

Howard Stern's Private Parts

BY ANDREW SIMPSON

Howard Stern has been called everything from the King of Media to a talking erection. And while the Gazette does not usually cover American pop culture, I couldn't say no to an interview.

During a conference call between Howard, the Gazette and four other newspapers, Howard discussed his new movie, *Private Parts*, his struggles in life and, of course, the origin of *Fartman*. The following are a selection of the questions we asked. Unfortunately, some of the answers had to be edited for brevity, but we expected no less from the world's greatest exponent of verbal diarrhea.

Gaz: Where did the idea for a movie about Howard Stern come from?

Howard: Well, I had the opportunity to do a movie, but I didn't want to do one of these really dumb comedies like *Coneheads*. My story kinda reads like a *Rocky* kinda story. It's about the guy who can't succeed, the guy who's told he's a moron by his father, who decided to go on the radio despite everybody saying he's introverted, he can't talk, he has no voice... But I go on the air anyways, and I eventually get pretty good at it. But then, of course, management doesn't see eye-to-eye with me and they knock me down and we get into these huge battles. I'm sure everybody can relate to this, I don't know about you as a writer, but I'm sure at some point in your career somebody comes to you and says, "You shouldn't be doing this for a living, you're awful, you're horrible." And a lot of us buckle and think maybe they're right, because we're all insecure.

Gaz: So there were times when the "King of Media" wanted to chuck it all?

Howard: Sure, there were times, but I'm really about pleasing an audience and I knew I was onto something really good, which was opening up my head on the air, letting my id out, forgetting the ego and just being the real person that I am inside, not the phony that we have to be in real life. I thought that was refreshingly honest in a day and age of bland media.

Gaz: With your book and movie success, will you continue in radio?

Howard: I think radio is what I do best, but it's funny, the book that I wrote got critical praise, the movie is getting critical praise and the one thing I thought I did best I get blasted for. Maybe I should get out of radio (laughs). I always felt that radio was my dream and while I love radio, I also hate a lot of things about it. I hate getting up at four in the morning, it's taking its toll. If you've ever tried getting up early every day, it's awful, and then talking straight for five hours, it really wipes you out. And I'm constantly preparing so that I don't even watch TV the same any more. I'm always like gee, what can I find on TV, what's the funny angle, what can I goof on. The constant preparation makes it feel like it's always Sunday night and you're preparing for school. But the feeling of going on air and unleashing whatever's in your head is really quite remarkable, and I don't think I could ever give that

up.

Gaz: Why should people go and see your movie?

Howard: Well, you know...it always sounds funny to me when you hear a guy who starred in the movie and wrote the book sit there and compliment his own movie, because I'm sure even Dan Ackroyd compliments his own movies — it sounds so false. The only thing that I can tell you is that we took this movie in front of test audiences and we had the highest test rating in Paramount history. I mean I don't know, quite frankly, how else to hype this movie but to tell the truth — people said that they loved it.

Gaz: You said in your book that you hated your audience because they're so fickle. Do you respect your audience?

Howard: Yes I do, you know the media paints this perception and perhaps I paint it too. My audience is extremely intelligent and well behaved. You know, the media wants to think that they're all 15-year-old punks who are mass-murderers, but studies show that it's only one and a half per cent of your audience that actually phones in, the rest of them are busy working. They're just everyday working folk and the reason I've had such clout with Hollywood while making this movie is my audience. I mean Hollywood bowed to the economic success of my radio program. So I owe it all to my audience and, you know, I don't say that in just some sort of bullshit, Liz Taylor tribute speech kinda way...

Gaz: Does it ever get tiresome hyping a movie?

Howard: Well no...you know, they told me that if you put out a bad movie you hide it from the media, and if you put out a good one you really push it. I'm telling you that if I had put out a bad movie I would have known it and I'd probably be hiding from the press at this point. But because I've done such a good movie I'll do anything to promote it, short of showing my inverted penis.

Gaz: How do you think this movie will fare outside of America, where people might not have heard of Howard Stern?

Howard: I really don't know how it will do, but I will promote it and I think that audiences would really like it. First of all, because I know that all foreigners hate Americans, and I'm the most hated man by the American Government — having been fined over 1.7 million dollars — so I think that anybody who the American Government hates, foreigners will like. It's a unique kinda look at American broad-

casting. I think foreigners recognize how puritanical Americans are, and I think it would be interesting for them to see my rise through American broadcasting by going against that puritanism.

