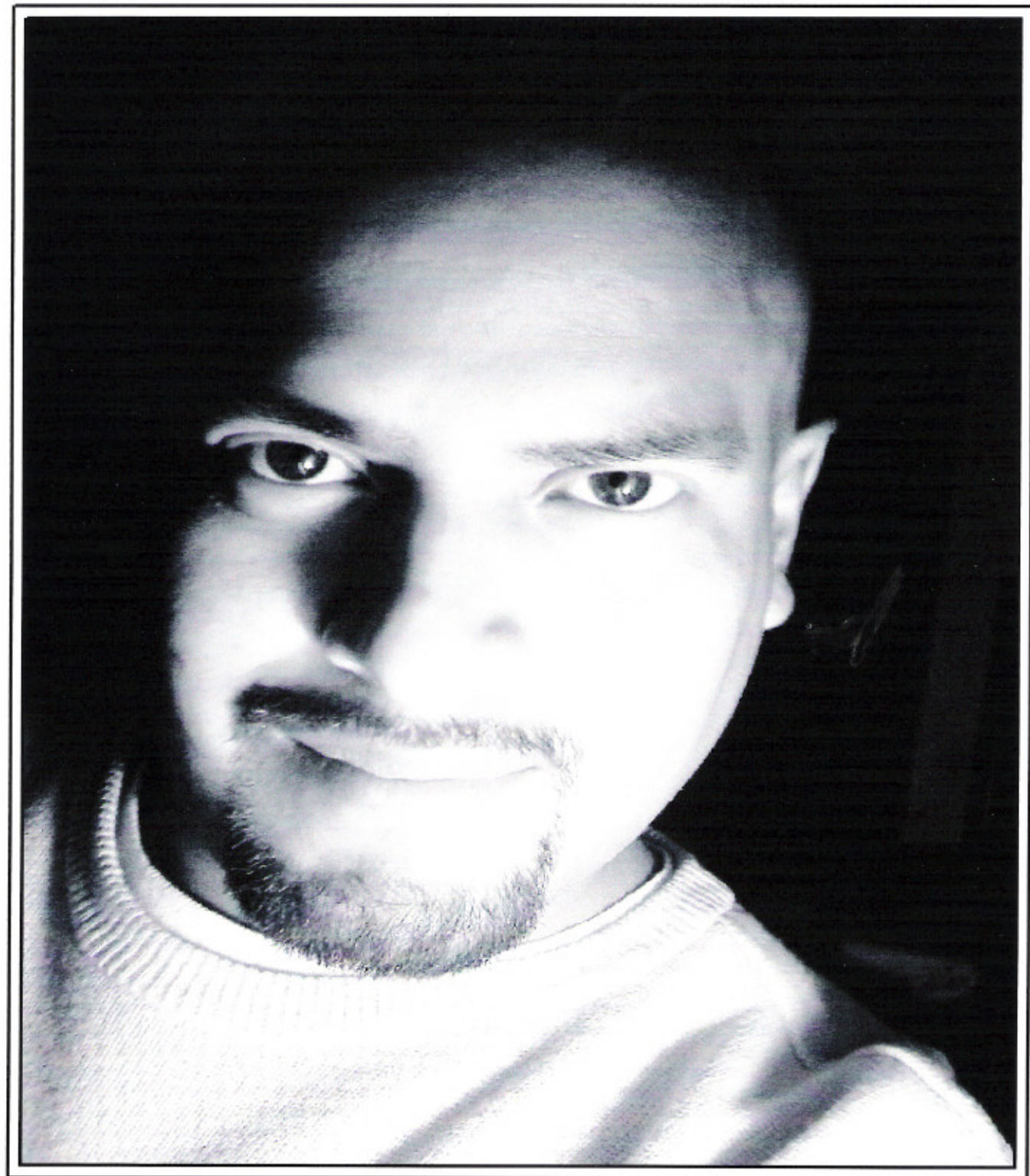


Charlie Moreno

email: Charlie@TainTech.com



Charlie Moreno

email:harlemhoodrat@yahoo.com

Then

Son to an abusive, drug-dealing father, Charlie managed to avoid most of the violence by faking asthma attacks. The family would be moved to and from several public housing projects because of so much criminal activity and community complaints against his father. After one major incident Charlie's mother took the small, chubby child and his brother to live at the Battered Women's Shelter where Charlie was bitten by another child and taken to the hospital. His father became a "born again" Christian and promised his mother he would change. His father continued the physical abuse, once even outside in the church parking lot. Charlie was taken to the Emergency Room and refused insurance coverage because it was considered "an act of God". Charlie's older brother was admitted into a mental hospital and later escaped with the help of Charlie. His brother would later attempt suicide multiple times and enter a halfway home.

