

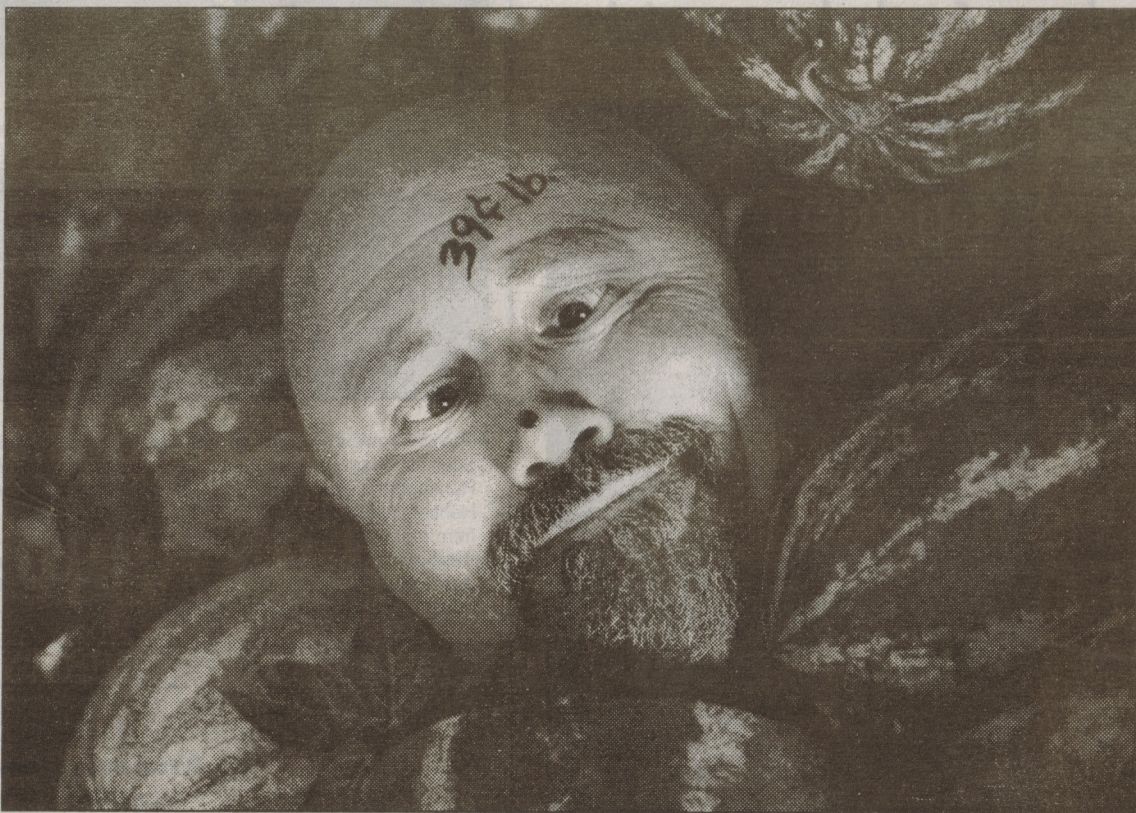
PERFORMANCES

Gallagher Throws Some Comedy (And Condiments) At Westbury

By Iris Wiener
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Gallagher may be known for his watermelon gags and his quite literally 'dirty' humor, but he has a lot to say about the world. On August 26th he's bringing a hysterical combination of comedy, controversy and condiments to North Fork Theatre at Westbury. "You'll laugh really big!" he says. "Not little Jerry Seinfeld 'Heh heh's.' You'll laugh with your belly."

After graduating from the University of South Florida with an engineering degree, Gallagher got his first taste of life on tour in 1976 as Jim Stafford's road manager. Stafford and Gallagher went out to California in 1979 and Gallagher decided to take the stage himself. As his audience grew, Gallagher became most noted for wielding his trademark Sledge-O-Matic. He showered his audience with the pulverized remains of apples, oranges, lettuce, cottage cheese, pound cakes, Big Macs, and of course, no show can end without the Watermelon finale. Show goers turn up already Gallagherized, wearing plastic raincoats, goggles, sunglasses, umbrellas,



Photos Courtesy Sold Out Shows

Watermelons are a running favorite of Gallagher fans, many of whom attend his shows to watch him smash various and sundry foods with a mallet.



lays there. But mustard is good because people hate it! So it has a different dimension of emotion there. They don't want it on their white sweaters.

Why is watermelon your food of choice for the finale of every show? How did that begin?