Gaz: I have to ask how that *Fartman* thing came about at the MTV awards?

Howard: The *Fartman* thing sums up my entire career. I always genuinely wanted to make people laugh. When MTV came to me and asked me to do that show, they said they wanted me to do something special — they'd had Pee Wee Herman the year before. I wasn't really sure at first, so they said that I could come in a limo and have a pack of women. And then I decided no, no, no, I'm gonna suspend myself 50 feet in the air as *Fartman* and show my naked ass-cheeks to the world and blow up the podium with my gas. And they were like, "Oh my God, how much butt-cheek are you gonna show?" But when I did it, it became front page news all across the country. It was wild. And when I got down from there, I saw everyone laughing, I saw the audience going wild and I thought: I've done it, I've made the event. And then, true to form, I go backstage and every celebrity is giving me the evil eye. It reminded me of high school, you know, like when the hip crowd won't accept you. No matter what I do, I never feel like I'm in with the "in" crowd, even though the people like it.

Gaz: Will the production of this movie change Howard Stern's life?

Howard: Hollywood absolutely has no impact on my life. I'll still go home today and my wife will yell at me and my father will call me an idiot. Even when I wrote the book and it sold millions of copies my life didn't change. I don't feel any different inside and maybe that's because I was called a moron all my life. I still feel like an idiot. But look at a guy like Quentin Tarantino, for example. Now here's a guy who

made a great movie, *Pulp Fiction*, and now you don't even hear from him anymore. I think some people are so taken with themselves, they're so satisfied with that one work that now they go to parties and say, "Hi, I'm Quentin Tarantino, look what I've done." Even with the response to my movie, I still don't feel like I really did anything, or accomplished anything. Maybe if I had invented the polio vaccine...

Gaz: Do you plan to clone yourself?

Howard: Well, you know something, I still don't believe that cloning experiment worked. I mean, they showed those two pictures of sheep on TV and said they looked alike...every sheep looks alike. But sure, I'd be willing to sell my DNA to anyone who wanted to raise a Howard Stern in their house like a chia pet.

Private Parts opens March 7.

Ed sucks

Ed's Next Move

Written and directed by
John Walsh

Some movies are so bad they are good. By plumbing the depths of the filmmakers art they manage to become anti-classics, films so preposterous, or so cringingly poorly made, that for that reason alone they stand out. Think of *Plan Nine From Outer Space* starring Bella Lugosi, or the king of anti-classics, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Unfortunately, *Ed's Next Move* isn't quite that bad. It is just bad enough to be lousy.

Ed's Next Move is a romantic comedy which tells the story of Eddie Brodsky, a nice guy from rural Wisconsin who goes to New York City looking for a new beginning after his girlfriend leaves him. Once in New York he has to find his feet in the big city, while at the same time lookin' for love.

This plot line allows writer/director John Walsh to draw his cliches from two sources.

There are the "little ol' country boy comes to the city" cliches, such as when Ed arrives in New York, checks into a seedy hotel, and has to listen to the people in the next room having sex. Ha Ha!

Secondly, there are "relation-

ship comedy" cliches, such as when Ed is told that guys need interpreters to understand what women are saying. Suddenly the scene changes to Ed and his Wisconsin girlfriend breaking up, only — get this — *there are professional interpreters there explaining that when his girlfriend says she "needs more space," she is actually dumping him!* Hoo-boy! I hope I don't bust a gut laughing!

It is almost cruel to comment on the wooden performances of Matt Ross as Eddie, Kevin Carroll as the friend Eddie makes in New York, and Calliope Thorne as Eddie's new lover in New York. As they move from one obvious plot development to the next they are forced to spout off lines like, "You've got to deal with New York on its own terms or you can forget about it," and "I wish I could see the world like I did when I was six." Given a script this mind-numbingly banal I would have trouble mustering enthusiasm as well.

This movie sucks. Go see *Microcosmos*.

Ed's Next Move is playing at Wormwood's Cinema from Friday, March 7 through Sunday, March 9. Microcosmos, a film about bugs, is also playing at Wormwood's, from Saturday, March 8 to Sunday, March 16. Call the theatre at 422-3700 for screening times.

BY GREG BAK

