

POWERLESS TARGETS AND OPPOSITE SCRIPTS
IN ETHNIC JOKES OF STAND-UP COMEDY
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Table of Contents

Tables	6
Chapter 1: Introduction	7
Chapter 2: Review of Literature	10
Humor Theory	10
Derision/superiority theories	11
Incongruity-based theories	12
Semantic Script Theory of Humor	13
Five-level Joke Representation Model	15
General Theory of Verbal Humor	16
Ethnos	18
Ethnicity	18
Ethnic Humor	20
Stand-Up Comedy	22
A Context for Humor	22
The Comedic Persona	24
Research Questions	25
Chapter 3: Methodology	27
Subjects	27
Context of Performance	27
Type of Performance	28
Gender, Ethnicity, and Age	29
Data	30

POWERLESS TARGETS AND OPPOSITE SCRIPTS	3
Token Selection	31
Token Analysis	32
Conclusion	36
Chapter 4: African American Comedians.....	38
Patrice O’Neal.....	38
Knowledge Resources.....	38
The Comedian and His Ethnic Targets	40
Rudy Rush.....	46
Knowledge Resources.....	46
The ‘We’ versus ‘They’ Ideology.....	48
Ty Barnett	51
Knowledge Resources.....	52
Lavell Crawford.....	55
Knowledge Resources.....	55
Ethnic Jokes	59
Conclusion	63
Chapter 5: Caucasian Comedians	64
Daniel Tosh.....	64
Knowledge Resources.....	65
Tosh’s Persona	66
Easing into Ethnic Humor.....	67
The Other Guys.....	71
The ‘Un-Ethnic’ Personas.....	71

POWERLESS TARGETS AND OPPOSITE SCRIPTS	4
Conclusion	77
Chapter 6: Asian American and Hispanic Comedians.....	79
Truths and Ignorance	80
Some Asian American Truths.....	80
Ignorant Beliefs about Asians.....	83
Hispanic Crusade Against Ignorance.....	84
Conclusion	90
Chapter 7: Discussion	91
Limitations of Study	91
African American Trends	92
Human Targets.....	92
Non-Human Targets.....	93
Racial Distinctiveness.....	94
Caucasian Trends.....	95
Un-ethnic Targets.....	95
Racism.....	96
Minority Struggles	97
Ignorance.....	97
Conclusion	98
Future Research	99
References.....	100
Appendix A: African American Comedians.....	103
Appendix B: Caucasian Comedians.....	118

Appendix C: Asian American Comedians.....133

Appendix D: Hispanic Comedians.....141

Tables

Table 1: Knowledge Resources Used to Inform the Joke Text32

Table 2: Usage of Explicit Ethnic Labels by O’Neal39

Chapter 1: Introduction

Humor has been the subject of research in many disciplines for quite some time. From psychology (Freud, 1960) to semiotics (Dorfles, 1968) to linguistics (Attardo & Raskin, 1991; Raskin, 1985), researchers have committed themselves to finding the causes for human laughter as a result of humor. Even medical professionals (Joshua, Cotroneo, & Clarke, 2005; Ziegler, 1995) have researched how laughter affects the human body. While early theories of humor were predominately rooted in psychological theories, more current theories are interdisciplinary. The most applicable theory to date, The General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH), explains humor according to the multiple factors that influence its occurrence (Attardo & Raskin, 1991), but the development of this theory did not neglect previous theories concerning humor research. As can be seen from the name of the theory, the GTVH is only useful in explaining verbal humor, but the applicability of this theory to verbal humor has been found to be the most extensive to date (Davies, 2004).

The focus of this study is the ethnic joke, which the GTVH has been applied to. While ethnic jokes are prevalent around the world, the humor found in them is also unique to each culture (Davies, 1990) because the hearer must have a certain level of knowledge about and experience with the target group or groups and the situation in which the joke occurs (Raskin, 1985). An ethnic joke may serve to disparage one group

by casting them in an unfavorable role. Attitudes toward this type of joke range from people who think they are simply jokes to people who think they are a form of hate speech (LaFave & Mannell, 1976). However, a special pass seems to be given to different areas of popular culture. The sector of the entertainment industry characterized as comedy is peppered with ethnic jokes incorporating stereotypes, disparagement, and ridicule of a target ethnic group or person representative of an ethnic group, but the mask of humor has all but deemed ethnic jokes acceptable. While discrimination and stereotypes are typically viewed negatively, popular culture has the ability to covertly further stereotypes that potentially lead to racial discrimination (Lippi-Green, 1997).

Interestingly, ethnic jokes that have appeared in the context of stand-up comedy have scarcely been studied in the literature. One unique feature of stand-up comedy is the creative freedom of the comic. While many ethnic jokes that have been studied are preformulated and repeated from one person to the next, one unique feature of stand-up comedians is that they are expected to create their own material. Even though a comedian may incorporate ethnic humor into his or her performance, it is not necessary that the target be cast into an unfavorable role. Due to stand-up comedy being a context with an underlying social or cultural function (Mintz, 1998), ethnic humor has the potential to be a vehicle for social change. Comedians identifying with a minority group can employ ethnic humor as a tool for improving their situation by disparaging the majority since one characteristic of a successful comedian is the establishment of a community between him or herself and the audience (Mintz, 1998). In this way, a comedian could use their position to give power to one ethnic group while simultaneously taking it away from another. However, no literature was found that

attempts to describe power relationships between the ethnicity of the joke-teller and the ethnicity of the target. Therefore, this study will look at humor in ethnic jokes that appear in stand-up comedy. The focus of the study will be on the power status of the characters, as portrayed in the joke by the joke-teller, to uncover if stand-up comedians typically cast ethnic and racial minorities in a powerless position or if humor can be found when the loser is a member of the majority. This will be accomplished through the use of the GTVH along with character analysis of the comedian to qualify the group he or she identifies with.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Like all speech acts, a humor act is based on a variety of factors that, with the right combination, may result in something that is deemed funny. Due to the wide variety of jokes and numerous contexts in which they occur, an investigation of humor requires the application of a theory that underlies it, a description of the genre of humor that encompasses it, and finally, the environment in which the humor act takes place, including the cultural knowledge that is part of a person's belief and/or value system (Raskin, 1985). These three components contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the significance of a humor act. Each factor provides a different angle for analysis, but the combination of the analyses allows for an elaborate description of a joke or humor act. Therefore, the complexities of each of these elements are described here to establish a method for humor analysis.

Humor Theory

Humor is a prevalent aspect in our everyday lives, but it has confounded and divided professionals in a variety of fields for centuries. The following is a brief, chronological review of the development humor theories. The first two theories described here, derision/superiority theories and incongruity-based theories, take a psychological approach to the explanation of humor, but critics of these argue that the scope of these theories is very limited in its ability to account for the many varieties of

jokes that occur in different contexts. Similarly, these theories do not and cannot sufficiently explain humor from a linguistic standpoint. Therefore, linguists used these psychology-based theories as a jumping off point in the development of linguistically based theories of humor (Attardo, 1989; Oring, 1998, 2003; Raskin & Attardo, 1991; Raskin, 1985). Each subsequent theory builds from the previous to incorporate a wider range of jokes, leading to today's most applicable humor theory, the GTVH.

Derision/superiority theories

The first type of humor theory can be traced back to Plato who held that humor and laughter were the results of positive feelings associated with watching other people experience a tragedy or misfortune (MacHovec, 1988, p. 30). This belief was the beginning of the derision theory in which "humor substitutes a verbal attack for physical violence" (MacHovec, 1998, p. 31). Similarly, others like Thomas Hobbes, Henri Bergson, and James Thurber thought humor to be the result of a sense of superiority over those experiencing tragedy, humiliation, or physical or psychological damage (MacHovec, 1998, p. 32), which results in a theory known as the superiority theory of humor. The joke teller and the listener share enjoyment as they laugh at the peril or humiliation of characters in the joke.

Both the derision theory and the superiority theory can be related to Freud's psychoanalytic theory of humor, which is described in his 1905 book, *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*. Freud posits a psychoanalytic theory that attempts to account for the reasons or motives behind joke telling. Freud describes these motives as primarily aggressive and, at times, sexual in nature (as described by Oring, 1992). He claims that jokes are a result of suppression or repression of aggressive thoughts and

feelings that would otherwise be considered offensive if not for the mask of a joking nature (Oring, 2003). For proponents of these related theories, humor is related to a sense of self and feelings of “hostility, superiority, malice, aggression, derision, or disparagement” (Raskin, 1985, p. 36) toward the targets of jokes. According to these theories, jokes are a tool for the expression of racism, sexism, and otherwise socially inappropriate thoughts or prejudices, which become acceptable in the context of a joke. However, MacHovec (1988) points out that this theory is extremely limited in its ability to account for various types of jokes. He labels these theories as “reductionistic...negativistic and depressive, seeing humor as malicious and destructive” (p. 34), in which case these theories cannot account for humor which does not disparage or humiliate.

Incongruity-based theories

Another set of theories that have also been widely accepted describes humor in terms of incongruity. Aristotle is credited with formulating the first ideas related to incongruity-based theories. He described humor as the result of “disappointments or frustrated expectations” (MacHovec, 1988, p. 34). Very simply put, the audience has an expectation in regards to the resolution, but the actual outcome or culmination of the joke disappoints or frustrates the expected resolution. Raskin (1985) describes incongruity-based theories as the bringing together of two or more unrelated situations, and that laughter is the recognition of the unexpected incompatibility between them. Raskin (1985, p. 32) and Oring (1992, p. 2; 2003, p. 2) both quote James Beattie who wrote that “laughter arises from the view of two or more inconsistent, unsuitable, or incongruous parts or circumstances, considered as united in one complex object or assemblage.”

Oring (1992, 2003) points out that incongruity itself is not necessarily humorous, but rather, he argues that there must be appropriate incongruity. He makes the claim that two situations must contain recognizable appropriateness as well as incongruity. In his 1992 book, he gives us an example that will be reproduced here to illustrate appropriate incongruity (p. 2):

Q: When is a door not a door?

A: When it's ajar.

He explains that there is recognizable appropriateness in that the word 'ajar' functions as a semantically appropriate adjective to describe an open door. However, the pronunciation of this term is identical to the noun phrase 'a jar' which is a name for a container and is clearly not a door. This second interpretation of this joke is the incongruous one. Due to its clash with the appropriate interpretation, there is humor because of the incongruous situations. We know a door cannot be a jar, but it can be ajar. While incongruity-based theories are fit to describe jokes that cannot be adequately explained by the derision/superiority theories, MacHovec (1988) claims that these theories still do not function to explain all types of humor.

Semantic Script Theory of Humor

The postulation of the semantic script theory of verbal humor (SSTH) (Raskin, 1985) launched the field of linguistics into a search for a comprehensive theory that was capable of explaining verbal humor. This semantically based theory hypothesized that a text is categorized as a joke if the following conditions are provided by the speaker (1985, p. 140):

- i. A switch from the *bona-fide* mode of communication to the non-*bona-fide* mode of joke telling
- ii. The text of an intended joke
- iii. Two (partially) overlapping scripts compatible with the text
- iv. An oppositeness relation between the two scripts
- v. A trigger, obvious or implied, realizing the oppositeness relation

The first condition is the postulation of non-*bona-fide* communication, which was groundbreaking in humor research (Davies, 2004). The first condition relates to Grice's cooperative principle for *bona-fide* communication, but Raskin modified each maxim to fit what he described as a joke-telling mode, or non-*bona-fide* communication mode (1985, p. 103). The four maxims of non-*bona-fide* communication – quantity, quality, relation, and manner – share the same names as the maxims of *bona-fide* communication and also should be conformed to in order for the hearer to recognize the joke-telling mode of communication as distinct from *bona-fide* communication. Below are Raskin's maxims of non-*bona-fide* communication (1985, p. 103).

- i. Maxim of Quantity: Give exactly as much information as is necessary for the joke
- ii. Maxim of Quality: Say only what is compatible with the world of the joke
- iii. Maxim of Relation: Say only what is relevant to the joke
- iv. Maxim of Manner: Tell the joke efficiently

Raskin (1985) explains that when these maxims are followed, a joke is generally successful in generating humor because the hearer recognizes a different mode of communication, but when they are not followed, a joke runs the risk of failure. Raskin further explains that if Grice's conversational maxims are violated, a hearer's next assumption would lead him or her to believe that the speaker is entering the joke-telling mode.

Raskin explains that, while all these conditions are important, (iii) and (iv) are rooted in semantic script theory. In order for the text to be considered a joke, two scripts must be broadly juxtaposed as real-versus-unreal situations. Within real and unreal script opposition, Raskin (1985) has identified three types of opposition which influence the occurrence of humor: *actual vs. nonactual*, *normal vs. abnormal*, and *possible vs. impossible* (Attardo & Raskin, 1991, p. 308). Humor then arises out of the recognition of two existing scripts and the incongruities or oddities that prevent the scripts from fully overlapping. The example and explanation below, taken from Raskin (1985, p. 25) illustrate very generally how script opposition works.

An aristocratic Bostonian lady hired a new chauffeur. As they started out on their first drive, she inquired: "What is your name?"
 "Thomas, ma'am," he answered.
 "What is your last name?" she said. "I never call chauffeurs by their first names."
 "Darling, ma'am," he replied.
 "Drive on – Thomas," she said.

The real script here lies in the normalcy of a passenger calling his or her driver by the last name, and the unreal script is the oddity of a passenger using an endearing term, such as 'darling', with a driver or any other service provider for that matter. According to the SSTH, humor is a result of the juxtaposition of these two scripts.

Five-level Joke Representation Model

In 1989, Attardo built on the SSTH by suggesting a hierarchical model of joke representation whereby the SSTH was situated as one of the more intrinsic levels of a joke because of its strong connection with joke meaning. Although Attardo expanded on the theory set forth by Raskin, he claimed that semantic analysis was only one aspect. In

his model, he proposed a five-level joke representation model. At this juncture, I will briefly explain the model as summarized by Attardo and Raskin (1991). The first level, or *the surface level*, of the model accounts for the text of the joke, and the second level, or *the language level*, requires textual analysis to provide a syntactical and lexical explanation of the content of the text. The third level is called *the target and the situation level*. On this level of a joke lies the target, which refers to the subject, and the situation of the target. The fourth and fifth level, *the template* and *the basic level*, respectively, are the deepest levels of the hierarchy. Both of these levels contain script opposition, which, as is mentioned above, is a requirement of the SSTH. Even though Raskin's SSTH was subsumed into Attardo's joke representation model, the latter was found problematic (Attardo & Raskin, 1991). However, the joke representation model was the first model to apply levels of analysis to humorous discourse, which made it still more comprehensive than previously postulated theories (Attardo & Raskin, 1991). With the ability to analyze individual elements of a joke, superiority and incongruity contributed to the joke instead of being the only means to describe it. The result was a more comprehensive way of describing humor. Researchers were closing in on a comprehensive linguistic theory of verbal humor, and the superiority theory, incongruity-based theories, the SSTH, and the joke representation model would all prove to be useful in informing today's most applicable theory.

General Theory of Verbal Humor

In 1991, Attardo and Raskin joined together to put forward the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH), which has proven to be a breakthrough in the realm of linguistic humor research because of its ability to account for a wide range of jokes (Davies, 2004),

and many researchers have applied the GTVH to different areas of research such as humorous narrative (Attardo, 1998), humorous communication (Brock, 2004), and cartoon analysis (Tsakona, 2004). Although the GTVH is limited to verbal humor as opposed to non-verbal humor, its applicability is extensive in verbal humor research. The underlying assumption of this theory is that humor results from a combination of one or more *knowledge resources* (KR) (Attardo & Raskin, 1991). Attardo and Raskin (1985) define KRs as “bodies of knowledge...which inform the joke” (p. 312). The KRs, which were posited to account for the various components of a joke, are script opposition (SO), logical mechanism (LM), situations (SI), target (TA), narrative strategies (NS), and language (LA). SO is rooted in Raskin’s SSTH, and LM is how the scripts are presented in opposition. The SI includes the setting, characters, and other contextual information surrounding the joke. The TA is the person or persons who experience the ridicule or are the “butt of the joke”. The NS describes the way the joke is told and could be classified as a riddle or narrative, and the LA includes the lexical items and syntactical constructions used in the joke. All knowledge resources lie within the text of the joke. The GTVH allows for different methods of humor analysis including joke comparison and analysis of individual components of the humor act.

All the theories discussed above have been shown to explain different how and why questions concerning the occurrence for jokes and humor. While the superiority and incongruity theories were highly influenced by psychological theories, Raskin’s SSTH was primarily based on semantics within the field of linguistics. Then, Attardo’s five level representation model expanded on the SSTH. Finally, Raskin and Attardo’s theories incorporated psychological theories into their analytical models of jokes. The

combination of the latter two theories resulted in the GTVH, which is the most comprehensive theory of jokes (Davies, 2004). Due to the wide applicability of the GTVH, the KRs it describes will be used to inform the present research by providing a template for discourse analysis of the joke texts gathered as sources of data.

Ethnos

After uncovering a theory that is capable of describing a multitude of joke texts, the next step is defining a type of joke that will be considered in the data set. Types of humor include those based on politics, gender, and ethnicity. In this section, ethnic humor will be described as a genre of humor, which has as its focus people bonded together by shared, identifying characteristics that lead to exclusion and stereotypes. A definition of ethnicity will be provided and an application of this definition will be provided for ethnic humor as it provides the basis for the data set of the present research.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a term that has been defined and redefined in the literature and has made it difficult for academics to summarize exactly what the term means in a way that can be collectively agreed upon. For the purpose of the present research, the definition of ethnicity will be rooted in the Greek word *ethnos* “which is variously translated as “tribe”, “race”, “people” and, most commonly, “nation”” (McDonald, 2007, p. 4). Davies (1990) furthers these translations by explaining that the term ethnic is used to describe “a group that sees itself and is seen by others as a “people” with a common cultural tradition, a real or imagined common descent, and a distinctive identity” (p. 1). According to this definition, ethnicity can be described as a unique characteristic that,

when applied to more than one person, identifies that group in a way that identifies no other. Such characteristics may define groups based on “racial, religious, national, regional, local, social, sex or sexist, age characteristics, or other differences” (MacHovec, 1988, p. 116). Likewise, a person may belong to more than one ethnic group, and at times, characteristics of multiple ethnic groups are combined to identify a (sub)group even more exclusively. This highlights more differences than when one ethnic characteristic is considered individually. Each characteristic adds a new dimension to the perceptions of the ethnic group. For example, the addition of the regional ethnicity ‘Southern’ to the religious affiliation ‘Baptist’ uniquely changes the perception of the ethnic group as opposed to groups described only as Southern or Baptist but not both.

While the explanation above presents ethnicity as a vague concept, this does not mean that it is an inadequate explanation, but rather, it aligns with the current literature signifying that a concrete definition of such a concept is difficult to establish. One debate related to defining ethnicity is the conceptualization of race and ethnicity. Generally, ethnicity refers to culturally based characteristics, and race refers to physiologically based characteristics (McLemore, 1994). However, race and ethnicity are often treated as one in the same, and questions whether the former is subsumed into the latter or each is a separate entity become points of argument (McDonald, 2007; McLemore, 1994). A lack of specificity of the difference between race and ethnicity has led researchers to various conclusions regarding the relationship between the two terms. Although some researchers claim that race and ethnicity are not one and the same, it is difficult to make the claim that they are not uniquely linked as characteristics that distinguish groups of people. While the battle rages on in other disciplines, the various arguments that lay out

a difference between the two terms are beyond the scope of linguistically based research, but it is important to note that both racial and ethnic traits are used to construct groups based on real (verified, actual) events or unfounded beliefs (stereotypes). Delimiting groups based on racial or ethnic traits provides the basis for humor that can be classified as 'ethnic'.

Ethnic humor

Ethnicity is a recurring topic in jokes told around the world, and the term 'ethnic' is used in humor research to define humor which distinguishes a target not only by cultural characteristics, but race as well. From email forwards to televised comedic performances, many jokes fall into the category of ethnic humor. While these jokes can all incite reactions ranging from laughter to anger, ethnic jokes are uniquely interesting due to their ability to separate groups and place negative or disparaging traits onto people without any seemingly apparent reason. A joke is determined as an ethnic joke by the inclusion of a target whose ethnicity is significant to the joke (Boskin & Dorinson, 1998; Davies, 1990; MacHovec, 1988; Raskin, 1985). While ethnicity is typically a choice, it is a choice that gets taken away "if a group is defined and excluded by others in terms of "race" whether or not this is linked to differences in physical appearance" (Davies, 1990, p. 2). An ethnic joke has the ability to define racial groups and further stereotypes under the accepted cover of humor.

Boskin and Dorinson label ethnic humor as "one of the most effective and vicious weapons in the repertory of the human mind" (1998, p. 206). These authors explain humor as a reflection of social relationships between ethnic groups within a culture. Disparaging and demeaning semantic properties of this type of humor could mirror

underlying stereotypes, which by nature, do not hold true for every member of a group but are nevertheless generalized across a population. Even though not all agree with these authors due to a belief that ethnic jokes possess, to some extent, a unifying property (Fish, 1980), much of ethnic humor brings to light stupidity, dumbness, dirtiness, or stinginess as inherent characteristics of the targeted ethnic group (Davies, 1990; Raskin, 1985). While each of these represents a feature of a typical ethnic script, Boskin and Dorinson (1998) explain that both the majority and the minority use these scripts to their advantage. The majority uses them as a means of social control. Outliers are viewed as violating the 'norm', and such behavior becomes subject to ridicule and degradation. However, they also explain that minorities employ these scripts as a way to cheapen the stereotype, thus making them less effective.

Like most verbal humor, ethnic humor can be described by the SSTH and the GTVH as a result from an opposition in scripts. Raskin (1985) claims that the main script associated with ethnic humor is *possible/impossible*. The basic underlying opposition is that the two juxtaposed situations present in the humor face incongruities of possibility. One script is a possible, or plausible, situation, while the other one is either impossible or highly unlikely (Raskin, 1985, p. 111). The example below shows the possible/impossible script opposition:

Nurse: That's a pretty bad cold you have, sir. What are you taking for it?
Patient: Make me an offer! (Raskin, 1985, p. 25)

In this joke, a more than likely interaction (the possible script) is rounded out by an impossible response (Raskin, 1985). The hearer immediately recognizes this as a joke due to the concurrence of the opposing scripts, and the humor arises out of the

impossibility of the patient's response in which he intends to make some sort of profit by selling his cold. If the patient had responded with the brand name of a medication, the humorous element of this joke would be eliminated based on the lack of script opposition.

Within the broader category of possible/impossible script opposition, researchers have specified some features that can be used to describe ethnic humor distinctively from other genres of humor such as those that belong to categories of sexual or political humor (Davies, 2004; Raskin, 1985). As is mentioned in the previous paragraphs, these features, which include characteristics of stupidity or dumbness, stinginess, dirtiness, and craftiness, are specific to ethnic humor and emerge time after time in the analysis of these types of jokes (Davies, 1990; Raskin, 1985).

Stand-Up Comedy

The reception of and the humor found in ethnic humor are largely dependent on the context in which it appears. One distinctive method of joke and humor delivery is stand-up comedy. While stand-up comedy has been described as having a social function (Mintz, 1998), a description of the elements of stand-up comedy that contribute to the present research are necessary to round out the three factors that influence the methodology of this project. We have discussed a theory for analyzing the joke and a type of joke to be analyzed, but a description of a necessary context is yet to be determined. The following includes the third and final component influencing the methodology of this research.

