job on her to make her look black. I mean, she has a boat, she was into race car driving...come *on* folks!

Houstoned: The Killers are such a strange package of people...

Levy: We try to mix it up. We have four strong comedians, then you go into the Iron Sheik, and it's part of the show. We work the crowd with him. Then Beetlejuice comes out. We've finally got it down to where it clicks.

Houstoned: Well, given the way things are going with [Stern sidekick] Artie Lange and his health, you may want to polish off that audition tape to fill his spot.

Levy: Naaaah. Artie's gonna be there forever. I hope. I love him on the show. He's a perfect fit, and I don't think anybody can fill his shoes.

Houstoned: Howard has put you in charge of coordinating the on-air roasts, which are usually pretty brutal. How do you put them together?

Levy: Me and [Stern producer] Gary put it together. We go through a list of comedians to see who would be the best fit. We also try to make sure we don't step on each other with [the material].

Houstoned: I know you got engaged recently to a big fan of the show, and finally moved out of your ex-wife's basement. So now that you're about to get hitched, are you going to retire the bit where you eat blue cheese out of the ass of a female audience member?

Levy: Not at all! I mean, that's me. When I got engaged to her [on stage], I did it right after the blue cheese bit. She understands that I do what I do. It wouldn't last very long if she tried to [censor] my act.

Houstoned: Is that something that allows you to break out of the Stern show? It's really a catch-22: you need the notoriety and exposure the show gives you, but you don't want to be tied to it completely.

Levy: I like to go to my clubs because it's more relaxing than working an [Stern event] where you have to go 100 miles an hour. You can sip a beer without someone yelling out "*Baba Booney!*" I can also try out new material that way. But I loved Howard's show from the start when I first started listening to him, and I wanted to be a part of that [atmosphere].

Houstoned: The show here in Houston is not at a comedy club, but a place that's been about a million different things and now is mostly a Latino dance club.

Levy: It usually doesn't matter where we play – the fans will find us and show up. We do rock clubs, all kinds of places. And that works out because we know that the people who are there are familiar with us and know what we do. Can you imagine going into a regular comedy club thinking you'll get a "regular show" and then fucking *Beetlejuice* comes out?

Houstoned: Ever have a dicey situation with a venue?

Levy: Yeah, in Baltimore. There was like six black people that were sitting together in the front, and they thought they were seeing the *Kings* of Comedy – not the *Killers* of Comedy. So by the time Sal came out, they realized that was not what they paid to see. They didn't see Bernie Mac.

Houstoned: I'm sure they also must have loved Yucko the Clown's racial jokes. Everyone always makes mention of how filthy and disgusting his clown outfit is, and apparently he's never washed it. Is that for real?

Levy: Oh yeah, it's really horrible! He'll be eating some pizza and drop sauce on himself and he just rubs it in. It's like the *smelliest* smell that doesn't go away. He's engaged too, and I can't believe poor girl is marrying him or that he's getting laid. Chicks even make out with Beetlejuice on stage. It's unbelievable. Sometimes I was I was retarded. He gets more action than I do.

Houstoned: What about audiences that just don't laugh?

Levy: Getting up there with just a microphone trying to make people laugh...it's tough. When it doesn't work, you just want to fucking kill yourself. It's different from a band playing a song or [sketch] comedy. And it drives you crazy because no matter how good you are, you think you're gonna suck when you're about to hit the stage. At least that's how I feel.

Houstoned: You recently wrote and performed in a porn movie loosely based on your career, *Stood Up*. You don't get naked and have sex in it, but did you at least write yourself a blowjob scene?

Levy: No, but I got one! Sometimes, God smiles at me. But most of the time he's throwing rocks.

Houstoned: Last question. If you were forced to share a house with one of the Killers for a month, who would you choose?

Levy: Well, since Jim Florentine's the most normal one, probably him. Sal, you can't get any sleep because he'll put a firecracker in your ass. Beetlejuice will talk all night. Shuli's very normal, but the house would smell like weed all day. Yucko, he's too quiet without the clown outfit on and too smelly with it, so I couldn't deal with him. Richard Christy also smells pretty bad...but at least he's this happy, hillbilly guy. So I guess it would be Jim! -- **Bob Ruggiero**

The Killers of Comedy, with Rev. Bob Levy, Shuli, Yucko the Clown, Sal Governale, Beetlejuice, the Iron Sheik and Jason Stewart, perform at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 26. Planeta Bar-Rio, 6400 Richmond. Call 619-549-8666 or visit www.revboblevy.com or www.killersofcomedy.com