**Transcript of “The Taxonomy of Haters” | Negin Farsad**

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I'm an Iranian-American Muslim female, like all of you. And I'm also a social justice comedian, something that I insist is an actual job.

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To explain what that is, let me tell you how I got here. I've performed all over the country. And let me tell you, America is majestic, right? It's got breathtaking nature, waffle houses and diabetes as far as the eye can see. It is really something.

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Now, the American population can be broken up into three main categories: there's mostly wonderful people, haters and Florida.

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(Laughter)

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Besides Florida, the most troubling category here are the Haters. They are a minority, but they overcompensate by being extra loud. They have the Napoleon complex of demographics, and yes, some of the men do wear heels.

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As a social justice comedian, it's my goal to convert these haters, because they hate a lot of things, which leads to negative outcomes, like racism, violence and Ted Nugent. This is not an exhaustive list; I'm probably missing 3-7 items.

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But the point is, we have to reckon with the haters. But there's variance within this group and it's not efficient to go after all of them, right? So what I've done is created a highly scientific Taxonomy of Haters. I basically took all of the haters, I put them in a petri dish, like a scientist, and this is what I found.

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(Laughter)

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First off, we have the trolls. These are your garden-variety digital haters. They're the people who quit their jobs so they can post on YouTube videos all day long. There's also the drive-by haters. Now, these people will be at a stoplight, they'll wait for the light to turn green and when it does, they yell, "Go back to your own country!" Now back in the day, they would've actually gotten out of their cars and hated you to your face. But they just don't make them like they used to -- which is another sign of the decline in America.

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(Laughter)

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The next category is the mission-oriented-bigot- whose-group-affiliation- gives-them-cover-for-hating hater. These guys like to hate via a seemingly nice organization, like a church or a nonprofit, and they oftentimes like to speak in an old-timey voice.

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But the group I'm most interested in is the swing hater. The swing hater is sister to the swing voter -- they just can't decide! They're like ideological sluts who move from hating to not hating. And they do it because they don't have enough information. This is the group I like to target with social justice comedy. Why comedy? Because on a scale of comedy to brochure, the average American prefers comedy, as you can see from this graph.

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(Laughter)

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Comedy is very popular. And by the way, this is a mathematically accurate graph, generated from fake numbers.

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(Laughter)

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Now, the question is: Why does social justice comedy work? Because, first off, it makes you laugh. And when you're laughing, you enter into a state of openness. And in that moment of openness, a good social justice comedian can stick in a whole bunch of information, and if they're really skilled, a rectal exam.

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(Laughter)

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Here are some ground rules for social justice comedy: first off, it's not partisan. This isn't political comedy, this is about justice, and no one is against justice. Two, it's inviting and warm, it makes you feel like you're sitting inside of a burrito. Three, it's funny but sneaky, like you could be hearing an interesting treatise on income inequality, that's encased in a really sophisticated poop joke.

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(Laughter)

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Here's how I see social justice comedy working. A few years ago, I rounded up a bunch of Muslim-American comedians -- in a non-violent way --

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(Laughter)

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And we went around the country to places like Alabama, Arizona, Tennessee, Georgia -- places where they love the Muzzies -- and we did stand-up shows. We called the tour "The Muslims Are Coming!"

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(Laughter)

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We turned this into a movie, and then after the movie came out, a known hate group spent 300,000 dollars on an anti-Muslim poster campaign with the MTA -- that's the New York City subway system. Now, the posters were truly offensive, not to mentioned poorly designed -- I mean, if you're going to be bigoted, you might as well use a better font.

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(Laughter)

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But we decided, why not launch our own poster campaign that says nice things about Muslims, while promoting the movie. So myself and fellow comedian Dean Obeidallah decided to launch the fighting-bigotry- with-delightful-posters campaign. We raised the money, worked with the MTA for over 5 months, got the posters approved, and two days after they were supposed to go up, the MTA decided to ban the posters, citing political content.

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Let's take a look at a couple of those posters. Here's one. Facts about Muslims: Muslims invented the concept of a hospital. OK. Fact: Grown-up Muslims can do more push-ups than baby Muslims.

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(Laughter)

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Fact: Muslims invented Justin Timberlake.

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(Laughter)

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Let's take a look at another one. The ugly truth about Muslims: they have great frittata recipes.

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Now clearly, frittatas are considered political by the MTA. Either that, or the mere mention of Muslims in a positive light was considered political -- but it isn't. It's about justice. So we decided to change our fighting-bigortry- with-delightful-posters campaign and turn it into the fighting-bigotry- with-a-delightful-lawsuit campaign.

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(Laughter)

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So basically, what I'm saying is a couple of dirt-bag comedians took on a major New York City agency and the comedians won.

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(Applause and cheers)

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Thank you. Victory was a very weird feeling. I was like, "Is this what blonde girls feel like all the time? 'Cause this is amazing!"

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(Laughter)

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Here's another example. I'm asked everywhere I go: "Why don't Muslims denounce terrorism?" We do. But OK, I'll take the bait. So I decided to launch thedailydenouncer.com. It's a website that denounces terrorism every day of the week, while taking the weekends off. Let's take a look at an example. They generally appear as single-panel cartoons, "I denounce terrorism! I also denounce people who never fill the paper tray!" The point of the website is that it denounces terrorism while recognizing that it's ridiculous that we have to constantly denounce terrorism.

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But if bigotry isn't your thing, social justice comedy is useful for all sorts of issues. For example, myself and fellow comedian Lee Camp went to the Cayman Islands to investigate offshore banking. Now, the United States loses something like 300 billion dollars a year in these offshore tax havens. Not to brag, but at the end of every month, I have something like 5-15 dollars in disposable income. So we walked into these banks in the Cayman Islands and asked if we could open up a bank account with eight dollars and 27 cents.

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(Laughter)

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The bank managers would indulge us for 30-45 seconds before calling security. Security would come out, brandish their weapons, and then we would squeal with fear and run away, because -- and this is the last rule of social justice comedy -- sometimes it makes you want to take a dump in your pants.

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Most of my work is meant to be fun. It's meant to generate a connection and laughter. But yes, sometimes I get run off the grounds by security. Sometimes I get mean tweets and hate mail. Sometimes I get voice mails saying that if I continue telling my jokes, they'll kill me and they'll kill my family. And those death threats are definitely not funny.

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But despite the occasional danger, I still think that social justice comedy is one of our best weapons. I mean, we've tried a lot of approaches to social justice, like war and competitive ice dancing. But still, a lot of things are still kind of awful. So I think it's time we try and tell a really good poop joke.

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Thank you.

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(Applause)