

MAD's IDIOTS OF THE ISSUE!

CHARLIE KADAU & JOE RAIOLA FAQs (Faulty, Angst-ridden Questions we asked Joe and Charlie!)



Q: How did you two meet?

J: In a high school drama class. I saw Charlie in Woody Allen's *Death Knocks* — very funny — and offered him a part in a musical comedy I had written. He foolishly accepted and ended up on stage singing, which was simply hilarious because when he sings, Charlie sounds like Tom Waits with strep throat.

C: In high school, Joe was awed by my raw acting and writing talent and essentially begged me to come in and save a struggling production he had created. That's how I remember it.

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Q: How long have you two worked together?

J: I don't think of what we do as "work." Luckily, other misguided people are willing to pay us for sitting around and arguing over what's funny. We've been doing that, whatever you call it, for over 30 misguided years.

C: I put our beginning as a writing team in the summer of 1974. The partnership in the suet exporting business started a couple of years later.

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Q: Who do you consider your influences?

J: Professionally, Monty Python's *Flying Circus*. Personally, mentally unbalanced street people, especially outspoken ones.

C: The Marx Brothers, Abbott and Costello, Soupy Sales, Chuck McCann, Steve Allen, Bob and Ray, Monty Python, Woody Allen, Mel Brooks and, oddly, MAD, along with many others.

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Q: Who is your favorite non-MAD writer?

J: Hermann Hesse. I like his gasoline, too.

C: Billy, whenever he sits in for Bil Keane in "Family Circus."

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Q: Pick a MAD contributor and describe them in one word.

J: Charlie Kadau: agnostic.

C: Joe Raiola: vital.

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Q: What was your favorite MAD trip?

J: The first one I went on, to Paris and Zermatt, when I had the chef at a four star hotel we were staying at cook (Bill) Gaines a vegetable cutlet. Gaines preferred eating animals, ideally when they were still alive, so this did not go over well.

C: Zermatt/Paris, 1987 and Bermuda, 1991.

Q: Any favorite memories from the MAD trips?

C: A night in a beer tent at a German wurst festival that looked like it would turn into a riot...Joe being hit square in the forehead by a roast potato in a Zermatt restaurant flung by (well, I know, but Joe doesn't to this day)...half a dozen MAD guys writing a standup comedy routine for Andrew J. Schwartzberg to perform at the cruise ship talent show — and he totally screwing it up...what may have been mob figures overhearing us discussing whether or not they were mob figures at the Casino Royale in Monaco...spending time out of the office with Bill Gaines.

Joe (l.) and Charlie (r.) — or, as they're known in some circles, "The Poor Man's Village People."



Q: Joe, we understand you two roomed together on one of the trips — how'd that go?

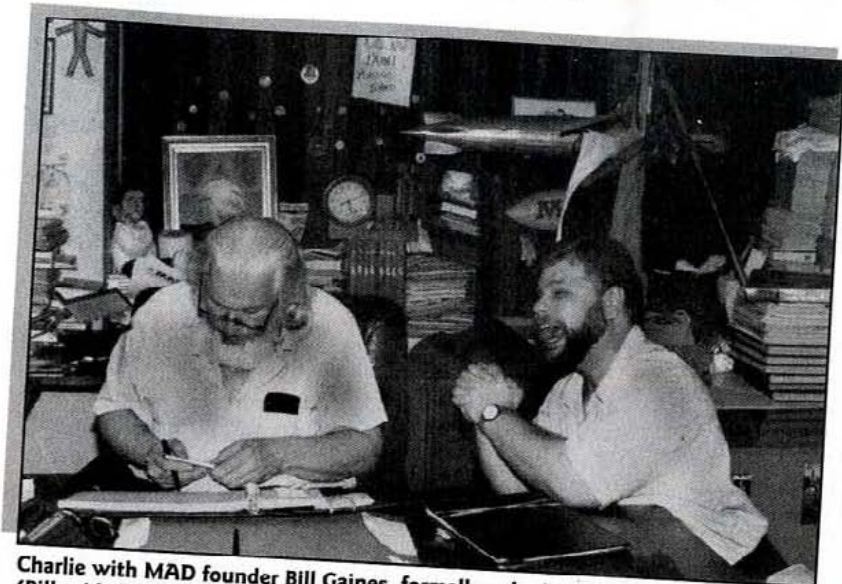
J: At the time, Charlie snored like a buffalo with a sinus condition. He made earth-quaking snorts that shook me to the core. I ended up sleeping like a homeless man in the foyer to get away from the noise.

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Q: You both worked as NYC cab drivers — any famous fares?

J: Many, including Lorne Michaels, who refused to hire me under any circumstance, which he still regards as his best career move ever.

C: Woody Allen and Marshall Brickman in the same cab! Art Garfunkel, who challenged my statement of "I know you" with an Art Garfunkel quiz. I scored 100%.



