

The background of the entire advertisement is composed of several comic book panels. At the top left, a panel shows a character with a mask and a speech bubble saying "EH? WHH THE...". In the top center, a panel shows a character with a star on their chest and a speech bubble saying "LEARN TO WRITE AND COMIC BOOKS DRAW". To the right, a panel shows a character with a top hat and a speech bubble saying "HEH.. W..ELL". Below these, a panel shows a character with a speech bubble saying "I SEE YOU'VE SQUANDERED THE LEAGUES MONEY AGAIN!". To the right of that, a panel shows a character with a speech bubble saying "IT ALL WRONG. I'VE ONLY BEEN SPENDING ON LEGITIMATE BUSINESS NEEDS..". At the bottom left, a panel shows a character with a speech bubble saying "NO!". At the bottom right, a panel shows a character with a speech bubble saying "A..OR..".

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on:
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Mike Gagnon

Mike crash landed on Earth after his parents launched him in a rocket. They never expected he would survive. He works as a writer, colorist and illustrator for comic book publishers of all sizes, from Marvel Comics to small press.

He is currently promoting his creator owned, co-written Avengers spoof comic, *The Almighties*, at www.thealmighties.com.



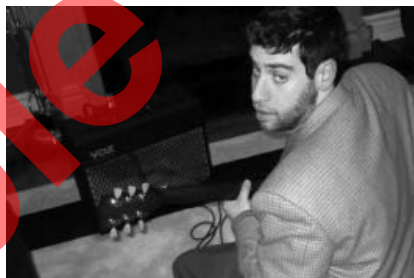
Brandon Sobel

Hailing from the 'burbs before storming through the

dirty, downtown core; amateur comedian, Brandon Sobel, has an impeccable duo of both boyish good looks and charm. A towering five foot five, Brandon's fresh face includes, exceptional observational wit and a tremendous stage presence.

Residing above the local bong emporium, 'The Guy Upstairs' has a background in self taught screen writing, over a decade of freestyle rap experience, and a vast knowledge of useless film and television facts. Brandon spends the days in extensive school for real estate or employed at his family owned bridal boutique.

'If you buy your house from me, the dress is FREE!' - Brandon Sobel (some restrictions apply)



CRAIG WATKINS TALKS ABOUT “THE STORE”

WITH MIKE GAGNON

I Recently had the pleasure of interviewing comedian Craig Watkins during the open mic comedy night at the Corktown Pub, located at 175 Young Street in Hamilton.

Watkins is the Producer/Director of “The Store”, a new independent comedy starring Anthony Mlekuz and Zak McDonald as a pair of bumbling robbers who try to use crime as a tool to solve their problems in life.

Q: Where did the idea for “The Store” come from?

CW: “Well, the story itself is based on real life. It takes place in a convenience store because it’s based on a time in my life when I worked at a convenience store and was rather unhappy about it. Anthony’s character is loosely based on me in that time of my life. The rest of the events are fictional. In fact one of the funnest parts of making this film was not knowing where the actors

would go. I decided early on that I would put as little effort into writing it as possible. (laughs) I knew where the story would start and where it would end and allowed the cast members to make up the rest. I feel this story improvisation really brought a sense of energy and unpredictability to the film that approaching it in a formulaic manner wouldn’t have achieved. I didn’t know what would happen in the journey between these two guys, because no one did, and it made it really fun to shoot.”

Q: How did your actors respond to starring in a movie where they were making up



the story as it went along?
Was it more of a challenge or
was it creatively freeing?

CW: "I think it was both at
different times, but we never
lost that sense of fun and
the idea of topping what we
had already done. Not know-
ing where it would go next
kept everyone on thier toes.
I know both Anthony and
Zak had a great time creat-
ing comedy on the spot while
cameras were rolling and
trying wildly different takes
of the scenes to see what
worked best."

Q: Aside from the challenge
of improvising on film, were
there any other unexpected
challenges?

CW: "Well of course we had
the usual expected challeng-
es of sets, lighting, budget,
timing like any other film, but
the unexpected challenge
came from some of Hamil-
ton's Finest arresting one of
our supporting actors in the
middle of shooting his scene.
He was dressed as a Police
officer and playing a cop that
arrests the main characters
in the film. We were doing

multiple takes of him going
in and out of the front door,
busting in to tell our charac-
ters to freeze and they were
under arrest. The next thing
we knew we had a SWAT
team surrounding the store
with our actor being cuffed
on the pavement for at-
tempted robbery. They didn't
seem interested in the entire
film crew or actor trying to
explain that we were film-
ing a movie. The crew and
bystanders caught it on their
phones. It's all over youtube.
All because a guy was just
doing his job and playing a
part. Guess it got us some
advance press though."

