

# PATTON OSWALT

**“WHAT A DUMB DOUCHE BAG.  
YOU STUPID DOUCHE-SNOZZLE.  
YOU TRULY DON’T FUCKING GET IT, DO YOU?  
YOU POOR MOTHERFUCKER.  
YOU’RE GOING TO MISS EVERYTHING COOL  
AND DIE ANGRY!”**

**T**HIS WASN’T A BAR AT CLOSING TIME. This wasn’t a roast, although the guy who’s doing the spitting has a knack for working those -- he unforgettably dissed both William Shatner and Flavor Flav on national TV, proving he can take on everyone from washed-up sci-fi fogies to crack-smoking Casanovas. No, this was a club in Austin, Texas, and Patton Oswalt was trying to record his 2006 comedy album, whose playful name, *Werewolves and Lollipops*, belied its sharp-as-an-umbrella-tip edge.

As, on the album, Oswalt rips into a hapless heckler who interrupted one of his bits with a pointless scream during a quiet buildup, it’s hard not to think of Oswalt Cobblepot, the vertically challenged, unassuming menace who tried to bite off Batman’s nose. Oswalt the comedian, whom one *USA Today* reporter actually suggested should have played the Joker in Christopher Nolan’s *Batman Begins*, would have made a much better Penguin: He’s pudgy, pasty-faced, stands at about five and a half feet tall and is maaad about monocles.

But despite the similarity in names, Patton Oswalt wasn’t supposed to turn out to be a wisecracking “bridge troll,” as he openly calls himself on

*Werewolves* (while riffing about going to the *Batman Begins* premiere, as a matter of fact). As the comic disclosed during another stand-up routine, he grew up in a military family in Virginia as the son of a colonel and, as *Royal Flush* suspected, he was actually named after famous WWII general George S. Patton.

“I was named after Patton, but my dad had done three years in Vietnam and steered me AWAY from the military,” Oswalt revealed to *RF*.

He never picked up a weapon on the battlefield, but the 39-year-old guy who you swear you’ve seen on TV before can fire on all cylinders. Oswalt’s happy-go-lucky demeanor has been witnessed on *The King of*

*Queens* and *Reno 911!*, and via the voice of lead character Remy in the animated smash *Ratatouille*, but if you’re George Bush, George Lucas or a hick who likes KFC, you’ll want to steer clear of this geek.

“KFC’s Famous Bowls, that’s their top-selling item,” he snarled on *Werewolves*. “America has spoken: ‘Pile my food in a fucking bowl. I don’t give a shit. ... I just want kind of a light-brown hillock of glop. If you could put my lunch in a blender and liquefy it and then put it into a caulking gun and inject it right into my ephemeral artery, even better. But until you invent a lunch gun, I would like a failure pile in a sadness bowl.’”

Bits like those -- and phrases like “sprinkle some fries on those cupcakes” -- have already become stuff of legend in the underground-comedy world, which has bled into the indie-rock scene thanks to Sub Pop Records snatching up Oswalt, as well as David Cross and Eugene Mirman, two cohorts who count themselves as veterans of Oswalt’s Comedians of Comedy revue. The touring carnival, which only started a few years ago, hits everywhere from rock clubs to big fests like Coachella and has given a boost to seasoned comics like Maria Bamford and newcomers like Howard Kremer.

“We might do some [more] music-festival stuff,” Oswalt said of the group’s plans. “A lot of the comedians that I [have been] showcasing in that, as well as myself, we’ve got our own stuff. It’s kind of a big group effort, but then everyone involved has so much of their own stuff that, why don’t they just put that out?”

“I’m working on a new album, and I’m even going to try





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to record a DVD very early in 2009," he added. "I want to write all-new material. 'Whatever the most recent year or month is, is your best time as a comedian, 'cause that's when you're doing your freshest stuff. It's whatever is the closest time when we're talking, but it's all subjective. If you asked me five years ago, 'Was this your best year as a comedian?' I'd go, 'Yeah, that is my best year as a comedian. I just did a TV special ...' it's all relative. [Being a comedian] is the thing that I love to do whether it's going well or it's going badly.



in the way of his nerdiness.

"When I was really, really young, I read them -- you know, second, third grade. And then I kinda fell out [of them] for a long time, and then, in the '80s, when like *Watchmen* and *Dark Knight* came out, friends told me about them, and I got back into them

full-time, and I would just draw them -- my versions of them."

