

In my opinion



RYAN MURPHEY
MR. SOPHISTICATION

Stop being thrifty and have some empathy

The last of the out-of-town relatives have gone home, the house is clean and the cooking is finished. All of the leftovers have been used up, but post-holiday exhaustion and tryptophan-induced stupors have left many less than enthusiastic about preparing their own meals. Thanksgiving fallout is driving people out to restaurants in droves. For those in the food service industry, this is good and bad news. The good news is that more customers means more money. The bad news is more customers.

The traditional job of a restaurant employee is to meet the customer's needs, and the traditional job of the customer is to give the server money. Over the course of a meal, the server takes drink orders, clears plates and makes sure that everything gets to the table as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, the busser cleans tables, sets tables, makes sure that waters are full and that the server and the customer are both happy. During this time, the customer relaxes and enjoys the meal while the server provides the same care for five other tables at once and the busser covers the whole dining room. In a perfect world, this exchange would play out smoothly, ending with a satisfied customer and a 15 percent or better tip. However, this is the real world. Restaurant employees are not always perfect and customers (especially those who have never worked in a restaurant) are rarely understanding.

In many cases, customers feel the need to act in a manner that violates the customer/server relationship. It is important that customers who choose to behave rudely understand that restaurant employees' servile occupations also give them great power. After all, they are the ones who handle the food between the kitchen and the table. Those who wish to avoid secret ingredients may want to consider the following advice on customer etiquette.

One piece of advice that should go without saying is that never, under any circumstances, attempt to get your server's attention with hand gestures or by addressing them as "Hey!" This is true in every setting from the finest restaurant in Manhattan all the way down to an A&W in the middle of nowhere. It makes the person being addressed feel cheap, not to mention homicidal. Anyone who does this should be slapped immediately.

Another reliable way to increase the chances of getting food with a dash of bodily fluids is to show up looking for a table two minutes before the restaurant closes. What people who have never worked in a restaurant before do not realize is that the person who is closing the restaurant has about an hour of work to do that can't be started until the dining room is empty. If it's a busy night, there are exceptions, but people who walk in to find a nearly empty dining room and

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Book reviews

Behrendt and Tuccillo's candid book answers tough questions about relationships with humor and advice

BY NATASHA CHILINGERIAN
SENIOR PULSE REPORTER

He doesn't call when he says he will. You're in a serious relationship, but he doesn't want to marry you. You've been dating for a while when he disappears into thin air. There is one simple reason for all these situations according to former "Sex and the City" consultant Greg Behrendt: "He's just not that into you."

"He's Just Not That Into You," co-authored by Behrendt and former "Sex and the City" executive story editor Liz Tuccillo, is a blunt, honest guide to understanding some of the most common problems women run into with men. Behrendt says that he "knows that guy you're dating" — the one who is too busy with his career, just went through an awful breakup, has trust issues, etc. — and convinces you to can him, pronto. Each chapter outlines a common, unfortunate guy-girl situation, such as the ones with the guy who has a fear of intimacy, the man who cheats on you once and the dude who's married. Advice is laid out in a question-and-answer format, and chapters are complete with examples of "the way it should be" and workbook exercises.

Familiarity and humor are the driving forces in this advice book. I recognized so many of the scenarios it was creepy.

"He doesn't really call me when he says he's going to. In fact, he doesn't really call me much at all," Behrendt's response? "They say that they don't have even a moment in their insanely busy day to pick up the phone. It was just that crazy. Bullshit."

Behrendt's no-nonsense advice makes you think that the stuff you're used to putting up with in relationships

might be a waste of energy. "He's Just Not That Into You" asserts that women are goddesses worthy of unconditional romance and anything less should be disregarded. Due to the book's comical language and recognizable stories, this argument is, for the most part, convincing.

Even if you don't accept the advice that any doubt in a romance must lead to "bye-bye," you're guaranteed to laugh. Workbook exercises include coloring in a red flag to remind yourself that a man who doesn't want to have sex with you is not "The One." Chapters include hilarious questions from "Nikki," a woman who condemns Behrendt's strict dating rules and sticks up for her emotionally unhealthy love life. But the funniest part is that you'll laugh at yourself when you realize how common unacceptable male behavior is and how much you've put up with it.

Although most suggestions are self-empowering, one of Behrendt's standards is a bit controversial. He states that a woman shouldn't date a man who doesn't ask her out first, stating, "Do you really have time for a guy who's so afraid of you that he's not even capable of inviting you for coffee?" While his advice might seem ridiculous to some (What if he's just too shy?), Tuccillo provides a

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Hicks' new collection sheds light on his 'satirical world view'

BY RYAN NYBURG
PULSE EDITOR

Sometimes it seems as if there are no interesting stand-up comedians anymore and the form has regressed back to the days before Lenny Bruce when comedians told jokes about their mothers-in-law and the uncleanness of Frenchmen. Since the 1980s, stand-up has become nothing more than a farm club for the future stars of crappy sitcoms, with fewer and fewer relevant performers every year.

The new collection of the works of the late Bill Hicks, "Love All the People: Letters, Lyrics, Routines," brings this dire situation to light. With a long career in stand-up but a relatively short time spent in the national spotlight, Hicks appeared to most audiences fully formed. With his razor-sharp wit and clear view of reality, he created some of the most astute social commentary of the late 1980s and early '90s. He died of cancer in February 1994, cutting short a career that seemed destined for great things.

"Love All the People" outlines Hicks' philosophy and provides insight into his satirical world view.

