



FROM THE BEST TRUSTED NAME
IN HUMOR
OF A NATION

May Contain Nuts

A Very Loose Canon of American Humor

Henry Alford	10g	2%
Roy Blount Jr.	31g	1%
Joe Bob Briggs	22g	1%
Patty Marx	4g	2%
Mark O'Donnell	25g	5%
P. J. O'Rourke	2g	5%
Others*	67g	84%

*A significant source of seriously funny contributions
from nearly 70 of the country's greatest humorists

Edited by Michael J. Rosen

Astronaut Application

It is March 11, 2002: There is an astronaut application on my desk. I received it in the mail after filling out a simple form on NASA's Web site. Six months ago today, my choice to be a comedian suddenly seemed trivial, so I began researching alternative careers that might make me more useful to society. Astronaut seemed the most logical choice. At nine pages long, it is surprisingly concise, and consists mostly of ordinary questions that you would find on any job application. The only page that really stands out is the one labeled "Summary of Aeronautical Experience," in which the applicant is required to provide a detailed record of the number of hours they have spent piloting and/or copiloting various types of civilian and military aircraft. The application makes it clear that special consideration is given to those who have experience as test pilots. I had to leave that page blank. After reading further, I realized that my college degree was also unacceptable. NASA requires that you have at least a B.A. in a field related to engineering, biological or physical sciences. My degree is in English. At least that's what my diploma says. Please never ask me any actual questions about literature—my automatic response will probably be some flustered tirade about the wasted years of my life (1985–1997), followed by the sentence "Oh yeah, definitely Vonnegut, without a doubt." I will then eat. After thoroughly reading the entire application, I realized that the only minimum requirement I did meet was that of height. In order to be an astronaut, you have to be between 58.5 and 76 inches tall. I'm approximately 72.5 inches tall. 73 if I've just finished using the lat pulldown machine at the gym. I found it surprising

that you could be so short and still be an astronaut, but what I found even more surprising is that one of the genetic attributes that allows so many great NBA players to soar high above the rim will forever prevent them from soaring high above the Earth. In a spaceship. If NASA ever establishes an elite team of basketball-playing astronauts (astrobasketnaughts), it will have to be the smaller guards that lead the way. Mr. Iverson, set us down on that asteroid! Now bury the tree! BOOYAH! But I digress. I felt like I had hit a brick wall. I was having severe doubts about being a comedian, yet I was completely unfit to be an astronaut. I had run out of options. I fell into a deep depression, and abandoned my good friends Mr. Beer and Mr. Ice Cream for my arch-enemies Mr. Too Much Beer, Mr. Way Too Much Ice Cream, and Mr. What the Hell Are You Doing with That Suede Pillowcase Aw Man I Don't Need to See That for Crying Out Loud Andrés No. That was until yesterday, when I picked up the most recent issue of *Vicarious Astronaut Bi-Monthly* and came across an article by Buzz Aldrin entitled: "United We Laugh: Why Comedians Are This Country's Most Precious Non-Fuel or Military Related Resource." In compelling and sometimes even tender language, Buzz recounts how his career as an astronaut would not have been possible without some of the earlier Marx Brothers films. It's a very interesting article with some fascinating, serpentine leaps of logic, but in the end Buzz makes it crystal clear that the future of our space program is entirely dependent on the comedians of this great country. And on advances in Plasma and/or Fusion research. Immediately, I felt better. Validated. More committed to making people laugh than ever before. Except for maybe when I was eleven years old, and just would not shut the fuck up until people either laughed or hit me. I suggest all you comics out there pick up the article and read it yourselves. Though I doubt you will ever, ever find it. Even so, the knowledge that there is a man named Buzz, and that he has set foot on the moon, is reason enough to go on. Right?

—Andrés du Bouchet