Charlie with MAD founder Bill Gaines, formally submitting his request for a raise. (Bill said, "Go #?%\$ yourself!")

Q: What is your favorite one-liner you wrote that was never used?

J: "I got a spam last night — apparently, I can get my penis enlarged while I'm refinancing my house."

C: When the former President's autobiography was released (and this really happened), I said, "Isn't it ironic that Bill Clinton arrived for his New York book party in a Hummer?"

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Q: What are the three funniest words in the English language?

In a poignant reenactment, Charlie and Joe recreate their historic first meeting.

J: A toss-up between "fa fa" and "fundalini," which, by the way, is a word I coined — a pun of Kundalini, the serpent energy. Wonder what the hell I'm talking about? Look it up!

C: Today, it's Clamato, nostril and Thermos, but my list changes daily.

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Q: Finish this sentence: It was so cold...

J: ...my brain froze and I couldn't think of a joke.

C: ...a right angle was only 45 degrees.

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Q: What's the best fake name you've ever created?

J: Hamilton Repetitive Hamilton

C: Hecky Peckersmith is certainly the most versatile. Also: Bill Fibbers. Joe Scuddy. Winston Van Winstonvan, and let's not forget Norton Crowheadenbus. And Russell Sprouts.

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Q: Charlie, when you were working as a security guard, the mall you were stationed at was robbed. Can you tell us what happened, Joe?

J: The mall was looted on Charlie's shift because he left work early. His colleagues were bound and gagged and merchandise was stolen. The story was big news and made the local paper. Although he inexplicably wasn't fired, the incident effectively ended Charlie's career in the private security sector. So, he fell back on his second choice: comedy.



Q: Charlie — what's your account?

C: I can tell you Joe's account is 98% false. It's like listening to FOX news.

Q: Who's more of a double-threat: Hilary Duff or Lindsay Lohan?

C: Sorry, a restraining order prevents me from speaking about either publicly.

Q: Joe, tell us about some of your non-MAD work.

J: I have a career as a solo performer and as unsuccessful solo performers go. I am almost successful. My latest show is called *Almost Obscene*, which I describe as "a rant against censorship, 'decency,' John Ashcroft and God Himself — not necessarily in that order."

Q: Joe, what's the strangest thing that's ever been hurled at you during a performance?

J: Well, I am, I think, the only living performer who has actually had tomatoes thrown at him, something usually reserved for Daffy Duck. The tomatoes, by the way, were followed by an assortment of salad ingredients and then a lawn chair, which wasn't such a bad thing, because it shielded me from the onslaught of tomatoes. (I was not asked back.)

Q: Charlie, do you have an alibi for that evening?

C: I know absolutely nothing about that Seatco Industries Porta-lounger model G-530 lawn chair OR who threw it.



During a break in their partnership, Charlie found some success with a new writing partner, a bear, while Joe was left impoverished.

Q: Charlie, you're also called Jenkins, Charlie Critter, Herr Karl, The Big Gun and The Stickler. Why so many nicknames? Any others you've been hiding?

C: Other actual, real nicknames include Chuckadoo, Chaluch, Chon-Chon and Chester. I guess it has to do with me being so beloved. Next question, Pepe.

Q: Joe — any nicknames for you?

J: They used to call me Black Melvin, which I am very proud of for no sensible reason. They also called me The Gunther, The Big Gun and Yosemite Sam. I have recently taken to asking some co-workers to refer to me as Mac, though you can call me Al.

Q: Hellmann's or Miracle Whip?

C: Miracle Whip is good for salads (egg, tuna, chicken). Hellmann's for everything else. Can I get a show on The Food Network based on this?

J: My vote is Vegan-aise.

Q: Paris Hilton or Nicole Richie?

J: Nicole Kidman

C: For making the best damned griddle cakes this side of Lake Michigan: Paris; for snaking those clogged drains: Nicole.



Joe and Charlie host a charity dance marathon in 1975. Their comedy has stood the test of time slightly better than these tuxedos.

Q: Better play value: Silly Putty or Play-Doh?

J: Play-Doh is for losers. Doesn't bounce or stretch, tastes lousy, isn't packaged in handy egg.

C: Sorry, a restraining order prevents me from speaking about either publicly.

Q: If you were conducting this interview, what question would you have asked yourself?

C: Why is Joe consistently lying about my record and distorting the facts? It's to hide his own mishandling of the economy, isn't it?

J: When is it over?

THE STATS:

First MAD article: The MAD Don't Book Chapter 1: What Not to Do at a Funeral (MAD #254, April, 1985) — See it on page #44!

Number of MAD issues appeared in Joe-67; Charlie-82

Number of Articles in this spotlight section: 11

**SALUD,
CHARLIE & JOE!**