A self-described "misanthropic humanist," Hicks took aim at ignorance, blandness and hypocrisy wherever he saw it. The book is chock full of Hicks' barbed insights as he discusses the war on drugs, television ("Lucifer's dream box"), the Kennedy assassination and the first President Bush. ("People ask me where I stand politically. It's not that I disagree with Bush's economic policy or his foreign policy, but that I believe he is a child of Satan here to destroy the planet Earth. Yeah, I'm a little to the left on that one.")

"Love" contains just about everything a die-hard Hicks fan would need of the man's writing, but that is the problem. This is essentially a book for die-hards and even on that level it won't fully satisfy. The transcripts are for acts that have been released on CD, meaning all of the performances contain material most fans are already familiar with.

A look at literature

Men's provocative thoughts on sex and women thoroughly exposed in Kelman's 'Girls'

BY DAHVI FISCHER
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If I were to assume that all men thought the way the fictional men did in Nic Kelman's "Girls," I would probably assume that wealthy middle-aged men want nothing more than to undress and sexually experience young, barely-of-age women.

In his 214-page book, Kelman uses ambiguous male characters to take a sexually detailed look at what really turns a man on and what really keeps him going during those difficult, lonely or sexually frustrating moments. The book consists of a generous-sized selection of mini stories detailing the provocative thoughts that race through a man's mind at any time, any place and at any age.

Kelman includes stories of a man who can't fight the temptation of a good underaged hooker, a man who gets turned on by watching his girlfriend fornicate with another man, a man who is in a foreign country and manages to run into a former sex partner and, my personal favorite, a married man who is having a secret love affair with the young daughter of his close friend.

While the stories are certainly not boring and give the mind quite a bit to ponder, many of them are strange, far-fetched and unrealistic. Additionally, many of the famous quotes placed between

each story tended to not make sense or have any relevance to the theme of the book.

On the flip-side, however, "Girls" is entertaining, easy to

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because only Hicks' responses are published, the arguments lack context.

A big chunk of the book is made up of magazine articles, some dating back to Hicks' senior year of high school, when he was one of the youngest performers on the Texas stand-up scene. A few of these hold passing interest, but in general they provide little that is new and less that is worth republishing. An original script for Hicks' planned-but-aborted BBC series is worth a look, but overall the book seems to lack relevant material with which its intended audience is not already familiar.

What the book does offer is a chance to view Hicks' work as a whole. Through this, his views on life and existence are given a well rounded presentation. Though cynical and as bitter as three-day-old coffee, his outlook in the end is a hopeful one. One might even come out of it believing that it is possible for a stand-up comedian to be a relevant cultural figure with something important to say.

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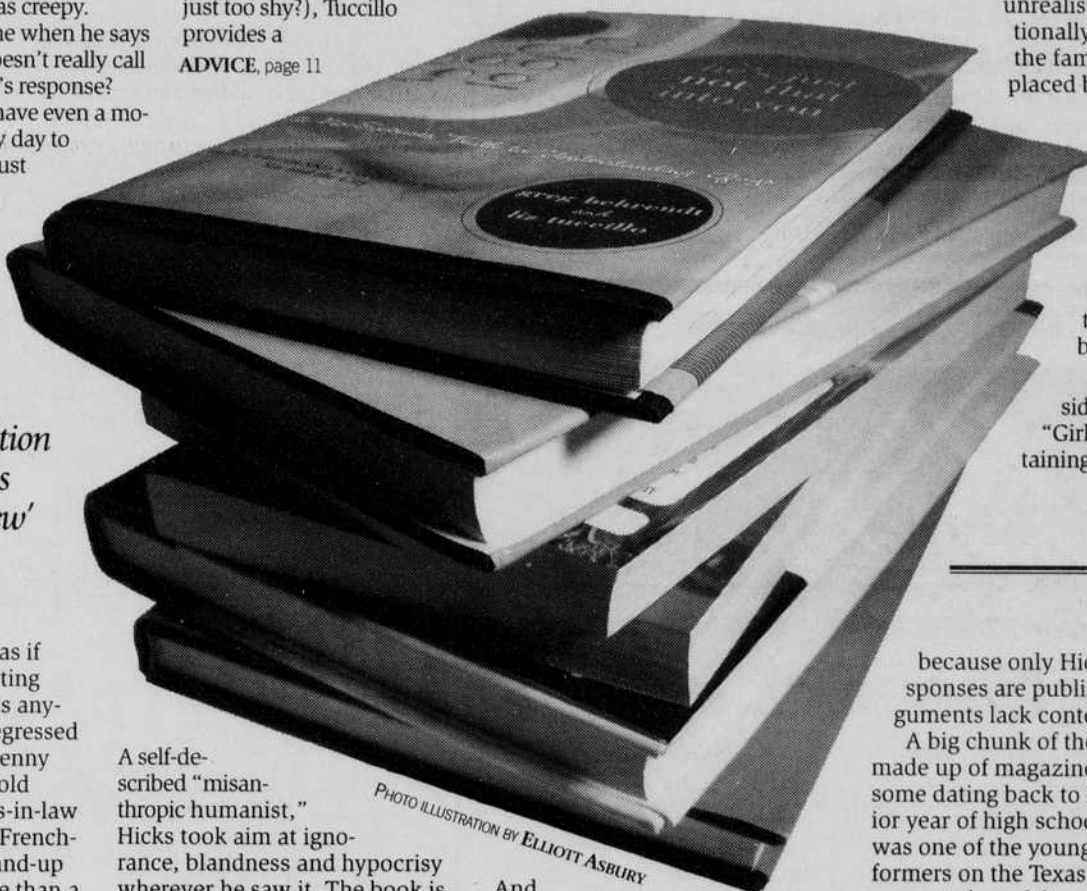


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