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## Colt Cabana Finds Comfort Zone With ROH, Comedy Routine

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3/26/2010 10:00 PM ET By [Brian Fritz](#)

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Colt Cabana knows how to turn on the laughs both in and out of the ring. In an exclusive interview with FanHouse, the Ring of Honor wrestling star opens up in-depth about many topics, including the real reason why he was released by WWE, how he feels to be back in ROH again, and the differences between stand-up comedy and entertaining fans as a wrestler.

It's a busy weekend for Cabana in Arizona, especially Saturday when he'll be wrestling in [a matinee event for ROH at Phoenix College](#), then later that night performing his stand-up routine for [Total Extreme Comedy](#) along with [Mick Foley](#) at Gammage Auditorium on the Campus of Arizona State University ([tickets available here](#)).



### **FanHouse: In your own words, why do you think it didn't work out between yourself and WWE?**

**Colt Cabana:** [long hesitation] Ahh Jesus ... I don't know. I thought some people in the company saw it, and unfortunately, other people probably in a higher position, just weren't familiar with me and what I could give to the company. I was down in Florida, and some of the younger writers really liked me, all loved my stuff. I was constantly praised by my trainers. And in my mind, when I got released, no one ever asked Dr. Tom [Prichard] or Steve Keirn, "Would you release him?" It was just a "Hey, let's release this guy," OK, snap, he's released. So I think those were the kind of circumstances that went around it. I don't think I was in anyone's long-term plans right away, but because that decision was made to release me, I feel there wasn't a lot of planning that went into it. It was just a quick thing that said, hey let's get rid of this guy.

Some people didn't realize that I was really highly praised for doing commentary at the time, I was told that my web show *What's Crackin'* on the Internet had the same amount of viewers as *The Dirt Sheet* and *Word Up!*, and those guys had been on TV for four years with the company. I had three matches at that time, you know, and I had the same amount of numbers because I had a little niche on the Internet. And I felt that could have grown, I just don't think other people felt that. There was a little opportunity given to me, but I don't think the same opportunity that others get was there. It is what it is. I could shake my fist forever at them or I could just go about my life and try to get back there one day -- in a better circumstance.

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### **There's a lot of times where people accuse those in WWE of living inside this bubble, where it's hard for them to think outside of that. Is that possibly a situation where maybe you fit in because you wore something different, you're not the traditional guy that they see and you do incorporate so much comedy into what you do?**

It's hard because, it's easy to stand out down there in developmental [territory] because, especially I had been wrestling for so long, and I had I'd say a mind of my own, an independent thought as opposed to some of the wrestlers who were just trained there, you know they had never been trained anywhere else, there were a bunch of football players and a bunch of models, and that's all they knew. And I knew a lot of different, I knew eight to nine different years of different experiences of what worked and what didn't work on a different level. In that aspect I knew to be different and that's how I would stand out, and I felt I did it in developmental, you know I was in OVW, it took me three weeks to get over huge in OVW. In Florida, I was very well-liked.

But at the same time, you know, everybody turns on their TV and sees the same formulaic wrestling. That's why, when I watch WWE, I watch Evan Bourne. He's one of my favorites. Although he's not given an opportunity,

every single thing he does is different -- a different style of wrestling -- and that's something that stands out in the world of wrestling today. Every now and then, somebody is gonna slip through the cracks a little bit, but I think it's few and far between. And I just wasn't able to slip through the cracks, with my style, comedy, and my alternative style of wrestling.

**You mentioned commentating, and you had done that a little bit, I believe with developmental. Did they ever even give you a tryout or seriously look at you as somebody who could do that up at the main roster?**

Well, how I started commentating was we would tape every three weeks and the other two weeks that we weren't taping, Steve Keirn and Dusty Rhodes were doing the commentary, just the house shows just so we had it. You could tell that they didn't want to do it. They were just doing it to do it. And I went up to Dusty, and said, do you mind if I commentated the second half, and I think he couldn't have been happier to get out of that commentary booth because it wasn't taped for anything, it didn't really matter. So he gave it me and Byron Saxton, and said, yeah you do color and Byron will do play-by-play, and we went out there and I think Tyson Kidd at the time, he was in one of the matches, and I hadn't even prepared, but I loved wrestling and it's not something I hadn't done before and I enjoyed to talk, and so I knew the backgrounds of these guys and I was informative and colorful and playful.

