

CorpJester means business with yucks

By Derek Fuchs
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

With a cadence rivaling that of an auctioneer, stand-up comedian Mark Klein burns through his typical monologues, such as this one from a self-produced CD:

My friends asked me why — logical question — “Mark, why’d you finally get married? You’re happy and single 38 years, dating pretty girls from all over America. Why did you finally pick one out and settle down? Was it love? Was it lust? Was it loneliness?” I know one thing, pal. After 38 years, I finally met that one woman who said those six words I waited all of my life to hear: My dad owns a liquor store.

But Klein, performing through Saturday at the Funny Bone in Station Square, says his reverence for a laissez-faire America dominates his work. He’s known as the CorpJester, a comedian who spends most of his time not in the nightclubs but at business conven-

Mark Klein (aka CorpJester)

- ▶ 8 and 10 p.m. today; 7:15, 9:30 and 11:30 p.m. Saturday.
- ▶ \$12 and \$13.
- ▶ Funny Bone, Station Square.
- ▶ (412) 281-3130.

tions and office parties, using his routine to assure his crowds that it’s OK to be a capitalist.

“A big part of it is, ‘Thank you for making a profit,’” he says in a phone interview from his home in Louisville, Ky.

“The rest of this talk about freedom and living your life as you see fit in America counts for nothing, because without the economic impetus behind it, it’s empty talk. The Constitution is just a piece of paper without a capitalist system which gives everyone the chance to access that freedom. That’s not a message businesses hear a lot in Hollywood.”

Don’t rip my choices and freedoms



Mark Klein

away from me because some people can’t behave responsibly, because 99 percent of us can be trusted with almost unlimited freedom. Ninety-nine percent of us can be trusted with handguns, cheap whiskey, country-and-western CDs, casino boats and race tracks. Ninety-nine percent of us with King-dons and Ho Hos and Cheese Nips and Diet Coke.

Maybe not Hostess Ho Hos, I’m gonna back off on that, all right?

And Klein, a full-time comedian since quitting his salesman job in 1979 (two years after graduating from college), says he detests political correctness. Eager not to offend employees, corporations have been finicky about his stand-up content without even hearing his routine, Klein says.

“I’ve had companies send me a laundry list of things you can’t talk about, things you can’t say. And when I get one of those, you’ve got to decide, are you right for this gig or is this gig right for you?”

Distinguishing what’s inappropriate from what’s PC is all the self-censoring he’ll do, Klein says. All his audiences get the CorpJester’s act, patriotism and capi-

talism in tow. “When I do that show on a college campus or in a college bar, their heads kind of cock to the side, like cocker spaniels hearing a dog whistle,” he says. “Because this is not something college kids are hearing from their sociology professors.”

But it’s not rhetoric, Klein says.

It’s entertainment, plain and simple. “I try to do enough of the hard laughs in there to keep them hooked on the show. And the message part, if you want to get a message out of it, that’s fine.”

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