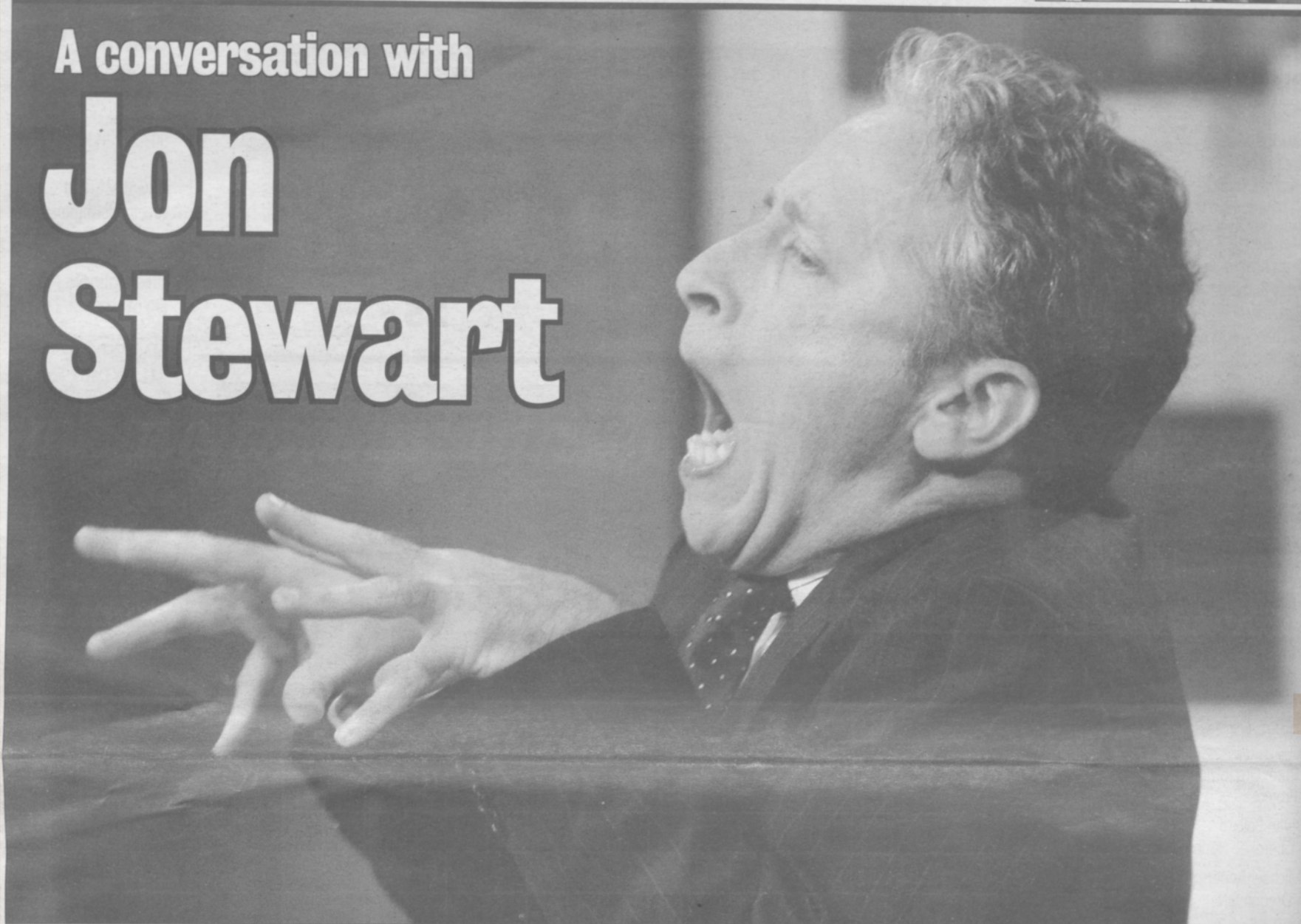




A conversation with

Jon Stewart



REUTERS/ERIC THAYER

The host of "The Daily Show" sits down with Street Roots to talk politics

BY SANDRA MOEN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Jon Stewart, the Edward R. Murrow of The Onion generation, sweeps into the room as if he's made this entrance a thousand times: brisk, no-nonsense and sporting a wide grin that says, "Look out, America. It's showtime."