From there, they were like, "Wow Colt's pretty good," and then they put me on the television program for the developmental there while I was in-between Scotty Goldman on TV and this was something I enjoyed doing down there. But one of the producers for the actual WWE show was down, and loved me, and apparently Jim Ross was going to come down to talk to me, and Jim Ross specifically wanted to talk to me. Now Jim Ross came down and he never ended up talking to me. Nothing ever happened with it, and then a week later, a week or two later I had been released.

Some people, I think there was some kind of instance of they knew I was doing it and apparently I was liked and did it well, but maybe the people who decided to release me didn't know of it or didn't care. I'm not really sure, because I'd been praised by a lot of people in that company for my commentary, and obviously it wasn't enough to keep my job. Which is crazy because I don't know, I must've done something really horrible, you know, if I was praised by a whole lot of people and they were like, "No! We can't keep him because he shook The Undertaker's hand the wrong way, we have to fire him!" So I don't know what went down, you know, I'm a nice enough dude that I don't think anything happened, but who knows, maybe I looked at Vince McMahon's right eye when you're supposed to only look at his left eye, I don't know. Obviously I did something.

**How much of that does play into when you come to the WWE roster, because there are so many nuances, and things, that wrestler code, like you make sure you don't do anything wrong, you shake everybody's hand. How much of that does play into it, especially for someone that's new into their area?**

Yeah, it does a lot. I think it's ridiculous. American Dragon is the same way with how they're portraying him on TV, you know, I've been wrestling 10 years, but at the same time who am I in the WWE? I'm nobody. So it's funny how they're doing that actually on TV with him ... I thought it's crazy, and I knew about it, but I was like, if they're going to fire me for something stupid like that, then that's just ridiculous, and I don't know if I did get fired for something like that. But I don't want to live that way. Why would I want to work for some place if that's really the reason why you did get fired for doing that or whatever. If I did, I'm not really sure. It gets into a lot of peoples' heads. I try not to allow it to get in my head, and I just further my career. The reason I was told was that creative had nothing for me, but I'm going to go out on a limb and say that wasn't the case because at that time I was creatively doing wrestling and commentating, doing my own show, I had buddies up there. So I didn't allow it to get to my head, but it was probably my demise of some sort. I'm not really sure.

**What's that like when you get that call and they say, we're releasing you but the reason is creative has nothing for you, when you're sitting there thinking, well have I really even been given a chance to show**

**"... maybe I looked at Vince McMahon's right eye when you're supposed to only look at his left eye, I don't know."**

-- COLT CABANA  
ON WHY HE WAS  
RELEASED BY  
WWE

**what I have?**

Yeah, for me they had done so little with me when they brought me up, that when I pitched that dot-com show and I had gotten it, I thought I'd only prolonged that firing, and nothing that I had done, but it was basically I'd got called up and I was just losing every match with no real direction for me. At that point, I was like, man this really isn't going all that well for me, and not that I was expecting that call every week, but when I got the call it wasn't like, "oh really? I thought I was going to 'Mania this year and wrestling Triple H." It was the reality of my spot on the card and how much people were willing to give me an opportunity, which was very little I thought, unfortunately. And when they told me the reason that creative had nothing for me, you know obviously I knew that's a blanket for something else.

It was weird, you know, the first question I asked when he told me that was, hey, when can I do international dates and when can I do ROH and when can I do this, and I think they were a little shocked, and I was like, listen I gotta wrestle and that's what I love to do. So if I can't do it for you, I gotta do it for somebody, otherwise I'll probably go crazy, you know I'm probably crazy as it is. It was a little depressing, I was down in the dumps, I lost my dream job, but what kept me sane I think was being able to wrestle and do Pro Wrestling Guerrilla the night after I got fired, and come back on ROH TV and go travel Europe, and so it sucks but as long as I have some creativity allowed to get out of me I'm gonna do it and that will keep me sane.



