

Interview: Comedian Gabriel Iglesias For ‘The Fluffy Movie’

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CHICAGO – One the hottest, most creative and “fluffiest” stand-up comics working today is Gabriel Iglesias. The comedian riffs on the circumstances of his own life, as he deals with his adventures in the comedy world. He has put that all together in a new stand-up concert film, appropriately entitled “The Fluffy Movie.”

Iglesias was born in San Diego, but grew up in Long Beach, California. After high school, he worked for a mobile phone company while doing stand-up comedy on the side. When he was 21 years old, he turned to stand-up full time. He worked his way up and gained cult-like popularity with routines that include his amazing ability to mimic voices and sound effects. He gained the nickname “Fluffy” from his act, in which he described the levels of “fatness” (Fluffy was right before, “daaaaamn” and “hell, no”). The comic has recently dropped 100 pounds, and is primed to hit the big screen.



Comic in the Stratosphere: Gabriel Iglesias in ‘The Fluffy Movie’

Photo credit: Open Road Films (II)

HollywoodChicago.com talked to Fluffy Iglesias for the second time this year, [after this interview in January](#) [15]. For this interview, he talks about his own life in moving up the “ha-ha ladder,” and the expectations for his stand-up movie debut.

HollywoodChicago.com: So now you have reached one of the pinnacles of a stand-up comedian’s life – the concert movie. What did you want to do different or better in your film than the ones we’ve seen before?

Gabriel Iglesias: The first thing I did was to create more appeal for everyone. I didn’t do material that would get an ‘R’ rating. I’m telling people the only ‘f-word’ in this film is Fluffy [laughs]. In my live concert shows, I have people come up to me and say that their kids turned them on to me. I wanted to make it possible for the whole family to see this film together. It’s not ‘Frozen,’ but it’s fun for most.

Secondly, we wanted it to be big and showcase where I am in my career. We shot it over two days, with 18,000 people in attendance for those shows. We're doing a montage up front, which tells the story of how my mom and dad met, and how I came to be. I got that idea from Eddie Murphy's 'Raw.' That is my homage to Eddie, because he inspired me.

HollywoodChicago.com: Obviously you want the material to be top drawer in a film that will live forever. What kind of different preparation did you have, knowing you were going to shoot the movie, and how much of the material is new or exclusive to the film?

Iglesias: The whole film is 100% new material. The original run time was over 2 hours, and we cut it to 97 minutes. It took a bit longer for me to get it right, because I have a passion for it. It's my baby, and this represents me, and I want to make sure what I do is in the movie.

HollywoodChicago.com: The sound effects and imitations you do in your act are so much of what you're about. When did you realize you could do different voices, and how did that morph into the wild imitations and accents that you put into the act?

Iglesias: That's been there since day one, although in the beginning I didn't really have jokes, I had impressions. I did dirty stuff, too, like impressions of cartoon characters having sex. I would walk around stage and say things like, 'Can you imagine if Marvin the Martian was having sex?' [Iglesias does a few seconds of this] It was funny, but it was dirty, so I couldn't do anything with it. I couldn't take it anywhere. So the best piece of advice I got early on was that I was likable, and if I worked a little cleaner I could work anywhere. That was the best advice I ever got.

HollywoodChicago.com: I read in an interview in which you said 'That doing a sitcom isn't your cup of tea,' and that social networks and YouTube can build an audience just as well. How, in your opinion, has our current technology changed comedy and stand-up?

Iglesias: It's made it accessible to the world, it's not just an American thing anymore. It's global. In some places, stand-up comedy is brand new. South Africa has only had a scene for 15 years. Being able to go to these places, because the internet has taken my face and material beyond America, is amazing. People are quoting my jokes as I say them, and I've never been to the country.

HollywoodChicago.com: You seem to never forget where you come from, constantly doing homages to the Long Beach area where you grew up. When you go back to what you call home, what location or place gives you the most sense of being home and why?

Iglesias: I'm usually home every Monday and Tuesday, except when I'm on the road. When I'm home, I go to the movies. The Comedy Magic Club in Hermosa Beach is my home venue. I perform there at least once a month, on the last Tuesday. I always tell people to not expect the stuff that they know. This is when and where I work on new material.

HollywoodChicago.com: Did you prepare material for the film there?

Iglesias: For the most part, I prepared the movie material on the road, because that's where I was when they approached me about doing it. I had a time frame to deliver the concert to them, much less time than I usually have. On average, my Comedy Central specials were two to three years apart, but the film came right after the last special, 'Aloha Fluffy,' which we filmed in December of 2012. It aired in April of 2013, and we filmed the concert movie in February of 2014. So less than a year.

It was my shot, and I wanted to take it. Fortunately I had 15 minutes of material stockpiled, but while I was on the road one night I got really drunk, and just started venting, and a lot of that made it into the movie.