Well that was the food that I threatened to use, and then one day I used it. I never used to smack the melon, I just carried it around with me. So then one day I smacked it, and then they wanted that every night. I think people like it because they think it's bloody. They like the red color, it's like hitting somebody's head.

From where do you think you primarily pull your comedy?

It's hard for a middle class white guy to be a comedian, because nobody feels sorry for you. Lesbians and blacks play on their problems. Almost all black comics have to talk about the difference between how white guys and black guys do things. And so for a white guy, you don't have any of that empathy, or the sympathy angle. So I picked on stupidity. I'm one of the first comedians that you're a farmer? I mean, that's nuts. Or that if you have on boat shoes that you have a boat?

as the front of the theatre as Death Row.

Gallagher has the distinction of being the first real star to come out of cable television. To date he has done sixteen specials, many of which are available for purchase at his Web site, www.gallaghersmash.com. But he's quick to remind Long Island that each of his performances is unique, and they won't be seen anywhere else. "I can't do anything predictable, I have to stay ahead of the people, especially out there. Remember, Westbury is a rough crowd, it's the smartest group you're going to get anywhere in America."

Why did you decide to go into comedy after getting a degree in engineering?

I could do it so much better than everybody else! I thought that it was a natural gift, and that I owed it to everyone to use it. I had also been disruptive in class and a funny guy my whole life. And it just occurred to me, seeing Jim Stafford perform, that this could be for me. And it seems crazy, doesn't it? To be a comedian? It just doesn't seem normal. I studied physics anyway; all you need to do is get the books.

Tell us what's currently on



your mind that we may or may not hear about on August 26th?

I'm against trends, fads, and fashions, because I think they stop people from thinking on their own and from being individuals, and I'm upset about that. So I try to encourage the kids to be pioneers, to think up a product, service, or their own business, and not be a follower. Kids don't think, they just go to school to see what the others are doing and copy it. And so we've got a lot of problems with behavior in America, and it even happens in sports. People don't know how to behave at a game. They interfere with the game, and this changes the score, they get into fights and this changes people's careers... And there's no definition in America. We're trying to decide when life begins, to know whether stem cells can be

used. We need to know when you're an adult so we know whether or not to charge kids who commit adult type crimes. We're making up new terms like 'biological parent.' They don't have definition anymore, and I see this, and I wonder why nobody talks about it. I wish I could just do jokes, but I talk about this during my show.

How do you take your feelings and work it into your comedy?

I just make them funny! Why would a person get a truck if they don't need a truck? The price of gas just went through the roof, now people are stuck with F150's, and all they do is go to the grocery store and back again. They're not loading grain! I tell people, "Don't wear bib overalls unless you're having dinner at Cracker Barrel." Who thinks just because you're wearing bib over-

tending, looking for meaning. That's why they wear an earring like a pirate, a tattoo like a biker... Everyday in America is Halloween. How do you teach your kids how to look out for themselves on the street, if every clue that person is giving you is incorrect? They're not rough and tough. In fact, you can't even tell if people are crazy anymore, because crazy used to be people walking around talking to themselves, but with these little bitty earphones on the cell phone, people are walking around talking to themselves all the time. And it used to be crazy not to pull your pants up. Now, all the kids are wearing them that way. So I say to the kids, "You can't run away from the cops with your pants half down." I make it a joke. But I'm still pointing out the problem.

How do you pick the foods that you use during each show?

It has to be gooey. And I just learned that watery stuff doesn't go up, and if it does go up it goes further because it spends more time in the air. So the surface tension of the liquid counts. So I use honey, mayonnaise...mayonnaise is better than mustard because it stands up, mustard just

people didn't like it in the beginning, and they didn't even want it on Showtime. They didn't like the idea that I'd call people stupid. Driving with the seatbelt hanging out the door making sparks, wearing camouflage and hitchhiking on the side of the road, the convertible top down and the heater on....

I don't know, but I know what they do know about me. They know that I write songs. I would say that I'm really smart, but I think they know that. And they know I care about them because I'm at each show an hour early to do autographs. I said to myself, "If I was the fan what would I want my celebrity to do?" They know that I'm funny and serious, they know that I'm artistic, they know that I'm logical, scientific.

Is there anything we didn't cover in this interview that you're dying to say to Long Island?

Why does NetZero cost \$9.95?

Tickets to Gallagher's performance at North Fork Theatre at Westbury can be purchased online at northforktheatre.com, by calling Ticketmaster at (631) 888-9000, or by visiting the box office.