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What a difference a Jay makes 7

Conscious comedy

DOUG MOTEL PERFORMS THIS SATURDAY AT UNISON IN NEW PALTZ

Doug Motel has done stand-up in Times Square and Los Angeles, been a bit player in the movies and may be best-known in some circles as a villain in the live-action pilot for *The Tick*. But today, he has landed in Rosendale, Ulster County, and has an 1870s farmhouse to contain his wife, "singer/ritualist/cultural events programmer" (as she is billed in the press release) Carrie Wykoff, his two-year-old daughter Maitreya and himself. Motel will be doing a fundraiser performance of his new one-man show, *starDUST: Adventures in Consciousness*, at Unison in New Paltz on July 26.

Motel said that the new show came to be as a result of pitching a previous one: "There were some producers in New York interested in one of my other shows. Afterwards, I found myself telling them some stories about my life. The next day, they came back to me and said, 'We think we can raise some money for your show if you include some of those stories you told us!" Motel said that he tried to rewrite the show and insert those stories, but it didn't work. His wife pointed out that he had, in fact, material for a new show. Previous stage pieces include *Mick in America*, *Shiva Arms* (*LA Weekly* and *Theatre LA* Ovation Award-winner) and *Mind Salad*.

Motel developed *starDUST* over the winter in California. He said that he knew from the outset that if he was going to write such a personal piece, "It can't be one where I tell the nice things that make me look really, really great." Having witnessed firsthand such modern American tragedies as the riots in Los Angeles and the events of 9/11 in New York City, Motel has much to say. Blended together with his experiences reaching for the brass ring of show biz success, the play is recommended for audiences aged 13 and over, due to the straightforward content.

Motel's wife is also responsible for their move to the Hudson Valley. He said that she has loved it here since she advised a friend who was opening a restaurant in New Paltz. After their baby was born, they decided that they would look around for a place here. Motel joked, "We didn't want to schlep the stroller up and down the subway platforms!" One day he saw an ad on Craigslist for a property in Rosendale, and the pair impulsively went to look at it, made an offer and had their offer accepted all in the same day! "'What was in our Cheerios this morning?' we said to each other."

Self-help author Marianne Williamson has described Motel's work as "Conscious Comedy." "To me, it means humor to crack us open a little bit, to widen our understanding of how we relate to ourselves and each other," said Motel. "I think there's a whole segment of society that's getting turned off by mainstream entertainment – that feel it's becoming increasingly irrelevant to their values." Motel labeled himself as "the Class Clown for the Eckhart Tolle crowd!"

The performance on July 26 at 8 p.m. at the Unison Arts and Learning Center in New Paltz is a benefit for his daughter's preschool, the Lederman Children's Center of Stone Ridge. Tickets are $15, and are available by calling (845) 363-4728, or by going to Motel's website at *www.DougMotel.com*.

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