

PULLING A TRAVOLTA

Following a stint on the final season of *Entourage* and a role in Woody Allen's *Blue Jasmine*, Andrew Dice Clay looks to mimic the career resurgence of one of his idols.

By John Bolster

Whether you think Andrew Dice Clay is a boundary-pushing, trailblazing comic in the mold of Lenny Bruce, or a performer who simply embraced H. L. Mencken's famous dictum about the economic advantages of underestimating the taste of the American public, you can't deny the mark he's made on pop culture. During his late-eighties heyday, Clay became the first comic to sell out Madison Square Garden two nights in a row. He generated more than \$12 million in ticket sales, opened for Guns N' Roses in front of 100,000 fans at the Rose Bowl, and got himself famously "banned for life" by MTV. Before his stand-up career took off, Clay had some success as an actor, scoring roles in *M*A*S*H*, *Pretty in Pink*, and Michael Mann's *Crime Story*. So perhaps it shouldn't have come as a surprise when, after a two-decade downturn, Clay showed some acting chops in a season-long role in the final run of *Entourage* in 2011. But many observers were surprised, and their surprise doubled when Clay was cast in Woody Allen's *Blue Jasmine* alongside such A-listers as Cate Blanchett, Bobby Cannavale, and Sally Hawkins. He turned in a quality performance, and now he's looking to keep the comeback-ball rolling.



You've got a book and a stand-up album—produced by Rick Rubin—coming out this month.

No—not the album; not yet.

It's not coming out?

No, you got some wrong information.

I got that from Jeff [Clay's publicist]. All right, well—

Yeah, no, I know. Sometimes he don't know what's going on. You know what I mean? Because a lot's going on. So it's hard to keep up. He's great at publicity, but then our plans change. He tell you I'm hosting a Showtime special?

No. What's that about?

It's called *The Andrew Dice Clay Blue Comedy Show*. I'm presenting new

comics, including Eleanor Kerrigan, who to me is just about the strongest female stand-up out there today. There are a lot of people on the show, but she's the only girl, and considering we just lost one of our greatest ever, Joan Rivers, I feel real good that I'm bringing on a new girl.

Was Joan Rivers a big inspiration to you?

I think whether you were a comic or not, she's inspiring because she had some real heavy things thrown at her in her life, and she was a true fighter, a true comic, true talent—and when she came along in comedy, it was a lot tougher for women. Because, you know, years ago, I mean all the way back to Mae West, then Lucy, and Phyllis Diller—you know, [they were all] great comedians. [Rivers] knocked down whatever walls were left.

Through my career I used to make fun of them, and I still would. Because they're a great target. Anything with girls, you know, and sex, is always a great target for Dice. But, honestly speaking, nobody would be able to wipe the floors with Joan Rivers [chuckles]. That's for sure. I'm really sad that she's gone.

What can you tell our readers about your book?

You know I had a better seat when I first called you? [He'd had to interrupt, and call back.]

Yeah?

Yeah. Like, I take one of the tables, and I move it into this alcove thing [with a] couple chairs. And then when I come back, there are two other guys sitting at the table. And this jerk-off sitting at another table goes, "They took your table." And I'm like, "Well, why didn't you just tell them someone's sitting there?" You know? Why couldn't you just say, "Somebody's sitting there"? You know why? You know why he didn't do that?

Because he wanted to stir up some shit.

Yeah, 'cause he was a piece of shit. He wanted to see a problem—that's how people are, they love that. I go through it every day.



PHOTOGRAPH BY PIOTR

"When I was at my lowest point, I would tell my sons, I would say, 'Wait till I turn it on again.' And then we turned it on, and it's just cooking."

Well, tell our readers what to expect from this book.

The book is called *The Filthy Truth*, and it's almost like the CliffsNotes [of my life]. You can never write the full story. People are always asking me questions and for stories—about girls and my life—that's just what happens when you're a performer. So this is like bits and pieces of it, you know? Childhood, teen-hood ... how I started performing, why I started performing. I think—besides being crazy, and what the fans would really love—the book is also inspirational. Because when I was at my lowest point, I would tell my sons, I would say, "Wait till I turn it on again." And then we turned it on, and it's just cooking.

In her blurb on your book, Roseanne Barr says the Andrew Dice Clay persona is actually intended to satirize the "stupidity of the ultra-macho male dinosaur." Is that just Roseanne trying to find a way to like your act, or is there some truth to it?

Oh, no, Roseanne knows me really well. We've been hanging for 25, 30 years. So she knows the man behind the leather. She knows the kind of father I am; she knows the kind of husband I am. She knows who I am, offstage. And she really enjoys me onstage, because I paint these ridiculous, comedic, sexual cartoons for people. The whole idea is to make people laugh at themselves.

You got to work with Martin Scorsese recently.

Yeah, that was just an absolute honor. I worked on his upcoming rock 'n' roll project for HBO. It's about rock 'n' roll in the 1970s in New York City. Right now, it's untitled—they just call it *The Rock 'N' Roll Project*. And all I did with Scorsese was laugh, because he's just the greatest fucking guy to hang out with.

What else is coming up?

I have some deals with networks for television shows in the works, and, you know, what this book tries to show, in a big way, is ... with this resurgence, I owed it to my children to go, "This is how you get it done." I like to teach by example. And that's what's happening now: I'm getting to work with A-list actors, directors, producers, and I'm humbled by it, and excited about it. —AD