

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE BATT



"Upright Citizen's Brigade" is dangerous sketch comedy that airs weekly on Comedy Central. At the beginning of their third season, the show is quickly becoming an underground success. In a recent exclusive interview, *The Battalion* spoke with the troupe about their secret plans to destroy the world.

Q: Are you guys on the set right now?

No, we're actually in Upright Citizen's Brigade HQ, 10,000 miles below the surface of the earth.

Q: Really? I thought you guys were kicked out of there.

It's a different one. It's a different volcano.

Q: Does your increased celebrity status make it harder to do the pranks that you do?

Yeah, it really does actually. Sometimes we dress up as normal everyday people and some days we dress up as one of our freakish characters. The other day I was dressed up in full hockey regalia cause I was a new character that was a fairy hockey player instead of a fairy godmother and I go up to guys who are in times of need, who need to go for it and I give them beer and I get them to chug it so they can go for it, like asking a girl out or asking her to go to bed with him. So I was going around different places on the New York University campus and almost everywhere I went, as soon as I walked in, people were like "hey man, I like your show." So I was literally having to sneak up on people and scare the s---t out of them to get the desired effect.

Q: Do you guys do pranks every week?

Oh yeah, we've increased our pranks like three fold what it used to be so it's at least a prank a week.

Q: Do you guys ever do pranks for fun — when you're not even recording them?

I think we all do pranks spontaneously that have no purpose, like yelling in a movie theater or something, but we try to record all our pranks. Pranks are really hard to record because people aren't in on it obviously, they aren't making conditions optimal, so they're not standing in the right light or there might be a radio playing really loud or they might not be speaking up very much. It takes a lot of different conditions for the prank to be recorded well.

One time we pranked Vanilla Ice on the tour of his new speed-metal band. We went dressed as "The Titte Brothers" and brought along a manager and a publicist. All four of us went backstage to talk to him after the show and we were totally messing with him, telling him he should open for us on tour and stuff. It was really funny, we had a Vanilla Ice doll from the '80s there and we got him to sign it. He was really embarrassed about it. But the light was horrible and it didn't come out at all. All we had was the audio from it. It was pretty disappointing.

Q: Does everyone you prank have to sign off on it?

Yes. Right Afterwards.

Q: So everyone knows afterwards that it was a prank?

Yeah. Some people get outraged. We've had guys ready to fight us.

Q: Have you had any interesting viewer reactions?

We just got some photos in the mail today about our second episode this season where we had this scene about the mafia do-

Upright Citizens Brigade



Interview by Juan Loya

PHOTOS COURTESY OF COMEDY CENTRAL

nating sperm to people against their will. We had people leaving free cups of sperm all over their towns. One kid sent up pics of him leaving sperm all around Santa Cruz — at statues and stores and display windows.

Q: Is the RZA of the Wu-Tang Clan going to make any more appearances?

Yeah, we're always asking the Wu-Tang to come back. We're going to have a final episode, a Thunderball episode where we were going to ask any of them who want to come, they always seem to have fun.

Q: So Thunderball is an old skit you guys did?

Yeah, we actually did it a long time ago in Chicago. We were going to do it as a show our first season, but that movie *BASEketball* came out and we didn't want people to think we stole their idea, so we put it off. It's a lot different from *BASEketball* except in the idea that it combines a lot of different sports. Thunderball is more violent and it's more like a game of cock fighting rather than some fun game that becomes the national pastime. For us it's more like this underground thing that people have to go to special places to view, so it's kind of a different feel.

Q: Have you guys ever participated in Improv festivals?

We've participated in the Chicago Improv festival every year they've done it. We've done a lot of improv festivals.

Q: It looks like "Upright Citizen's Brigade" got a bigger budget for your second season. Is that the case?

Well, I have to give credit to our directors for making a small

budget look great. Compared to major network shows, our budget is nothing. But compared to other shows on Comedy Central, we have a huge budget. So it's kind of a relative thing on TV. We have special effects and stuff and we've been lucky with that. It hasn't been a radically bigger budget this season, though.

Q: Do you feel you guys are a lot more successful and are more known?

I think we have a hard-core cult following from people who are really into the chaos, underground, 'Illuminati' side of it and I wish more people would be into it because it's a good sketch show. That's our focus this year, to tell people this is a sketch show, not some crazy, science-fiction show, it's just good sketch. We want to appeal to people who are 40 [years old] as well as people who are in college.

Q: Do you guys have any projects outside the show?

We have our own Website, uprightcitizens.org, which isn't the Comedy Central one. We want our Website to be a viable source of entertainment in itself instead of something that just services the TV show as an information site. We want it to be something for people to hang out and have fun with.

We have plans for putting a lot more video, audio material on it. Of course we have our movie, book and CD-ROM ideas but we don't have time to work on all that while we're doing the TV show.

Q: Do you think Upright Citizen's Brigade would ever come to College Station?

We're going to tour soon, probably late April or early May. If people at Texas A&M are interested, get people to contact our Website or Comedy Central's Website and request us and we'll come there.

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Applications are due by 5 p.m., Tuesday, February 8th, 2000, at the Clayton Williams Alumni Center Reception Desk.

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