

# IT'S OK TO LAUGH

## Comic Rob Schneider Discusses the Climate Change of Comedy

BY LEE VALENTINE SMITH

AS A CAST MEMBER DURING the second golden age of Saturday Night Live in the early '90s, Rob Schneider established himself as a versatile comedic character actor in the rare spirit of Peter Sellers. With a number of memorable catch phrases and characterizations, he quickly made the leap to films with "Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo," "The Hot Chick" and "Grown Ups."

Now after two seasons of his Netflix series Real Rob are available and a third planned for next year, he's back on the road with a stand-up tour this fall.

Schneider - last in town to shoot a performance with his old friend and collaborator Adam Sandler at The Fox - recently spoke with INsite by phone from his home in Los Angeles.

*You've known Sandler for years. He elicits such drastic reactions; people either really love him or they just can't stand him.*

Well his critics are people who don't quite understand his appeal. It's brilliant to be able to keep what is joyful about what you do. He's like a 14-year-old when he comes up with something funny. It makes him bounce out of his chair. That's his real brilliance; he never lost his 14-year-old id.

*It's so easy for artists to become jaded - and that's especially true in comedy.*

It is! You're affected by everything and by people's expectations. Then you're affected by your reactions to those expectations. I remember talking to the great director John Landis. He told me that Alfred Hitchcock never made a great film after "Psycho," because he became Alfred Hitchcock, the celebrity. He couldn't filter through his lens of perception and make a great movie without that burden of being called a "genius." Luckily, I've never had that burden.

*Since you do so many characters, it's hard to pigeonhole you into any one category, which is great for career longevity.*

It is good, but there's a growing intolerance about what people are allowed to do these days and who is allowed to represent it. Because I'm part Scottish and part Asian, am I only allowed only do part Scottish/part Asian work? Right now, we're dealing with a form of intolerance in the guise of tolerance. It's a secular form of fundamentalism. A closed-minded school of thought where "heretics" must be violently excommunicated from the Church of Liberalism if they don't conform to the strict doctrine.

*Comedy is an especially ripe target for those attacks.*

It is because it's the last bastion of pure, open thought. It's one man on the street corner trying to get an audience while speaking his mind. So obviously that needs to be controlled because that's a potential threat to the orthodoxy. God forbid people might want to make up their own minds about stuff. But all ideas and people are valid. To invalidate one, invalidates all of us. But like all forms of fanaticism, like all forms of fascism, it has a shelf-life.

*Thanks to social media, everyone has a street corner now.*



Right, you have the instant judgement of justice-warriors on Twitter and they're the ones who get to decide. It's interesting, if you had a machine to go back in time, looking for a device to destroy America, you'd have invented Twitter. So stand-up is a target because it is freedom; it's not produced by any one company, it's not on television necessarily. When people go to see Dave Chappelle or Bill Burr they're looking for a moral barometer. When I go see those guys, I watch the audience as well as the great comedians. That audience is desperate to hear them because they can't find that stuff from their political leaders or most journalists. They're looking to comedians for what to do. Or in the case of Louis CK, what not to do.

*In this whole era of PC, it's so weird to see colleges cracking down on comics of all people.*

They're the worst right now! Seinfeld, or Chris Rock or I, we won't perform at a college. No great comedians perform

at universities anymore. But once all of this collapses, I hope it'll lead to a greater expansion of freedom.

*You're in a good place for creative freedom because you created your own show.*

I've had complete freedom of expression on Netflix and they've become the biggest entertainment entity in the world, so right now it's the freest place to work. Each episode is 30 minutes so it's a true teleplay. And I get messages from all over the world about it. So I couldn't be in a better spot.

*Does that freedom of expression bleed into your current stand-up set?*

I think it's the best I've ever done. I can see people bending over laughing. That's when you know it's really working. They don't know exactly where I'm gonna go - and then I go there. It's nice to know you can still shock an audience. But you have to be careful how you get there. I literally have to explain, in a comedic way, that it's ok to laugh at these things. I never thought I'd have to do that. George Carlin would be aghast that you need to remind an audience that it's ok to laugh. But I do - and it is!

**ROB SCHNEIDER**  
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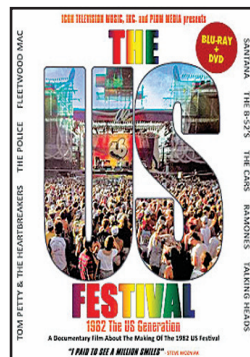
# NEW RELEASES

THE LATEST DVD, BLU RAY & VOD RELEASES

By John Moore

## THE US GENERATION (MVD Visual)

While Woodstock and its dreadful 1999 successor are usually the first that come to mind in talking about music festivals, the under-the-radar US Festival, launched in 1982 by Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, had a wildly impressive line-up that ran the gamut from Tom Petty and The Police to the Ramones and Fleetwood Mac. Directors Glenn Aveni and Jay Cederholm pull together a solid documentary here interviewing Wozniak and others involved with the money-losing festival, including plenty of old interviews of bands taken during the event. The highlight, however, are the live performances, particularly of The B-52's and Oingo Boingo.



## STRIKE BACK - SEASON 5 (HBO)

The Cinemax action series, back after a two-year break, has managed to chip away some of the rust that set in on the last season. With a new cast, the members of the Section 20 anti-terrorism unit are focused on hunting down a new freed terrorist and his wife. This season, the chase takes place on the Syrian/

Jordanian border in North Africa and throughout Europe. Along the way, the team also has to deal with White Nationalists in a particularly timely story line. The time off and new cast members have managed to refresh a once-great action show that had been showing its age.



## RECORDS COLLECTING DUST II

(MVD Visual)

As a follow-up to 2015's Records Collecting Dust, filmmaker Jason Blackmore heads to the east coast this time to interview a slew of punk legends about the vinyl records that make up their collection. Those interviewed with this go round include Ian MacKaye, Roger Miret, Brian Baker, J Robins and a couple dozen others. While sure to be an eye roll to those who aren't into music, this doc, much like the one before it, is a record nerd's dream conversation. Among the common albums in many of the collections noted here are Kiss records, AC/DC and Minor Threat (a must have for any East Coast punk rocker, naturally).



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