"The Store" is independently
distributed by the films cre-
ators. The trailer can be
found at:

[http://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=RDhwhvXohMc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDhwhvXohMc)

You can catch the world pre-
miere of "The Store" at The
Staircase Theatre 27 Dun-
durn Street North, Hamilton
at on September 22nd.

THE LAST YEAR ZAK McDONALD

The last year of my life has been the best worst year ever.

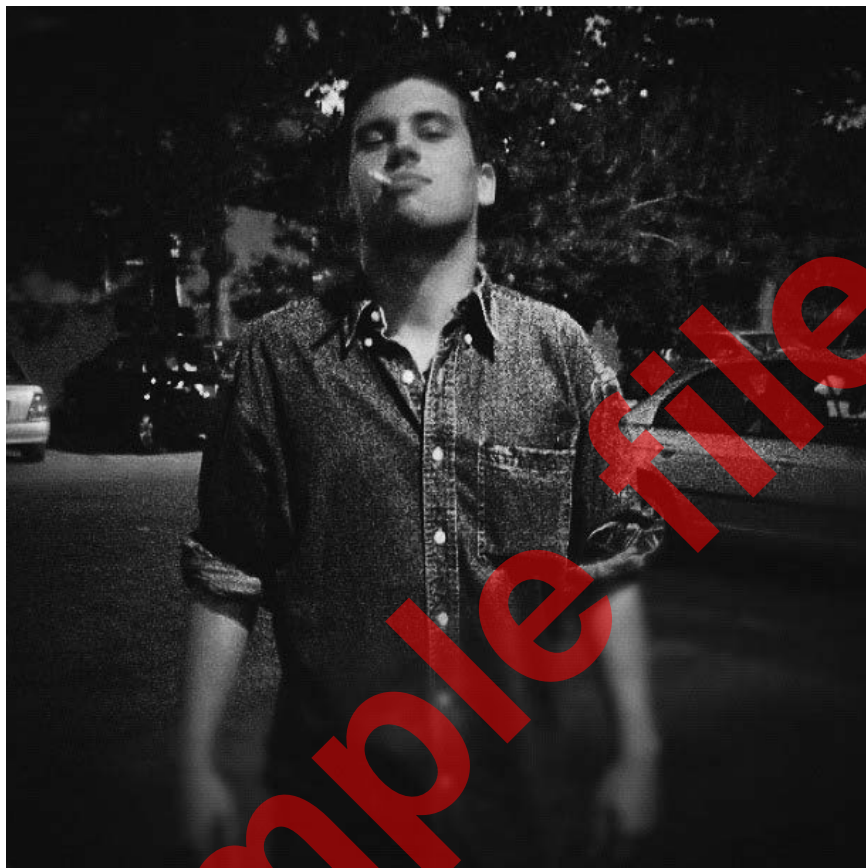
At the beginning of last summer, I started seriously getting into stand up comedy. At the time, I had stopped doing stand up comedy for a couple of months, due to frustration and feelings that I was not very good. My friend and fellow comedian Gavin Stephens, told me “99 percent of comedians think they are going to destroy that first night on stage...”. Sadly, this was not the case for me. When I started, I knew I was going to be terrible.

I did it because I loved it, and started off really bad. Really, really bad but that’s how everyone starts out. The first time I felt good, I did a show at a gay bar and destroyed it. I got free beer and nachos. It was the best day of my life! To me it felt like a continual struggle but other people told me I was doing, “occasionally well.” A few months later, I stopped doing stand up for a short time. Until Patrick Copolino asked if I would like a spot on the Hamilton Yuk

Yuk’s amateur night. I accepted because I rarely got asked to perform. Truthfully, I don’t know if I would have ever done stand up again if it wasn’t for that Facebook message.

I opened my set with a rant on why I hated working at McDonalds. It wasn’t a well written joke but I performed it well and was passionate. My friends liked it and I was proud. That was the day that changed my life; I knew I was never going to stop doing stand up. Over the summer, I worked hard developing new material and got better. I also developing bonds with my peers in the Hamilton comedy scene and started to earn respect from audiences, my peers and most importantly, myself.

I’ve always been a loner and in my own head. As a mature young man, I had already gone from living with my crack head mom to moving in with my dad with thirteen different schools in between. I finally felt important and that I fit in!