A Context for Humor

Stand-up comedy creates a very complex environment for joke-telling and humor creation. Mintz (1998) asserts that this type of context for humor has a long history, and it is also deeply rooted in culture. To Mintz (1998), stand-up comedy is, at its simplest form, “an encounter between a single, standing performer behaving comically and/or saying funny things directly to an audience, unsupported by very much in the way of costume, prop, setting, or dramatic vehicle” (p. 194). Although comedic shows are as wide and varied as the personalities of the comedians who perform, stand-up routines from a variety of unique comedians have been analyzed as having an underlying social and/or cultural function (Douglas; 1978; Duncan, 1970; Martineau, 1972; Scarpetta & Spagnolli, 2009). Douglas (1978) points out that humor in jokes is often not found without the relevant cultural knowledge. The stand-up comedian, therefore, uses an audience’s cultural knowledge to oppose two scripts and highlight the incongruities between them. If one script is unknown to the audience, then the comedian risks joke failure.

Being a stand-up comedian is not as simple as standing in front of a paying audience with a microphone opposing semantic scripts for a predetermined period of time. While most prescribed jokes are without an author and are told time and time again, a stand-up comedian is an inventor of humor as he or she is expected to author his or her own jokes. The comedian must also take on a persona (Mintz, 1998), interact with the audience (Scarpetta & Spagnolli, 2009), and use a variety of performative techniques to further the creation of humor (Glick, 2007). The first of these, the comedic persona, will be the influential factor in this research as it establishes the comedian as having an ethnicity, or an exclusive group with which he or she identifies.

The Comedic Persona

One imperative skill is the ability to develop and maintain a comedic persona. To illustrate how specific personas can be, one can look at the comedic foursome that performs on the Blue Collar Comedy Tour. These four comedians – Jeff Foxworthy, Bill Engvall, Ron White, and Larry the Cable Guy – stereotypically represent the southern ethnicity of the United States. While all four attempt to appeal to the same type of audience, each comedian has a persona that distinguishes him from the other. Foxworthy is the husband and father surrounded by women but unable to understand them in any way. His jokes are typically ‘clean’, but he is known for a certain type of joke that is typically disparaging toward the ethnic group ‘Redneck’. Engvall is similar to Foxworthy in that he focuses on husband and fatherhood. However, he is known for a brand of joke that points out the stupidity of humankind he encounters in his everyday life. White is a chauvinistic divorcee whose humor can best be defined as crude and whose everyday activities do not begin without an alcoholic beverage. Larry’s persona is perhaps the most odd of them all when compared with his true identity. With his cut off flannel shirts and stereotypical southern accent, Larry physically represents the working class southerner who is commonly the target of disparaging jokes told against southerners, while his non-comedic persona hardly reflects his stage persona.

Mintz (1998) explains that the persona is a necessary aspect of a comedian’s stand-up performance. He claims that the comedian “is defective in some way, but his natural weaknesses generate pity...exemption from the expectation of normal behavior” (p. 196). Due to the abnormalities in the persona and the misalignment of the persona with behavioral norms of the greater society, the stand-up comic is permitted to be

deviant. The criticism he or she bestows on a target is to some extent acceptable. Mintz (1998) further explains that a comedian's shortcomings, as are highlighted in the persona, allow the audience to laugh at and find humor in self-deprecation, where the comedian targets him or herself. Humor is found in the performance because of the ideas underlying the superiority theory. Laughter is the expression of relief as a result of not suffering from the same afflictions of the target.

The comedian's persona is a real or imagined portrayal of an ethnic group. The characteristics and behaviors that the comedian incorporates into his or her performance are interpreted by the audience within the interactional context (Scarpetta & Spagnolli, 2009). These characteristics and behaviors are imposed upon the group or groups of people to which the comedian is attempting to portray. Whether real or imagined, the audience's interpretation of the comedian's persona contributes to the humor they find in the jokes (Mintz, 1998). This relationship could be further interpreted based on the target. Social status differences (i.e. minority, majority, immigrant, etc.) are crucial characteristics of the ethnic joke. This research seeks to uncover a relationship between the joke-teller and the target based on their ethnic differences or similarities. The comedian's persona and his or her depiction of the target are critical components of such an analysis.

Research Questions

Ethnic humor can be readily explained by humor theory, but the public nature of stand-up comedy shines a controversial spotlight on disparagement and degradation in joke telling. What normally would be considered offensive, racist or otherwise politically incorrect is met with acceptance and laughed at in the context of stand up comedy. The

atmosphere is one of expectation in which the audience anticipates the creation of humor. Based on the comedian's persona, he is allowed to engage in ethnic joke telling, whether or not the tone of the joke is light or disparaging. The overall goal of this research project will be to describe various elements of ethnic humor used in stand-up comedic performances. In order to provide an adequate description, the following research questions will be answered to provide specific details about the interplay between stand-up comedy and ethnic humor.

1. How do the knowledge resources of the GTVH inform the joke texts present in the data set?
2. What are the traits of the comedian's persona that contribute to the creation of a real or imagined ethnicity?
3. What is the relationship of the ethnicity of the joke teller to the ethnicity of the target(s)?
4. To what extent does the target of an ethnic joke gain or lose power in relation to other characters in the joke?

Chapter 3: Methodology

As has been mentioned previously, three components surround the analysis of a joke text: the underlying theory, the genre of humor, and the context. The research will look at the relationship between these three influences in an attempt to investigate ethnic humor in stand-up comedy. This section will be divided into two parts: the first part will explain how subjects were selected for inclusion in the research, and the second part will describe how tokens were selected and analyzed.

Subjects

The qualitative nature of the analysis of this research required a small data set gathered from a small amount of subjects. When choosing subjects, the following issues were taken into consideration: context of performance, type of performance and gender, ethnicity, and age of the comedian.

Context of Performance

Stand-up comedy routines can be found in a variety of places such as the Internet, DVDs or VHS tapes, radio programs, and television programs. From short vignettes to hour-long specials and solo performances to comedy duos and trios, a wide range of stand-up comedy is available for audiences. For this study, restrictions were placed on what context of performance was acceptable for the data set in order to limit the variables among the subjects. First, all performances were taken from a show called Comedy

Central Presents, which has been airing on the television station, Comedy Central, since 1998. Comedy Central Presents is a show that “has showcased the finest comedians doing their finest work on the finest stage on television” (comedycentral.com, 2011). The television station’s own website boasts that they provide something for every fan. It appears that viewers can expect that only the best comedians will perform each Friday night. Therefore, this particular television show provides a variety of comedians within a very similar context. Comedians who appear on Comedy Central Presents are not the same in terms of style, comedic persona, or genre, but rather, they are labeled as the best of them all.

By limiting the data set to only those who have been featured on Comedy Central Presents, I built a random data set of comedians of the same caliber performing under the same conditions. Each performance is approximately 21 to 22 minutes in length, but is referred to as a 30-minute set because of commercial time as the showed is aired on cable television. The primary advantage of this show is the consistency in the variables that contribute to each performance. All shows are the same length and are grouped by seasons. A season for Comedy Central Presents is a group of performances that aired during the same calendar year. For example, season 14 is comprised of 24 performances that aired during 2010. All performances during a season are filmed on the same stage in front of a live audience.

Type of Performance

Once the context of the performances was chosen, I formulated a list of potential subjects, which was relatively uncomplicated because an inventory of comedians who have been featured on Comedy Central Presents is readily available on Comedy Central’s

website. Once this list was prepared, it was necessary to systematically narrow down potential subjects based on a range of factors. The first round of eliminations concerned the type of performance. The comedic sector of the entertainment industry provides something for everyone. If an audience prefers the ventriloquist act of stand-up comedy, they would likely choose to see Jeff Dunham, whereas an audience with musical tastes would likely choose Stephen Lynch whose stand-up performance is primarily done with his guitar and humorous self-composed lyrics. Another type of performance is the comedy duo. Comedians such as the Sklar Brothers provide unique twists on their act by joking with each other, echoing each others jokes, and finishing the others joke. Another comedy duo, Hard ‘N Phirm, work together by creating humor through song. The variety present in stand-up comedy acts range from simple, which is defined as one person with no props or effects, to more complex with musicians, ventriloquists, and comedy duos. For this research, only stand-up performances at their simplest were considered. A simple stand-up performance is one that includes “a single, standing performer behaving comically and/or saying funny things directly to an audience, unsupported by very much in the way of costume, prop, setting, or dramatic vehicle” (Mintz, 1998, p. 194). The first part of this definition excludes comedy duos and/or trios, while the second part of this definition excludes musical acts, ventriloquists, and the use of any other type of prop for humorous effect. As a result, all comedians exhibiting any form of stand-up other than the ‘simple’ form described above were removed from the list.

Gender, Ethnicity, and Age

Regarding gender, all comedians chosen for this study were male. Since it has been established that ethnicity can refer to all types of differences including gender

(MacHovec, 1988), male and female comedians should be regarded as belonging to two separate ethnicities. For example, an African American female comedian could not be categorized into the same group as an African American male comedian because of the gender variable present between the two. While it is not beyond the scope of this research to analyze female comedians of various ethnicities, one major factor comes into play and that is the small number of female comedians in the industry today. Equivalent male and female groups could not be created using Comedy Central Presents. Therefore, the gender variable was eliminated.

With the data set limited to male stand-up performances aired on Comedy Central Presents, the next step limited the data set by ethnicity. To be considered for this study, a comedian must have openly identified his ethnicity as belonging to one of the following categories: Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, and Asian. As Davies (1990) explains, ethnicity is based on how people view their own ethnicity as well as how others view them. Therefore, the remaining candidates were individually researched and placed into one of the ethnic categories mentioned above. Information concerning a comedian's ethnicity can be easily located. The majority of the comedians have their own website in which they openly state their affiliation with an ethnic group. Candidates were excluded if they identified themselves as an ethnicity that is not being considered in this study. For example, one of the subjects in the study, whose name is Dat Phan, is an Asian-American who often refers to his Vietnamese heritage in his act. His personal biography on his website states that his "mission is to bring a more positive portrayal of Asian-Americans to mainstream entertainment and Hollywood" (www.datphan.com, 2011).

Data

Within each comedian's performance, two types of joke texts were identified: ethnic joke texts and non-ethnic joke texts. The joke texts were categorized as ethnic or non-ethnic based on pre-established criteria. Then, the ethnic joke texts were analyzed in order to answer the research questions in this paper.

Token Selection

Each comedian informs the present research with a variable amount of tokens. Therefore, I conducted an analysis of each performance in order to separate the joke texts into two categories: ethnic jokes and non-ethnic jokes. For the purpose of this research, ethnicity will be considered as belonging to one of four categories: African American or black, Asian American, Caucasian, or Hispanic. Since the definitions of ethnicity are not limited to skin color but include other characteristics (i.e. gender, age, sexual orientation), it is probable that all joke texts could be considered ethnic. If joke texts targeted females or the elderly, they would be potential ethnic joke texts; however, one significant aspect is the comparison between the ethnicity of the joke teller and the ethnicity of the target. In order to compare across all groups, the ethnic joke texts must be specific to the ethnicity of the subject participating in the data set. Since all are male, joke text targeting females are not considered ethnic. The same situation arises with sexual orientation. Evidenced by the heterosexual stance they take in joke texts regarding sexual intercourse and/or their marital status, all comedians in this data set appear to be heterosexual males. Without equivalent groups represented in the data set, cross-ethnic considerations and comparisons cannot be made. Therefore, ethnic joke texts are categorized as such based on the targeting of African Americans, Asian Americans, Caucasians, and Hispanics.

Comedian's created ethnic joke texts by explicitly stating the target ethnic group or implying a stereotype, allowing the audience to make a connection between two opposing scripts. Two main types of ethnic jokes appeared: those in which an entire ethnic group was targeted and those in which an individual was representative of an entire ethnic group.

Token Analysis

I transcribed each performance in order to analyze the semantic content of each token comprising the data set. While the numbers of tokens selected from each comedian varied, each token was examined on four different levels. The ethnic joke texts were first described according to the knowledge resources of the GTVH. Then, the second level of analysis sought to describe the comedian's persona. Thirdly, I examined the relationship between the ethnicity of the joke teller to the ethnicity of the target or target group. Lastly, the power gain or loss of the target was determined in order to present the final portrayal of the target to the audience.

Knowledge Resources. There are six knowledge resources (KRs) described by Attardo and Raskin (1991); however, only five are used in the analysis of the joke texts. The logical mechanism will not be considered here as it has been argued as an unnecessary component of humor analysis (Davies, 2004). The use of the KRs established a baseline for joke text comparisons. The following chart presents how each KR breaks down each joke text into analyzable components across comedians.

Table 1: Knowledge Resources Used to Inform the Joke Text

Knowledge Resource	Manner in which the KR informs joke text
Language (LA)	In what ways does the comedian manipulate dialect and/or accent to create humor in the joke?

Narrative Strategies (NS)	What method is used to convey the joke text? (i.e. expository, riddle, question and answer sequence, etc.)
Target (TA)	What are the characteristics of the target that contribute to the establishment of an ethnicity?
Situation (SI)	In the joke text, who and/or what is involved, where does the event take place, and what are the targets doing?
Script Opposition (SO)	What scripts are opposed in the joke text to create humor?

Each ethnic joke text present in the data was comparable to all other joke texts based on these five categories. Dat Phan, a Vietnamese American, is one of the subjects belonging to the Asian American comedian group in this study. One of his ethnic jokes concerned the Vietnamese takeover of the United States. The following excerpt is used to demonstrate the analysis of an ethnic joke text according to the KRs:

- (1) ...Before we left Vietnam, what was the final meeting? (Vietnamese accent)
 “Vietnam, listen up! Final meeting. I been thinking bout it. I know the perfect job for us, ok? The Japanese people take over, they make the VCR. That’s a good plan there. I also heard they make the fortune cookie. German, they take over they make the farfa- auto- da car. Vietnam, we take over by doing pedicure. That’s how we take over...”

Phan uses a Vietnamese accent, which is in stark contrast to his standard English (SE) dialect that he uses in the majority of the show. He delivers through a combination of narrative strategies. This excerpt is a question and answer sequence, and within the answer, we see the triple sequence strategy. This occurs by the reference to the Japanese, the German, and finally, the Vietnamese, where the punch line occurs. The target of this ethnic joke is the Vietnamese, but more specifically referencing those associated with the Asian-owned nail salon stereotype. The joke text involves Vietnamese citizens in Vietnam preparing for domination of a new country. The situation concerns their planning and related thought processes. Finally, the scripts opposed in this joke text are smart vs. dumb. Phan is contrasting more complicated, technological means of takeover

(i.e. VCR and car) with the more artistic manicure/pedicure. Phan presents Vietnamese immigrants as dumb in comparison to Japanese and German immigrants to the US.

Regarding script opposition, Raskin (1985) identified an overarching category or real-versus-unreal scripts. As was previously mentioned, the subcategories of script opposition were as follows: normal vs. abnormal, possible vs. impossible, and actual vs. nonactual. The joke texts present in the data set were categorized based on these subsets. Furthermore, the joke texts will also be classified according to the most common features associated with ethnic humor. These features can be found in Raskin (1985) and Davies (1990; 1998) and are also explained above. The categories were dumbness or stupidity, stinginess, craftiness, and dirtiness. Any outlying scripts will be described and categorized as 'other' unless major trends appear in the data.

Comedic Persona. The comedic persona of each participant is determined by two important aspects of his stage presence: his pragmatic or social defects and his ethnicity. Comedians create personas through the jokes they tell and physical mannerisms present on stage. Mintz (1998) claims that a comedian's persona is identifiable in his or her defects. Also, he explains that a comedian's persona can also be explained according to the social norms they deviate from and ridicule in their performance. In analyzing the semantics of the joke texts, a description can be provided of the comedian's persona.

The follow example of comedic persona is taken from the African American comedian, Lavell Crawford, who is included in the present data set. His jokes work together to establish a persona whose main defect is his weight. While not attempting to hide his obesity, his jokes make the audience develop pity for him. Some of his jokes

concern his dangerous love for Burger King Whoppers, his fear that a shark will find him and swim back to his family to alert them to a potential “lifetime supply of dark meat”, and his failed attempt at suicide because he was too heavy to hang himself from his mother’s ceiling fan. His ethnic jokes texts explicitly identify himself as a black man. The following examples are taken from the written transcript of Lavell Crawford to illustrate his explicit statements regarding his ethnicity:

- (2) And I forgot, black folk give everything a nickname. We don’t even call diabetes ‘diabetes’, we call it ‘the sugar’. I said, “Mama, I got the sugar.”
- (3) Then a security guard came outta nowhere and said, “Look black guy, this is white Heaven. Black Heaven’s somewhere near Harlem.”
- (4) (Concerning Black History Month) ...But we need to get celebrating. We should at least get some free chicken, chicken coupons to our favorite chicken restaurant anywhere we want. And we should be able to drive down a predominately white neighborhood as fast as we want and the police can’t pull us over.

With explicit references to his defects and ethnicity, Crawford creates a persona for audience members to identify with or disassociate with, both situations resulting in humor. Through joke text analysis, the comedic persona was described for each subject in the data set.

Joke Teller and His Targets. After having established a comedic persona, I juxtaposed that of each comedian to his various targets within the ethnic joke texts. In this way, social differences were highlighted to provide information that underlies an analysis of the relationship of the comedian and the target. These differences were then compared up against the power loss or gain of the target. In ethnic humor, the target is presented as having some unique characteristic, which can be linked to the target’s ethnicity. One variable that could influence the ethnicity of the target of the joke is the

ethnicity of the joke teller him or herself. Based on the power relationship between the target and others, which could include other characters or the comedian, trends were sought for the purposes of analyzing who targets who and if the ethnicity of the joke teller influences who they choose not to target. For example, if a Caucasian comedian chooses to target the Asian ethnic group, but never targets the Hispanic ethnic group, does this have any significance? Descriptions of this type of data are present in the analysis.

Power Loss or Gain. As mentioned in the previous chapter, ethnic humor can be a tool for social control or change (Boskin & Dorinson, 1998). Whether by cheapening a stereotyping or promoting one, comedians can have an impact on socio-cultural values. By taking power away from a powerful group, a comedian can make light of various types of discrimination. On the other hand, a comedian can perpetuate social stereotypes by taking power away from an already powerless ethnic group. In all the joke texts that comprise the data set, a winner and loser was identified based on the power loss or gain by the target.

Conclusion

After each joke text was individually analyzed for the aforementioned, I searched for trends within each ethnic group. These trends were then qualitatively compared across the ethnic groups present in this study. First, the GTVH is used to highlight the knowledge resources (KRs) used to inform the ethnic joke texts of each comedian. It is important to note that not all KRs are discussed for each comedian, but rather, the KRs that are most influential throughout the entire set of ethnic joke texts within one

comedian's performance are used to describe the data set of each individual comedian. The information collected from the initial analysis sheds light on the comedic persona of each individual. The third and fourth analyses explain the relationship between the comedian and his targets and the power loss or gain by the targets in the joke text, respectively. Following the presentation of each comedian in the data set, trends across each ethnic group are discussed. More specifically, chapter four discusses the African American group and chapter five discusses the Caucasian group. The final analysis chapter, six, focuses on the similar trends that are present in the Asian American and Hispanic group. The final chapter of this research presents the overall trends found within each ethnic group and the differences between them.

Chapter 4: African American Comedians

In chronological order of performance, the following four comedians comprised the African American data set: Patrice O'Neal (season 7, 2003), Rudy Rush (season 8, 2004), Ty Barnett (season 10, 2006), and Lavell Crawford (season 12, 2008). This chapter will present the findings from this data set. In this chapter, each comedian's performance is analyzed in the order they are listed above.

Patrice O'Neal

O'Neal's performance consists of twelve joke texts during the twenty minute performance. Six of these performances were categorized as ethnic joke texts due to the inclusion of a target that was labeled as a certain ethnicity by O'Neal. Furthermore, two of the non-ethnic joke texts included some reference to ethnicity. These were labeled as embedded ethnic joke texts due to the fact that they were small parts of a larger text. Examples of these scenarios will follow, but for now, it is important to state that O'Neal's entire performance was comprised of four non-ethnic joke texts, two non-ethnic joke texts with embedded ethnic joke texts, and six ethnic joke texts.

Knowledge Resources

O'Neal's ethnic joke texts demonstrated a variety of elements which contributed to the presentation of his target as a member of an ethnic group. On the language level of GTVH analysis, O'Neal's ethnic joke texts were not overly characterized by

manipulation of various dialects or accents, but rather, they were peppered with explicit terms used to reference various ethnicities. Out of 58 explicit ethnic labels used, 29 of them were used to reference Caucasians. Of the four African American males, O’Neal total number of explicit ethnic labels is the highest, as is his frequency of usage at approximately 20 ethnic labels per 1,000 words. The breakdown of usage is presented below in Table 2.

Table 2: Usage of Explicit Ethnic Labels by O’Neal

Caucasian		African American		Asian		Hispanic		Other	
White (adj.)	28	Black (adj.)	11	Asian	2	--	--	Arab	5
				Chinese	4				
Redneck	1	Nigger	3	Japanese	1	--	--	Indian	3
Total number of words – 2884									

In looking at the variety of words used, it is important to look at the context in which they occur before making any sound conclusions. O’Neal seems to use ‘white’ and ‘black’ as simply labels that separate one ethnic group from another. The presence of ‘nigger’ and ‘redneck’ in this data set supports this idea in that O’Neal uses the former terms as labels. The first two examples distinguish ‘black’ in a positive sense from ‘nigger’, which is used in a negative sense. In example 5, O’Neal discusses the ethnicity of the sniper who terrorized the Washington, D.C. area in 2002. The example expresses O’Neal’s view of the situation after the ethnicity of the sniper was revealed. He makes the claim that when people thought the sniper was Caucasian, people viewed him as “a genius...a mastermind, a diabolical, insidious madman”. Example 6 discusses the situation of Arabic people after the terrorist attacks of 2001. The final example comes from a joke text in which O’Neal is discussing the rest of the world’s view of Americans.

In this example, 'white' is distinguished from 'redneck'. O'Neal relates the latter term with the Ku Klux Klan, which is associate with much negativity.

- (5) ...Now he been downgraded to nigger and a XXX, now you don't hear nothing about him.
- (6) It's beautiful cause Arabs are the new nigger...Black people look at Arabs like white people look at us.
- (7) I don't care if you got KKK on your knuckles. Big time redneck, man. If I see you in another country, you're like my brother, cause they hate us, man, the same.

The Comedian and His Ethnic Targets

For O'Neal, language in the form of explicit ethnic labeling is the main KR that he uses to create the ethnic joke text. Through consistent use of ethnic labels he is able to constantly refer back to ethnicity as a focal point of his joke texts. Unfortunately, the use of positive and negative terms for Caucasian and African American ethnicities is not sufficient for determining O'Neal's relationship to his targets. In order to present a holistic view of O'Neal's performance, this section describes O'Neal as a comedian, his relationship to his targets and how he creates a situation of power loss or gain for them.

O'Neal's Persona and His Targets. O'Neal emphasizes the advantages and disadvantages of his race. He seems to be proud of his race, yet he harbors some frustration toward the still oppressed situation of the African American. This is all accomplished through joke texts within the performance. It may appear that O'Neal's persona is not very likeable due to the bluntness with which he presents his ethnic humor; however, he is able to present himself in a way that incites pity in the audience. While in some joke texts he presents himself or members of his ethnicity as the 'winners', he is

able to ward off any perceptions of an over-inflated ego by positioning himself or members of his ethnicity as the ‘losers’, which gains sympathy from the audience.

Black and White People Rule the Earth. The only ethnicity, according to the ethnic joke texts, rivaling the African American race is the Caucasian race. O’Neal presents three broad situations: jokes in which non-Caucasian and non-African American ethnic targets lose, African American targets lose to Caucasian targets, and African Americans and Caucasians win equally over other ethnic targets. In this section, each of these situations are explained and exemplified.

