



Photo by Theresa Danna-Douglas

K-von parlays business degree into comedy career

K-von (his real name), a native Nevadan and 2003 marketing and management alumnus, currently lives in Beverly Hills. He starred in the horror flick spoof The Gingerdead Man 2, and has appeared many times on television, including Showtime's Comics w/out Borders with Russell Peters, the Style Network and Good Morning America to name a few. He is a regular at Hollywood's Laugh Factory and tours colleges and clubs across the country.

With a Persian father and an American mother, K-von has a good-natured brand of multicultural humor—and he's not afraid to mock anyone, of any ethnicity, but he takes special aim at his Middle Eastern brethren. Constantly coming up with new material, he often draws from his childhood in Las Vegas, as well as his experiences as a college student at the University.

What got you interested in comedy?

My father worked at Harrah's Casino and always had plenty of jokes to tell. Some of them may not have been appropriate for a 7-year-old, but I always thought it was great that he could make people laugh with a quick story and a surprise punch line. I wanted to be able to do that.

In Nevada, there is not much opportunity for beginners to do standup, so I vowed to tackle it after I graduated. While in college, I would write jokes in the back of my notebook. Looking back, I realize the more boring the

class, the more jokes there were. In fact, I tell my family to this day that I was low on material and that's why I had to take accounting twice.

What's it like being a comedian?

It's a total roller coaster ride. Maintaining a daytime job, preparing for shows at night, impressing club owners and building a fan base keep you very busy. For the first few years a comic is just trying to figure out who they are on stage, come up with material, and basically survive for the amount of time you are on stage. If you can get past the ups and downs in the beginning, it becomes a lot more rewarding. We have a lot of fun on the road and after shows, but the comics I see really excelling treat comedy more like a business than a 24/7 party.

How did your experiences at the University help shape your future career path?

From a business standpoint, I use my marketing degree every single day and it has given me quite an advantage. From an experience perspective, the University allowed for a well-balanced campus life. I find, when I share my school stories while on stage, I'm able to relate to audiences all over the United States. Topics like being out of the house for the first time, joining a fraternity, living in the dorms, dating, and gaining weight from eating in the cafeteria are a gold mine for comedy material.

Were there certain professors who helped you the most?

Former Dean of the College of Business Mike Reed, the Nevada Small Business Devel-

opment Center's Rod Jorgensen and Professor of Managerial Sciences Howard Olsen were a few of my biggest influences while in school. They pushed me, made me work hard, and allowed me to confidently prepare to start my own business one day.

What are your favorite memories from your days at the University?

Partying at the Beer Barrel, taking skiing as a class (I still can't believe it), pledging the fraternity, heading to Lake Tahoe on a whim and late-night study sessions in our pajamas, to name a few. One memory in particular comes to mind. Like most college kids I was totally broke while in school. After all, my class missed the Millennium Scholarship by one year. So during finals week, I went to Krispy Kreme and bought five dozen donuts. I set them on my study table in the library with a sign that said "\$1 Donuts." I made \$48 a night for a week while studying. I should have received my business degree right then and there! That money helped pay for the next semester's books... or a few trips to the Beer Barrel, I can't remember which. Of course, there was a downside: I usually polished off plenty of donuts myself each night.

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For the full interview, visit: www.unr.edu/nevadasilverandblue

From a conversation with Senior Editor Melanie Robbins '06M.A. For more information on shows, please sign up and view K-von's calendar on www.K-vonComedy.com or www.myspace.com/KvonComedy.