In the fall, I forged new friendships with Manolis Zontanos and Patrick Coppolino, my best friends to date. I thought that these guys were two of the funniest guys I had ever seen do comedy. They had already earned respect from some of the greatest comedians from all over the world and now I had earned their respect. I remember telling Manolis about my past; living in a car, my mom,

everything. In a moment of clarity, Manolis was curious, "why aren't you doing that on stage?" From that point on that quote became clear and will always stick out. I began new material on being a crack baby, being a virgin and disappointing my parents. Probably the hardest things for me to talk about. From that point I felt a shift. Over the next year, I did my first booked show, first

paid show and first show on the road. I also starred in a movie and through Pat and Manolis, I have met some hugely talented comedians that I had always respected. I built two life long friendships that changed my life forever. I'm not a superstar and I haven't accomplished much but I've accomplished more in stand up than I ever dreamed of.

I am proud of who I am and am confident in what I can do. I do believe this is a time to constantly grow, reminding myself of what I have done and what I need to do. Bill Parcells said, "There's a big difference between routine and commitment." This is the time for me to dedicate myself to being the person I want to be and succeed at a

higher level. I see my enjoying having success around me and I want that too. I know it's in my hands.

By the way, I lost my virginity this year, too.

War and Hate forever,

Zak McDonald

Watch Zak star in the premiere of The Store @ The Staircase Theatre on Sept. 22nd. He will compete Sept 21 as a rising Star at Staircase theatre.

Visit: zakmcdonald.tumblr.com



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We are unique. We strongly believe in the power of youth to do great things!

Through mentorship and teamwork, we work together to encourage empowerment and development.

If you are a youth who has ideas or would like a place to be yourself, come and be a part of what we're building!

When and where to find us:

Tuesday 3:00–6:00 p.m.
Wednesday–Friday 3:00–9:00 p.m.

24 Main Street West
(Beside the bus terminal on MacNab St)

downtownyouthcentre@gmail.com



Programs @ NGEN:

Homework Help:

Daily help with homework. Drop in, make friends, and improve your grades.

Cooking Class:

Share skills, culture and great food.

Roots to Leaf:

R2L is an arts-based alternative education program, focusing on the four elements of Hip-hop: Beat-making, Emceeing, Breaking and Graffiti.

Steel Express – Beginner &

Intermediate Breaking Lessons:

Through mentorship & youth-led teaching, participants learn athleticism and fundamentals of breaking. Thursday 6:00–8:30 p.m.

Drop-In:

Our space is open for youth to drop-in, hang out, join various activities and feel at home.

Youth Action Committee:

Youth leaders interested in incorporating youth-led initiatives and ideas into this space and into the community.

NGEN is a collaborative initiative of Boys & Girls Club of Hamilton, Empowerment Squared, Centenary United Church, and the youth of NGEN.

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ASK THE DUDE!

(QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FROM OUR READERS)

Q: How do you get laid? (Mayce Galoni)

A: Don't think about getting laid.

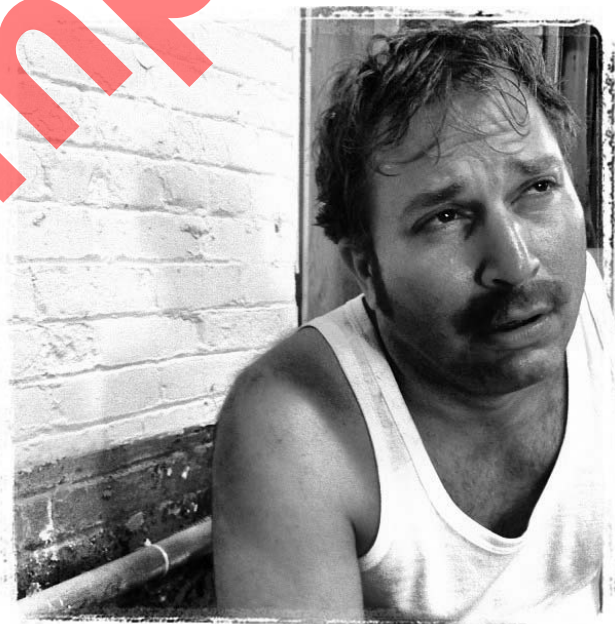
Q: Best date ever. (Josh "SHUA" Durand, Hamilton)

A: When you get a blow job and you don't have to tap.

Q: I have a boyfriend but I slept with his best friend. (Anonymous)

A: You're a C#NT!.....

Thank you for all your questions, you can message me your questions @ManolisZontanos



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