In O’Neal’s performance, no ethnic group can win out over the African American, except the Caucasian. His statement that “black and white people rule the earth” is supported by the power status he awards to each ethnic group. With references to Arabs, Indians, and various Asian nationalities, O’Neal demonstrates the various ways these groups are defective in comparison to other ethnic groups. In the examples below, this phenomenon is revealed.

- (8) I thought Arab was Arab...nope. Call a Pakistani dude ‘Palestiani’, right. “Hey, so where you from, Palestine?” “Ugh huh.” Spit at you, too...And you be like, “Oh my god, can I just get my gum?” I really don’t care where you from.

Example 8 is an excerpt taken from a joke concerning the reasons “black and white people rule the earth”. In example 8, O’Neal disparages ethnic groups whose differences in nationality cause racial tension. Additionally, he demeans the social status of the Arab by implicitly highlighting the fact that the Arab target of the joke is a mere convenience store attendant with the comment, ‘And you be like, “Oh my god, can I just get my gum?”’” Owning or managing a gas station in the United States is a common

stereotype of both Arab and Indian ethnic groups and is perpetuated by this joke text.

This excerpt is followed by O’Neal’s viewpoint as an African American:

- (9) People just look at me all day long calling me black, right? But I don’t go, “Oh why...ugh. Don’t you see the beige in my nose? Huh? Huh? How dare you!”

His overall claim in this joke is that African Americans and Caucasians “rule the earth” because they are the only two ethnicities that are referred to by the name of a color (i.e. black and white). Therefore the sensitivities associated with mislabeling someone’s ethnicity do not exist. The Arab target in this joke loses possibly because the requirement of specificity in labels has made it so people cannot identify the ethnicity with which he identifies. O’Neal claims that color is transparent and simple for people.

- (10) That’s why some of these countries, man, the food they eat, ya know what I’m saying? I’m gonna say China, but I don’t mean China. I just mean like countries that Chinese people come from, like...whatever. They, ya know, they eat our pets, man, ya know?...How can you eat a puppy, man?

The excerpt in example 10 is embedded within a non-ethnic joke text. O’Neal is commenting on homeless people who own dogs. He reveals a more sensitive side to his persona in that he states his love for animals over his love for his fellow mankind.

However, he brings to light a common stereotype targeting Asians: the consumption of dog as acceptable human food. In this example, the Asian target represents another ethnic group that does not match the ethnic superiority of the black and white races.

Can’t Be Racist. There is only one situation, which is referred to twice throughout the performance, of the Caucasian and his one downfall: the social expectation by all others that a Caucasian should not say or do anything that could remotely be considered racist. Two ethnic joke texts in O’Neal’s performance reveal this phenomenon. Both joke texts begin with the same line: “I feel bad for white dudes...”.

This section briefly highlights the only instance in which Caucasians lose power.

The first joke text explains why O'Neal feels sorry for Caucasian males, and the second illustrates an example that demonstrates two ways in which Caucasian males cannot be racist. Examples 12 and 13 are excerpt taken from each of these joke texts, respectively.

- (12) I feel bad for white dudes now. White dudes are finished man. You are, you really are, you know you are. It's sad. It's sad for me. It's no fun. You're no fun no more. Can't be racist. It's beautiful. I'm so happy I can be racist now. Isn't that fantastic?
- (13) That's how- That's the downfall of white guys, the OJ verdict. "Hey man, you upset a black dude killed a white woman?" "No...I'm upset when any man kills any woman for any reason." "I'm walking through the hall right now and I see a few black guys coming toward but I can't run cause if I run, they'll call me a racist." Run, stupid, run! Right? Just run. Get home, right? Feel guilty, but be alive.

Example 12 shows the superiority of O'Neal and the ethnic groups he represents. While bragging about being racist appears to be a social defect, O'Neal is demonstrating how improved his life is now that he can be a racist. He elaborates on this in the joke text represented by excerpt 13. He discusses what he has labeled "the downfall of white guys", in other words, the OJ Simpson case. He appears to try and reason with the Caucasian male, showing him a situation (i.e. encountering more than one African American male) in which his safety could depend on his racism. Simultaneously, he is implicitly perpetuating the stereotype that African American males pose a threat, but he counteracts this stereotype by turning the situation around in example (14), implying that bald males could be associated with the Ku Klux Klan:

- (14) I'd rather be- I'd rather be guilty and alive than like feeling good about myself and dead in the- whatever, man. If I'm in Kentucky and I see five bald white

dudes walking towards me, I ain't gonna wonder if they got cancer. I'm gonna go, "Aw, man." I'm running.

These two situations represent the one instance in which a Caucasian target loses. In order to conclude the analysis of this comedian, the final section discusses how the comedian views himself as a representative of his race.

The Black Man's Struggles. Throughout the ethnic joke texts, O'Neal positions his own ethnic group as both winners and losers. While the previous analysis highlights situations in which African American joke characters win or gain power, two situations in which African Americans lose power are present in the data set. The first situation deals with Caucasian females and how this group poses a threat and the second deals with crimes that a black man is not allowed to nor is able to commit.

In example (15), the excerpt describes in a situation that O'Neal deals with on a day-to-day basis: avoiding blame for the murder of a white woman. In this excerpt, he tells the audiences when white women seem to be problematic for him.

(15) Alright, white women make me real nervous. White women make me nervous as hell. Not right now cause there's witnesses, but I'm talking about like at night when they by theirself, ya know what I mean, walking towards me.

O'Neal appears to believe that if any ill should fall upon a white woman that he randomly encounters, he as a black man will be accused of it. Therefore, he tells the audience that he collects receipts to serve as alibis in example 16.

(16) I collect receipts cause that's a trail of where you been, man. You- Everywhere I go, I get a receipt. I don't care. And I never go more than a half hour without buying something cause you could kill somebody in a half hour, and then, you ain't gonna have- you need an alibi. So every 15 minutes, I buy something...

He rounds out this joke text by imitating a dialogue between himself and a convenience store attendant (identified as Arab through the use of accent) in which the attendant

refuses to give him a receipt for a pack of chewing gum. A fight ensues until O'Neal is assured that the gas station attendant would remember his face and the time that he entered the store.

The second example is a joke text in which that African American male is discriminated against in the type of crimes society believes he will commit. O'Neal begins by discussing the Washington, D.C. sniper of 2002. In discussing the sniper, O'Neal makes the claim that when the sniper was thought to be Caucasian, he was intelligent. This is presented in example (17) below:

- (17) What happened to the sniper? When he was a white guy, we heard a lot about him. When he was a white guy, he was a ge- a genius! A mastermind, a diabolical, insidious madman. The country is in grips of terror behind this amazing...

The words used to describe the sniper reflect someone with power and control. However, O'Neal argues that the view of the crime and the criminal changed after the sniper was caught and his African American ethnicity was revealed. This is revealed in example 18.

- (18) Now he been downgraded to 'nigger' and a XXX, now you don't hear nothing about him. Type up sniper on the internet. Page not found, can't found, nigger don't XXX. (audience laughter)

While there could be other reasons for the lack of interest in the sniper, such as too much hype for too long, O'Neal attempts to solidify his reasoning in the second half of the joke text. After admitting the situation has him confused and believing that African American males "have come a long way" and "can do some white guy crimes", he presents an argument that demonstrates an African American male's inability to carry out "traditional crazy white guy stuff".

- (19) Like chloroforming women – that's a white guy crime...Black guy- couldn't be the chloroform. "Miss, can I have the time?" "No, no I can't help you." You'd

“Excuse me, you got the time and the chloroform....” (begins to stumble around as if fumes were affecting him)

With the explanation of kidnapping by chloroform, O’Neal concedes that African Americans cannot commit all traditional Caucasian crimes. The African American targets in this joke text lose because the types of crimes associated with them are less sinister and perhaps do not require much forethought and planning. Therefore, with these two joke texts presented here, O’Neal presents ways in which African Americans have not yet advanced.

Rudy Rush

Out of 17 joke texts in Rudy Rush’s performance, there are only 3 ethnic jokes texts. The only ethnicities that appear in his joke texts are African American, Caucasian, Asian, and African, and Asians and Africans are only mentioned one time each. While the number of ethnic jokes is low, conclusions can be drawn from the small data set. Also, one interesting situation occurred that does not appear in other performances. Rush begins a non-ethnic joke immediately following an ethnic joke, and in the non-ethnic, he clarifies to the audience that the joke that is about to ensue is non-ethnic in nature and applicable to everyone. In this section, I focus on the analysis of Rush’s ethnic humor.

Knowledge Resources

The main knowledge resource that characterizes Rush’s ethnic joke texts is his targets. He presents an ethnic dichotomy: white and black. His targets do not seem to affect one another, but rather, they live in separate worlds, perhaps even dominating the world. The first ethnic joke that he presents concerns the state of African Americans and Caucasians following the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001. Asians and Africans

are mentioned this joke text, but they are not the focus. The excerpts below show various aspects of this joke text as it relates to African Americans and Caucasians.

- (20) I don't know, man. Things are going crazy in the world today. 9/11 changed everything. Black people different, white people different.

Example 20 introduces the joke text. Rush tells the audience that “things are going crazy in the world today” and the terrorist attacks “changed everything”. The inclusivity one would expect after the use of these phrases never comes. African Americans and Caucasians are the only ethnic groups that are mentioned, which could imply. Literally, the world would incorporate all ethnic groups or at least all those involved with the situation (e.g. September 11th terrorist attacks), but Rush seems to be viewing the world as containing only two ethnicities, or at least the only two that deserve mention. Example 21 shows a similar situation in which Rush continues on the topic of the terrorist attacks of 2001 and describes who is being targeted by foreign enemies:

- (21) You know what's funny? White people, let me tell y'all something, y'all think them terrorists is looking for all of us. They looking for y'all asses. Black people remember, after it happened, they came to work, “Oh my god, they after all of us!” “Uh uh. I live in Harlem. They're not coming to my neighborhood.”

He describes the level of fear following the attacks as it was felt by two ethnicities.

According to Rush, each ethnic group felt a level of threat after the attacks; however, the African American community rested easy knowing that it was free from peril considering that Caucasians were the sole target of such an attack. Some ethnic groups also affected by September 11th, 2001 are left unmentioned, such as the Hispanics, the Asian Americans, and Middle Easterners.

- (22) And black people, we be tripping now, too. We always complain, “I can't catch a cab to save my life!” Look, one of them brothers with the turban come over now, we be like, “Naw, naw, go head, go head. Go ahead, I'm gonna wait for one of

them Asians or Africans. I ain't messing with you, bro." "I take you to Brooklyn (Arab accent)" "No, no, boom, boom. (audience laughter) I ain't messing with you."

Initially, he separates the two ethnic groups, but in example 22, he relates one way the fear has spread to African Americans to the extent that they will pass up the opportunity to receive public transportation, a convenience with which they struggle to obtain, in order to find safety with a driver who is not Middle Eastern. In Rush's ethnic joke texts, non-Caucasian and non-African American ethnicities are part of the situation in the joke, they are not the targets. The script opposition of this joke is *black man can't get a cab* vs. *black man refuses to take a cab*. Had the other ethnic groups not been mentioned in the joke, there would be no basis for the two scripts that are juxtaposed in this text. Therefore, it appears that Asians, Africans, and Arabs could be the targets, but they are not. Throughout the performance, Rush's ethnic targets are limited to African American and Caucasian ethnic groups.

The 'We' versus 'They' Ideology

Since Rush presents his audience with only two ethnic targets throughout his set of ethnic joke texts, the absence of other ethnic groups as joke targets is worth an investigation. The black and white world that Rush presents to his audience shows just a small aspect of the larger world, but also, a large aspect of Rush's view of the world. While his data set is limited proportionally to the overall number of jokes he tells during his performance, the examples presented here support trends found in the African American group of comedians as a whole. This section provides possible explanations for why Rush's targets are limited to African American and Caucasian targets.

We. Rush speaks directly to the ethnic group with which he identifies. He also speaks as an experienced member of the African American community. He accomplishes this through the use of the first person plural pronoun and the provision of his knowledge about different aspects of his ethnic group. Referring back to example 21, we can see that Rush seems to speak for his ethnic group by addressing the “black people” directly, and in example 22, he speaks as a member of the African American community by referring to himself and others as ‘we’. In these examples, he also illustrates for the audience the difference in the two ethnicities in terms of how they view the troubles that resulted from the attacks. The Caucasian mentality, according to Rush, is that all people are in danger, but Rush separates his ethnic group from the Caucasian group. He does so by insinuating that African Americans who live in Harlem, which is a lower income area of New York City, are free from danger due to their place of residence. With this, he removes power from the Caucasian, to whom he assigns fear and peril. African Americans, residents of Harlem, are not gripped by these situations.

Following the joke text represented by examples 21 and 22, Rush discusses the 2002 Washington D.C. sniper, as did Patrice O’Neal. He also claims that people were surprised at the African American ethnicity of the sniper, as did O’Neal. However, Rush’s take on the situation contrasted that of O’Neal. He highlights the reason he believes that a black person would be a sniper. Referring to himself and other members of the African American community, he explains why a black man would be a sniper:

(23) Let me tell you something, black people, I wasn’t surprised cause we don’t have any good black leaders anymore. Black people just doing whatever they wanna do.

Through this joke text he isolates his ethnic group and present a personal analysis on the reasons behind what prompted an African American to murder many people.

In his third ethnic joke text, he discusses African American parents. He identifies himself as a member of the African American ethnicity in the very first line that he uses to open his joke:

- (24) And black parents are funny, I don't know about white parents, but black parents are funny cause they get out in front of other people and they change their whole personality.

He explicitly states that he lacks the knowledge that one would have had he or she been raised by Caucasian parents. The joke here describes how his mother met a Caucasian boyfriend of one her African American friends. The Caucasian also happens to be a professor at a college, so we can see that he has a higher level of education. Rush continues by explaining that his mother introduced him to the Caucasian male as 'Rudolf' when he is typically referred to as 'Rudy'. His mother elevates her formality in the situation as Rush seems to be implying that she gives him this name as a way to impress the Caucasian professor. He ends the joke with the following:

- (25) We meet this guy, she's like, "This is my son, Rudolf." I was like, "What the hell?" I go to shake his hand, I'm like, "Hi, I'm Rudy." She's like, "Hahaha, Rudolf." I start thinking to myself, 'Are you bout to sell me to this white man?'

While targeting his mother's shift in behavior due to her surroundings, he could be bringing to light the idea that Caucasians have higher social power than African Americans since his mother is attempting to impress this man so much that Rush gets the idea that he soon might be sold. Conversely, his profession could be the trigger for his mother's higher level of formality, but the former suggestion carries just as much weight because his ethnicity deserved mention within the joke text.

They. As was somewhat mentioned above, Rush presents Caucasians as ‘they’. What is particularly interesting is that opposing group seems to be framed as the only other group separate from African Americans. In a similar manner to how he establishes his ethnicity, he presents Caucasians as the others by addressing them directly and using the third person plural pronouns in reference to them. The following examples show the direct addressing of this particular ethnic group:

(26) White people, let me tell y’all something, y’all think them terrorists is looking for all of us. They looking for y’all asses.

(27) White people, let me tell y’all something, y’all ain’t gotta worry. Black people ain’t voting for no brother with no perm. I’m sorry.

Example 26 is a warning to Caucasians that the terrorists are targeting stereotypical ‘white’ areas of the city, and example 27 is his assurance to Caucasians that Al Sharpton would never be voted for by African Americans due to his hairstyle. While Rush directly addresses African Americans, he does so in a way that shows he identifies with them. In example 21, he asks African Americans if they remember Caucasians’ behavior after the terrorist attacks. However, in these two examples above, he is giving them some information that he feels is relevant to their lives. By relating something to them that they do not already know, he distances himself from them.

Ty Barnett

The third comedian of this ethnic group is Ty Barnett whose 20-minute segment contained fifteen joke texts. There were a total of five ethnic jokes, one of which was embedded within a non-ethnic joke text, and one ethnic mention. Barnett’s joke texts are more complex than his comedic counterparts in that he intertwines many topics together so it proves difficult to separate each joke text; therefore, each example presented in this

section is described in context, whether that context is ethnic or non-ethnic. Additionally, Barnett presents many similarities to the previous comedian, Rudy Rush, in that he presents the audience with a racial dichotomy: black and white. In the following section, I describe the ethnic humor of Ty Barnett.

Knowledge Resources

The knowledge resource that is the most influential in shaping Barnett's ethnic joke texts is the target. Superficially, he is similar to Rudy Rush because it appears that he presents the audience with only two ethnic targets. However, by using the knowledge resources, we can see that he targets stereotypical ideologies that are associated with each ethnic group: African American and Caucasian. He targets situations and concepts rather than people themselves. Therefore, he seems to be similar to Patrice O'Neal, who appeared to use his ethnic jokes to address racial issues present in society.

Race Relations. In one of his joke texts, Barnett addresses race relations in the United States. However, race relations refer only to the relationship between the African American and the Caucasian. This is affirmed by Barnett through the social examples that he mentions with the text:

(28) This one guy, he asked me last week, he's like, "Ty, do you think race relations have gotten better in this country?" And I had to think about how to answer his question, so I was like, "Well, uh, officer, (audience laughter) if you would release the chokehold..."

In example 28, Barnett targets the relationship between himself and a police officer. The audience is left to presume that the police officer is not African American due to the topic of the joke, which is race relations. Also, it would be odd for Barnett to be implying any other ethnic group for the race of the police officer due to the fact that no other race is

mentioned throughout his entire performance except for Caucasians. Therefore, the audience more than likely believes he is talking about a white officer. After pausing for audience laughter, he cites two different ways that labels have served to cast a dark shadow on the African American community:

- (29) If you driving down the road, and the road is icy...black ice. (shakes head disapprovingly/audience laughter) Don't act like you ain't never heard it before.
- (30) I saw- I saw a report on CNN. The report said the killer bees are coming, the killer bees! But these were killer bees because they were Africanized. (audience laughter) What the- What are these, hip-hop bees? Like they gonna come in here and sting everybody except me, this row (motions to audience), and half of him (points to audience member).

In example 29, Barnett makes an illogical connection between labeling ice on the road and using labels to discriminate. Then, in example 30, he makes the claim that by calling the killers bees Africanized, CNN contributes to the negative image of African Americans. While the connections create humor because the scripts are mismatched, Barnett is bringing up an interesting point: The way we use language to label things may reflect the way we see our relationships with other ethnic groups. These examples only deal with how people view African Americans, but this would be expected from such a comedian. After supporting his belief that we use too many labels, he provides a way to avoid this and begin to repair race relations in the United States:

- (31) No, check it out. Since all racism comes from stereotypes, I think we should switch stereotypes...every 30 days. No, check it out. The stereotypes that apply to one culture, switch it up. That way if I ever got pulled over, the cop be like, "Well we stopped you cause you match the description of a car-jacking suspect." "No, no, no, officer, if you would check your calendar, you match the description."

Barnett's solution might be impossible, but he could be presenting a valid point: the only way labels will ever be eliminated is if people themselves stop using them. The

script opposition here is *stereotypes are deeply ingrained vs. stereotypes can be transferred easily*. The mismatch between the two scripts supports the point he could be trying to make by presenting the audience with his solution.

On Being a Minority. There are two instances where Barnett highlights his status as a minority. While he presents himself as the subject of the joke text, he could be a representative of his entire ethnic group. The first instance occurs at the beginning of the performance and the second is embedded within a non-ethnic joke text. In both cases, he discusses situations that accent his ethnicity, while providing commentary about the differences between African Americans and Caucasians. The first example is somewhat historical in that it highlights the time period before the Civil War when slavery was still prevalent:

- (32) Good looking crowd. Uh, this is nice. I feel very, uh, comfortable here. I do. Seriously. Four hundred years ago, this woulda been an auction.

This excerpt is taken from the very beginning of the performance as the audience lessens their applause so he can take the stage and begin the show. Barnett identifies himself as African American, and this is recognized by the audience due to the context he presents to them. One African American in front of many Caucasians would have been a slave auction around during the 17th century, which is the time period he is referring to. However, times have changed so he feels okay up on stage.

The second situation he targets is recreational places that are typical thought of as being for the Caucasian. On a recent trip to a winery in California, he and others notice his ethnicity to quite an extent:

- (33) Cool, but weird cause I was like black guy number 5. So it was like Disney Land so everybody knew I was just visiting. It's like, "Look, Marge, there's another

one!” (snaps photo with camera) They’re sitting there asking me to take pictures with their kids, I’m like, “Rarr!”

He relates his trip to the winery to that of a trip to an amusement park; only in this case, he is the attraction because of the rare presence of African Americans at wineries. While making light of an awkward social situation in which he found himself to be a minority, he could be raising the issue of segregation in recreation. Overall, the joke text is non-ethnic while example 33 represents the embedded ethnic joke text. It seems that it was important enough for him to mention his minority status in this environment that he inserted comments about it into the joke text.

Lavell Crawford

During Lavell Crawford’s 20-minute performance, he incorporated ten total joke texts, only two of which were categorized as ethnic. However, Crawford incorporated six ethnic mentions into his joke texts. Crawford’s comedic persona is very influential the development of his performance, so his ethnic joke texts are somewhat different from those of the other comedians comprising the African American ethnic group. In this section, I discuss how Crawford’s ethnic joke texts are similar to the three previous comedians and how they align with the trends present thus far.

Knowledge Resources

The most influential knowledge resource in Crawford’s performance is his narrative strategy. His narrative strategy works with his comedic persona to create a unique character on stage. As was previously mentioned, Crawford used more ethnic mentions than complete ethnic joke texts. These were inserted into non-ethnic joke texts as comments seemingly providing detail, but they appeared to serve a more important

function. While the ethnic mentions may not be what Attardo and Raskin (1991) traditionally defined as narrative strategy, they are ways in which Crawford relates his joke texts. The ethnic mentions assist in creating the way in which the joke is told, so they should be subsumed under the narrative strategy category in the knowledge resources. This section highlights Crawford's use of ethnic mentions throughout his performance.

Side Notes. Crawford uses ethnic mentions to provide the audience with knowledge about his ethnic group that they may or may not have known. These comments appear as side notes where they interrupt the joke text, but they are not irrelevant. He seems to insert them in order to highlight certain characteristics about his ethnic group. He does not present the characteristics as positive or negative, but rather, he could be presenting them to provide the audience with the information they need to follow the joke or he could be creating exclusivity. In the following excerpt, Crawford is discussing a situation in which he received news from the doctor that he had diabetes. Then, he had to go home and tell his mother. When he tells her about the diagnosis, she instantly believes he has contracted a sexually transmitted disease; however, he quickly realizes why she does not understand.

(34) And I forgot, black folk give everything a nickname. We don't even call diabetes 'diabetes', we call it 'the sugar'.

Upon revealing 'the sugar' diagnosis to his mother, she becomes very distressed. In order to address her misunderstanding, Crawford could have said she was not educated or was not aware of the disease, but instead, he chose to explain to the audience a unique aspect of the language of the African American community, which he refers to as 'black

folk'. He identifies himself as a part of it through the use of the inclusive 'we', and he casts no negative light onto this distinctive linguistic behavior of African Americans.

Within the same joke text, he makes a second ethnic mention, which highlights the faith of the African American. After his mother becomes aware of Crawford's true ailment, she begins to beg Jesus concerning this new development in her son's life:

(35) I said, "Mama, I got the sugar." She like, "Oh, Lord! Not the sugar! Love the baby Jesus! Take me instead, Lord! Jesus XXX, tell me what you want! Holy..." Black folk go to church in only a minute.

