

naked truth

ANDY DICK

INTERVIEW BY HARIETTE SUROVELL

PHOTO BY JOSHUA WEINFELD

Andy Dick, the unconventional and irreverent star of television's hit comedy series *Newsradio*, will be segueing into movie stardom in the upcoming Don Scardino movie, *Advice from a Caterpillar*. Co-starring Cynthia Nixon and John Tenney, *Advice* is a combination of ultra-hip incestuous love triangle and screwball comedy. Dick, who has outed himself as being bi-sexual in the press many times, plays a gay society caterer. Alternately engaging and aloof, Andy (who is famously moody) wasn't overly-inclined to discuss his movie in-depth, so I asked him the questions everyone really wants to know about: his relationships on and off the set with Phil Hartman, his *Newsradio* co-star, his reaction to Phil's murder by his wife Brynn, his feelings about the death of his good friend Chris Farley, and his unusual life-style: he lives with his ex-wife, current girlfriend and all their children, along with assorted male lovers.

In person, you look a lot like Peter Sellers. I read that Peter Sellers is one of your influences, one of your idols.

I have the glasses that he wore which are Calvin Kleins, I bought the exact pair but they're just a little too big for my face. These are a scaled down version because my face is so skinny and I wear my hair down like this.

I thought your parody of *Unzipped* was brilliant.

Yeah, that really is like a modern-day Peter Sellers-Clouiseau. It was great. I'm good at what I do. I was asked to do Andy Kaufman, but I said no. I'm not good at impersonating. I'm not an impersonator. Jim Carrey was passionate about it, and he brought the right clothes, and the bongos to the audition, so how can you compete with that?

Can we talk about your new movie?

This is just a sweet movie about cynical people. It's about more people who don't know what they're looking for but they couple up and find love eventually.

Was the character written for you, do you think?

No, it was a play. Years ago. Ally Sheedy was in the original version. It was on off-Broadway for five years.

This thing about you being bi-sexual, are you sensitive about this?

It makes other people sensitive.

I don't give a shit. I'm sure people have very weird reactions.

People don't believe in... straight people say, 'c'mon you know you're just gay', and gay people say, 'c'mon you know you're just gay', and everybody just wants to make me gay! There is such a thing as bi-sexual. People want black and white.

Do you think everybody's bisexual?

Well I said that, that's just to shock people. I know that there are people who are straight. I could have sex with my same sex... something tweaked my reality as a child. That's what happened.

Tweaked your reality?

I wasn't ready for certain sexual things. There was a babysitter, you know, or it may have been my brother Michael's mom or someone, and that just broke that boundary and there's no boundaries drawn there, no lines drawn. That is what I mean by 'tweaking my reality.'

But you're not on this like, 'I was sexually molested and I'm a victim' thing?

No. And I enjoy being bisexual. I enjoy being with men and I enjoy being with women but tonight I will be with one of each and I'll be on the outside on the side lines watching, having fun.

Do you think your sexuality is a result of what you have called your abusive childhood?

My parents just neglected me, I wasn't abused or anything. Neglect is a form of abuse. That's what happened. I was being neglected, not taught etiquette or proper things, what's appropriate and no boundaries were drawn.

Andy, you were adopted, right?

It's not their fault. My parents did the best they could. We're back to the victim thing, I'm not a victim.

This kind of like, 'extended' lifestyle you live, that has gotten so much press, do you think that this maybe is because: you were adopted as a child, you searched for your biological mother and this way is your way your sort of like creating an extended biological family?

Oh yeah, I definitely know that, I've already figured out... I mean I used to, I had no blood relatives till I made some, I guess, but now I have blood mom, last summer, and, that definitely closed and opened a lot of doors for me, and it's just another thing in my life, I just move ahead. That's how I feel talking about my sex life — I'll be like: Who cares? It's always changing.

People care because you're a celebrity and it's different.

And because I'm vocal about it.

It would be nice if you started a trend of more honesty.

I think that's happening, but the way I act is infantile, it really is, I'm like a big fat fucking baby. I just need to be spanked and sent to bed early, I'm serious, but no one stops me.

