



**PRODUCED BY  
SUSAN SEIZER**

**DIRECTED BY  
ROBERT CLIFT  
AND HILLARY DEMMON**

**FEATURING  
STEWART HUFF  
KRISTIN KEY  
AND TIM NORTHERN**

**PRESS CONTACT**

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## SUMMARY

Documenting the creative brilliance and passion of three stand-up comedians working the comedy club circuit in the “flyover zones” of middle America, **Road Comics: Big Work on Small Stages** explores expectations of where and how comedy thrives today in the United States. Filmmaker Susan Seizer follows comic artists Stewart Huff, Tim Northern, and Kristin Key as they earn their living on the road, pausing along the way to discuss the business of being funny with regional club owners.

**Road Comics** showcases the actual work that goes into developing jokes and telling stories. Huff spins lively tales about his adventures among amazingly ordinary people -- the kind you might meet at Cracker Barrel or the Dairy Queen, for example – in the process shaking up any sense of what did and didn't, or could and couldn't, really happen. Kristin Key commands the stage with bravura and a self-deprecating self-consciousness, strumming and plucking familiarity out of all-too-common human foibles, our own as well as hers. Tim Northern's comic style is to swing at a ball and wait for it to land, and slowly roll along the green, until he hears the satisfying clunk of the audience getting his dry, witty word play. Crafting their nightly works out of our shared daily lives, these three comics connect with audiences who appreciate the humor they draw out of malls, fast food, and the slow quirkiness of lives not made for TV. Intercutting performance footage and interviews with the comics and club owners, **Road Comics** shows us that being funny is not an exclusively coastal commodity.

## PRESS

**“I’m always on the lookout for films and books that illuminate the stand-up experience, so discovering this honest and engaging documentary was a real treat.” - Jason A. Heidemann, *Time Out Chicago***

**“One would hope that a film on comics would be fun and it is. For a film that comes in just under an hour, it takes you places, including the insides of the performers’ heads.” - Mike Leonard, *The Herald-Times, Bloomington, Ind.***

**“It’s moving and thought provoking. The comics have such a raw drive to speak, be funny and connect with other human beings, almost completely outside the cultural value systems of conventional entertainment and success. They are so authentic and surprisingly thoughtful, even brilliant. The connection that (Seizer) makes with the performers is warm and appreciative... it is a wonderful achievement.” - Sarah Drury, *Professor of New Media, Temple University***

***Road Comics* “is nice and tight, communicating the culture and unique comic and performative sensibilities of the three comedians. And it’s still really funny!” - Joshua Malitsky, *Professor of Communication & Culture, Indiana University***

## SCREENINGS & AWARDS

**Official Selection of the 2013 Friars’ Club Comedy Film Festival**  
New York City  
April 2013

**Official Selection of the 2012 Southern Appalachian International Film Festival**  
Knoxville, TN,  
November 2012

**Official Selection of the 2012 Chicago Comedy Film Festival**  
Chicago, IL,  
November 2012

**Official Selection of the 2012 Landlocked Film Festival**  
Iowa City, IA,  
October 2012

**Official Selection of the 2012 Louisville International Film Festival**  
Louisville, KY,  
October 2012

**Indiana premiere Indiana University Cinema**  
Bloomington, IN,  
September 2012

**Official Selection of the 2012 Cincinnati Film Festival**  
Cincinnati, OH,  
September 2012



## PRODUCTION DETAILS

**RUN TIME:** 53 minutes

**RELEASE DATE:** September 2012

**Road Comics** was shot on location in Bloomington, Ind., Columbus, Ohio, Louisville, Ky., and Atlanta, using a Canon XH A1 camcorder. It was edited with Final Cut Pro.

The film grew out of the research of producer Susan Seizer, a cultural anthropologist. After training her ethnographic eye on the comedic mastery of theater artists in South India (see [www.stigmasofthetamilstage.com](http://www.stigmasofthetamilstage.com) for details), Seizer moved to southern Indiana in 2006 to work at Indiana University. The geographical focus of her next research became the comedy club circuit in middle America. On a local Bloomington back-room stage in late 2007- early 2008, Seizer found three comics whose work she loved. Each had been working the road professionally for at least a decade, delighting local audiences wherever they went, yet none was famous. What Seizer saw and liked in these three comics is how unexpected they are: their timing, their phrasing and their jokes are all different -- not only from each other, but also from any televised norm.

## CAST & CREW



### STEWART HUFF

<http://stewarthuff.com/>

Winner of the 2011 Aspen Laff Festival, Huff has been performing comedy for over 15 years. Darrin Hensely of *The Examiner* writes that Huff "may be one of the best comedy writers America has seen since Woody Allen," adding that he "is able to pull comedy from subjects that shouldn't be able to illicit any more jokes." A hit at the 2012 IndyFringe Festival, Huff will be returning to the event in August 2013.



### KRISTIN KEY

<http://www.kristinkey.com/>

Often billed as "a preacher's kid gone bad," Key grew up and got her stand-up start in Amarillo, Texas. She has appeared at The Improv and was a finalist on NBC's *Last Comic Standing*, ranking 6th out of thousands. Though she is now working out of Los Angeles, Key continues to tour as a road comic and says she considers road comedy in middle America to be the freest form of stand-up possible.



### TIM NORTHERN

<https://twitter.com/TimNorthern>

A Top 3 Finalist in CBS's *StarSearch*, and a frequent guest of the Bob & Tom show, Northern is a deceptively quiet performer. His jokes are like crossword puzzles: he gives the clue and the audience completes the thought. Engaging crowds in this way distinguishes Tim's humor. As he puts it, "I assume the audience has a brain and likes it smart." He currently lives in Louisville, Ky., where he is raising his two young children.

# CAST & CREW



## **SUSAN SEIZER, PRODUCER**

<http://www.indiana.edu/~cmcl/faculty/seizer.shtml>

Seizer is a cultural anthropologist in the Department of Communication and Culture at Indiana University. **Road Comics: Big Work on Small Stages** is the first film she has produced. The film came from a larger research project involving the work of road comics in the United States and continues her interest in the intersections of humor, performance, and creativity. A book detailing her project is forthcoming.



## **ROBERT A. CLIFT, VIDEOGRAPHER AND DIRECTOR**

[http://www.sou.edu/communication/faculty/clift\\_robert.html](http://www.sou.edu/communication/faculty/clift_robert.html)

Clift is a documentary filmmaker whose work focuses on the relationship between popular culture and everyday life. He has produced and directed two nationally broadcast PBS documentaries, *Blacking Up: Hip-Hop's Remix of Race and Identity* (2010) and *Stealing Home: The Case of Cuban Baseball* (2001). He is a professor of film and media in the Department of Communication at Southern Oregon University.



## **HILLARY DEMMON, EDITOR AND DIRECTOR**

<http://hillarydemmon.com/>

Demmon runs Limbic Productions, Inc., a video production company in the Pacific Northwest. In addition to documentary filmmaking, Demmon also creates commercial work for corporate and nonprofit clients. She has taught digital media production and storytelling at Georgetown University and Southern Oregon University.