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**Feature Story**

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**How I Fell Into Being a Comedian: The Life and Times of Natasha Leggero**



**HARRISONBURG, VA** – Oct. 9, 2014 – Imagine yourself a young girl from humble upbringings growing up in a small town in Illinois with only one stop light, one grocery store and a post office. Now picture your name in flashing lights outside some of the biggest and most well-known theatres in the world as you sell out comedy shows night after night. This is the reality of Natasha’s life and how humble beginnings can lead to an extraordinary endings.

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## The Life and Times of Natasha Leggero

From an early age she was never really into comedy. She was a child actor, not a child star, but a thespian. Leggero loved to act and was in many of her high school plays in Rockford, Illinois. As quickly as she graduated she moved even quicker to New York City to go to Hunter College and get her degree in theatre criticism. She began reviewing plays after she graduated but that was not cutting it for her so she moved to Los Angeles. In an interview with Comedy Central, Leggero exclaimed, “I just got onstage one night and I just was really talking about what I thought about Los Angeles. I didn’t really think people would laugh or I didn’t even know what a comedian really was. I thought it was like an old man in a suit talking about his wife. I just talked about my life a little bit and it worked. So I just kept doing it really.”

Leggero just happened to fall into being a stand-up comedian. She was so naïve about her stumbled upon career path that she had never even heard of Sarah Silverman or any of the other big names in the comedy world. Her first gig was at a comedy store in downtown L.A. and still



to this day she claims that it is her best show yet. Leggero carries on in the Comedy Central interview by saying, “I was so shocked that people were laughing and I had such a visual response to the laughter. It felt like waves coming over my body. I was not expecting it and it was just a very supportive room. I think

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I'm still trying to get that feeling back." From then on the sky was the limit for Leggero as she began to star in T.V. shows, movies, roast famous celebrities and perform her stand-up routines in the nation's biggest cities.

Leggero's biggest comedic influences are John Waters, Woody Allen and Neil Simon. This is where her satirical, dark and society-mocking sketches come from. Michael Smith, in an article written for *The Raleigh Times* said, "Natasha Leggero is one of the funniest comedians touring in 2014, her elitist character and take on current social norms will leave you sweating from laughter. Her routine contains her hilarious takes on toilet-babies, music, poor people, pop figures and so much more. Inspired by the downward spiral of popular culture Natasha has

decided to add some class and style in poking fun at the elements of society that she finds funny." As a late bloomer to comedy, Leggero did not start till the ripe old age of 26. In an interview with the website *Chicago Now*, Leggero states, "I didn't really understand that you could be a comedian and be fancy and just be yourself. I just thought that you had to be a man in a suit talking

about your wife. I didn't realize that you could talk about your true experiences no matter what they are, even if it's just reacting to how people are dressing in LA."

More recently, Leggero took part as one of the guest roasters on Comedy Central's *Roast of James Franco* where she out-performed and overall roasted Franco to a pulp. This in turn helped



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her land her most recent role in the movie *Neighbors*. Leggero is most known for being a permanent panelist on *Chelsea Lately*. This is where she truly made a name for herself in the comedy world and really got her face out there to the public. Also, it didn't hurt that she was a judge on the very popular comedy reality competition, *Last Comic Standing*. With all of Natasha Leggero's success in film and TV, she still found enough time to release her debut comedy album, *Coke Money*, and it received stellar reviews from critics. Mark Gould, a writer for the popular website The Laugh Button said, "It doesn't take a long time to listen to the album to realize that bravado is the main tool in her box" Gould stated, "Natasha knows she looks good, and she knows she's hilarious, and we're all helpless. Laughing is the only real option here."

Leggero is in the midst of a cross country comedy tour and her next stop is at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA. The show is a part of The University Program Board's Fall Comedian Series and it will take place on October 18, 2014. Tickets are on sale at [www.jmutickets.com](http://www.jmutickets.com) . Leggero will feel right at home in Harrisonburg, with the small town feel and all; but let's hope that she brings her A-game!

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### **About The University Program Board**

The University Program Board (UPB) is one of the largest student-run organizations on the James Madison University campus. UPB improves students' lifestyles at JMU with educational and most of all entertaining events all over campus. These events can include concerts, speakers, movies and novelty acts. UPB managers are responsible for the promotion, booking, and production of campus events. UPB is divided into five different committees: Film, Center Stage, Spirit and Traditions, Special Events, and Spotlight Sounds; for more information, <http://info.jmu.edu/upb/>.