Did you read the book about *Saturday Night Live* how John Belushi, they actually had this ex secret service guy?

That's what Chris Farley had too, and that works to a degree, when he was out here hosting at the very last time they wouldn't let me come in his room. I wasn't doing drugs then, and also, during the last few times I was with him I wasn't doing them with him, I was doing them but I wasn't doing them with him and then he was calling me at the hotel once, during that time, late at night, and I didn't return his calls.

You feel guilty about that?

Yeah, not bad because I didn't do anything, but I feel, I feel, I don't feel... guilt is a weird thing to me because I don't have a lot of that but I definitely know that I play the part, however big or small, in the deaths of at least two people.

How so?

I told Phil when I got out of AA that I was going to take Brynn to meetings because I knew she was always drunk and I never did it. But you know, I can hear people go, 'no, you didn't have any...no, no, no'but, seriously, you know, we don't know what difference I could have made because I never made that effort, I didn't make the effort with Chris.

Now I try to make efforts, you know, I'm just, the best effort I can do is just stay sober myself. I can at least do that. But I wasn't doing that with Chris. I remember talking to Chris and saying, 'Hey, I don't know how you can do it, I just love getting fucked up.' Seriously, that's bad news. But it's just as bad to say, 'Phil, I'm going to take Brynn soon as I get, out' I said, when I was in, he called me in rehab, 'Like, when I get out of here I want to start going to meetings with Brynn.' Instead she's dead. I just never did, I got out of rehab and I got all busy. We're selfish people.

Phil Hartman was a fatherly person, right? And he was a real father too, right?

Yeah, I wanted to emulate him, his control over his money, the way he did, I'm in debt, I hate that, \$150,000 in debt to the IRS right now. Just figure, I'm just all messed up. He was with his kids, he had this family, everything was ideal but look what happened...

Was he one of those people who wanted to help, like a "white knight" complex thing?


No, it's not that way. He loved his kids, he just like, he loved this whole package he had going.

Did you emulate him as a father for your own children?

I wanted to be like that but I couldn't and I remember asking him, 'You don't like that I'm not going out with Maria, their mother?' He said, 'No, I don't.' I felt bad because I wanted him to approve.

How resilient are you, you get out of rehab, I don't know what the timing was but first Chris Farley dies...

That sobered me up for about five months. I just clenched, then went, literally, 'That's it, he died, I'm not...', he actually sobered up, and then, after he had sobered up and was sober for a month, and I went, 'I think I'm going to sober up too.' Then I sobered up, then he died. He fell off the wagon and then died. Fuck! I'm staying sober!



I just need to be spanked and sent to bed early, I'm serious, but no one stops me.

How did you deal with the Phil Hartman thing?

Ever since then I've only had people around me, actually, I don't think I've ever been alone. I've had people... my friend Ryan, my son, my ex-wife, and then ah, friends that I meet here, I've never been alone, that's one... and those people are all sober.

And they're all nurturing you.

They're nurturing and supportive.

Isn't it still difficult to cope with that level of trauma?

Not really. I thought I had this anxious breathing condition that was after rehab started, like I was starting to feel relaxed. Boom! Hit with that I couldn't breathe... It's starting to go away again, and always, that would be my reason to go back on smoking pot, I'd get anxiety, it was all nerves, I could tell I was getting tense, and it always calms my nerves, and it always did, I always felt better. I would read these books that said pot is a good thing... did you know that? They have books that say pot is medicinal, they give used to give it to asthma patients.

What are you like as a father?

With my sons, you know what I'm like? I treat them really rough, because I want to roughen them up.

Why? Because your military dad did that to you?

Maybe that, but also, when I was a kid, I was afraid of other kids. I don't know how my kids are gonna turn out, but I just do the best I can do.

Are you really just an exhibitionist with a license because you're a celebrity.

No, I mean, yes... I don't like my body, it's oddly-proportioned. I'd like to be, like, dumpy.

So why were you running around naked when you were a kid?

That had a lot to do with coming of age and I wanted to see my friends naked. And watch.

So you wanted them to emulate you and start a trend?

Yeah, it was like, will you do it if I do it?