Again, we see an ethnic mention that provides an explanation for the behavior of Crawford's mother upon receiving the bad news. There is no outward positive or negative value associated with this behavior, but rather, he gives the audience the information they need to understand why his mother reacted in such a way. In both examples above, he potentially creates exclusivity by simply mentioning these behaviors as a characteristic of African Americans. The exclusivity is created by possibility that no other ethnic group has these characteristics; therefore, they must be mentioned. While it appears more likely that he is providing the audience with the information they need to understand the joke text, he could also be creating a certain level of exclusivity. This is shown more clearly in the following section.

Separation and Identification. Crawford inserts ethnic mentions into his joke text creating an illusion of separation and ethnic identification. By attributing ethnicity to a character in the joke text where no aspect of the joke text had previously incorporated ethnicity, Crawford separates himself from the other character or characters in each text. He also employs ethnic mentions in order to identify himself or others as having

ethnicity. Crawford presents ethnicity as a significant attribute of the characters that he mentions. The following examples are provided to illustrate ethnic identification.

- (36) And I- And then, ya know, some of my white friends told, “Hey Lavell, let’s go- let’s go skiing.” I said, “Man, I don’t go skiing.” “But at least you can go up the mountain.”
- (37) Then I’d say- I’d say, “You know that little white boy ain’t got a bad idea.” I’d say, “I’m gonna hang myself from the ceiling fan, too.”
- (38) I’m afraid of him biting me and leaving a blood trail back to all his family saying, “Drop whatever you’re doing and come 25 miles due south. I done found a lifetime supply of dark meat.”

In examples 36 and 37, Crawford identifies Caucasians through use of ‘white’ as an adjective. Example 38 shows an instance of Crawford labeling himself as African American with the phrase ‘dark meat’. He equates himself as shark food with the noun ‘meat’ and highlights the color of his skin with ‘dark’. In each of these examples, ethnicity had not been a prevalent factor in the joke text until it was mentioned to identify a person or group’s ethnicity. For instance, example 38 is taken from a joke text regarding a time when Crawford attempted to ride a jet ski in the ocean. He discusses situations that may arise if he were to fall off the jet ski. At approximately 850 words, this short excerpt is the only mention of ethnicity throughout the entire joke text. For Crawford, it appears that ethnicity is a defining factor for the characters in his joke text. However, trending with the other comedians in this group, he mentions only African Americans and Caucasians.

Segregation. Crawford also highlights segregation with his final ethnic mention. In a joke text, he relates to the audience his experience at a mountain in Aspen, Colorado with some of his white friends (see example 36). After expressing his fear of the

mountains and the physical strain on his body, he joked about being so high up that they started to orbit the Earth and reached Heaven. This joke text contains two ethnic mentions; however, the second illustrates African American and Caucasian segregation that extends into the afterlife. The second ethnic mention is the concluding statement of the entire joke text.

- (39) Next you know, we went up there, we went so high we was in orbit, man, we was in Heaven! Heaven! I saw Jesus! I went out and I went to shake His hand. “Hey Jesus, how ya doing?” Then a security guard came outta no where and said, “Look black guy, this is white Heaven. Black Heaven’s somewhere near Harlem.”

Since general beliefs regarding Heaven describe it as not being located on earth, the African American in this joke text loses because his Heaven turns out to be Harlem, which is typically associated with lower socioeconomic status and higher levels of crime. As a result, Crawford positions African Americans in a position of low power with respect to the Caucasian who gets to enter the Heaven in the sky where Jesus resides, while African Americans are destined to remain in Harlem or near it for this life and the next. However, Crawford may also be commenting on the racial issues that are still present between Caucasians and African Americans in the United States. While segregation may not exist overtly, segregation is historically associated with the relationship between these two ethnic groups. Segregation in this context could be representative of the racial tensions that continue to exist even in the 21st century. This is supported by Ty Barnett’s comments that race relations have not improved, as was mentioned above. Crawford is able to slip in a humorous comment to round out his joke text; however, the mention of ethnic segregation is more meaningful than it appears.

Ethnic Jokes

In addition to the ethnic mentions present in Crawford's performance, he incorporates two ethnic joke texts. Both texts are different in their situations, but they are similar in theme and target. Similar to the ethnic mention in example 39, Crawford appears to address social issues with his two joke texts. The first can be described as a call to action, while the second one is more of a social critique. In this section, I describe the two ethnic jokes, analyzing their underlying meaning and relationship to the overall data set within the African American group.

Black History Month. The first joke text accomplishes two things: the first half attempts to call African Americans together to celebrate Black History month more, while the second half seems to demonstrate the suppression of the black man's achievements. The first part of the joke text is unique from the other comedians in this ethnic group, but the second part resonates that of Patrice O'Neal who presented the idea that African American males cannot commit the same crimes as Caucasian males whose criminal behaviors tend to reflect thought, care and planning (i.e. sniping and using chloroform for kidnapping). The two ideas presented above are explored here beginning with Crawford's call to action.

Call to Action. Crawford begins this joke text by explicitly addressing the African American community with 'black folk'. He calls them out by expressing his belief that the community, including himself through the use of the first person plural pronoun, needs to increase efforts in the celebration of Black History Month. He illustrates for the African American community that they need to "celebrate it harder". He provides evidence for this belief.

- (40) Mexican got Cinco de Mayo, they have guacamole all in the streets. White folks got St. Patrick's Day, "Kiss me, I'm Irish." I like (makes kissing face) "Not that hard!" But we need something. We need to get celebrating.

He demonstrates for his audience that other ethnicities are active about celebrating their holidays, while the efforts by the African American community to celebrate their own could be improved. He completes the first half by explaining how he thinks this could be accomplished:

- (41) We should at least get some free chicken, chicken coupons to our favorite chicken restaurant anywhere we want. And we should be able to drive down a predominately white neighborhood as fast as we want and the police can't pull us over. (makes police siren noise) "Officer, it's Black History Month." "Oh I'm sorry, I thought it was March 1st." (audience laughter) "I'll see you tomorrow, black man. Thank ya!"

Through the use of examples of other ethnic groups, a reference to the common stereotype that African Americans eat a lot of chicken and an insinuation to racial discrimination by Caucasian law enforcement, Crawford using a joking nature to somewhat mask the overall message of this joke text: African Americans should be proud of their ethnicity and demonstrate it, especially when given the opportunity during Black History Month. The absurdities of free chicken and the right to break the law create the script opposition *celebrating Black History Month vs. celebrating Black History Month illegally*. The humor arises out of this script opposition, but the underlying message remains.

The Black Man's Suppression. Continuing on the topic of Black History Month, Crawford discusses the African American inventors that should be celebrated during this time. He labels the inventors 'brother'. Crawford is the only comedian in this group to use this term for an African American male. This positive term is contrasted throughout

the joke text by the opposition: the white man. After creating a list of great inventions from African Americans, he demonstrates how the Caucasian has gone one step farther:

- (42) But- But ya know what kills me about Black History Month is all our great creators created stuff, the white man always found a way to top it. That's what kills me. Like the brother invented the light bulb, the white man invented the electric bill. (audience laughter) Brother invented the stoplight, police invented the traffic ticket. Brother create a baby, white man create child support court.

The theme presented in this joke text aligns with that of Patrice O'Neal who appears to be upset about the disbelief by the people that the sniper would be an African American. Presented in this joke text, a similar theme arises: the African American will always be outdone by the Caucasian. Additionally, another interesting theme runs through this joke text and it is that of the African American's suppression. The ways in which the Caucasian tops the African American are of financial cost to the African American. The 'white man' in this joke seems to represent, not the man who outdoes another man, but a man who suppresses another man by placing penalties on him, and in this case, penalties for his own inventions. The Caucasian inventions in this joke are not inventions at all, but rather, they are a means to control the African American inventions. Crawford could be suggesting that this is reflective of the relationship between the African American and the Caucasian in general.

Temporary Negros. The final ethnic joke text resembles that of Ty Barnett, who was made aware of his minority status on a trip to a California winery. Crawford travels to Aspen, Colorado where he experiences a similar situation.

- (43) Yeah, but speaking of Black History Month, I went to the whitest part of America. I went to the whitest part of America – Aspen, Colorado. It ain't no black folk no where up there, no where. It was one brother when I got off the plane, he shook my hand and said, "Thank you, and welcome to Aspen." And

evaporated right there. I ain't lying. I said, "Wow, they got temporary Negros up here. That's amazing!"

Similar to the situation presented by Barnett, Crawford finds himself in a predominately Caucasian recreational area. Barnett and Crawford present two different parts of the United States and two different types of leisure activity (i.e. wine tasting and skiing), but the same theme: segregation.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the humor of the four males that comprise the African American comedian group. While all four comedians present ethnic humor, all four juxtaposition the Caucasian with the African American and present powerful and powerless targets. The final three – Rudy Rush, Ty Barnett, and Lavell Crawford – present the world as black and white, while the first comedian, Patrice O'Neal incorporates other ethnic groups into his performance. Overall, the four comedians focus on the relationship between the African American and the Caucasian and present ironies, stereotypes, and struggles that each ethnicity holds about the other.

Chapter 5: Caucasian Comedians

In chronological order of performance, the following four comedians comprised the Caucasian data set: Daniel Tosh (season 7, 2003), Jimmy Dore (season 8, 2004), Ben Bailey (season 10, 2006), and Bill Gardell (season 12, 2008). This chapter will present the findings from this data set. In this chapter, each comedian's performance is analyzed in the order they are listed above. Within this data set, a very different situation occurred from the other ethnic groups of comedians: only one comedian tells ethnic jokes in his stand-up routine. A second comedian uses an indistinguishable accent in one of his joke, but the other two reference other topics that are not related to ethnic background as it is describe in this research paper. Therefore, the analyses of the three comedians who do not employ ethnic joke texts focuses on the topics they choose to use and whether those topics appear in the performances of other the other three ethnicities that form the data set of this investigation.

Daniel Tosh

In his 20-minute segment, Tosh tells twenty jokes total. This performance is broken down into 18 non-ethnic joke texts and 2 ethnic joke texts. Tosh also makes one embedded ethnic joke with the set of 18 non-ethnic texts. Tosh is the only Caucasian comedian to incorporate ethnic jokes into his performance. The analysis of his routine

attempts to explain why Tosh differs in this aspect from his Caucasian comedic counterparts.

Knowledge Resources

The most influential knowledge resource that makes Tosh's joke texts unique is his narrative strategies. Tosh's performance is characterized by narratives and one-liners. What is different about his narrative strategies is that he does not carry one topic on into the following joke text. In fact, most of his subsequent joke texts are almost entirely unrelated to the predecessors. Examples 20 and 21 demonstrate the disconnect between one joke text and the next. The examples are short texts due to spacing issues, but this situation can be found throughout the transcription of Tosh's stand-up routine.

- (20) Yeah, I live in Los Angeles. Girls in Los Angeles like to say this, "I'm not religious, but I'm spiritual." I like to reply, "I'm not honest, but you're interesting." (audience applause/laughter) Yeah, alright.
- (21) I know a lot of you think I'm crazy, I am. I have a lot of voices in my head, but they speak in Spanish and I have no idea what they're saying. That's irritating. I wish one of them would get a job. (audience laughter) Oh, they're my voices. Don't worry about them.

These examples are the joke texts in their entirety. By examining the knowledge resources that inform these joke texts, we can explain the disconnect that is present between them. In terms of language and narrative strategies, they are the same. However, in terms of target, situation, and script opposition, they are very different. The latter three knowledge resources are on a deeper level than the first two (Attardo & Raskin, 1991). Therefore, instead of analyzing the way the texts are presented (e.g. language and narrative strategy), we examine the content of the joke (e.g. target, situation, script opposition). In these two texts, Tosh first ridicules girls from L.A., then he ridicules himself explicitly and Hispanics implicitly. The latter is discussed in more

detail in the next section, so for now, it is important to note to separate targets. Also, the situations differ as in the first, he relates encounters he has had with females from L.A., and in the second, he discusses an internal events that happen within his own mind. Lastly, the scripts he opposes in each joke are dissimilar. In the first joke, he opposes *smart vs. dumb*, and in the second, he opposes *possible vs. impossible*.

Tosh's Persona

By creating disconnect, Tosh could be allowing himself an escape out of each joke text in the event that it fails. The example presented here is followed by what could be described as skeptical audience response. In the recording, the response is incomplete and reactions seem to be mixed. Some audience members laugh, while others respond with what sounds like a disapproving, "oh".

(22) I was dating this girl, she got a boob job, a breast enlargement, but she put squeak toys in 'em. And I'm like (honk, honk, honk, honk) Yay! She was a clown, so it was a tax write-off.

This joke is presented as a one-liner. The audience response could be a reaction to the content of the joke itself, or it could be a reaction to Tosh's frequent use of this type of narrative strategy. Whatever the case may be, Tosh quickly jumped into the next joke. He interrupted the audience's response and changed the topic completely. The joke that followed example 22 began like this:

(23) Ah, the floor is lava. (climbs on stool sitting on stage) I almost got burnt there. Oooo you don't know what that is? Fine, I don't care. That's a game I used to play as a child – The Floor is Lava. That's when you climb on all the furniture in your house and you couldn't touch the floor.

When Tosh says, "I almost got burnt there", he could be referring to the fact that the audience disapproved of his previous joke or he could simply be setting the stage to

begin his narrative about a childhood game. Either way, he escaped joke failure by quickly changing the target, the situation, and the narrative strategy in order to tell his next joke.

Easing into Ethnic Humor

More than the other comedians in this data set, Tosh seems to test the audience in both what they can handle and how much they are willing to tolerate. This aligns with how Tosh presents his ethnic humor. While he only has one embedded ethnic joke and two stand alone ethnic joke texts, he spreads them out throughout the performance and warms his audience up to a Caucasian male comedian relating ethnic jokes to an audience. His ethnic jokes violate Patrice O'Neal's claim that "white dudes can't be racist". In this section, each joke will be presented separately to show the progression.

A Stereotype Implied. The first ethnic joke that appears was mentioned in example 21, but it is rewritten here for convenience. Tosh discusses the Spanish speaking voices inside his head. By wishing one of his voices would find work, he could be implying that people who typically speak Spanish are unemployed. However, because he does not explicitly state this, the audience is left to come to such a conclusion on their own. The audience reaction gives Tosh cues as to how to proceed with his ethnic jokes. These cues are not just related to whether or not the audience will accept his ethnic humor, but also, they could assist him in determining if the audience can interpret implicit humor, or in other words, 'get it'.

(24) I know a lot of you think I'm crazy, I am. I have a lot of voices in my head, but they speak in Spanish and I have no idea what they're saying. That's irritating. I wish one of them would get a job. (audience laughter) Oh, they're my voices. Don't worry about them.

A Simple Mention. The second ethnic joke that appears is embedded into a narrative. Tosh poses a question to the audience in which he imitates the behavior of a European. While the behavior is unusual for an American, the embedded joke text highlights a difference between Europeans and people from the United States.

(25) Have you guys flown since 11-9? I'm European. (audience laughter)

The humor is not disparaging, but rather, the humor is a simple opposition of *real* vs. *unreal* scripts. The real script being that Tosh is from the United States, and the unreal script being that Tosh is from Europe. This, however, is an explicit reference to an ethnicity that is not his own. While the term 'European' is very general, it is similar to 'Asian' and 'Arab' in terms of grouping together many nationalities.

The Racist White Dude. The third and final ethnic joke text is a long narrative that targets Mexicans, Chinese, African Americans and Caucasians. A short summary of the joke text reveals that Tosh questions the flavor of various human beings and what one would encounter in a cannibalistic situation. This joke occurs as joke number 17 out of 20, so it comes towards the end of the performance. The nature of this joke text should come as no surprise to the audience considering he has flaunted script opposition more so than any other comedian with such jokes concerning breast enlargement with squeaky toys, a male taking a pregnancy test, and adopting a baby as her grandfather in order to avoid the responsibility of fatherhood. The audience has plenty of time to prepare for a topic such as cannibalism, but they have only been mildly prepared for the content of this joke text. Example 26 illustrates the introduction of the topic.

(26) Cannibalism is a horrible scenario. I'm not going to argue with you, but if you had to eat another human being to survive, do you think they taste like their ethnic background?

He then continues by explaining his thoughts on the issue:

(27) Do you think Mexicans are spicy? Do you have to have chips and salsa before you bite into one? You can start laughing now, I'm gonna do everybody in here. (audience laughter) Chinese people, are you hungry 30 minutes later for more? Let's go everybody, black people, tastes like chicken. All's fair, all's fair, white people? Alright, you don't eat white people. I'm sorry, I don't make the rules.

In 26, Tosh questions the flavor of his targets ethnic backgrounds. His detailed questions in 27 highlight stereotypes about Mexican and Chinese food and the widespread stereotype that African Americans eat a lot of chicken. After starting with Mexicans, he lets the audience know that it would be acceptable for them to laugh because he intends to target everyone. However, when it comes to the final ethnicity, Caucasian, he awards power to his own ethnic group: white people are not to be eaten. If this were the entirety of the joke text, we would award power to the Caucasian ethnicity, however, he backtracks.

Tosh immediately justifies the punch line of the joke. He claims he likes to make white people uncomfortable. He then assures the audience that this was indeed “just a joke”. The presence of this comment is unique in that this joke text is the only time Tosh explicitly states that the joke is a joke. Even after outlandish statements such as those found in other joke texts in his performance, this is the only where the audience is reminded of Tosh's joking nature. After that, he then begins to reverse his standpoint multiple times before the joke text is over. First, he simultaneously targets African Americans and Caucasians. He then apologizes for an aspect of targeting African Americans, expresses concern over being discriminated against, and finally, relates an

incident of what happened the last time he told this joke. Each of these situations is presented separately.

- (28) What if that joke's the reason I don't get into Heaven? Like I get up to Heaven, find out God's black. Yeah, he comes walking up to me. (walks around and shakes finger accusingly/begins to speak in AAVE) "Uh that joke wasn't funny, mother f***er, let me tell you something, black people taste like chicken. White people taste like macaroni and cheese, bitch!" (audience applause/laughter)

Example 28 accomplishes two things: targets African Americans and their stereotypical use of vernacular English and targets Caucasians by associating them with a food. While this joke potentially counteracted the outcome of example 27, the good intention of targeting Caucasians is made void by the targeting of African Americans. The audience response demonstrates that the reference to macaroni and cheese flavored Caucasians was what they had been waiting for, and possibly overlooking the targeting of African Americans. However, Tosh continues on, apologizing for his behavior in 29.

- (29) Alright, calm down, crackers, this ain't a rally. I don't want anyone getting the wrong idea. I know that uh, I doubt God's using that kind of language and that's a very stereotypical voice I used for an African American, I apologize.

While recognizing his racism in 29, he reverses the situation in example 30 where he expresses concern for his own race and the stereotypes placed on his ethnic group.

- (30) How many black comics have you heard in your lifetime go, "You know, white people, 'Hi Bob, how are you?' 'Good, Tom, thanks for asking'" (speaks in unnatural 'dorky' accent) I don't sound like that at all. That's very offensive.

Example 30 could be a justification for targeting African American speech or it could be Tosh's script opposition in that we might not expect a Caucasian to feel discriminated against, yet he presents the situation as if he does. At any rate, he closes the joke out by explaining that he has been confronted about this joke in the past, and he presents what he views to be an acceptable reason for telling such a joke. While justifying his right to

tell jokes about African Americans in example 31, he implies that he really has no valid reasons for doing so.

- (31) I did that joke one night, and of course, a white lady came running up to me after the show. She goes, “What gives you the right to do jokes about black people like that?” I’m like, “Listen, lady. My best friend is Cuban and that’s close enough.” (audience laughter) Yeah, she was like, “Oh, I’m sorry.”

The Other Guys

Out of the four Caucasian comedians, only Daniel Tosh incorporated ethnic jokes into his stand-up routine. The remaining three – Jimmy Dore, Ben Bailey, and Bill Gardell – are discussed together in light of this finding. The goal is to establish what they do instead of ethnic humor. In this section, I present the trends across these three comedians in terms of targets and situations.

The ‘Un-Ethnic’ Personas

These three comedians vary from the others in the data set. At first, it is difficult to see exactly why, but the knowledge resources contribute to a more detailed understanding of the relationship between the joke texts and the comedian. Here I explain each comedian’s persona as it is established by his joke texts.

Jimmy Dore. The first comedian had 17 joke texts in his performance. Eight of those joke texts dealt with family and religion. Dore grew up in a large family where he was one of twelve children. He was also raised Catholic and went to Catholic school, and he is upfront about the fact that he resents it. These five of the joke texts specifically targeting family and three targeting religion comprise approximately half of the performance (1,494 words/3,020 total words). For Dore, these two topics are very

significant to the creation of his persona. His bitterness towards the living in a large family and religion is represented in example 32 and 33, respectively.

- (32) They go, “Well you learn a lot about life growing up in a big family, don’t ya?” “Yeah, I learned I’m replaceable.” (audience laughter) Like if I died, my mom would be sitting around with all my brothers and sisters, “Oh no, what am I going to do now with just the 11 of you? How do you fill the empty 1/12th of your heart?”
- (33) And I went to Catholic school for 12 years, ya know? And people always say to me, “Jimmy, you went to Catholic school for 12 years, how come you’re not a Catholic?” I say, “Cause I went to Catholic school for 12 years. I uh had it beaten outta me by God’s little helpers.”

Following 32, Dore admits his parents would good parents, but their faults are childhood memories he could live without. He talks about his parents beating him as a punishment and buying him cheap clothes. His memories of Catholic school do not paint the picture of a happy childhood either. He claims that teachers chose to work at the Catholic school for the sole purpose of beating children.

The remaining nine joke texts concern various topics ranging from Wisconsin people and deer whistles to tattoos to the death penalty. While the topics of the jokes are unrelated, the narrative strategy he uses connects them all and assigns them a similar style. In each of the remaining jokes, he gives he thoughts on the topic he is addressing. In examples 34-36, we can see some of his internal thought processes.

- (34) I think that’s funny, grown-ups looking forward to casual. I figure there’s gotta be one guy really into it, ya know? He’s at home with a calendar, “Wednesday’s done. One more day and then look out. I have got a polo shirt that’s gonna take their f***ing heads off.
- (35) Like what kinda tattoo would a librarian get, ya think, ya know? (points to upper arm) ‘Books kick ass’ ‘Shut the f*** up and read’ (audience laughter/applause)
- (36) And I started thinking about that, like why don’t we that with other criminals? Like if we’re gonna murder murderers, why don’t we rape rapists? (audience laughter) Sounds good on paper, but there’d be a short line for that job.

Dore's persona can be described as a bitter adult harboring intense feelings about his childhood, but this has given him the ability to look at situations from an 'outside the box' perspective. He is a thinker who is able to present ideas to the audience that perhaps they would not have come up with on their own. While he does not disparage ethnic groups, there is an element of disparagement in his stand-up routine. His parents, their parenting style, growing up poor, religion, Wisconsinites, and people with tattoos are some of the targets he presents in his joke texts. Ethnic humor could be seen as unusual for a comedian whose focus revolves around his life experiences and internal thoughts. For Dore, ethnic humor may be an unnecessary aspect to his performance because he does not have to create an ethnicity for himself or because his Caucasian ethnicity is irrelevant to his persona.

Ben Bailey. This comedian is the 'experiential' comedian. Life and the situations in which he has found himself have provided Bailey with the material he needs for his performance. He plays a prominent role in all 17 joke texts in that he is either the main character or directly affected by the situation of the joke text. Examples 37 and 38 represent the first situation and examples 30 and 40 represent the latter.

