

## A Burrito and a Comic

By Bethel Caram and Neil Potter



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*Once upon a time in New York City a West coast bohemian 20- something met a Southern jock and a match was made in comedy heaven. Bethel and Neil write, perform, and make fun of all types of relationships- mostly their own- which remains, after a decade plus, in THE GREY AREA. (You know, that stage where you have no idea what's going on!) Today, they want to analyze someone else's life! They zoom in on headline comedian, Lenny Marcus.*



Lenny Marcus is one of the countries premier comedians and if you haven't had the pleasure of his brand of entertainment, run don't walk, to a comedy club near you.

So Neil and I show up at Lenny's door with food from Chipolte - we are not above bribing someone to grant an interview - and we are just cheap enough to insist that the bribe falls into a non- flagable tax-write off. We sit down at Lenny's dinner/ bumper pool and poker table in his apartment on the Upper West Side. (Think Jerry's place in Seinfeld!)

**Bethel: So when did you know you wanted to be a comedian?**

**Lenny:** I'm not sure. Well, I knew I didn't want to do my day job.

Turns out Lenny's college roommate had something to do with it.

**Lenny:** We just hit it off. He had every comedy album ever. He asked me if I had ever thought about doing stand up.

**Bethel:** Did you have an idol?

**Neil:** Like an American Idol?

**Bethel:** I knew I should have left Neil at home.

**Lenny:** Sure, I had several. We'd get pizza and watch Letterman. He always had on the new guys: Gilbert Gottfried, Seinfeld, Rosanne. They made it look so easy, but we knew...

**Bethel:** You knew it wasn't?

**Lenny:** Yeah, I thought, 'we got to start early cause this is 'gonna be really hard.' I always thought my roommate would be the writer 'cause he's really funny. But the truth is, neither one of us did anything about it.

**Neil:** The end. Great job. This interview stuff is so easy...burrito time.

**Bethel:** Neil keep eating, we'll get more done that way. So, how did stand up happen? What was the first step?

**Lenny:** After college, I went to work as a computer programmer for EDS (Electronic Data Systems). They moved me from Chicago, to Texas, to Michigan, and then finally to New Brunswick, NJ. One day my secretary called The Stress Factory (a local club) for me and that was the first time I ever talked to Vinnie Brand (owner). I asked him a bunch of questions and I started doing open mics. Then I slowly started doing them in the city at places like Stand up NY, where I met you, Neil Potter.

(At this point tears begin to run down Neil's face, diluting his sour cream-he loves the past!)

**Bethel:** These were bringer shows, right? (Definition: *bringer show*- an event that requires begging friends to show up, fork out cash, all so you can bomb and humiliate yourself in front of your soon to be EX- friends ) Was it hard to ask people to come to these shows?

**Lenny:** No, the people that I worked with loved it.

Apparently, "bringer show" has a different meaning for me than Lenny.

**Lenny:** First time I brought like 50 or 60 people. At my first Carolines gig I had like 100 people. And then I realized... you only needed like 5 to get up.

**Bethel:** Overachiever.

**Lenny:** I was the "bringer-ringer".

**Bethel:** They could count on you for laughs AND people?

**Lenny:** Yeah, I guess.

**Bethel:** How long did you do bringers?

**Lenny:** I got pretty lucky, only like a year.

**Neil:** I'm *still* doing bringers. Will you listen to the bit I just wrote?

(He pulls out crumpled Chipolte napkins covered in notes.)

We all ignore Neil

**Bethel: There is no BFA in comedy, no direct way to accomplish that dream. Did you always have a plan?**

**Lenny:** Yes. 1) move into the city 2) do spots and get paid 3 ) try and hold onto my day job as long as possible until I could support myself with comedy alone.

**Neil: At any point are you doing this to get girls?**

**Lenny:** Not one day. In 18 years I've met maybe 5 girls.

**Neil: But you got girls from doing comedy? Please tell me the answer is yes? For the love of everything that I understand to be true, please say yes.**

**Lenny:** Yes... whatever you say.

**Neil: Thank you for keeping the dream alive.**

At this point I realize I have lost control of the factual interview. With Neil by my side, there is no gravity. It was just a matter of time before we were hovering in interview antimatter.