**How much fun is it to be back in Ring of Honor these days, because obviously you were there before you went to WWE, you're back there now in a really good position. Is it a lot of fun to be with Ring of Honor since they let you do what you want to do I guess?**

Yeah, creatively it's great. To paint my picture on the canvas in a wrestling ring, obviously the paintings I got to do on WWE TV, it was nice to do that in front of millions of people the couple of times that I got to do it, but I just did what I was told, here I can do what I want to do. That's nice from a creative aspect and also being in ROH allows me to pursue different avenues and different venues, different things I want to do in my life, of course like the comedy and I'm writing. Nothing's holding me back, I'm not tied to any sort of chain or anything. And not that the WWE was a chain, but with WWE in my position, I couldn't try out for an audition or I couldn't go somewhere else to wrestle, and they paid me nicely for it so obviously I couldn't go do that. So here creatively it's really nice for me, to be back in ROH from a wrestling standpoint.

**Ever since you've been in wrestling, you've always put a bit of comedy into what you do. Why that decision early on, to include that?**

When I first started wrestling, I was just Plain Joe wrestler like everybody else, I was just learning my stuff. At the time when the indies started being the big thing, when I was ready to kind of break out, the Japanese style was very popular. Everybody was dropping themselves on their heads, everybody was kicking really hard, and that was something that everybody was doing. I actually say that the best one at doing it was Low Ki, so he was the one that stood out. Now everybody was trying to be Low Ki Junior, and it's just like everybody was an imitation, and I found that if I wanted to stand out I couldn't be doing that stuff, I had to stand out differently.

Naturally, I'm a very comedic person, I like to make people laugh and it's not hard for me to do in front of an audience, so when I started using that with the wrestling, it got a great reaction and people started remembering me -- my part of the show was the funny guy, the comedic guy during the show. They remember Low Ki as the guy who beat the living s\*\*t out of people, but they remembered me as the guy who would make them laugh, and I would stand out, and from that I got bookings. I became "known" on the independent circuit and eventually it got me my contract with WWE. So it was kind of about wanting to be different and wanting to stand out. It was what made me integrate my comedy into my wrestling.

**So how much more difficult is it to get laughs when you're doing stand-up comedy as compared to when you're in the wrestling ring?**

It's interesting, because in the ring they pay to see wrestling, so it doesn't have to be constantly funny. In the middle of the comedy is actual professional wrestling, which I've been trained in and doing for 11 years now. So I can always go to a hold or go to something serious or go to a strike exchange, as opposed to constantly telling jokes. It's not really a constant SNL skit inside a wrestling ring, it's a wrestling match with some different bits

here and there. With comedy they're expecting you to make them laugh the whole way through. You can't go to an armbar midway through a stand-up set, that would just be weird. It's obviously harder in stand-up because with wrestling you have that crutch of actual wrestling, you can go to your wrestling if need be. With stand-up, your crutch is to make them laugh, so that's your job the whole time.

**Did you always have aspirations of doing stand-up comedy, or is this something you just had an epiphany about one day?**

I've been a huge stand-up comedy fan my whole life, but I'd say in 2003-2004 I took a serious appreciation for the art of it. Not necessarily the guys on TV, but I really found my love for alternative comedy, and which in turn, about that time is when I started doing alternative wrestling. And I say alternative wrestling because I say I do a different style of wrestling. My wrestling, for the most part, is not the typical hip toss, arm drag, body slam that you see on all shows. You always see something different from me, I like to do very out-of-the-box stuff as opposed to my WWE debut when I was in the box in my promo. Because of that, I found out what this alternative comedy scene was all about and I really got into it, but I was in wrestling at the time and I was just a fan, just like somebody's a fan of wrestling I was a fan of comedy, and eventually when the opportunity came for me to do the stand-up, I jumped at it.