Oswalt's illustrative abilities only took him so far, but in recent years, his childhood dreams have come true thanks to a different kind of pen-stroke. He penned

## "AMERICA HAS SPOKEN! PILE MY FOOD IN A FUCKING BOWL."

I just really, really love it. There's not much beyond that. You do the thing that's the most fun for you. It's what I'd rather be doing at any time."

Well, almost at any time. Beyond being a stand-up star, TV stalwart, roast regular and the COC ringleader, Oswalt punches up scripts, has MC'd two award shows recently (the indie-music Plug Awards and the American Cinema Editors' Eddie Awards) and has even delved into the comic-book realm. That's right -- as he says on *Werewolves* -- which, by the way, featured much-raved-about drawings by Netherlands artiste Zeloot -- his geekiness has gotten

a five-page plop-style parody backup story in *Batman* #600 called "The Dark, Groovy, Solid, Far-Out and Completely With-It Knight Returns," and scribed a handful of other pieces for the comics universe: *JLA: Welcome to the Working Week*, and stories for *The Goon Noir* #01 and *Masks: Too Hot for TV*.

"Some of the ones I did were pretty serious," he qualified. "*The JLA: Welcome to the Working Week* wasn't meant to be funny. I've done funny stuff in areas that are meant to be funny, so ... I don't think geeks, at least comic-book fans, take it that seriously. ... Comic-book



### ONE WORD ANSWERS



IRAQ  
BOONDOGGLE

GUANTANAMO  
ROOM 101

HILLARY  
CLINTON  
IMPATIENT

BARACK  
OBAMA  
PATIENT



PUPPY  
ADOPTION  
REQUIRED

PARTING  
WORDS FOR  
PRESIDENT  
BUSH?

HAVE FUN  
BEING RAPED  
IN HELL!

WHAT IS THE  
BIGGEST  
PROBLEM  
FACING THE  
COUNTRY  
TODAY?!

writing is more of a, 'When I get a great idea.' Thankfully, it's not paying the bills, so I can keep it fun and interesting"

But Oswalt is a huge comics fan -- seriously. Don't believe it? When he spoke with *RF*, he went into detail about his favorite superhero crossover story line of all time:

"I consider Warren Ellis' *Planetary* 'crossover' [to be my favorite,] since what he posits is that all pop culture -- comic books, horror movies, pulps -- are dressed-up 'real' history. So within the logic of the world, he's got disguised 'crossovers' from everywhere -- DC and Marvel, cheap-o drive-in movies, Japanese crime flicks. Come to think of it, *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* has a similar feel."

Of course, comics fans are still trying to shake out of their minds bad memories of the D.O.A. flick that was loosely based on Moore's *Extraordinary Gentlemen*. But as far as Batman is concerned, Oswalt isn't worried about the prospects of the next capped crusader flick.

"I'm really good friends with [writer] David Goyer, so I know some stuff about the plot and everything, and it sounds really great," he admitted about *Begins*. "I think the story's going to be solid ... that's what's going to make it. We'll see."

But as for the JLA movie that's being bandied about ... well, he isn't so sure.

"I've always wanted to see someone work with huge icons that [pit] them against each other, but ... like an comic [book-adapted] movie, it's going to depend on the casting and the script. ... Each comic [book-adapted] movie is its own ... it's like any other movie: Are they going to do a good job writing and directing it, and is there a vision behind it?"

As for Oswalt's vision, he still trying to formulate ideas for what next projects he can dip into -- "I have very, very nebulous ideas right now that are even hard to talk about, so we'll see," he said. But until those plans materialize, we'll always have his tasty standup.

"It's the most fun," he said. "It's the thing that I love to do, whether it's going well or it's going badly. I just really, really love it. There's not much beyond that. You do the thing that's the most fun for you. It's what I'd rather be doing at any time."

So until more is on his radar, expect to find Patton in the clubs delivering his comedy -- a success pile in a happiness bowl. 🍷

## MAJOR BLUE BALLS!

PATTON PICKS HIS FAVORITE COMIC BOOK STORYLINES THAT WERE NEVER FINISHED



### SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATER

1993-1999  
a terrific, missed opportunity to redo the history of the DC Universe, "Deadwood"-style. It was the Ultimates line of comics before there were Ultimates. 70 issues, gone too soon.

### THE PSYCHO

2006 ▼  
James Hudnall and Dan Brereton's weird-beard take on superheroics as nuclear brinkmanship. Three issues.

Why the FUCK did this not catch on? Oh well -- it just got optioned for a movie, so let's keep out fingers crossed.



### BIG NUMBERS

1990 ▲  
Alan Moore and Dave McKean's great, lost, never-finished masterpiece. Two issues and gone.