Now

After a year of depression and thoughts of suicide Charlie was taken to a comedy club for his birthday. Charlie explains the evening, "I realized all their jokes had someone as the victim. Somebody gets hurt and people laugh. A guy slips on a banana peel, and people laugh. I wanted to see if my life makes people laugh." Charlie got on stage anywhere he could, bars, open mics, even as a street performer at downtown bus terminals. Charlie entered an amateur contest at the club where he had had his epiphany and won. After only three months as a regular opening act Charlie was still not happy. He hopped on a greyhound bus with \$300 in his pocket and headed to New York City. He slept in subways and parks and finally entered a homeless shelter, was robbed, went days without eating, but still managed to perform at almost every club in NYC. He has been an extra in movies and television. A couple of years later after experiencing this drama Charlie is continuing to fine-tune his act. Charlie explains his style, "If I'm right about this, people don't expect to laugh at my domestic violence jokes, suicide jokes, and homeless jokes, but if I do it just right, they'll forget and laugh anyway. If comedy is tragedy, I'm gold baby!"

Charlie Moreno

Clubs and Venus:

New York City:

Apollo Theatre
Boston Comedy Club
Gotham Comedy Club
Stand Up New York
New York Comedy Club
Pip's
Gladys' Comedy Room
The Comedy Cellar (Showcase)
Comic Strip Live (Audition, passed)
Ha Comedy Club

Other Clubs:

Bart Reed's Comic Strip - El Paso, TX.
The Velveeta Room – Austin, TX.
Capitol City Comedy Club - Austin, TX.
Loonee's Comedy Corner – Colorado Springs, CO.
Laff's Comedy Café – Albuquerque, NM.

Television & Film Credits:

Anger Management – Extra (Columbia Pictures)
Brown Sugar – Extra (Fox Searchlight Pictures)
Two Weeks Notice – Extra (Warner Bros./Castle Rock Pictures)
The People's Court – Audience Commentary
Law & Order – Extra (NBC)
NY1 News – Extra (Time Warner Cable)

Performed With:

Chris Rock, Wanda Sykes, Jim Gaffigan, Ant, Ralphie May, Mitch Hedberg, Tony Rock, Jim David, Pablo Francisco, Paul Rodriguez, Freddy Soto, Chris Fonseca, Chris Mata, Robert Hawkins, Patrick Candelaria, David Graham, Robert Duchaine, Bill Santiago, John Heffron, JJ Ramirez, Angel Salazar, Juan Villarreal, Carlos Mencia, Joe Klocek, Seth Buckwald, and many others.

Special Skills:

"T.V. Clean" or "Midnight Blue" Material, Bi-Lingual (English/Spanish), Voice Over/Radio (On Air Experience), Southern Dialects, Dramatic Improvisation, Comedic Improvisation, and Screenwriting.

References and avails upon request.

Charlie Moreno

The El Pasoan-turned-New York comedian returns home for a stand at the Comic Strip

The constant saga and drama surrounding the road to fame is rarely boring and often tragic. Such was the case for rap star Eminem, as we all know too well from his movie "8 Mile." But El Paso, too, has its own version of a struggling artist born out of hardship and violence. Only Charlie Moreno is a stand-up comedian instead of a rapper, and El Paso was his own personal 8 Mile from which he escaped to New York City and launched a comedy career.

Moreno will deliver the gritty details about his life this weekend during his performances at the Comic Strip, where he'll be opening for Pat Dixon and James Stephens III. Don't worry; it's okay to laugh at Moreno's hard-knocks repertoire.

"I have a friend who lives in the projects there, and she was telling me how her cable got cut off. If you live in the projects, you shouldn't even have cable. You shouldn't be watching 'Behind the Music' when you're behind on the rent," Moreno jokes about life in poverty.