- (37) I put on my favorite winter jacket for the first time the other day, and as soon as I put my hands in those pockets, I was immediately reminded that last year, I didn't have any money either.
- (38) The thing I hate the most about the subway is every time I get off the train and I'm trying to get out of the station and back up to the street, I end up getting stuck behind these really slow people on the stairs.
- (39) Now, you know a smell is bad when it starts to affect your other senses. Right? If you're standing on the corner, and a garbage truck goes by and you are momentarily blind, that is a bad smell.

- (40) Over and over and over, all day long. It's not even just people that you know, it's strangers just yell at you on the street if it's cold enough. Just walking by, "It's freezing out here!"

Through the use of the first person singular pronoun, Bailey relates personal experience, whether true or false, to the audience in examples 37 and 38. In the latter two examples, he incorporates the audience into experiences he has had through the use of the pronoun *you*. The use of pronouns *I* and *you* show a distinction in who is involved in the situation of the joke text. However, both pronouns suggest the incorporation of personal experience into the joke texts of this comedian.

Since Bailey appears to have created a persona that relates his own personal experiences, ethnic humor could seem odd in his performance. Throughout the performance, the characters in his joke texts, including himself, have unidentified ethnicities. Bailey speaks as an 'every' man instead of a Caucasian man. He jokes about situations that apply to everyone such as the weather, being stuck in the waiting room at a restaurant, and the smell of New York City. For Bailey to maintain his comedic persona, he would almost have to incorporate his personal experiences related to ethnicity; however, this is unnecessary for him and could be potentially risky because ethnic humor typically does not incorporate everyone, and it excludes and rejects certain groups.

Bill Gardell. The final comedian in this ethnic group uses his joke texts to question the direction in which the world is headed. His childhood is a major contributing factor to his comedic persona and his view of the world. He describes life in a working class family that is not above drinking and poking fun at one another at family parties. He prefers the simplicity of life before technology, and takes interest in life's

situations. He explains how people are too sensitive these days, which is a belief that contributes to his preference of a more simple way of life.

Gardell is unique in that he does not incorporate ethnic humor into his performance, but superficially, it would not be surprising if he did. He speaks out against those who are different than him. This is illustrated in following examples.

- (41) Saw my first gay pride march out in Los Angeles. I've never seen nothing like that, man. 100,000 gay people come marching through the city...Straight guys, we don't have a parade, do we? You don't see us marching up and down the street, "Vagina!" Where's that parade?
- (42) You know you read these stories, two kids build a bomb in their dad's garage, "We had no idea." Well that guy's a failure. How do you not know your child's building a bomb in your garage? How busy are you?

In example 41, Gardell seems to be belittling the gay pride movement from pride in oneself to simple a sexual preference that does not need to be celebrated. The excerpt in 42 comes from a joke text that attempts to explain why today's youth are out of control. In the excerpt, we can see that he is targeting 21st century parenting styles. Since Gardell is both a heterosexual and a parent, he targets two groups that he does not identify with. Therefore, it seems unusual that he would not incorporate ethnic humor into his stand-up routine. However, a closer examination of his joke texts reveals that he creates a specific persona for himself that could be easily targeted by others. He uses his joke texts to fight for the social group with which he identifies.

Out of 23 joke texts, he mentions his own drinking six times, his family including his childhood and his wife and child fourteen times, and his discontent with the direction the world is headed in seven times. While some of these overlap, they exist throughout the performance, continually reminding the audience of who Bill Gardell is, where he

comes from and what has shaped him. The following examples show the underlying theme of Gardell's performance: the establishment of his persona.

- (43) I have a great job, man. I get to drink and work. How cool is that? Not a lot of jobs you can drink at work, well unless you're a pilot or tanker captain.

The first example, 43, explicitly shows Gardell's affinity for drinking. Not only this, but while most comedians have a bottle or a glass of water on a stool on stage, Gardell has a glass of liquor, and at this moment in the performance, he takes a drink. Example 43 is the first reference in the performance to his drinking. By combining it with the physical action of drinking, he could be signaling to the audience that it is in fact liquor he is drinking on stage. Other references to his drinking habits do not combine these two elements consistently, but this excerpt seems to be the audience's introduction into this aspect of his persona.

- (44) He'd go, "That's why I'm in the garage. Keep your voice down, she'll hear us." My father was teaching me a very valuable lesson for when I got married, and that is just don't argue with her. At all costs, let it go.

Example 44 describes how his past has shaped him. He explains to the audience that his father's advice has been beneficial for him in adult life. In other references to his immediate and extended family, he labels them 'working class'. It is interesting to note that he does not call them 'poor' as does Jimmy Dore to his family. However, in contrasting Dore and Gardell, it has been shown that Dore harbors some disdain for his childhood and family while Gardell is proud of where he came from. This can be seen in examples 45 and 46.

- (45) I grew up in a working class family. I thank God for that every night. I'm from Pittsburgh, that's why I put that steel mill up there (points to stage backdrop). Cause if I suck tonight, that's where I'm going back to work. (audience laughter)

- (46) Here's what I love most about coming from a working class family. Nobody is above a ball bust. And that's important and we've lost that. We've lost that, man, we can't tease each other. That's why nobody's laughing, that's why everybody's wound tight.

Through the use of the phrases *I thank God for that every night* and *Here's what I love most about...*, he awards prestige to his lifestyle and those he associates with. Working class, or blue collar, is stereotypically associated with lower income and education levels, poorer housing, more traditional conservative values, and higher levels of drinking, so Gardell could be using his time on stage to provide support for this type of lifestyle.

- (47) But I'm a little worried about kids, man. They start kids on computers at 6 now. Look, how bout some hide and go seek? How bout some water balloons? Something. We don't need to be click, dragging and dropping out of the womb. (audience cheers/applause) That doesn't need to happen right out of the womb. Understand?

Example 47 above is one of Gardell's values, which could be related to his experience as a member of a working class family. This excerpt is one of many in which he conveys his opinions about society to the audience. It could also evidence another reason Gardell does not use ethnic humor: he does not disparage others until they present a mismatch with his persona. Therefore, ethnic humor might not be necessary for Gardell. While it appears likely that he would use ethnic humor, it might only be beneficial for him to do so in the event that an ethnic group opposed his way of life or contradicted his beliefs and values.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the humor of the four males that comprise the Caucasian comedian group. Out of the group, only Daniel Tosh uses ethnic humor in his performance, but it is important to note that he allowed himself an escape in case of joke

failure, and he incorporated it carefully. He even reassured the audience that it was “just a joke” and apologized for manipulate dialect to impersonate a speaker of vernacular English. The remaining three – Jimmy Dore, Ben Bailey, and Bill Gardell – were found to differ from one another in terms of their persona, but each one had a unique, potential reason for not incorporating ethnic humor into his performance. One could infer from the results that Caucasian comedians are more hesitant to incorporate ethnic humor than African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanics.

Chapter 6: Asian American and Hispanic Comedians

Each of the previous two chapters was entirely dedicated to one ethnicity: Caucasian and African American. This chapter will present the remaining two ethnicities together due to the striking similarities that are present between the two groups. The Hispanic group is comprised of Carlos Mencia (Season 6, 2002), Freddy Soto (Season 7, 2003), Gene Pompa (2004), and Bill Santiago (Season 10, 2006). The Asian American group includes Dat Phan (Season 8, 2004), Steve Byrne (Season 10, 2006), Jo Koy (Season 12, 2008), and Eliot Chang (Season 14, 2010). Across these eight male comedians, two major themes emerge: the presentation of a truth about their own ethnicity and/or the presentation of ignorant assumptions held by various ethnicities, including their own. These two themes are intertwined within each joke text and each performance, so the relationship between these two themes is difficult to tease apart. Perhaps what is more interesting is the variety of national background with which each of these comedians identifies. Due to the various nationalities that are encompassed under the umbrella terms 'Asian' and 'Hispanic', more variation is found in these two groups than the previous two due to the unavoidability in their diverse national affiliations. These two groups are not as homogeneous as the first two, which may be an important factor in why these eight comedians present very similar themes throughout their

performance and across specific ethnic groups. This section presents the themes throughout the eight performances and utilizes examples.

Truths and Ignorance

Both the Asian American and Hispanic comedians reveal truths about their ethnicity. They also aim to point out the ignorance in their own and other ethnic groups. As if to educate the audience, they use their joke texts to perpetuate or dispel stereotypes associated with their own or another ethnicity.

Some Asian American Truths

Each of the comedians in this group identifies with an Asian nationality, but their joke texts reveal that they also identify with general stereotypes regarding the broad spectrum of nationalities that are considered Asian. Additionally, these four comedians represent the only Asians to appear on Comedy Central Presents. With the exception of Steve Byrne, the remaining three discuss various truths and falsities regarding the stereotypes commonly attributed to Asians. While each comedian does not address the same stereotype, the purpose for each joke text appears to be similar in that the joke texts teaches something to the audience by confirming or dispelling a stereotype.

The first set of examples addresses stereotypes for the audience. Dat Phan strongly identifies with his ethnicity, but he specifies it as if he is consistently referring to his Vietnamese heritage. The first truth Phan reveals to the audience is that not all Asians are united. This is seen in the following example:

- (48) I went and had Japanese food today and I made like the biggest mistake, ya know? I- I- I ordered a fortune cookie after the meal. You guys ever done that? I didn't know the fortune cookie's Chinese. And I ordered it and I'm Asian and I didn't even know.

- (49) I'm so jealous of other Asians, ya know? They all have their own martial arts styles. My people, we don't have crap. Vietnam is the only country in Asia that does not have a martial arts style of their own.

In example 48, Phan is relating a story to the audience about his recent trip to a Japanese restaurant where he mistakes two different Asian nationalities and typical customs associated with each of them. His explicit statement of being Asian seems to signal to the audience that the Asian label does not automatically indicate unity across countries and regions of Asia. The message is reaffirmed in example 49, which is taken from a joke text regarding the various martial arts styles that come from different Asian countries. While Phan makes the overall claim in the entire joke text that the Vietnamese martial arts style is limited to beauty salons, he also demonstrates the uniqueness of each individual Asian nation.

This message is again portrayed by Jo Koy who was born into a Filipino family. While he only has one ethnic joke text in his entire performance, it reveals a truth about Filipinos and their Asian status. He explicitly states to the audience that a Filipino is an Asian, but their physical appearance resembles that of a Mexican.

- (50) The crazy thing about Filipino is that we're Asians, we just look Mexican, ya know? We look Mexican, but the way you can tell is just our p's and our f's.

He continues on by exemplifying his mother's ever present struggle with correctly producing /p/ and /f/ in their appropriate environments. Koy presents the audience with knowledge about how to judge a person of Filipino descent. While his test of Filipino status is not foolproof due to the fact that a true bilingual should not present this pronunciation issue, he does seem to support Dat Phan's separation of Asian nationalities because he makes the claims that Filipinos do not look Asian, but they indeed are.

Eliot Chang also reveals truths, but he never reveals his Asian nationality. Chang is the ‘every Asian’, and he reveals this through his ethnic joke texts. He also aligns with the previous two comedians in revealing truths about the Asian ethnicity, but he does not present a separation between Asian nationalities, more than likely because he does not reveal his national affiliation. The excerpts taken from his performance present truths about Asians and address a variety of stereotypes. In the first example, Chang is addressing the belief that Asian comedians are not funny. He expresses his fear of an Asian audience because he assumes they are nervous about his presence on stage due to the fact that he is in a position to embarrass their whole ethnic group.

(51) I see some people looking at me like “An Asian! This is gonna suck!” I know the deal, people get scared when there’s an Asian up here. I get scared when there’s Asians out there.

The second example in 52 dispels the myth that Asians eat what Americans consider to be pets. This joke text portrays Asians very differently than Patrice O’Neal who removed power from Chinese targets as he chastised them for eating ‘puppies’. From the viewpoint of an Asian, this is a stereotype that needs to be dispelled.

(52) And then the second thing people ask me is like, “Hey Eliot, is it true? Do Asians eat dog?” And I’m like, “Dude, Asians do not eat dog, poor people eat dog.” K, and I don’t care what race you are, if you’re starving, you get creative.

(53) And the last thing people ask me is, “Uh hey Eliot, is it true, are Asians bad drivers?” And let me tell you someth- Yeah they are! They f***ing are. Ugh! (buries face in hand with shame) You know how many times I pass an accident, I’m like, “Please don’t be Asian, please don’t be Asian, please don’t be Asian...”

The third example here is Chang’s claim that Asians are indeed poorly skilled in driving. Chang presents a very true to life persona. He could be more believable by confirming and dispelling stereotypes rather than trying to dispel them all. On the other

hand, he could be manipulating script opposition in order to be a good performer. It is possible that the audience would expect Chang to dispel all stereotypes, but by affirming some, there is a mismatch between the audience's expectations and the actual nature of the joke. Either way, Chang seems to present an unbiased viewpoint which makes him more credible in the eyes of the audience.

Ignorant Beliefs about Asians

In this section, we explore the beliefs about the Asian community that are rejected by the Asian comedians. We begin with Dat Phan who rejects some beliefs about the Asian community. The first beliefs that he rejects are the beliefs that his Asian appearance means he has excellent math skills and he is a martial artist. He also rejects the idea that just because he is Asian, he enjoys all things that also are Asian. Finally, he reminds the audience that just because he is Vietnamese, he was not responsible for the Vietnam War.

- (54) I knew comedy was for me when I was the only Asian in high school that failed math, (long pause/audience laughter) but you know when I failed, eight other students around me failed, too.
- (55) I think it's like the stereotype though, you know? Cause people, they see me and they think I like do martial arts. Even before the TV show they thought I did martial arts. And that doesn't bother me, but I would like nothing that has to do with martial arts, ya know?
- (56) I saw these guys, they saw me, they're like, "Oh you're Asian. You do comedy, that's wonderful, that's great. We love it, we love it, we love Orientals. We love Jackie Chan. We love Jet Lee," Ok, I love Jackie Chan, I love Jet Lee, but what the hell do I have to do with them?
- (57) I had this one guy come up to me, and he's like, "You're Vietnamese, aren't you? Thanks to you, a lot of people were killed in Vietnam." "Hey man, I would've helped the Americans out except at the time, I was a fetus!"

The above excerpts demonstrate how Phan attempts to combat certain ideologies regarding his ethnicity and appearance. With the exception of example 57, Phan does not seem offended by these assumptions regarding his ethnicity. In example 55, he explicitly states “And that doesn’t bother me...”, which may indicate that he is more offended by the fact that the initial judgments, whether harmless or hurtful, are not based on Phan as a person, but rather, they are based on him as an ethnic person.

Steve Byrne presents one ethnic joke throughout his performance, but in it, he presents the ignorance beliefs regarding his physical appearance. Byrne may not have a lot of ethnic joke texts due to his dual ethnicity (i.e. Korean-Irish), but he does isolate his Asian attributes in his joke text. He is unique, and he knows it. He demonstrates this through the text of the joke. First, he explains to the audience that he is biracial, as he refers to himself as a ‘mix’. Then, he targets people who like to try to figure out exactly which country hails from. When he tells people that he is actually from Pittsburgh, they do not believe him. The punch line of the joke makes a ridiculous claim and juxtaposes a *possible vs. impossible* script.

(58) Like I’m from some mutant island south of the Philippines, the island of half-Asia. It’s just me, Keanu Reeves, and Tiger Woods on a beach all day playing volleyball.

His biracial status separates him from the other three comedians in this ethnic group, and it could make it more difficult for him to have a group to identify with. The specificity of his combined ethnicities might make it difficult for him to incorporate more ethnic joke texts into his performance; however, he does incorporate this one that addresses his biracial affiliation.

Hispanic Crusade Against Ignorance

A similar trend can be seen in the Hispanic group. By confronting stereotypes head on, this group is also able to confirm or dispel certain beliefs surrounding their ethnic group. Three nationalities are represented by this group: Mexican, Honduran, and Puerto Rican. One unique feature of these comedians is that they do not reveal truths only about their own ethnicity. They appear as social commentators at times by incorporating multiple ethnic targets into joke texts. This is not predominant throughout the data set, but it is unique to this group and deserves mention here.

Carlos Mencia is a Honduran native currently residing in California. While many people today know him from his show *Mind of Mencia*, his performance on Comedy Central represents his early days on the comedy scene back in 2002. In his performance, he points out ignorant beliefs held by people. His targets are not limited to one ethnicity, but rather, he targets everyone, including his own people. In the following examples, we see targets such as Asians, Middle Easterners, working class Caucasians, and Hispanics.

- (59) I know she's Asian cause that's what we have to call her. Even though, she come from the Orient. Did I name it the Orient? NO!...“Come, fly to the Orient.” That's what they say! But when we call them oriental, “I am not oriental!”
- (60) Middle Eastern people, you guys are upset, that's cool. Complain to white people though. They're gonna empa- sympathize with you. Yeah, not us though. Blacks and beaners, leave us alone. Don't come to us crying. We're the last people you wanna bring that to.
- (61) You can't come and- (Southern accent) “I got hit by a ternader again!” Well of course you did! You live in tornado alley! It's telling you, “I'm coming right here!” Dumbass, move, I don't feel sorry for you.
- (62) We go too far with political correctness. We listen to- to Hispanic people when they complain about the Taco Bell dog. Instead of being glad that, you know, there's something on TV. They're all like, “Hey man, I don't like that dog. It represents me.” How retarded do you have to be to look at a dog and say, “Hey man, that's me!”?

These examples represent the overall theme of Mencia's performance. He calls people out for viewing situations from a biased standpoint. Each example illustrates this trend. In example 59, he questions why Asian people would become upset at being labeled Oriental when they refer to their region of origin as the Orient. Similarly, he calls out his own ethnicity due to what he views as ignorant claims that a dog is representative of their culture. For Mencia, it appears that no one is free from ridicule. He rebukes the avoidance of racial difference and the sensitivity of ethnic humor. He makes the claim that by doing this, we are essentially separating each other because of our differences. He supports this claim by using more ethnic joke texts to celebrate the differences we find in each other.

- (63) Come on, folks! This is America. We got people that know how to do what we need in our military. A tank is made to drive, and shoot with a turret that spins at a 360 degrees. You know what that is? That's a drive-by! We got Ray-ray in there, "Hell yeah!"... We got a- we got a beaner that'll stab you. We got a black guy that'll shoot you. We got a crazy white guy that'll eat you.... And we got the Asians in reserve. "Settle down, crouching tiger! You're next! You're next!"

The example in 63 presents some stereotypes related to various ethnicities, but Mencia seems to present them as positive attributes that contribute to the skills of a great nation. By targeting every one and highlighting the positive side of every one, Mencia is able to make the argument that being sensitive to racial stereotypes is what is causing racial or ethnic divisions in the United States.

By targeting every one, Mencia was able to teach the audience a lesson. The second comedian of this ethnic group was slightly less aggressive towards his targets, but he was similar to Mencia in that he targeted multiple ethnic groups. Freddy Soto, self-identified as Mexican, also targets political correctness and those who try to adhere to it.

He leads up to his point by making a few ethnic jokes, and then relates those jokes to his attack on being politically correct. First, he relates a story about the time leading up to the birth of his first child. His Caucasian wife is targeted as a racist for her comments.

(64) She says some racist stuff every now and then, man.... When we were in the ultrasound room, getting an ultrasound for my little baby – you tell me if I’m being too sensitive – we’re looking at the monitor, my baby comes up on the screen and when ya first see it, it’s like 6 millimeters big. She starts crying, my wife. “Oh my god. It looks like a little bean.”

In this excerpt, he calls his wife a racist because she refers to unborn child as a ‘bean’.

This word is related to the word ‘beaner’, which is a derogatory term for the Mexican people. While her intentions were not at all how Soto interpreted them, he is demonstrating sensitivity to racial or ethnic disparagement. He follows with a narrative about Texans who believe that Mexicans should learn English and try to justify it by claiming that some of the most important books are written in English, such as the Bible. Then he opens up the floor to multiple ethnic targets. He claims that Hispanics eat beans and African Americans eat chicken and watermelon, but Caucasians are more difficult to identify.

(65) Everybody’s got a food. That’s what racism was all about, food, really. Right?...Hey, we tried to pin cracker on the white people, that one’s- that one’s not happening too good, man. Cause white people are very crafty, you guys are always in everyone else’s restaurant. That way no one’ll get you.

After this, he isolates his main target: political correctness. He makes the claim that refusing to talk about human differences takes away from the uniqueness of individual ethnicities. He illustrates this by claiming that in the event of a crime, these differences become very important. The main question he could be presenting is why do we try to minimize our differences instead of highlighting them to make us special and

unique. The following excerpt could have been used by Soto to illustrate the hypocrisy in attempting to be politically correct only when it suits our needs.

- (66) Good, I hope you get mugged. Right? Then we'll see how sensitive you are, right? Who mugged you? "Oh, it was a person." (audience laughter) What'd he look like? "Just people, really." No, trust me. They'll have a label for you, and you won't even know what to do.
The third comedian, Gene Pompa, identifies himself as a Mexican-American.

Pompa calls out ignorance regarding Mexican skin color and racial profiling. Pompa first targets people who try to label Hispanics as either Chicano, Hispanic or Latino. In his joke text, he illustrates how this gets confused based on skin color. Here, we are reminded of the claim presented by the Asian comedians that nationality is a dividing factor under the umbrella term 'Asian' of 'Hispanic'. After his ethnicity is questioned due to the color of his skin, Pompa presents a solution to the issue of ethnic identification.

- (67) I say, "Hey man, some Mexicans are kinda white, and some Mexicans are kinda brown.... They're always trying to categorize us. Sometimes they call us Chicanos, then Latinos, then Hispanics, but on behalf of my Hispanic brothers and sisters, I don't think we should be referred to as brown or white anymore. We should be called "tope". We could be the 'topes'. Cause 'tope' that goes with everything.

It seems that since it has become difficult for people to correctly identify someone of a Hispanic ethnic background, Pompa could be criticizing the necessity of labels. Later in his performance, he continues his criticism of people's ignorance by relating a narrative about his ex-girlfriend's father who expressed his surprise that Pompa and his Mexican gardener were so different in appearance and behavior. Pompa calls out the ignorance of assuming that knowing a person's ethnicity allows one to predict all aspects of that person's personality.

- (68) Some days you gotta deal with society's willful ignorance with a childlike wonderment.... He goes, "I'm sorry. My gardener's Mexican. He doesn't look or

act anything like you.” XXX my landlord’s a moron and you guys dress totally different.

Pompa compares the ethnicity of his landlord to that of his ex-girlfriend’s father, by claiming that one is a ‘moron’ and they do not dress a like. He highlights the ignorance by reversing the stereotype. Assuming that the ex-girlfriend’s ethnicity is Caucasian, as would be her father’s, Pompa opposes the scripts *all white people are the same vs. all white people are different*. While the latter script is more commonly accepted, the juxtaposition of these two scripts shows how the assumption that all Hispanics are the same is absurd.

The fourth and final Hispanic comedian is the Puerto Rican, Bill Santiago. As a Puerto Rican, his Hispanic ethnicity is somewhat different from that of his Honduran and Mexican counterparts present in this research because of his legal status in the United States. He addresses this fact in his performance, but he otherwise maintains a Puerto Rican theme throughout his entire performance. Being born in New York City and growing up as an unquestionable citizen may be the reason he strongly emphasizes his Puerto Rican background, as if to make sure people know that even though he is a citizen of the USA, he grew in a very distinct culture. Concerning Santiago, I present an analysis of one of his joke texts regarding the Latino-Hispanic label as it trends with the previous three comedians in this ethnic group. However, it is important to know that the majority of Santiago’s performance is dedicated to discussing Puerto Rico and the culture with which he identifies.

Santiago explains that even though Puerto Ricans do not have the problems associated with becoming citizens and immigrating into the United States, they still are

subject to the Latino-Hispanic distinction that is the potential cause of too much generalization. In his joke text he claims that “your specific reality depends on where your people come from” and that separate realities exist between various Hispanic nationalities.