In On the Act: Gabriel Iglesias in 'The Fluffy Movie'

Photo credit: Open Road Films (II)

HollywoodChicago.com: You recently and famously lost some weight, and in an interview you said the death of fellow stand-up John Pinette was a wake up call. Did you think you had finally gotten to that fifth level of ‘Daaaamn’ as described in your stand-up?

Iglesias: I was past the fifth level. It’s one thing to be confident about who you are, because I was, but it’s another thing to be physically feeling all the problems. I was getting anxiety attacks, sometimes I couldn’t breathe – the only place I felt comfortable was in a pool, because gravity doesn’t work against you there. I had problem with my knees, so I had knee surgery, followed by a series of cortisone shots. Now that I’m a hundred pounds lighter, I can walk again.

HollywoodChicago.com: What has being a different size done to the concept of who you think you are?

Iglesias: I address all of it in film, the Fluffy thing, the weight loss and what’s going to happen. People ask that question, what is your image going to be? Well, the answer is my image was going to be dead, if I didn’t lose the weight. I think I need to go in this direction. This might be the last time I use ‘Fluffy,’ which will be a perfect transition.

HollywoodChicago.com: You were born in 1976. What do you think has been the most significant historical event that has affected your generation, or what do you find people your age most like to talk about when it comes to history or politics?

Iglesias: I think it’s now, with the legalization of marijuana, gay marriages and the age of technology. Somebody sneezes and they know it in Japan. The speed of information is so fast, we have to slow ourselves down. We’re definitely are in interesting times when it comes to technology.

HollywoodChicago.com: Since you’re bilingual, how are your dreams different in Spanish than English?

Iglesias: They’re louder in Spanish [laughs]. For some reason, everyone is screaming.

HollywoodChicago.com: Let’s go to stand up comedy school. How do you handle the following scenarios. One, somebody bombs in front of you, and the audience is dead ...

Iglesias: First, you have to comment on it, you just can’t start your thing. I’m not going to bury the guy, but I’ll give him a little rib. ‘I don’t know what happened there, man, didn’t have your Wheaties?’ Then you move on.

HollywoodChicago.com: Second, you play a room with less than ten people, and I know you haven’t done that one in awhile ...

Iglesias: Yes, but I’ve done that. Ignore who is not there, and focus on everybody who is there. I’ve played in front of two people, 16 years ago in The Annex in The Comedy Store. I didn’t care, it was the first time I was at The Comedy Store, and I did my whole act.

HollywoodChicago.com: Finally, of course, the heckler...



Gabriel ‘Fluffy’ Iglesias in Chicago, June 12, 2014
Photo credit: Patrick McDonald for HollywoodChicago.com

Iglesias: Depends on what they are heckling. There are hecklers who just make noises, ‘AAAAHhhh,’ or people who say, ‘You suck!’ or ‘Next!’ There is also the ‘echo heckler.’ I’ll say, ‘I was at the store,’ and the echo heckler says, ‘Ah, the store!’ So it depends. The heckling I get now is ‘I love you!’ or a request to do a certain joke or routine. I usually powered through heckling, because if you address it, you’re just talking to the heckler, and not the audience. Moving on stage helps as well, just get away from them.

Now of course, I have people at the venues. If we hear about it beforehand, we can react pretty quickly if something gets out of hand. People pay too much, and go through a lot to get to my shows, so I’m not letting one person screw that up.

HollywoodChicago.com: Was there any point in your life when the pain of living was more difficult than your ability to make fun of it?

Iglesias: For me, it’s small windows. For example, I performed the day my mother passed away, and the day they put her in the ground. Those were two of the hardest show dates I ever had to do.

HollywoodChicago.com: Since you’ve recently reunited with your father, has your relationship with him gotten better?

Iglesias: Still difficult, he was gone for 30 years. We’ve gotten together, and he tries to be a dad, but for me it’s too late. After my mom passed, I haven’t talked to him again, because I didn’t want to replace her, and that’s what the reunion with my dad felt like. But, I do mention him a lot in the movie, and I am flying him out for the premiere, so he’ll see the montage of how he and my mom met. So those are two prime examples of the pain of life that was hard for me.

HollywoodChicago.com: Not to get too deep, but what about personal relationships for the life of a stand-up comic on the road?

Iglesias: This happened with my girlfriend. I’m on the road, and her mom gets really sick, and dies seven days later. Since I was on the road, she never told me, because she knew I would cancel and come home. People don’t understand the sacrifice, the missed birthdays and anniversaries. I told my son he better get his high school diploma, because all of my show dates are scheduled around it [laughs].

“The Fluffy Movie” opens everywhere on July 25th. Written by and featuring Gabriel Iglesias. Directed by Manny Rodriguez and Jay Lavender. Rated “PG-13”



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