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[Comedy](#) Wed Jun 15 2011

[Jim Norton brings the Anti-Social Network to Just For Laughs](#)

By Nellie Huggins

Jim Norton, who is best known for his brutal honesty on stage and self-deprecating style, recently took some time out of his busy [Just For Laughs](#) and [Anti-Social Network](#) schedules to answer some questions for us, and to reveal his secret love for Lady Gaga.



You are stopping through the Chicago Just For Laughs Festival with the Anti-Social network this week. What was the impetus for this show?

I wanted to put together a powerful, four-headliner show because I get so bored touring alone. And that's what I've done, with the exception of myself, who is the weak link. And I had to look up 'impetus' before answering the question. (I thought it was a veiled jab at my many failed sexual performances).

You've done a lot of out-of-the-ordinary gigs (the AVN awards, for example) What is it that makes you such a good niche comedian?

I think it's just that I'm very honest about my own perversions and awfulness, which attracts people who specifically relate to it. My act tends to be uncomfortable for emotionally healthy people. Unless you accidentally added the 'h' and are calling me a good nice comedian, in which case, thank you.

Your new cd, Despicable, was released this year. What was that process like for you?

It's my 3rd and the hardest part, aside from attempting to insert laughs into a monumental bomb of a set, is figuring out the artwork. I never know what photos I want on the cover or inside sleeves. Nice of me to explain what 'artwork' means on a CD. I'm an ass.

A lot of people have labeled you an "angry" comic, which is a common misnomer when a male comic is opinionated. How do you refute this stereotype? DO you try and refute this stereotype?

I never liked that label because I'm more 'self-hating' and 'insecure' than angry. 'Angry comic' implies rants are coming, and I detest rants, because they stopped being interesting after 1994.

What inspires you as a comic, and how do you go about your joke writing process?

I go onstage at the Comedy Cellar in NY and just talk about whatever is in the news with only a very general idea of where I want to go. Lately it's been bin Laden's death, Weiner, Schwarzenegger and the

IMF rapist. You get a feel for what's working just by doing it night after night and developing a flow and rhythm with it. I love working on material; your act never feels stale or boring that way. (Unlike this answer, which was tedious at best and coma-inducing at worst).

Who are some of your favorite comics to watch or collaborate with?

I'm not a good collaborator; I'm too much of a self-centered fool to admit my idea stinks. I love watching Colin Quinn, Attell, Breuer and Bill Burr. Louis CK is also great to watch, although I haven't seen him since we quarreled after making love.

Who/what inspired you to pursue comedy?

Richard Pryor and Carlin are my idols. I wish I had more original answers than that, but they're simply the greatest to ever do stand up.

Was there ever a moment where you doubted the choice to do comedy?

I haven't doubted my choice in many many years, although, in the beginning, I was obsessed with waiting for the other shoe to drop, for the entire country to realize at once that I was an unfunny fraud; an imposter. Thank God that never happened, and they are only realizing it slowly, on an individual basis.

If you had one piece of advice for an aspiring comic, male or female...

Write all your own material, tape every set and listen to them to learn. And always remember: the more disastrous a tragedy, the more there is to make fun of. (And if you're fairly attractive and need a gig, blow Jim Norton).

A last minute question that I can't help but ask; I just read today, on your twitter, that you really enjoyed the new Lady Gaga cd. Are you a big fan?

I love Lady Gaga's music, I really do. I wish I were kidding. I've seen her in concert and would love to meet her. And if that's not possible, I'd at least like to meet someone who knows her, so I can purchase her underpants.

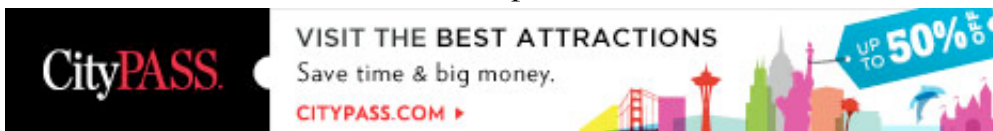
The Anti-Social network, featuring Bill Burr, Dave Attell, Jim Breuer and hosted by Jim Norton, is now on tour nationally. Tickets for tonights show at The Chicago Theater can be purchased [here](#).

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[Oral Tradition: Chicago French Speakers Maintain a Decades-Long Conversation](#)

By Megan Marz

In 1987, a few Alliance Française de Chicago students started meeting for drinks after their business French course. When the course ended, they continued to meet. Now, almost 25 years later, the weekly tradition continues to thrive.

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[The Saps @ Empty Bottle](#)

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[The Silent Film Society of Chicago presents *The Mysterious Lady* @ Portage Theater](#)

Fri Aug 26 2011

[Farmageddon Documentary @ Siskel Film Center](#)

Sun Aug 28 2011

[You, Me, Them, Everybody @ The Whistler](#)

Mon Aug 29 2011

[You, Me, Them, Everybody @ The Hungry Brain](#)

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