(69) For example, Mexicans get shot trying to get into this country. Yes? Cubans get shot trying to get out of their own country. Puerto Ricans get shot just for trying to have a country. Do you see the difference?

While it appears that Puerto Ricans do not have many problems in the way of legalities, the pride that they take in their culture could be suppressed due to the fact that they are a subsidiary of the United States Government. The remainder of his performance is dedicated to expressing the pride he holds for his ethnic background. However, the ethnic joke text presented here supports the trends that have been seen in the other Hispanic comedians.

Conclusion

The trends presented in this chapter demonstrate that Asian and Hispanic comedians tend to highlight society’s ignorance. They also establish a difference between nationality and ethnicity that is not present in the African American or Caucasian data set. It could be that Asians and Hispanics experience more stereotypes that are attributed to them in error do to a lack of knowledge by those around them. In this chapter, we have seen how Asian and Hispanic are general terms that do not capture the realities of each group of people subsumed under them.

Chapter 7: Discussion

This research has analyzed the ethnic humor of sixteen stand-up comedians, and more specifically, the ethnic humor that is found in their performance on the television show *Comedy Central Presents*. The four ethnic groups represented here were African Americans, Caucasians, Asian Americans and Hispanics. While the original goal for this research was to discover essentially who targets whom in ethnic humor, I found that the target is not necessarily a person, but it can also be a concept or an ideology. To conclude this research, this chapter analyzes the trends of each ethnic group, and I present preliminary reasons for the existence of these trends in the data set.

Limitations of this Study

The major limitation of this study is the availability of subjects for analysis. While there is uniformity in the context surrounding each performance, the amount of comedians in each ethnic group available for selection varies greatly. In each season of *Comedy Central Presents*, both Caucasian and African Americans are present. However, not every season incorporates Hispanic or Asian American comedians. Also, this research presents the entirety of Asian American comedians that have been featured on the show from the beginning of the show in 1998 until 2010. Therefore, the Hispanic and Asian American comedians were selected due to their existence, and not randomly from a large pool of potential subjects.

Additionally, the claims made in this research are based on a small group for each ethnicity. Results would be more conclusive had the sample size been much larger. However, if more comedians had been selected for the Caucasian and African American ethnic groups, the sample size for the Asian American and Hispanic comedians would not have been comparable simply because there are not as many comedian that identify with the latter two groups present on Comedy Central Presents. While it would be possible to find more comedians belonging to this group, the researcher would have to sacrifice the context and possibly the age of the comedians, which could affect the reliability of comparison between individual comedians and ethnic groups.

African American Trends

Overall, the data supports my claim that the relationship between the African American and the Caucasian is the broad target of the ethnic humor of this ethnic group. Each of the subjects in the group presents this dichotomy in a variety of ways. From explicit labeling in Patrice O'Neal's performance to the exclusive nature of Rudy Rush's and Ty Barnett's ethnic humor, the African American comedians rarely make mention of non-African American and non-Caucasian ethnic groups. In this section, I will summarize the trends present in this ethnic group.

Human Targets

The African Americans mostly target Caucasians as well as members of their own ethnic group. While Patrice O'Neal incorporates other ethnic groups into his performance, I have shown how the targeting of these groups is not comparable to that of the Caucasian ethnic group. Rudy Rush and Ty Barnett also contribute to this trend because they do not target non-African American and non-Caucasian groups. The

reasons for this could be a sign of the relationship between the two ethnicities. The historical relationship could be reflected in the African American's choice of target. From the days of slavery to gaining the right to vote to fighting for civil rights in the 1990's, the African American and the Caucasian have had an ongoing relationship that may reflect some sort of power struggle. The trends found in this data set may indicate that these men target Caucasians because this ethnic group might be the only ethnic group to rival the African Americans. The underlying motive could be to remove power from ethnic groups who present more rivalry and competition, and this claim is supported by other evidence from the other ethnic groups in this data set and will be discussed in the upcoming sections.

Non-Human Targets

The African American comedians also target ideologies and social situations that they are affected by and/or involved in. The first non-human target that is presented by the group is that of the African Americans inequality with respect to the Caucasian. The first comedian, O'Neal, presents the black man's struggle under the white man. He is not directly targeting the Caucasian male or female, but rather, he is targeting the relationship between the two ethnic groups. The implicit message in his ethnic joke texts could indicate an underlying belief that the African American still does not have equal status with the Caucasian. This was seen in his joke texts concerning his fear of 'white women' and the inability of a black man to commit 'white guy crimes'. Two other members of this group, Barnett and Crawford, also show how the African American is regarded as an outsider in certain situations (i.e. winery and Aspen, Colorado). This theme resonates strongly with that of historical segregation in that recreational trips such as the

aforementioned activities are stereotypically regarded as Caucasian activities, which means that it would be considered out of the ordinary for another ethnicity, such as the African American, to do them. In targeting the topic of segregation, the comedians provide somewhat of a social critique in that they appear to address relational issues between the two ethnicities that cause tension. By disparaging the topic of segregation, they remove its power, which also results in a loss of power for those who associate with or entertain the idea of inequality for these two ethnic groups.

Racial Distinctiveness

Another trend present in the African American data set is the uniqueness with which the comedians present the two major ethnicities mentioned in their joke texts: African American and Caucasian. Rush presents a ‘we’ vs. ‘they’ dichotomy. He highlights many differences between the two groups, but maintains their separation. He also points out what he knows about each ethnicity, and he makes it clear that there are aspects of Caucasians of which he lacks knowledge. Crawford presents aspects of the African American community that he believes his audience is unfamiliar with (i.e. diabetes and ‘the sugar’). While Rush presents humor about ‘black parents’ and Crawford inserts cultural facts about the African American community, an exclusive situation is created. It seems to promote an attitude of affiliation and pride within the community as it creates a common identity. This is the third trend found in the data set of the African American ethnic group.

Caucasian Trends

With the exception of one comedian, the data set indicates that Caucasian comedians do not typically incorporate ethnic humor into their stand-up performances.

While Daniel Tosh included ethnic humor in his joke texts, the inclusion aligned with his persona, which was shown to be a little more edgy than his comedic counterparts.

Following this trend, the remaining three comedians who incorporated no ethnic humor in their performances also showed that their joke texts and their comedic personas aligned with one another in that their personas were established through their joke texts.

Therefore, one may infer that ethnic humor within any one of these performances may or may not seem out of place depending on the comedic persona that each comedian is attempting to establish for his audience.

Un-ethnic Targets

The avoidance of ethnic humor required this group to fill up their twenty-minute performances with non-ethnic humor. While the African American, Asian American and Hispanic comedians all utilize ethnic humor in their performances, they were essentially working to create an ethnic persona. This ranged from comedians like Dat Phan and Bill Santiago who consistently talked about their Vietnamese and Puerto Rican heritage, respectively, to Steve Byrne and Jo Koy, who made few joke texts regarding their ethnic affiliation, but filled up their time with non-ethnic humor. However, the Caucasian group created 'un-ethnic' personas. Their targets and their thoughts about said targets create personas that may or may not require the use of ethnic targets. I have shown this with Jimmy Dore, who refers back to his childhood for much of his material. He presents himself as a bitter adult with less than fond memories about growing up in a large, poor family. On the other hand, we see Daniel Tosh, who presents himself as rude and offensive. He does not refrain and it appears that no topic is too insulting or distasteful

for him to incorporate into his performance. Therefore, it does not seem odd that Tosh would be the one to include ethnic humor in his performance.

Racism

Overall, I have argued that the Caucasian ethnic group avoids humor because in their efforts to establish a comedic persona, ethnic humor is not facilitative in their endeavors. However, there could be another social reason for the exclusion of this type of humor in their performances. Caucasian males comprise the powerful majority. As Patrice O'Neal claims, the Caucasian male cannot be racist because society has deemed this as inappropriate behavior for him. However, this could be a contributing factor to the personas that each one creates on stage. While they do not try to establish an ethnicity, they may also be trying to avoid establishing a racist persona due to its social unacceptability for Caucasian males. Mintz (1998) claims that the comedian presents himself as defective. If the Caucasian presents a racist persona, he may risk the perception of acting pretentious and superior. While this in itself could be a defect, Mintz (1998) discusses that the audience seeks to identify with the comedian's defects and to laugh at him because they are either relieved they do not suffer from such ailments or the defects the comedian presents are familiar to them. An attitude of superiority may not be one of these defects that is as easily relatable as others. This is shown by the risk that Tosh runs in his performance. In a way, he presents this attitude, but there are times during his performance that his joke texts are not accepted by the audience and he is forced to quickly change the joke.

Therefore, it is not entirely sufficient to argue that Caucasian males avoid ethnic humor because it does not contribute to their comedic persona. It should also be argued

that the avoidance of this ethnic humor may align with the social expectations placed upon them as Caucasian males that they should not be racist. So, in their efforts to establish an appropriate comedic persona, they tend to avoid the use of ethnic humor.

Minority Struggles

The final group analyzed in this research shows noteworthy variation from the first two groups. The Hispanic and Asian American comedians in the data set form a heterogeneous group in which each subject can be identified separately by his nationality. This characteristic of these two groups separates them from the first two groups because each one belongs to a subgroup that has its own set of cultural traditions and characteristics that do not necessarily pertain to all other members. These two groups together share similar trends within their ethnic humor. Both of these groups highlight ignorance and set about to dispel or confirm stereotypes. Due to the variety in the national backgrounds with which they affiliate, the overgeneralization could necessitate the themes in the minority chapter since these two groups of minorities struggle to be recognized as belonging to one nationality over another while their nationality is simultaneously encompassed under umbrella labels (i.e. Hispanic and Asian American).

Ignorance

Broadly, these two ethnic groups present society's ignorance concerning both their ethnic and national backgrounds. By highlighting the variation within an overarching ethnicity (i.e. Asian American and Hispanic), these comedians address ignorance related to their ethnic group. Since a comedian's persona is not necessarily devoid of his personal life experience, these comedians show that the characteristics others have attributed to them are true or false. If they are always subject to ignorance due to the

variety of their national backgrounds within an overarching ethnicity, it is possible that this trend is present in their performances due to their experiences in every day life. Dat Phan demonstrates this in his performance by claiming that the association of his Asian appearance and martial arts is untrue. Eliot Chang confirms that Asians are indeed bad drivers, but they do not eat canines. Carlos Mencia addresses the ignorance of those who believe he is from Cuba or Mexico depending on where he is in the United States, when in reality, he is from Honduras. Gene Pompa insinuates that claiming all Mexicans are the same, then so are all Caucasians. In this way, these two groups of comedians point out society's ignorance concerning their ethnic groups. Due to the fact that these groups of not homogeneous based on the diversity in their national backgrounds, they may feel the need to address certain ignorant beliefs in attempt to remove power from those who align with such ideologies.

Conclusion

There seems to be a hierarchy in the ethnicity of the comedian and what he selects as a target. As the majority, the Caucasian avoids ethnic humor unless it suits his comedic persona. The African American isolates the relationship between themselves and Caucasians, which may reflect a long history between the two ethnicities. The Asian Americans and the Hispanics target ignorant viewpoints regarding their own ethnic and national backgrounds. The underlying motive for all groups could be to remove power from ethnic groups who appear to have more power than themselves. In the case of the Caucasian, his majority status gives him a higher power, and he is less likely to target ethnic groups. While the African Americans are more uniform in that the labels that are used for them are generally applicable to the majority of the group (e.g. 'black', 'African

American'), they have fewer divisions in their ethnic groups, which gives them more power than Asian Americans or Hispanics in terms of unification. Therefore, their targets may reflect a power struggle in the relationship between themselves and Caucasians. Finally, the Asian Americans and Hispanics each for a general ethnic group, but they do not appear unified due to their diverse national background. Therefore, this could be the reason for the strong focus on targeting society's ignorance and attempting to dispel or confirm stereotypes that are attributed to them.

Future Research

While the field of ethnic humor research is extensive, the availability of research featuring stand-up comedians and ethnic humor is limited. More research is needed to confirm or disaffirm the trends presented here. Even though my research is a starting point, it would be beneficial for the field to continue filling the gap in ethnic humor research by investigating the context of stand-up comedy. Additionally, future research should look at the influence of gender and/or ethnicity within this context as well.

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Appendix A

Excerpts from Patrice O'Neal

Excerpt #1

- 1 Thank you! Thank you! Thank you so much! A lot a white girls here. Beautiful white girls, they got asses now. White girl used to (laughs) I don't know whatcha all eatin'. White girls used to be notorious for flat asses. It was just (mumbles). On the ass chart, it used to be uh, white girls, Chinese boys, then uh police.
- 5 How white girls feel having their asses now? Y'all really- Y'all used to throw up every time somebody said you had a fat ass back in the day. "Damn, white girl! You got a fat ass!" (imitates offended female voice) "I gotta- (pretends to make himself throw up) I need to- (throw up again) Oh my god, I ate too many air and salad sandwiches. My ass is fat." Now Asian girls run that whole thing. Yeah,
- 10 Asian girls' asses look like...CD cases. They- (audience/comedian laughter) Chinese girls' asses are just not there. God bless Indian girls, too. And I mean uh these Indian girls (points to forehead). Member- It's sad now cause you got everybody full of not- You can't even have fun no more. Everybody gotta be careful. People like, "Hey, what?"- You know you ask somebody, "What are you?"
- 15 and they be like, "Indian." First then you go, this one (points to forehead) or this one (covers mouth to imitate Native America), which one?" (Repeats hand actions)

Excerpt #2

- 25 What happened to the sniper? When he was a white guy, we heard a lot about him.

When he was a white guy, he was a ge- a genius! A mastermind, a diabolical, insidious madman. The country is in grips of terror behind this amazing- How's he- How's he escaping? He must be building his own helicopter and flying. Now he been downgraded to 'nigger' and a XXX, now you don't hear nothing about him.

30 Type up sniper on the internet. Page not found, can't found, nigger don't XXX. (audience laughter) Sad. I don't know whether to be proud or upset, ya know what I mean? Cause we come a long way man. We can do some white guy crimes. That's traditional white guy stuff – sniper. Nobody thought that was a black dude, man. That's traditional crazy white guy stuff. Like chloroforming women – that's a

35 white guy crime. Put chloroform and (imitates action). That's white guys- the chloroform and the “Miss do you have the time, do you have the time?” “Yeah, sure oh oh!” (imitates woman being assaulted). Wake up hanging in the basement (puts arms over head looking around as if confused). He be in the corner like “hahahaha” (sinister laugh). Black guy- couldn't be the chloroform. “Miss, can I

40 have the time?” “No, no I can't help you.” You'd stand there with the fumes. (imitates man being very obvious about his intentions) “Excuse me, you got the time and the chloroform...” (begins to stumble around as if fumes were affecting him)

Excerpt #3

I feel bad for white dudes now. White dudes are finished man. You are, you really

45 are, you know you are. It's sad. It's sad for me. It's no fun. You're no fun no more.

Can't be racist. It's beautiful. I'm so happy I can be racist now. Isn't that fantastic?
People look at me like, "Aw you're so- that's- man, you're a racist, man." It's
beautiful cause Arabs are the new nigger, cause Arabs. And black people know it.
Black people, we are really good at being racist man. Black people look at Arabs
50 like white people look at us. We "oh tsk, ugh tsk." (rolls eyes and sighs). Officer,
officer. We call- we call 'em VIM?, you know it. I'm a filthy racist, uh huh. I'm a
dirtbag. I'm no good.

Excerpt #4

Black and white people rule the earth. Why? Cause we pick the color. Why...why
didn't anybody else pick the color, man? Why everybody gotta be specific all the
55 time? Call somebody Japanese, Chinese you get a big, "Oh, wha- what makes you
think I'm-" I be like, "Oh my god, man, the eyes do the same..." (shrugs
shoulders/audience laughs) I didn't know this. Palestinians don't like to be called
Pakistanis. I thought Arab was Arab...nope. Call a Pakistani dude 'Palestiani',
right. "Hey, so where you from, Palestine?" "Ugh huh". Spit at you too. (mimics
60 spitting) "Do I look like a" – Like you're supposed to know – (mimics spitting)
"Palestine...dirty...yuck." And you be like, "Oh my god, can I just get my gum?" I
really don't care where you from. People just look at me all day long calling me
black, right? But I don't go, "Oh why..ugh. Don't you get the beige in my nose?
Huh? Huh? How dare you!"

Excerpt #5

65 I feel bad for white dudes, man. White dudes can't be racist. "I...no..." That's all white dudes do all day long trying to prove they're not racist. (put hands up in the air and shakes head as if to deny something) "Whatcha feel about the OJ verdict?" "Well...I...I..." (shakes hands as if to wave off the subject). That's how- That's the downfall of white guys, the OJ verdict. "Hey man, you upset a black dude
70 killed a white woman?" "No...I'm upset when any man kills any woman for any reason." "I'm talking through the hall right now and I see a few black guys coming toward but I can't run cause if I run, they'll call me a racist." Run, stupid, run! Right? Just run. Get home, right? Feel guilty, but be alive. I'd rather be- I'd rather be guilty and alive than like feeling good about myself and dead in the- whatever,
75 man. If I'm in Kentucky and I see five bald white dudes walking towards me, I ain't gonna wonder if they got cancer. I'm gonna go, "Aw, man." I'm running. Even if they go, "Dude, wait, come here, man! Don't run, we coming from chemotherapy..uh...class.

Excerpt #6

Alright, white women make me real nervous. White women make me nervous as
80 hell. Not right now cause there's witnesses, but I'm talking about like at night when they by their self, ya know what I mean, walking towards me. She could be nervous, too, because I'm a big dude, like, "Oh geez, a big black guy is walking towards me. I hope he doesn't- hope he doesn't grab-" Ya know, getting their

fantasy going. “Hope he doesn’t grab me with his big black arms and throw me in a
85 trunk. And I’m thinking the same thing, like, “Oh Jesus, I hope nobody kills this
white woman cause I’m gonna get blamed for it.” That’s why- look, I do a lot of
stuff to protect myself, man. I keep my receipts, uh, I collect receipts cause that’s a
trail of where you been, man. You- Everywhere I go, I get a receipt. I don’t care.
And I never go more than a half hour without buying something cause you could
90 kill somebody in a half hour, and then, you ain’t gonna have- you need an alibi. So
every 15 minutes, I buy something, uh, stick of gum, “Can I get my receipt for that,
please?” “We don’t have receipts for gum, my friend.” (speaks with Arab accent)
“Well, you gonna have to, uh...” “We don’t have receipts.” “Well, you gonna have
to write me one or something. I gotta have the receipts.” “I don’t have receipt!!”
95 And then, ya know, if it’s like that, I’ll end up arguing with him, just so, ya know,
he remembers me, ya know what I mean? “Give me my god damn receipt, pussy!”
“OH what!” “You heard me punk!” “F you! Kiss my ass!” “Yea, kiss my ass, too.
What time is it?” “5:15!!” “Alright.” “You were in here messing with me at 5:15!!
You wasn’t out killing something cause you were fucking with me!” That’s why I
100 don’t litter. I don’t throw garbage in the street. Not cause I care about the earth, but
I’m afraid I’ll be walking through the park drinking a soda, when I’m done, I just
throw it over my shoulder, fly over a bush, and land on some dead white woman’s
head with my fingerprints on the can. Now I’m the Pepsi-Cola Rapist cause I’m
lazy.

Excerpt #7

I love animals, man. How can you do something wrong to...ya know? That's why, some of these countries, man, the food they eat, ya know what I'm saying? I'm
115 gonna say China, but I don't mean China. I just mean like countries that Chinese people come from, like (audience applause) whatever. They, ya know, they eat our pets, man, ya know. That's what they eat, our pets, our the people things we love, ya know (makes kissing noises) They eat 'em. How can you eat a puppy, man?

Excerpt #8

Uh, I just started realizing I was American, man. I never thought I was American, ya know what I mean? Until I left, you know? I went to the- to the- the attacks, man. I went to the- America, black people don't like America, but now I do, ya know, cause I travel. They hate us in other countries, man. When I go to other
135 countries, I look for, ya know, I look for people, I don't care if you got KKK on your knuckles. Big time redneck, man, if I see you in another country, you're like my brother, cause they hate us, man, the same.

Excerpts from Rudy Rush

Excerpt #1

110 I don't know, man. Things are going crazy in the world today. 9/11 changed everything. Black people different, white people different. You know what's funny? White people, let me tell y'all something, y'all think them terrorists is

looking for all of us. They looking for y'all asses. Black people remember, after it happened, they came to work, "Oh my god, they after all of us!" "Uh uh. I live in
115 Harlem. They're not coming to my neighborhood." And black people, we be tripping now, too. We always complain, "I can't catch a cab to save my life!" Look, one of them brothers with the turban come over now, we be like, "Naw, naw, go head, go head. Go ahead, I'm gonna wait for one of them Asians or Africans. I ain't messing with you, bro." "I take you to Brooklyn (arab accent)" "No, no, boom,
120 boom. (audience laughter) I ain't messing with you."

Excerpt #2

Everybody was surprised the sniper was black. I wasn't surprised, man, I was just a little frightened cause, ya know, it touched home with me cause my cousin, he became a reverend in Virginia and we had to drive down there, the whole family, and they didn't catch the sniper yet. It's me, my mother, my uncle, my brothers and
125 sisters. My uncle's 85, I say, "Your ass is pumping gas, you lived a full life." He was out there (imitates frail old man holding gas nozzle) Gas all over. Watch your head! We were scaring him like, "Watch out!" People were like, black people were surprised. Let me tell you something, black people, I wasn't surprised cause we don't have any good black leaders anymore. Black people just doing whatever they
130 wanna do. We don't have no Martin Luther King no more, no Malcolm X, like the good- the last good black leader was Public Enemy. (audience laughter) No, really, think about it. Who do we have? Jesse Jackson? No come on, Jesse did a lot of

good stuff, but he made me mad cause ya know he had that baby outta wedlock and everything. But that wasn't even the thing that got me mad. He went to counsel Bill Clinton when he messed around on Hilary. Anybody read about that? What the hell was that conversation like? He probably closed the door and was like, "Yo, you didn't tell on me, did you?" Then y'all talk about Al Sharpton. Al Sharpton's talking about he gonna be president. I was laughing cause I ain't- I didn't think he was serious. He's really serious. White people, let me tell y'all something, y'all ain't gotta worry. Black people ain't voting for no brother with no perm. I'm sorry. He better get a goatee or something, fade it up or something, I don't know what he gonna do. I'll vote for Mr. T before I vote for his ass. (audience laughter) Don't laugh, Mr. T might be a good president! Mr. T, he XXX with the A-team. You ain't gotta send no troops over to Iraq or nothing. Just send Mr. T. He'll bust in there, "What the hell you doing with a bomb, Saddam?" (arab accent) "Mr. T?" "I pity the foo' that mess wit my country!" "I'm so sorry, Mr. T." "Yeah, fool. And dial 1-800-Collect, too, damn it! (audience laughter) Dial down the center!" "Who do you want me to call, Mr. T?" "I don't give a damn! Call somebody!"

Excerpt #3

Now I didn't realize I was abused as a child til I got older. And a lotta people in here was abused and just don't know it yet. You don't. I don't care if you black, white, XXX. Remember when your mom give you a bath? She would make that damn water adult hot. Remember how hot that water was? You stand in there,

“Mom, this water’s hot.” “Sit down.” “Wha- this water is hot.” “Sit down.” And you know that damn water’s hot cause your stomach, it’s like, “It’s hot, it’s hot, hot, hot, hot, hot, hot water, hot, hot.” I’m in sixth grade, I’m like strong as hell. Hot baths.