The El Paso native grew up in the Sherman Projects, son to a verbally and physically abusive father who took drugs and drank a lot, and a mom who was always away from home working to support the family. His brother went in and out of a psychiatric hospital in his youth, and Moreno's parents eventually split up.

"I was no saint, either," Moreno recalls. "I just realized I had to straighten up, so I started working." The then-16-year-old was rewarded for his employment at a downtown shoe store by being mugged and robbed on the job. He's even got a comedy routine about the incident.

Life was at its lowest for Moreno by 20. "I was a big mess," he said. "I was smoking a pack of cigarettes a day. My car had given out... my girlfriend had a miscarriage. I was so depressed I was thinking, 'I gotta find something to do.'"

It all clicked one night when his mother took the troubled young man to the Comic

Strip. "No matter what we went through, my mom always made us laugh. [Comedy] feels good. You just let it all out, whether it's good or bad... Comedy is tragedy. People like to laugh at other people's misfortunes."

He was convinced that he could turn his life of sadness into raw hilarity, and that El Pasoans who grew up the same way could relate to the humor.

For two years Moreno emceed comedy events at the Main Event sports bar, opened for bands like Wednesday and Hot Rod Boogie at bars and nightclubs, and performed benefit shows for small radio stations. Finally, the Comic Strip granted Moreno his first real gig.

Still, Moreno wanted more. The ballsy comic took his last 300 bucks, hitched the Greyhound to New York, and slept in train stations and homeless shelters until he found a shack - er, apartment - in the Bronx. To this day, Moreno's quest for stardom is ongoing. By day he works in a drug store; by night he showcases his jokes in New York sushi bars - yes, sushi bars - and comedy clubs. He's even met Jerry Seinfeld and Chris Rock.

This weekend's homecoming performance will feature a harsher slice of Latino life. "I'm tired of seeing these teenaged girls having their baby showers and quinceañeras at the same time," he muses.

Get ready for Mexican stereotypes-a-plenty - like Moreno's cousin who works as an exhibit at the Border Patrol Museum - and other barrio banter at the Comic Strip.



what's up

**Charlie Moreno, Pat Dixon,
and James Stephens III**

Bart Reed's Comic Strip, 6633 N. Mesa

Thursday, 8:30 p.m.

Friday & Saturday, 8:30 & 10:45 p.m.

Admission:

Info: 581-8833

Living

D

El Paso Times

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Features Editor Paula Monarez Diaz 546-6154, pdiaz@elpasotimes.com | www.elpasotimes.com

52 under 40: Arts & Entertainment

Comedy became a refuge for Charlie Moreno at a young age. The 26-year-old comedian seemed to forget his problems through humor.

While in New York, the Del Valle High School graduate performed at venues like the Apollo Theater and the Gotham Comedy Clubs and shared some of the venues with comedians that include Chris Rock and Wanda Sykes.



Q What steps did you take to succeed?

A Persistence. You can't give up because every time you go up on stage, things could go up or down.

Q What advice do you give others on your path?

A Do it for the art. Don't do it for the wrong reasons because it

Nominate a candidate

Each Monday in 2004, the El Paso Times will feature El Pasoans younger than age 40 making a name in arts and entertainment. To nominate someone for this column, e-mail 52under40@elpasotimes.com. Entries may be mailed to 52 under 40, P.O. Box 20, El Paso, TX 79999.

elpasotimes.com

Online extra:

► More profiles, nomination tips
www.borderlandnews.com/under40

takes many years to become famous or make good money.

Q Why El Paso?

A El Paso is a good town for comedy. It is also a good spot geo-

graphically because you can travel to a lot of other clubs in a relatively short amount of time.

Q What percentage of your jokes are based on truth?

A There are three parts to a joke, the premise, the setup and the punch line. More than 80 percent of the premise and the setup are things that are true. The punch line is what varies because if I told the truth people would probably not want to laugh.

Q Do people ever attempt to try out their comedy on you?

A Yes, but a lot of the time I don't mind because they tell me regular jokes that you would tell a friend and I really don't know many of those types of jokes.

By Zahira Torres, El Paso Times