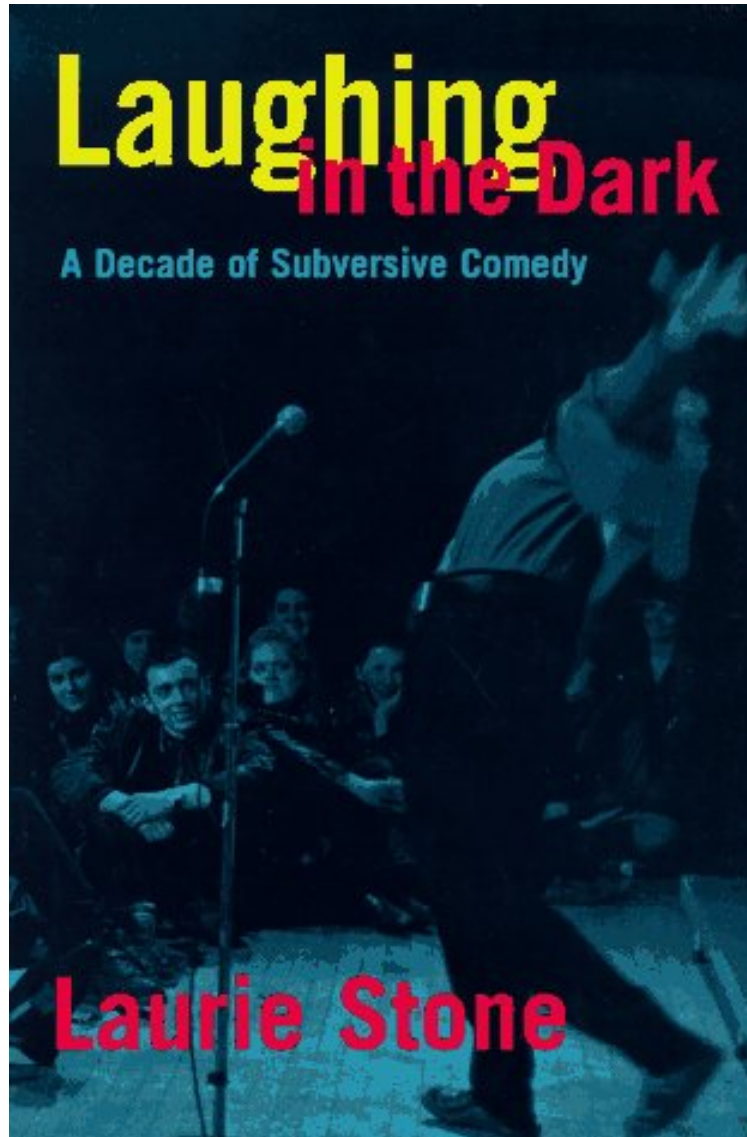


(Pdf free) Laughing in the Dark: A Decade of Subversive Comedy

## Laughing in the Dark: A Decade of Subversive Comedy

Laurie Stone

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**Laurie Stone : Laughing in the Dark: A Decade of Subversive Comedy** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Laughing in the Dark: A Decade of Subversive Comedy:

A collection of essays, reviews and interviews from the Village Voice explores the idea of what makes us laugh and think, discussing the work of Richard Pryor, Dennis Miller, Whoopi Goldberg, Eric Bogosian, Rosie O'Donnell, Tracy

Ullman, and many other artists who have shaped American comedy."

From Library Journal It is said that all humor is built on truth, and Stone aims at the truth in this thought-provoking collection of interviews and essays that first appeared in the Village Voice. She thoroughly examines the comedy circuit and its offshoots (i.e., performance art, offbeat revues, and subversive theater) from the 1980s through the present, concentrating on individual performers. Brutally descriptive and erudite, she candidly dissects the performers, their material, audience impact, and what contributes to an individual brand of humor. A broad cross-section of names are included?veterans such as Bill Cosby and Joan Rivers share these pages with the lunatic fringe of Paul Reubens and Jim Carrey and performers from the gay scene (Peggy Shaw, the Five Lesbian Brothers) and television (Jay Leno, Rosie O'Donnell) among a host of others. No subject is taboo here in these frank pieces?proving that comedy is often no joke. The book may leave readers with a bitter aftertaste of the dark side of this art. Recommended for circulating libraries with large entertainment collections.?Carol J. Binkowski, Bloomfield, N.J. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Stone started writing her Village Voice comedy column, "Laughing in the Dark," in 1987 in response to the rise in hip and original insurgent stand-up comedy in clubs and on the airwaves. This spicy and creatively analytical anthology not only collects her pithy and incisive critiques but also offers a vigorous history and dissection of various comedy styles, from the "spiritual spawn" of Lenny Bruce to comedians who have veered off from the path blazed by Johnny Carson. Stone explains that she looks for "sass and craft" in stand-up acts and, ever earthy and candid (qualities she also applauds in the work of the diverse comedians she admires), saucily compares laughter to orgasm. Because comedy is, indeed, a mysterious and deeply satisfying force that works faster than the speed of thought, Stone's breakdown of why we find such talents as Richard Lewis, Garry Shandling, Rosie O'Donnell, Damon Wayans, Emo Philips, and Sandra Bernhard funny is truly illuminating. Stone accomplishes what the best of critics should: she enhances our enjoyment. Donna Seaman From Kirkus s Novelist and Village Voice critic Stone (Starting with Serge, 1989) offers an anthology of poorly executed essays on stand-up comedy. Purportedly a study covering the last decade, this is instead a haphazardly organized collection of previously published pieces, written largely in a vernacular that will be lost on readers who are neither bicoastal nor metropolitan. Furthermore, Stone cannot avoid injecting her painfully PC views into nearly every piece, which would not be terrible were it not for her amazing inconsistency. A blind spot vis--vis Judaism shows, and her criticism of Fiddler on the Roof in a discussion of revitalized Yiddish theater belies a loathing for Orthodoxy in particular. It seems only Jewish comics like Danny Hoch (who, admittedly, is one of the lesser-knowns that Stone features in Laughing), who are sufficiently secular and multicultural, are acceptable to Stone. Elsewhere, Stone is careless and even cruel, as in her comparison of a comedian to the "surface flash and pointlessness of minimalist fiction"--tell that to Gass or Sorrentino--or her statement regarding Spalding Gray's eye disease that "in this age of AIDS and cancer, the threat of blindness to one eye has to be a comedy." And with all her deserved attention to the rise of gay comedy, there is no mention of Canada's Kids in the Hall, the troupe that revolutionized drag and gay comedy in the 1980s and toured the US only two years ago. Clearly a book for Stone fans only; to the reader looking for an unbiased, funny view, caveat emptor. -- Copyright 1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.