Excerpt #4

And black parents are funny, I don’t know about white parents, but black parents are funny cause they get out in front of other people and they change their whole personality. They do. I remember this one time – this is a true story y’all – my mother’s friend was dating this white guy professor at a college so we went to go have lunch with them. Now, we go to family functions, barbeques, my mother’s black friend’s house, I’m Rudy. “This is my son, Rudy.” We meet this guy, she’s like, “This is my son, Rudolf.” I was like, “What the hell?” I go to shake his hand, I’m like, “I’m Rudy.” She’s like, “Hahaha, Rudolf.” I start thinking to myself, ‘Are you bout to sell me to this white man?’

Excerpts from Ty Barnett

Excerpt #1

1 What’s happening? Oh man, look at that! This is- That was sufficient. Yeah, good stuff. Good looking crowd. Uh, this is nice. I feel very, uh, comfortable here. I do. Seriously. Four hundred years ago, this woulda been an auction. (audience laughter) Some of y’all got that really quick and didn’t wanna let people know, like

5 (covers mouth and turns head away to hide laughter).

Excerpt #2

Like I said, I live in Los Angeles now, so I'm trying to do more things that they do out there, so like I went- I went wine tasting. Yea, yea, no it was cool. Cool, but
60 weird cause I was like black guy number 5. So it was like Disney Land so everybody knew I was just visiting. It's like, "Look, Marge, there's another one!" (snaps photo with camera) They're sitting there asking me to take pictures with their kids, I'm like, "Rarr!" (pretends to be entertaining monster)

Excerpt #3

105 I'm serious. If you look good, you can promote anything. You can promote a Klan rally. You could. They'd be like, "I can't believe they be putting this racist shit in our neighborhood." "Yeah, but did you see them big booty bitches, though?" (some audience laughter) Some of y'all laughed, ok. I'm just saying it would be weird, ya know? They'd be trying to have a wet sheet contest. (audience laughter) I give
110 credit to the few white people that's laughing right now. Cause the rest of y'all are looking at the black people like, "Don't laugh, they looking right at us, don't laugh. I know it was funny, we'll laugh when we get to the car. Please, please don't start no shit here, please.

Excerpt #4

People still get mad- upset when you talk about race. This one guy, he asked me
115 last week, he's like, "Ty, do you think race relations have gotten better in this
country?" And I had to think about how to answer his question, so I was like,
"Well, uh, officer, (audience laughter) if you would release the chokehold..." Hell
no, race relations ain't got better. You know why though? Cause we put labels on
everything. Everything and everybody. If you driving down the road, and the road
120 is icy...black ice. (shakes head disapprovingly/audience laughter) Don't act like
you ain't never heard it before. Look, she's sitting there (points to audience
member like, "That's just wrong. I call it African American ice."

Excerpt #5

I saw- I saw a report on CNN. The report said the killer bees are coming, the killer
bees! But these were killer bees because they were Africanized. (audience laughter)
125 What the- What are these, hip-hop bees? Like they gonna come in here and sting
everybody except me, this row (motions to audience), and half of him (points to
audience member). Too many labels, but I don't just talk about the problem, I
provide solutions. He's like (points to audience member), "Oh shit." No, check it
out. Since all racism comes from stereotypes, I think we should switch
130 stereotypes...every 30 days. No, check it out. The stereotypes that apply to one
culture, switch it up. That way if I ever got pulled over, the cop be like, "Well we
stopped you cause you match the description of a car-jacking suspect." "No, no, no,
officer, if you would check your calendar, you match the description. (audience

laughter)

Excerpts from Lavell Crawford

Excerpt #1

But you know, I told my mama, I said, I forgot, I say, “Mama, I got diabetes!” She ain’t even know what it was. She be like, “What’s that?” I say, “Mama, you don’t know what diabetes is?” She said, “I don’t know what it is, but you shoulda been
45 wearing a condom out there messing with them nasty ass girls.” I said, “Mama, what’s wrong with you? It ain’t- Diabetes ain’t a venereal disease.” And I forgot, black folk give everything a nickname. We don’t even call diabetes ‘diabetes’, we call it ‘the sugar’. I said, “Mama, I got the sugar.” She like, “Oh Lord! Not the sugar! Love the baby Jesus! Take me instead, Lord! Jesus XXX, tell me what you
50 want! Holy...” Black folk go to church in only a minute. That’s on my grandmom answering machine, (sings) “If you need more power, tell him what you want. Leave a message at the end of the tamborine. Bing!”

Excerpt #2

Black folk, we need to celebrate Black History Month. I think we need to celebrate Black History Month. I th- We gotta celebrate it harder. Black History Month’s the
55 shortest month of the year, but we need to celebrate it, man. Everybody else celebrate they holiday. Ya know what I’m saying? (audience applause) Mexican got Cinco de Mayo, they have guacamole all in the streets. White folks got St.

Patrick's Day, "Kiss me, I'm Irish." I like (makes kissing face) "Not that hard!"
But we need something. We need to get celebrating. We should at least get some
60 free chicken, chicken coupons to our favorite chicken restaurant anywhere we
want. And we should be able to drive down a predominately white neighborhood as
fast as we want and the police can't pull us over. (makes police siren noise)
"Officer, it's Black History Month." "Oh I'm sorry, I thought it was March 1st.
(audience laughter) I'll see you tomorrow, black man. Thank ya!"

Excerpt #3

65 But we need to celebrate Black History Month. We had some great inventors in
Black History, man. We had a brother invented the light bulb, you know that? A
brother invented the light bulb, and then, another brother who invented the stop
light. I was like, "WOW!" And some brother invented the peanut butter. I wanna
thank him for that cause he- (audience laughter) he got me through some hungry
70 times. I'll thank him for that. But- But ya know what kills me about Black History
Month is all our great creators created stuff, the white man always found a way to
top it. That's what kills me. Like the brother invented the light bulb, the white man
invented the electric bill. (audience laughter) Brother invented the stoplight, police
invented the traffic ticket. Brother create a baby, white man create child support
75 court. (audience laughter)

Excerpt #4

Yeah, but speaking of Black History Month, I went to the whitest part of America. I went to the whitest part of America – Aspen, Colorado. It ain't no black folk no where up there, no where. It was one brother when I got off the plane, he shook my hand and said, "Thank you, and welcome to Aspen." And evaporated right there. I
80 ain't lying. I said, "Wow, they got temporary Negroes up here. That's amazing!"

Excerpt #5

95 So we go up the mountain, man. It was one of them gondolas, and they take you up this mountain. We already on a mountain, and I can't breathe. The air is this thin (indicates size with fingers). You know, and if you can't breathe down here, you ain't gonna breathe up there. I walked up two steps and I almost dropped dead right there. They had paramedics following me around everywhere I went. And a funeral
100 car talking bout, "He's gonna die any minute." (audience laughter) Man, and we went up in this gondola, man, and we kept going up. We already on the mountain, and we kept going higher and higher and higher. It felt like I was on the Price is Right. That little man that XXX (imitates noise from the television show) I like, "Damn, are we going to go over the damn hill?" Next you know, we went up there,
105 we went so high we was in orbit, man, we was in Heaven! Heaven! I saw Jesus! I went out and I went to shake His hand. "Hey Jesus, how ya doing?" Then a security guard came outta no where and said, "Look black guy, this is white Heaven. Black Heaven's somewhere near Harlem." (audience laughter)

Excerpt #6

130 Man, I wouldn't get no play from the girls. I'd be like, "Hey baby, can I get a hug?" They'd be like, "No, fat boy!" I walk up to another girl, "Hey baby, can I get a kiss?" Be like, "No, fat boy!" I'd be like, "Look here, I got a name." They're like, "What is it, fat boy?" And I go home, being depressed, watching them after school specials. Be a little white boy on there, he sick of his- "I'm sick of my parents! I'm

135 sick of this world!" He said, "I'm gonna hang myself. Goodbye cruel world!" And he hangs hisself from the ceiling fan. Then I'd say- I'd say, "You know that little white boy ain't got a bad idea." I'd say, "I'm gonna hang myself from the ceiling fan, too." (audience laughter/comedian sighs)

Excerpt #7

I ain't afraid of the first initial shark eating me up. I'm afraid of him biting me and leaving a blood trail back to all his family saying, "Drop whatever you're doing.

165 (Audience laughter) And come 25 miles due south. I done found a lifetime supply of dark meat."

Appendix B

Excerpts from Daniel Tosh

Excerpt #1

57 Yeah, I live in Los Angeles. Girls in Los Angeles like to say this, “I’m not religious, but I’m spritual.” I like to reply, “I’m not honest, but you’re interesting.”
(audience applause/laughter) Yeah, alright.

Excerpt #2

60 I know a lot of you think I’m crazy, I am. I have a lot of voices in my head, but they speak in Spanish and I have no idea what they’re saying. That’s irritating. I wish one of them would get a job. (audience laughter) Oh, they’re my voices. Don’t worry about them.

Excerpt #3

I was dating this girl, she got a boob job, a breast enlargement, but she put squeak toys in ‘em. And I’m like (honk, honk, honk, honk) Yay! She was a clown, so it
90 was a tax write-off. (audience laughter)

Excerpt #4

Ah, the floor is lava. (climbs on stool sitting on stage) I almost got burnt there.
Oooo you don’t know what that is? Fine, I don’t care. That’s a game I used to play as a child – The Floor is Lava. That’s when you climb on all the furniture in your

Excerpt #5

127 Have you guys flown since 11-9? I'm European. (audience laughter)

Excerpt #6

Cannibalism is a horrible scenario. I'm not going to argue with you, but if you had to eat another human being to survive, do you think they taste like their ethnic
155 background? (audience laughter) Do you think Mexicans are spicy? Do you have to have chips and salsa before you bite into one? You can start laughing now, I'm gonna do everybody in here. (audience laughter) Chinese people, are you hungry 30 minutes later for more? Let's go everybody, black people, tastes like chicken. All's fair, all's fair, white people? Alright, you don't eat white people. I'm sorry, I don't
160 make the rules. (audience laughter) Do you at least understand why I end the joke that way? Because it's so funny to make a room full of white people uncomfortable. "Uh see, we laughed at black people tastes like chicken cause we kinda thought you were going to throw one in our direction, and now you pretty much hung us out to dry." It's just a joke. What is that joke's the reason I don't get
165 into Heaven? Like I get up to Heaven, find out God's black. Yeah, he comes walking up to me. (walks around and shakes finger accusingly/begins to speak in AAVE) "Uh that joke wasn't funny, mother fucker, let me tell you something, black people taste like chicken. White people taste like macaroni and cheese, bitch!" (audience applause/laughter) Alright, calm down, crackers, this ain't a rally.
170 I don't want anyone getting the wrong idea. I know that uh, I doubt God's using

that kind of language and that's a very stereotypical voice I used for an African American, I apologize. How many black comics have you heard in your lifetime go, "You know, white people, 'Hi Bob, how are you?' 'Good, Tom, thanks for asking'" (speaks in unnatural 'dorky' accent) I don't sound like that at all. That's
175 very offensive. I did that joke one night, and of course, a white lady came running up to me after the show. She goes, "What gives you the right to do jokes about black people like that?" I'm like, "Listen, lady. My best friend is Cuban and that's close enough." (audience laughter) Yeah, she was like, "Oh, I'm sorry."

Excerpts from Jimmy Dore

Excerpt #1

1 Hey, oh. God bless America. Thank you very much. Alright, well it's great to be here in New York City. I was just in Wisconsin telling jokes and uh- (single audience member cheer) Yeah, actually I work a lot in Wisconsin cause, uh, let's face it, I have a great agent. (audience laughter) But get this. Everybody up in
5 Wisconsin, they told me if you're going to be driving around Wisconsin, you have to get a deer whistle. Do you know what those are? You put 'em on the front of your car and it's supposed to keep the deer out of the way of your car at night. Well I didn't know that. People are like, "Hey, you better get a deer whistle. Hey, you better get a deer whistle." I'm like, "Hey, I don't wanna call a deer." (audience
10 laughter) And they go, "No, we put the deer whistle on the front of the car." I'm thinking, "That's sick. Poor deer." Then they told me what it was and I was like,

“Alright.” So I go in to buy one, the lady’s showing it to me. I go, “Hey, could you turn it on? I’d like to hear it.” She goes, “It’s on right now.” “Well, it must be broken cause I can’t hear anything.” She says, “No, a deer’s ears are so sensitive, it can pick it up.” Yeah, I guess that’s why a deer can’t hear ‘HOOONK HOOONK HONK HONK’. (audience applause)

Excerpt #2

I think that’s funny, grown-ups looking forward to casual. I figure there’s gotta be one guy really into it, ya know? He’s at home with a calendar, “Wednesday’s done. One more day and then look out. I have got a polo shirt that’s gonna take their fucking heads off. (audience applause) Hello, ladies, would you like to meet my friend Ralph, Ralph Lauren?” (motions hands as if to pop his collar up on his shirt)

Excerpt #3

Oh, well, ya know what? People always tell me I should talk about my family on stage cause it’s interesting to them, but, uh, it’s mostly stuff I’d rather forget cause I come from a big family, ya know? 12 kids in my family. Whenever I tell that to people, they always go, “Wow, 12 kids, what was that like?” “Uh, horrible, lotta people, not enough food. (audience laughter) Exactly what you think.” Then they try to make it nice. They go, “Well you learn a lot about life growing up in a big family, don’t ya?” “Yeah, I learned I’m replaceable.” (audience laughter) Like if I died, my mom would be sitting around with all my brothers and sisters, “Oh no,

50 what am I going to do now with just the 11 of you? How do you fill the empty
1/12th of your heart?" And my parents were great parents. They raised 12 kids, God
bless 'em. I can't even teach my dog to sit. (audience applause)

Excerpt #4

120 And I don't know, the world's changing. I remember a time when you used to have
to be a motorcycle gang member or felon to get a tattoo. Now everyone gets
tattoos. It kinda takes the fun out of it. Certainly the danger is gone when librarians
are sporting tats. Not that I've ever seen a librarian with a tattoo but I'm sure
there's gotta be a couple. Like what kinda tattoo would a librarian get, ya think, ya
125 know? (points to upper arm) 'Books kick ass' 'Shut the fuck up and read'
(audience laughter/applause)

And I don't wanna sound like an old man, "Oh, the kids today with the hair and the
clothes", but I don't really like when women get tattoos. It does not turn me on. I
mean, it's not a deal breaker, holy crap. But why is this such a popular spot? You
130 ever notice, top of the butt, it goes all the way across. Can I say this to those
women, the female ass needs no dressing up. If I'm back there, I'm happy.
(audience laughter/applause) Your ass is perfect the way God made it! You don't
put a bumper sticker on a Rolls Royce, leave it the hell alone already!

Excerpt #5

So, uh, we're all gonna die. I can't stop thinking about it. And, uh, every one of us,

135 we're all gonna die. And, uh, I was reading this article about it, and, uh, this article
said that we're the only animal aware of our death, so we do a lot of things like we
invent religion and Heaven to make it easier to die so we don't go kicking and
screaming into our graves. We have dignity at the end of life and I was like, "Yeah,
that makes sense, ya know?" Cause I was brought up Catholic, right, so I have a lot
140 of hate, and uh... (audience laughter). My parents were really Catholic, like ya
know, they almost molested somebody, and uh...(audience laughter) Yeah.
(audience applause) Yeah. Can't get much more Catholic than that, ya know?
That's hardcore, ya know? I mean, I'll go to church on Sunday, but that's were I
draw the line. And I went to Catholic school for 12 years, ya know? And people
145 always say to me, "Jimmy, you went to Catholic school for 12 years, how come
you're not a Catholic?" I say, "Cause I went to Catholic school for 12 years. I uh
had it beaten outta me by God's little helpers." (audience laughter)

Excerpt #6

The death penalty, though, people go- it's a big controversy now cause a lot of
states are stopping it, but I always felt like if you killed someone, you deserved to
die, you know? How clear can that be, right? And then one night after a show, this
lady comes up to me, she goes, "It's not that they don't deserve to die, they deserve
180 it, but we're not supposed to go down to their level and become just like them.
We're supposed to set an example of how to handle our problems, not make
criminals poor choices." And I hate when someone's smarter than me, and

uh...(audience laughter) And I started thinking about that, like why don't we that with other criminals? Like if we're gonna murder murderers, why don't we rape
185 rapists? (audience laughter) Sounds good on paper, but there'd be a short line for that job. They'd have to make the judge do it, and that'd be a reluctant guilty verdict, I'll tell you that. "Guilty, get him over here. You did it this time, buddy. Here's an inch and a half of American justice coming at ya right there." (audience laughter/applause)

Excerpts from Ben Bailey

Excerpt #1

50 You can always tell that it's cold outside because everyone that you see always tells you that it's really cold outside. (audience laughter) Over and over and over, all day long. It's not even just people that you know, it's strangers just yell at you on the street if it's cold enough. Just walking by, "It's freezing out here!" (audience laughter) How the hell are you supposed to respond to that? "Yeah...yeah, I know
55 because I am out here, too. Therefore, I am also able to feel it. I think the rest of these people are also aware that it's cold judging by the clothing that they have selected. So you can knock it off with the fucking weather updates. We all know it's cold."

Excerpt #2

I like it when it first gets cold, you get to break out your winter jacket for the first

60 time, put it on, put your hands in the pockets, and be reminded of what you were
doing last winter. I put on my favorite winter jacket for the first time the other day,
and as soon as I put my hands in those pockets, I was immediately reminded that
last year, I didn't have any money either. (audience laughter) But I did, apparently,
have chapped lips...and a rash that required a prescription ointment. (audience
65 laughter) I think I had blocked that part out.

Excerpt #3

I hate the cold, man, I'm tired of it. Hate the cold in New York. It gets so cold here
in New York in the winter that you cannot tell who is homeless. (audience laughter)
Everybody looks homeless in the winter. Everybody's got five hats on, four pairs of
mittens, three scarves, two jackets, and a hooded sweatshirt, staggering around the
70 city with snot frozen to their face. It's like, "Gahhhh, it's freezing out here!" I've
been giving money to everybody I see. Just walking down the street like, "Oh my
God, this homeless problem is out of control! Damn you, Bloomberg." That's the
mayor, by the way. There's like one guy in the back, "Who's this Bloomberg fella?
(audience laughter) And how come he's getting blamed for the weather?"

Excerpt #4

I think I would choose the cold over the hot if I had to though. (single audience
member cheer) Thank you very much. (audience laughter) Fellow cold supporter.
Cause when it's hot in New York City, it stinks, and it stinks bad. You walk one

block in Manhattan in July, you smell 100 different smells that could down a horse.

90 It's just one after another, you're like, "Oh, oh, oh my god, run! Run! It's not going away! Get back to the car!" (audience applause) Now, you know a smell is bad when it starts to affect your other senses. Right? If you're standing on the corner, and a garbage truck goes by and you are momentarily blind, that is a bad smell. You're just minding your own business and (makes noise like truck driving by),

95 "Whoa! What the hell is that? (audience laughter) I can't see!" And why is it that when you smell a horrible smell, you immediately smell it again (audience laughter) just to see if you can identify it? You think that it would be enough to know that it was awful, but it's not. You have to know exactly what that awful smell is. You can't help it, right? You're like (inhales through nose) "Oh my God,

100 was that (inhales again) Yup. That was rotten meat alright. Good thing I smelled it again. Now when I'm telling my friends about this, I can specify precisely what the odor was that burned all the hairs out of my nose and made me kinda retarded for a couple of hours. It was rotten meat, so avoid it at all costs.

It stinks in New York in the summer, it stinks in New York in the subway no

105 matter what season it is. Constantly smells like piss in the subway and that's not even the thing that I hate the most about the subway. The thing I hate the most about the subway is every time I get off the train and I'm trying to get out of the station and back up to the street, I end up getting stuck behind these really slow people on the stairs. (audience applause) Now it happens to me every time I take

110 the subway. It's been happening to me for years. And my question is this, how the

hell do they beat me to the stairway? (audience applause/laughter) It doesn't make any sense! They're the slowest people on the whole damn train, and I can't get to that stairway before they do to save my own life. How's that even possible? Once the doors on the train open, they run as fast as they can to the bottom of the stairs.

115 By the time they get there, they're so tired from running that they're barely able to make the climb at all. We're all trapped behind 'em like, "Yeah, you shoulda paced yourselves! Now we're all gonna be late. Let us outta here, it smells like piss down here.(inhales through nose) Yeah, it's piss. (audience applause) I checked it again. I can't help it, I'll just keep smelling it over and over until you fat, slow sons of

120 bitches let me outta here! How the hell did you beat me here anyway?"

Excerpts from Bill Gardell

Excerpt #1

Saw my first gay pride march out in Los Angeles. I've never seen nothing like that, man. 100,000 gay people come marching through the city. Started thinking about

15 that. I'm a little jealous of that. Straight guys, we don't have a parade, do we? You don't see us marching up and down the street, "Vagina!" Where's that parade?

(audience applause) I'd have a rolling vagina float. Put a trampoline in the middle and a midget popping in and out. Just tossing out plastic lips like it was Mardi Gras. (audience applause) Happy vagina day, everybody!

Excerpt #2

20 I have a great job, man. I get to drink and work. How cool is that? Not a lot of jobs
you can drink at work, well unless you're a pilot or tanker captain. Those guys get
to- (audience applause) Guys read about those airline pilots that were getting
loaded and landing people in the wrong city? Haha. I don't have a joke for that, I
just think it's funny. (audience laughter) You see 'em up in the cockpit, "Put 'em
25 down in Cleveland and then go to the Rock'n'Roll Hall of Fame for all I give-
(takes drink/audience laughter) I understand how you get drunk and crash your
plane or wreck a barge, which always makes me laugh when these guys get loaded
and crash a train. It's on rails. There's one lever up front. Faster, slower. (motions
forward and backward with fist) Faster, slower. "What happened?" "I went like
30 that." (motions forward and backward rapidly/audience laughter)

Excerpt #3

I wanna thank you for getting away from your buttons this evening, man. Live
entertainment is the last thing we have that you need an attention span for. And I- I
appreciate you coming down here, ya know. It's moving too fast for me. See, I'm
glad I'm the age I am cause if you're over 35, technology can't really get you. You
35 look at technology like, "I can't figure that out. Turn the radio on. I don't know
what you're doing here." But I'm a little worried about kids, man. They start kids
on computers at 6 now. Look, how bout some hide and go seek? How bout some
water balloons? Something. We don't need to be click, dragging and dropping out
of the womb. (audience cheers/applause) That doesn't need to happen right out of

40 the womb. Understand? The other day I was at the mall, I saw a 9 year old girl text
messaging her friend. When I was 9, you took a piece of paper, folded into a
diamond, you go, “Ok pick a color. B-L-U-E.” (audience cheers/applause) You flip
it up, you go, “What’s it say?” “You’re an idiot. I gotta go to class.”
You see a kid ride a bicycle lately? My God, can we get some more safety gear on
45 them? You got a helmet, flat jacket, elbow pads, I didn’t have anything. First time I
went down a hill into a tree, I knew next time I’m in this area, slow down!
(audience laughter) It’s a self-teaching process. My bike didn’t have any safety
gear, I didn’t even have two good peddles. I had a peddle and that metal bar. You
had to run your foot (pushes foot on ground). Something fell off my bike, man, my
50 dad would go, “You don’t need that on there anyway. Don’t worry bout it. That’s
how they jack the cost up. Get outside.”