**Now, when you're doing stand-up, you don't shy away from taking jabs at other wrestlers, especially people you worked with in WWE. Why the decision to put that in the act?**

If somebody takes that for real, then they're a moron, because it's comedy, it's at a comedy show. But realize that the person I take a jab at the most is myself -- 100 percent, if you come to my show, I make fun of myself the most. It shows I have a sense of humor about how horrible my WWE career was and just about the fact that I am a professional wrestler and all the silliness that goes into wrestling, I make fun of myself first and foremost, and I'm OK with that. But if you can't take a joke, then I feel sorry for you, because there's only a couple of people in this life that I really, really despise, and I don't say their names because I don't want to give them any credit. Why bother saying their names? The people I joke about on stage, it's just having fun.

Also, it's interesting because a lot of people e-mailed me and [Facebooked me](#) and [tweeted me](#) to say, "Colt, you should've gotten a better push that that, you should have gotten more of an opportunity in WWE, you're so talented," and when I go out on stage and make fun of it, I'm hoping to say to these people, "Look, I'm OK with it. I think it's funny." I find the humor in how pathetic my career over there was. So you can too, and you can laugh along with it, and it's my way of saying you should be OK with it, too. Let's just laugh about it, laugh about wrestling, laugh about life, and have a good time. After this you'll see the upbeat, fun-loving person that I am on stage, which is basically the same person that I am off stage.

**So who's funnier, yourself or Mick Foley?**

Man I can't answer that, he does about an hour of just going off, but I have a specific 20-minute set. I think we complement each other. I have specific jokes, he tells very funny stories. He's a great storyteller, as he's been for his whole career -- in the ring and out of the ring. He was a *New York Times* best-selling author, so he's a fantastic storyteller. He adds such humor to his stories and they're wonderful. I'm more of an offbeat, alternative joke-teller. I think we're both funny, that's what makes the show so great. Obviously he's the headliner and main event, I'm just complementing him. Like a good salad complements a good steak.

**I hear you're involved in a documentary called *Wrestling Road Diaries*, what's that about?**

Yeah, that was a concept American Dragon (Bryan Danielson / Daniel Bryan) and I had years ago, and eventually I got signed. And when I got released, we wanted to go full-force. He had brought it up, he wanted to do a three-month trip, get a van and eventually when it came down to it, we did 10 days, nine shows and seminars. In my mind, a lot of it was based off *The Comedians of Comedy*, which was Patton Oswalt, Zach Galifianakis, Maria

**"I find the humor in how pathetic my career over there was (in WWE)."**

-- COLT CABANA

Bamford and Brian Posehn back in like the mid-2000s. It had that movie and it eventually became a TV show, and it was so interesting because it wasn't just about the comedy. They showed the bits on stage, but they also showed how the life works. And these guys weren't mega-famous at that point, now Galifianakis has gone on to do *The Hangover* and is a world-famous comedian. At that point though, these guys had their fans but they weren't necessarily the biggest stars in the world, and I think it's the kind of the same parallel to myself and Bryan at the time. This was before he signed with WWE, before he got on NXT.



We documented the whole thing, and it's still in the editing process, but we have a Web site and it should hopefully come out sometime this summer. It's really just a look at our lives on the road. We sleep on friends' couches and floors, eat crappy meals, and live that crazy life on the road, and it gives people an inside look of how we're doing it -- not just the wrestling, which I think is maybe the next step of what people want to see. Hopefully from this it catches a producer's eye or a director's eye and we can make it a little bigger, but right now we're putting out this film. We got a lot of positive feedback from the [YouTube trailer](#) and people are interested in it, so hopefully that anticipation culminates in a big success for our little movie.

*You can check out more of Colt Cabana on Twitter ([@DrColtCabana](#)), at [ROHWrestling.com](#), and [TotalExtremeComedy.com](#).*

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