His hair is perfectly coiffed, just enough "poof" on top and a stylish dusting of gray on the sides. He looks younger than his 47 years, but maybe it's the lighting. Age be damned, he still brings to the job a recoiling, childlike confusion to hypocrisy and lies. He unleashes the truth in a way that makes you go, "God, what a mess this country is in," followed by the most stress-reducing laugh you'll

have all day.

That's the man who comes before me, dressed as always in a perfectly fitted dark suit, looking equally suited to tell me what's what in the way I want to hear it, the way millions of viewers look for it four nights a week on Comedy Central on "The Daily Show," now the most trusted name in news on whom the most jaded generation relies.

I must admit it's a bit intimidating to interview Jon Stewart. Unlike some people we get our hands on, he's really smart – I mean super-smart, and he doesn't suffer fools. On his show, he doesn't offer easy questions and he doesn't take easy answers. He's lovingly ruthless.

Before this moment arrived, I had imagined how

this interview would go a hundred times. Jon and I (we're on a first-name basis by now) would get started by going over a few of his thoughts about what's too taboo to send up on the show. I'd find out which president he would want to riff on if he had a time machine and how his show would address another major terrorist attack. Then we'd chat a bit about the process, you know, the comedy industry stuff, and he'd probably comment that I'm asking great questions.

But first, let's hit the basics. Born Jon Liebowitz (he formally changed it to Stewart, his middle name, in 2001), he attended William and Mary

"The Daily Show" is now the most trusted name in news on whom the most jaded generation relies.

See STEWART, page 10

The bloom has left the Rose City romance with Big Apple

New York City talks candidly about its relationship with Portland

BY RAMA GREENBUSH
WILL WRITE FOR FOOD

It was an unlikely romance that captured all our hearts: the beautiful, glamorous, world-renowned New York City somehow fell in love with humble, quirky Portland, Oregon. No one expected the two cities to pair up, but once they did, it felt like destiny. But was it?

After years of quiet flirtation, New York and Portland started seeing each other in earnest early last year, and they weren't afraid to show their affection to the world. New York sent Portland lavish gifts, such as Brooklyn 20-somethings and clothes that were actually fashionable, and wrote frequent public love letters to Portland in the Style and Travel sections of the New York Times. This was the real thing – or so it seemed.

In recent months, friends of the two cities tell

us, Portland and New York have drifted apart. Speculation has been brewing over the reasons behind the split – Basic incompatibility? Fear of commitment? A hot, young town on the side? But the cities themselves have kept silent.

That is, until now. Street Roots recently sat down for an exclusive, no-holds-barred interview with New York City, and for the very first time, the bustling metropolis bared its soul about the courtship, the breakup and what the future holds.

Street Roots: Let's start at the beginning. What first attracted you to Portland?

New York City: Oh, it wasn't just one thing. I liked the trees. I liked the food carts. I liked dogs and the yoga. I liked those quirky striped socks Portland was always wearing. I felt kind of like a

teenager with a crush again, you know? And I liked how really friendly and relaxed Portland always seemed – it balanced out the craziness in my own life. I was in kind of a weird place then, and Portland was exactly what I needed.

SR: We know what your relationship looked like in the papers, but what was Portland like in private? Were there problems we couldn't see?

NYC: For the most part, Portland was great when we were together. It was really easygoing. We took walks along the waterfront, we watched independent films, we bought organic produce at the farmers market ... and we would just sit around and talk for hours. Portland is a really great

See BIG APPLE, page 7