Excerpt #4

80 I see the big mantra today, “Oh kids today 18-25 they don’t know how to act.
They’re shooting at each other, they’re fighting all the time. They’re not respectful
to old people. I don’t know what happened.” I do. We got soft. We started trying to
be friends with our children. When that didn’t work, we tried to medicate ‘em. And
now that’s not working and everybody’s reading books. That ain’t gonna work. It’s
85 very simple, ok? A child does what it’s taught and what it’s allowed, and if you
don’t have the balls to enforce those two things, don’t have kids. That’ll correct the
system. (audience cheers/applause) Number two, and this is vital. If you are raising

a little boy, it's good for him to know that daddy's a little crazier than he is. It keeps the balance. We were terrified of my father. My father loved us, but he
90 wasn't in love with us. You understand? He wasn't afraid to lose one of us as an example. (audience laughter) You know you read these stories, two kids build a bomb in their dad's garage, "We had no idea." Well that guy's a failure. How do you not know your child's building a bomb in your garage? How busy are you? You couldn't move a hammer in my dad's garage without him coming through the
95 wall like Kool-aid. "What is going on in here!?" (audience laughter) And just to scare ya a little bit more, he'd give ya the old guy flinch (moves head quickly forward as if advancing) "Oh he's coming, he's coming." (audience laughter) Could never figure out why my father was always in the garage. Then I got married. (audience laughter) And it became crystal clear. He was avoiding enemy
100 fire. I'd said, "Dad, why you always in the garage?" He'd go, "Ya hear that?" I'd go, "I don't hear nothing." He'd go, "That's why I'm in the garage. Keep your voice down, she'll hear us." My father was teaching me a very valuable lesson for when I got married, and that is just don't argue with her. At all costs, let it go. (female audience cheers) Let it go. Let it go.

Excerpt #5

220 I grew up in a working class family. I thank God for that every night. I'm from Pittsburgh, that's why I put that steel mill up there (points to stage backdrop). Cause if I suck tonight, that's where I'm going back to work. (audience laughter) I

love a working class Christmas. That's my favorite time of the year. That's when
225 all the relative that you ain't usually allowed over to the house get to come over
and that lie begins. "Has it been a whole year since we saw you? God, it's good to
see ya. I missed you guys, come on in." Then the booze gets passed out. Bout an
hour later, "You can kiss my ass!" You're like, "Grandma, settle down, alright? He
didn't- He didn't mean to take the last yam, there's more." (audience laughter)
230 Here's what I love most about coming from a working class family. Nobody is
above a ball bust. And that's important and we've lost that. We've lost that, man,
we can't tease each other. That's why nobody's laughing, that's why everybody's
wound tight. You gotta learn to laugh at yourself, and in a working class home, it is
a level playing field. You have two choice: laugh or cry. Be here all day. (audience
235 laughter) And it's good cause it teaches you humility. You learn to laugh at
yourself, ya know? Nobody's above it in my house. My grandfather's 92 years old,
gotta a hearing aid in each ear, can't hear anything anyway. We mess with him
every Christmas. Every year me and my brother come in the house like this (moves
lip but does not speak/audience laughter). He'll spend a half hour trying to tune us
240 in. Just (whistles and pretend to adjust hearing aid) And it's funny every time.
(audience laughter) We even get the dog to do it. (moves mouth, but does not bark)
If we really want to mess him up, we give the dog peanut butter so it starts (imitates
dog quickly chewing on peanut butter) Let me tell you something, there's nothing
funnier than a deaf old man chasing a dog that's making no noise going, "Shut up!
245 Shut up!" (audience laughter) I know some of you thought that last joke was mean,

but the rest of you are going, “We’re gonna try that this Christmas.” (audience laughter) That’s free entertainment right there, my friend.

Appendix C

Excerpts from Dat Phan

Excerpt #1

15 (SE accent) So here we are in New York. I, uh, I was eating some (audience
applause) It's great. I love it. I went and had Japanese food today and I made like
the biggest mistake, ya know? I- I- I ordered a fortune cookie after the meal. You
guys ever done that? I didn't know the fortune cookie's Chinese. And I ordered it
and I'm Asian and I didn't even know. I'm like, "Hey man, the food was really
20 good, but there was no cookie with a note inside for the future after the meal.
(Japanese accent) "This is Japanese restaurant, not Chinese." (SE accent) "Hey
man, relax you guys have any burritos?" (Japanese accent) "You get out of here!
Smuck alley!"

Excerpt #2

I'm Vietnamese. Vietnamese people and beauty salons, how the heck did this
25 happen here folks? What was our plan of attack on the American job market there?
Before we left Vietnam, what was the final meeting? (Vietnamese accent)
"Vietnam, listen up! Final meeting. I been thinking bout it. I know the perfect job
for us, ok? The Japanese people take over, they make the VCR. That's a good plan
there. I also heard they make the fortune cookie. German, they take over they make
30 the farfa- auto- da car. Vietnam, we take over by doing pedicure. That's how we
take over. We take over one foot at a time, damnit. That's the plan of attack right

there. We take over from the toe up. That's the plan. We spread over USA like fungus on the toe. USA, five dolla make you holla. Love you long time, G.I." (SE accent) Ladies, you know what I'm talking about. You get in there. You're getting
35 your nails done and they're like, (Vietnamese accent) "Rose, oh your name is Rose. So beautiful. Uh huh uh huh -utterance in Vietnamese- Hey! hahaha So how's your son doing? Your son doing good? -utterance in Vietnamese- Hey! hahaha I tell you she slut! Oh shoot wrong language!"

Excerpt #3

I'm so jealous of other Asians, ya know? They all have their own martial arts
40 styles. My people, we don't have crap. Vietnam is the only country in Asia that does not have a martial arts style of their own. Like Koreans have tae kwon do, Japanese people have karate, my people (Vietnamese accent) "XXX you pick the color. Dat's the martial arts style we do right there. Crouching tiger, hidden acrylic, ah! Dat right there, that's the cuticle strike. XXX press on style look like real nails.
45 You wanna mess with our people, huh? You wanna mess with Vietnam, huh? You wanna walk down a dark alley, huh? We wax- we bikini wax. We rip your pubs off, ah! We rip your pub off, throw it in your eye, ah! We going to tear all your hair outta the root, then we give you shampoo. 25 dolla make you holla!"

Excerpt #4

(SE accent) I love doing comedy, you guys. I knew comedy was for me when I was

50 the only Asian in high school that failed math, (long pause/audience laughter) but
you know when I failed, eight other students around me failed, too. (long
pause/audience laughter) And I was copying one of them. That's the thing. You
know I was copying a guy named Mike, you know? What it is? I think it's like the
stereotype though, you know? Cause people, they see me and they think I like do
55 martial arts even before the TV show they thought I did martial arts. And that
doesn't bother me, but I would like nothing that has to do with martial arts, ya
know? So for example, I was taking- this is a true story- I was taking a leak at one
of these comedy clubs, right, and this guy was standing next to me and he's like,
"Hey, do you do kung fu? I noticed the way you walk around. It's kinda smooth
60 like, ya know, martial arts or..." I'm taking a leak! It wasn't like I was going
(martial arts noises) "Finish him. (martial arts noises) Fatality. Dat Phan wins.
Shake it off. Flawless victory.

Excerpt #5

Everyone wants to typecast you in Hollywood, ya know? Its so funny. I saw these
guys, they saw me, they're like, "Oh you're Asian. You do comedy, that's
75 wonderful, that's great. We love it, we love it, we love Orientals. We love Jackie
Chan. We love Jet Lee," Ok, I love Jackie Chan, I love Jet Lee, but what the hell do
I have to do with them? I don't go up to Latinos and say, "Oh your Mexican? I love
Menudo, Menudo's great." I don't go up to black people and go, "Oh you're black?
I love Denzel Washington, he's a black guy, too. Black guy, Eddie Murphy. You

80 know, everybody's black!" I don't go up to white people and say, "Oh you're white? I love Michael Jackson!" I don't do that!

Excerpt #6

I dated this one girl and her dad was a Vietnam vet. You know how scary that is...for me. I'm picking up his daughter, and he's like, "What's your name, son?"
110 And I'm like, "Uh Charlie, I mean, Dat Phan. I love your daughter, M-I-A. I mean Mia, Mia! Ah, she's telling me how you're the bomb. Oh there's another one, ah!"
I had this one guy come up to me, and he's like, "You're Vietnamese, aren't you? Thanks to you, a lot of people were killed in Vietnam." "Hey man, I would've helped the Americans out except at the time, I was a fetus! All I know about
115 Vietnam is that Robin Williams was a DJ over there. That's all I know. Don't blame me."

Excerpts from Steve Byrne

Excerpt #1

Where are all the Asians tonight? (audience applause) Good. Korean-Irish actually, it's weird with a mix. People always wanna play detective with your face, like 9
5 times out of 10 they're polite like. "So ya know, the whole like with your- with the- where you from?" I'm like, "Pittsburgh." They're like, "Pittsburgh. Right, seriously. Where you from?" I'm like, "Pittsburgh." Like I'm from some mutant island south of the Philippines, the island of half-Asia. It's just me, Keanu Reeves, and Tiger

Woods on a beach all day playing volleyball.

Excerpts From Jo Koy

I'm Asian, by the way, so quit looking at me like a math problem. I'm actually Filipino. That's what I am. I'm Filipino. That's my mom. (points to woman in the audience) Filipino. Don't clap. That's my mom. My mom's Filipino. The crazy thing about Filipino is that we're Asians, we just look Mexican, ya know? We look
40 Mexican, but the way you can tell is just our p's and our f's. Like my mom's been living in this country for 36 years. She still can't get her p's and her f's right to save her life.

Excerpts from Eliot Chang

Excerpt #1

1 I'm gonna give everyone time to get comfortable with this first. (indicates his own face) I see some people looking at me like "An Asian! This is gonna suck!" I know the deal, people get scared when there's an Asian up here. I get scared when there's Asians out there. (points to audience) I do, cause they all look at me the same way
5 like, "Oh God, please be funny, please be funny! Represent mofo, represent! Keep it real!" That's exactly what they're thinking. That's a lot a pressure for me! Now I gotta be a role model, ya know? Other comics, they just have to be funny, I have to represent an entire nation. Every time I do a joke, I'm like "Yeah, this punch line's for the motherland!" (picks up microphone stand and swings it like a flag) "Follow

10 me!”

Excerpt #2

111 So I have one of those friends who’s like super duper politically correct. Did you
ever know someone like that? That person’s a freakin’ bummer, alright? Cause
they’ve got a problem with everything. Like he actually said this to me, he was
like, “Hey man, you gotta be careful. There’s a lot a women who have an Asian
115 fetish.” (looks around as if confused – audience laughter) “Well, what do you
mean?” “Well, they’ll have sex with you just cause you’re Asian, duh. Aren’t you
offended?” Uh, I’ll be offended after my orgasm, how bout that? (audience
laughter) Offended...I’ll be like “UH! You used me.” Like “shame!” (sarcastic
tone) Offended? Hot women wanna have sex with me because of my race? For
120 once, I can feel like a black guy, alright! (audience applause/laughter) Don’t look at
the black guys, they’re laughing, don’t worry! They’re like, “Yes, it’s freakin’
awesome, thank you!” Sometimes you let racism slide.

Excerpt #3

And I don’t- I don’t get racism. I don’t understand it. Like my g- my last girlfriend
was West Indian. Uh, she was from Trinidad, ya know? She had like, like she had
125 really dark skin, like she looked black. And I look, the way I look, right? So
anytime we’d walk around together it was like really funny cause racists never
knew who to confront first. They had like a brain meltdown, ya know? Like they’d

see us coming and their hate circuits would overload. Like “Oh your skin! Your eyes! The crime! You’re taking our jobs away! If they have a baby (makes
130 explosion sound and noise like a machine powering down due to malfunction)
White power...

Excerpt #4

So a lot a Asian guys hate the small penis stereotype. Yea, we know what you say about us behind our backs and to our face! You guys don’t even hide that racism! You’re up in my face like, “What’s up, mofo?!?” (motions fingers as if to indicate
135 something small) I thought you’re supposed to hide racism. Seriously, I- I thought we’re supposed to hide racism. Did I miss an email? Geez. So we don’t have the same cool mystique that black dudes have, ya know? But I try to look on the bright side. Because that means if a girl’s with me, she’s with me for me. It’s like, “Wow, this bitch actually likes my personality? Who’d a thunk it?” Plus, there’s no
140 pressure cause she doesn’t expect me to have a big penis and when she sees that I do, surprise! (audience applause/laughter) It’s like “Oh man, he can do me well and get a bank loan! Jackpot! Big bucks, no whammies!” And then the second thing people ask me is like, “Hey Eliot, is it true? Do Asians eat dog?” And I’m like, “Dude, Asians do not eat dog, poor people eat dog.” K, and I don’t care what race
145 you are, if you’re starving, you get creative. If I locked you in a room with no food, you’d come out with a recipe for your own ass, like, “Muah! I can’t believe I’ve been ignoring this! It’s with me all the time!” And by the way, America, you can’t

say shit to us anymore cause I've seen Fear Factor. K, Asians eat dog to survive,
you eat whale dick to be famous. (audience applause/laughter) That's right. Talk to
150 us about our priorities, shit. So no, I do not eat dog, but I do like to mess with
people. So you know what I wanna do? I just wanna go to like a dog park all day
with a big bottle of ketchup like, "Mmm, oh hey, mmmm. (pretends to pet dogs)
Hey, hey little guy. Hey simmer, I mean sit sit! Good dinner, doggie oh! This is a
great buffet." And the last thing people ask me is, "Uh hey Eliot, is it true, are
155 Asians bad drivers?" And let me tell you someth- Yeah they are! They fucking are.
Ugh! (buries face in hand with shame) You know how many times I pass an
accident, I'm like, "Please don't be Asian, please don't be Asian, please don't be
Asian... (looks toward imaginary accident) Fuck!" Now I gotta follow this fool
home and kill him. Just to stop him from spreading stereotypes, I have to murder
160 for equality, that's messed up. Unless he's got a big dick, and then I'll let him go
cause, ya know... (motions hands like one balances out the other)

Appendix D

Excerpts from Carlos Mencia

Excerpt #1

- 15 Ya know, like there's an as- there's an Asian lady right there. I know she's Asian cause that's what we have to call her. Even though, she come from the Orient. Did I name it the Orient? NO! Did you name it the Orient? NO! They're the ones that come out on commercials saying, "Come, fly to the Orient." That's what they say! But when we can them oriental, "I am not oriental!" Well Jesus, settle down.
- 20 "Oriental is food! Oriental is XXX!" Alright, settle. Jesus Chri- I was close, man. I get partial credit. It's not like I called you a black midget, I was close!

Excerpt #2

- I feel bad, man, I do, but on the other hand, there's part of me that really weird and I'm not saying it's right. Ya know what I mean? Middle Eastern people, you guys are upset, that's cool. Complain to white people though. They're gonna empathize with you. Yeah, not us though. Blacks and beaners, leave us alone.
- 55 Don't come to us crying. We're the last people you wanna bring that to. (Arabic accent) "But you don't understand, they are looking at me funny because of the way I look. Racial profiling." Welcome to the club, Ahmed!

Excerpt #3

But it's not mean, see some of you are like yeah it's mean no no no no no it doesn't

matter where you come from. I don't feel sorry for rednecks that get hit by tornados every year when they live in (hit forehead with microphone) tornado alley. Do you understand that? You're a jackass, move! You can't come and- ("redneck" voice)

70 "I got hit by a ternader again!" Well of course you did! You live in tornado alley! It's telling you, "I'm coming right here!" Dumbass, move, I don't feel sorry for you. ("redneck" voice) "We got hit by a ternader!" Well, move, jackass! It's not even difficult for you to move! Your house has wheels!

Excerpt #4

100 I don't understand why anybody would even attack us. I don't even get it. Why do you think Iran helped us out? After, ya know, September 11th. You think they like us? Go to the internet and see the things that were written from Iranian, ya know, people about us on September 10th. You'll see some heinous stuff. American infidel, die in pool of blood. All that crazy stuff, but then, September 11th occurred.

105 And our president came out, and he spoke like Clint Eastwood at the end of Unforgiven. Remember Unforgiven? At the end of it, when he was like, "If anybody shoots at me, I will shoot you, I will hunt you down, and I will kill your friends, I will burn your barn down." That's the way he came out, he's like, "We will find you, those who helped, those who obeyed, those who looked at you, those

110 who even know." As soon as he said that, we got a phone call from Iran, (Arabic accent) "What can we do to help you my friends? We were talking smack yesterday. You didn't believe any of that! Come on! We try to tell joke, we are not

funny people, we apologize.” Don’t you get it? American has the best of every thing? in the world. Every country’s already here. You don’t- Do you ever hear
115 about aliens going to other countries? All the best come here. They’re here. I can’t even believe people are like, “Man, I hope we can win some wars, I hope-” Do you realize that one day we were gonna go to Afghanistan and poof! the next day we were already there? How did that happen? How did that happen? (slow voice) I don’t know how it happened, they didn’t even let us cross their borders. That’s
120 cause we have people in this country that know how to cross borders illegally. That’s us. We got the best. We’re awesome. Even the Taliban was like, (Arabic accent) “Where in the hell did they go?” We were bad ass! they turned around, all their tanks were up on blocks (Arabic accent) “Where are my tires? Where did my tires go? Call the general on the radio. They took the freakin’ radio!?” Come on,
125 folks! This is America. We got people that know how to do what we need in our military. A tank is made to drive, and shoot with a turret that spins at a 360 degrees. You know what that is? That’s a drive-by! We got Ray-ray in there, “Hell yeah!” Pow pow! Pow pow pow! “USA, brother, USA!” We’re crazy. We got crazy white people that’ll do- oh my god- we have an army. We got a- we got a beaner that’ll
130 stab you. We got a black guy that’ll shoot you. We got a crazy white guy that’ll eat you. That’s an army, ladies and gentlemen! He will eat you- (“redneck” voice) “you ain’t talking now, are ya boy?” (pretends to eat with hands from something on the ground) “you ain’t talking now, are ya boy?” And we got the Asians in reserve. “Settle down, crouching tiger! You’re next! You’re next!”

Excerpt #5

135 And you see, everybody got picked on, everybody had a fabulous time. But no, no, this is what people are afraid of: us enjoying making fun of each other. Listen, look at me, white people, when I say this: Do you know how many white people have died in the history of America so we can have the fundamental freedom of speech to say what we feel? See, I wish that you had my freedom of speech. I wish that

140 you really knew what it was like to have fun. But some of you don't. And you think you do. Please, tell my jokes at your job on Monday. We go too far with this stuff. We go too far with political correctness. We listen to- to Hispanic people when they complain about the Taco Bell dog. Instead of being glad that, you know, there's something on TV. They're all like, "Hey man, I don't like that dog. It

145 represents me." How retarded do you have to be to look at a dog and say, "Hey man, that's me!"?

Excerpts from Freddy Soto

Excerpt #1

(woman's voice) "Oh that's your people though, Freddy. That's why I love your family! They're so passionate." She says some racist stuff every now and then, man. Oh, you can believe it, man! Ev- Dig this! When we were in the ultrasound room, getting an ultrasound for my little baby – you tell me if I'm being too

65 sensitive – we're looking at the monitor, my baby comes up on the screen and when ya first see it, it's like 6 millimeters big. She starts crying, my wife. "Oh my

god. It looks like a little bean.” (audience laughter) What kinda racist crap is that?!

What do you mean it looks like a little bean? Huh? Is that why you’re crying cause it looks like a little bean? I bet if it looked like a cracker, you’d be very happy!

70 Yeah! Oh! There we go. Everybody’d be laughing if it looked like a Ritz, alright ya know. That’s where she comes from, I guess. Ya know, she came from the South, I came from the South.

Excerpt #2

Man, we got the beaner, big deal, so what? Everybody’s got a food. That’s what racism was all about, food, really. Right? Black people, what do you guys have?

(audience: chicken!) Fried chicken, watermelon. See how quiet everybody just got in here? (audience laughter) But everybody laughed at the beans, though, didn’t

90 they? Beans is funny, right? But chicken, “oh never heard of it, what’s with chicken? Watermelon? Hey, guy, uh uh. (waves hands and shakes head as if he doesn’t know what is being talked about) Haha, I’m on a date. Hey, I got these tickets for free.” Hey, we tried to pin cracker on the white people, that one’s- that one’s not happening too good, man. Cause white people are very crafty, you guys

95 are always in everyone else’s restaurant. That way no one’ll get you.

Excerpt #3

You gotta have fun, man. People are now starting the politically correct thing, ya know? “We’re all just people! I’m in the human race.” What do you mean we’re

all just people? You're scared of adjectives, man? You can't describe each other anymore? What is that, man? I'm proud of who I am. It's the differences that make
100 us special. Don't ever take it away from each other. That's- (audience applause)
Are you telling me if you have a friend with a wooden leg, you're never gonna talk about it? That's not a friend, man. If he's a friend of mine, you kick it out from under him. That's- You'll remember that for 100 years. I guarantee you. Yeah, take it away from him when he's swimming. He'll go in a circle. (imitates this action)
105 "No, Freddy, we're all just people! Don't say such things!" Good, I hope you get mugged. Right? Then we'll see how sensitive you are, right? Who mugged you?
"Oh, it was a person." (audience laughter) What'd he look like? "Just people, really." No, trust me. They'll have a label for you, and you won't even know what to do. Who mugged you? "Oh my god, it was the Mexican gang banger. He had a
110 big tattoo with the virgin Mary of Guadalupe on his throat. There were 16 people in his car. And 12 more on the hood. All the babies were in the backseat. All the women were having babies and more babies, and they were out selling Chiclets. Everyone of 'em had a leafblower and a lawnmower. There was little dog that spoke Spanish. And he's selling tacos for 99 cents. They were- They were driving a
115 Chevy with um a Malibu door. And they had mattresses on top of their car, no rope. Everybody was just holding on with one arm. Oh my god." (pretends to cry throughout as if the memory is too much to bare) What color was the car?
"Primer."

Excerpts from Gene Pompa

Excerpt #1

People will come up to me and go, “Gosh, Gene, you don’t look Mexican. Uh, you look kinda white.” I say, “Hey man, some Mexicans are kinda white, and some Mexicans are kinda brown. Ok, mom? (audience laughter) Why don’t you back off
25 a little there? Cochina.” They’re always trying to categorize us sometime they call us Chicanos, then Latinos, then Hispanics, but on behalf of my Hispanic brothers and sisters, I don’t think we should be referred to as brown or white anymore. We should be called “tope”. We could be the ‘topes’. Cause ‘tope’ that goes with everything.

Excerpt #2

50 Some days you gotta deal with society’s willful ignorance with a childlike wonderment. I’m sitting across the table from my ex-girlfriend’s dad, and he goes, “Gene, you need to do more jokes about stealing hubcaps and spraying GRAffiti.” I go, “I don’t steal hubcaps. I don’t spray paint GRAffiti.” He goes, “I’m sorry. My gardeners Mexican. He doesn’t look or act anything like you.” XXX my landlord’s
55 a moron and you guys dress totally different. I used to like to go over to his house and ask him if I could use his restroom, and then I’d come out and go, “Man, your toothbrush tastes weird.”

Excerpts from Bill Santiago

Excerpt #1

At least, Puerto Ricans don't have to deal with that, ya know? Citizenship and immigration, right? Although, although I had an uncle once who was deported to the Bronx. I don't know what happened there, but I'm sure he deserved... Now in
80 California, the Mexicans, they gotta deal with that, it's just crazy out there. For awhile, they were gonna give legal driver's licenses to illegal aliens, but they never told you why. That way if you get deported, you could drive yourself back home. That's the problem with Latino-Hispanic, it's too generic. It makes it sound like we all come from the same place. But your specific reality depends on where your
85 people come from. Right? For example, Mexicans get shot trying to get into this country. Yes? Cubans get shot trying to get out of their own country. Puerto Ricans get shot just for trying to have a country. Do you see the difference? You're not gonna read about that in your history books, so I gotta point it out for ya right here.