

Interview with comedian Alysia Wood

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Anyone can tell a joke, but it takes talent to tell a joke and make it funny. Not only does Alysia Wood make people laugh, but she also willingly agreed to do an interview with us. We would usually award her double bonus points for this, but she also gets brownie points for mentioning Back to the Future TWICE in our interview with her. If you happen to find yourself on the west coast this spring make sure to check out one of her performances. She'll be performing in California and Seattle (go Mariners!) pretty extensively over the next couple months. Check out her tour schedule at www.AlysiaWood.com, but for now read our interview with her below.

Q: You had an opportunity to become a 911 operator but chose to be a comedian instead. What drew you toward your interest in law enforcement and why ultimately did you decide on stand up?

AW: Whoa, whoa, whoa... I didn't want to enforce the law. Washington's 911 included medical, fire and police dispatch and call receiving. I was already doing the medical part in a hospital and had stand up in the back of my mind. I wrote jokes during class knowing that the hours at 911 would've conflicted with standup. After I graduated from the course, I tried comedy last minute, loved it and never looked back. Comedy was a low paying career that I wasn't even good at yet. To answer your question, I'd clearly lost my mind.

Q: Erma Bombeck once said "Laughter rises out of tragedy, when you need it the most, and rewards you for your courage." How has comedy made a difference in your life?

AW: Before comedy I had credit... so I suppose comedy rewarded my courage with a bankruptcy attorney.

Q: When a joke bombs onstage, do you retract it from your next performance or do you chalk it up to being stricken with a dense crowd?

AW: I subscribe to the theory that if you think it's funny then it definitely is, you just aren't presenting it to the audience correctly. So I work the joke to death. If I retired a joke every time it bombed, I seriously wouldn't have any jokes. Sort of like gold, which starts out dirty and fucked-up looking. If not, then obviously someone else created it before it hit your hands.

Q: You were born in Louisiana and now are residing in Los Angeles. What were some of the first cultural differences you noticed between the two?

AW: Actually I went from Louisiana to Seattle, where the natives sincerely believe "stereotypes aren't valid" and "I don't see color." Then I moved to New Jersey where the

people REALLY embraced race differences and stereotypes. Then I moved to LA where race is "marketable, baby."

Q: If you could traverse the space-time continuum, what advice would you have given yourself 10 years ago?

AW: *Traverse the space-time continuum?* Did someone beat you over the head with a Back to the Future box set?

Q: Female comedians have long battled the stigma and stereotypes of being inferior crafters of humor. Your success and very clever routines truly help debunk this myth. What advice would you give to other aspiring female comedians?

AW: I give the same advice to the girls that I give the guys: don't ask me, I don't know what in the fuck I'm talking about.

Q: Your honesty about your A.D.D. and your near suicide at age 12, demonstrate your courage to show vulnerability and candor in a world where so many have adapted a "guilt free" modus operandi. Who influenced you with this level of frankness?

AW: That specific joke was a funny story before I wrote it but I love the challenge of making an uncomfortable topic undeniably funny...
A lot of comics before me demonstrated that the painfully true stuff is the funniest and most powerful. Personally, 20% of my set is generally stream of consciousness because I have ADD, I'm a bad liar and I've learned it's easier to go with the grain than against it... and I can't do pratfalls. I am "above" pratfalls but only because I don't know how to do them. Believe me, if I knew how to do a pratfall, I'd spend the entire set running into the brick wall.

Q: What do you feel is the toughest aspect of constantly being on the road?

AW: Well, I love the road. I only left because I needed a raise and health insurance.

Q: Where can we see more of you in 2007?

AW: The only thing I've booked so far is Seattle March 8-10. Otherwise, I'm running around LA. I keep my schedule current online so harass your local club and keep an eye on www.AlysiaWood.com.

Q: We always end interviews with word association. We say Wombat and you say.....

AW: Back to the Future box set.

<http://www.wickedinfo.com/comedians/interview-with-comedian-alyisia-wood/>
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