**Neil: Let's focus on your dating life – I think the people want to know ...they pay us big money as reporters to pull back the curtain.**

**Bethel: We aren't getting paid.**

**Neil: I told my mom we are ....so please stick to the story.**

**Bethel: We're getting paid Mrs. Potter.**

**Neil: Lenny, do you have a "go- to- move " with the ladies?**

**Bethel: That is your question?**

**Lenny:** (laughing) I'm not sure what you mean?

**Neil: A "go -to- move " on a date. Like taking them to see you kill at a comedy club, or a certain drink at a certain bar, a song, a line to get her up to the love pad?**

**Lenny:** Got it the first time. I would never reveal my, " go -to- move ".

**Neil: But you have one?**

**Lenny:** No comment.

**Neil: Can we role-play?**

**Lenny:** With Bethel?

**Neil: Let's move to the next subject.**

**Bethel: What Neil means to say is ...**

**Neil: I hate when you explain me to people.**

**Bethel: What?**

**Neil: You explain me. It's like I'm an animal in the zoo. 'What the Monkey really means is by throwing his poop at the window, he is saying he loves you.'**

**Bethel: I'm sorry Neil, I was insensitive, I apologize.**

Neil pulls out his iPhone 5 and plays Damien Rice , *The Blowers Daughter*, which fades to nothing as his battery dies. Now we're all just confused.

**Neil: Speaking of sensitive, what was last movie that made you cry?**

**Lenny:** I don't cry at movies.

**Neil:** A running brook or the changing of the leaves? Which is more romantic?

Neil makes running brook noise (it sounds nothing like a running brook).

**Lenny:** Can't you do both at same time? Go somewhere that leaves are changing *while* the brook is running?

**Neil:** When you eat alone, do you act like somebody is coming or do you embrace your aloneness?

**Bethel:** I think Neil is asking about your point of view. All good comics have one.

**Neil:** What? Is time for me to go back to the zoo? Feeding time?

**Bethel:** You could have, at least, charged your phone!

**Neil:** Maybe that was meant to be ...

**Bethel:** Maybe you should of charged your phone and prepared for this interview?

**Lenny:** You want to know how I first discovered my on stage point of view?

**Bethel :** Yes, way to take back the interview, Lenny.

**Lenny:** I was working at the Stress Factory which is across the street from Rutgers University. There were a bunch of college kids there that night and they were heckling me pretty bad- I was eating it. But it occurred to me that they were like 17 and I was like 31, 32 so I said, 'Shut up or I'm 'gonna kick your ass!' And apparently the way I look, that's really funny. A light bulb went on. My whole thing ( act ) changed. So from then on every joke I did was from that angle.

**Bethel:** We've all been friends for a long time and I remember your big closer back then. Can you tell it?

**Lenny:** The lady with the cup of coffee? Well, there was a big news story then about how a 90 year old woman spilled a hot cup of coffee from McDonalds on her lap and then had the nerve to sue them for it being too hot. So my joke was about how ridiculous that was. The joke was:

" Not in my courtroom, not if I was the judge. I would kick her ass. I'd be like, ' Lady you're like 95 years old, you haven't had something that hot and wet between your legs in 65 years'".

20 years later I found out that poor woman almost died from that. She finally won the suit and rightfully so.

Lenny Marcus continues to " kick ass " onstage nightly.

*Lenny Marcus is a comic, writer, actor, director, and was most recently on The Late Show with David Letterman. You can see him weekly at clubs around NYC such as The Comic Strip, Comedy Cellar, and Stand-Up NY. Lenny has two comedy CD's, You're Getting a Zero and Idiots, Toasters, Meredith (and other things hazardous to your health), and his third will " drop " in 2014. Check out his website: [lennymarcus.com](http://lennymarcus.com) for his up to the minute schedule around town as well as new projects and tours. And you can always follow him on Twitter at: @LennyMarcusNYC*

