



Andy Kaufman: The Truth, Finally

Bob Zmuda , Lynne Margulies

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For the first time ever, the two people who knew Andy Kaufman best open up about the most enigmatic artist of our generation.

Comedian and *Taxi* star Andy Kaufman, known for his crazy antics on screen and off, was the ultimate prankster, delighting audiences with his Elvis and Mighty Mouse impressions while also antagonizing them with his wrestling and lounge-lizard alter ego, Tony Clifton. Some say he died in 1984, while others believe he performed the ultimate vanishing act.

In *Andy Kaufman: The Truth, Finally*, Bob Zmuda, Andy's writer and best friend, and Lynn Margulies, the love of Andy's life, reveal all—including surprising secrets that Andy made Lynne and Bob promise never to tell until both of his parents had died.

Hilarious and poignant, this book separates fact from fiction, and includes a candid inside look at the Milos Forman film *Man on the Moon*, which Zmuda coexecutive produced and featured Jim Carrey as Andy, Paul Giamatti as Zmuda, Courtney Love as Margulies, and Danny DeVito as Andy's manager, George Shapiro.

Finally, Bob Zmuda shares in detail the reasons he believes Andy Kaufman did, in fact, fake his own death, including exactly how he did it and why he will return.

Andy Kaufman: The Truth, Finally Details

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Author : Bob Zmuda , Lynne Margulies

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From Reader Review Andy Kaufman: The Truth, Finally for online ebook

Liz Yerby says

I'm on an Andy Kaufman kick right now. It's predictable with jim and Andy out, but also before that I was rewatching taxi and leading singalongs so.

Harrison Rip says

Bob Zmuda's other book, Real Andy Kaufman Revealed, is the best book ever written. This book, however, is just him alternating between bragging and whining about his life with Andy. The only interesting part was when Lynne Margulies revealed that Andy died of AIDS, not cancer. Skip this garbage.

Blue says

This book claims to be "the truth" regarding the controversial performance artist Andy Kaufman, as told by his best friend/partner in crime Bob Zmuda. However, I find this claim difficult to believe. There are a few interesting insights about Kaufman- supposedly he was bisexual, his death was from AIDS and not cancer, he suffered a traumatic childhood with the loss of a beloved grandfather and an abusive father- but when these insights are revealed alongside the more fantastical revelation that dominates the book- that is, that Kaufman supposedly faked his death and planned on returning after thirty years- I found it difficult to take even the former claims at face value, because I just couldn't buy that Kaufman is/was still alive. Zmuda's argument for Kaufman faking his death is laid out entirely in the last chapter, but it's referenced practically every other page, to the point where it gets tiresome at best and at worst, delusional. More than thirty years have passed, and there's still no sign of him... leading me to doubt the authenticity of the conversations Zmuda reproduces here (all of which revolve around Kaufman's fixation on faking his death) and therefore, that of the entire book. (Although having seen the documentary about the Kaufman biopic, Man on the Moon, I can attest that at least the parts of this book regarding the movie were true. Other than that, it's difficult to trust anything Zmuda claims.)

Furthermore, I found this book to reveal more truth about Zmuda than Kaufman, and the truth is, Zmuda is an unpleasant person to read about. I read biographies/memoirs (not sure how to categorize this one) because I want to know more about the subject... not hear about the author's petty grudges with those whom he perceived wronged him (like Kaufman's family and some of the folks involved with making Man on the Moon), or worse, his sexual exploits- Zmuda seems to think it's okay to deceive someone into having sex with them, by pretending to be another person. Getting back to the first point, though, I was surprised by how so much behind the scenes work on Man on the Moon, especially the process of getting the project off the ground in the first place, seemed to involve taking sides or getting revenge or other personal politics. Perhaps that's the nature of Hollywood, but at times it seemed mean-spirited.

Overall, if this is the truth as it claims to be, I think I prefer the myth... which might be the point.

Andy says

What a terrible book. I wanted to learn about Andy Kaufman, but Zmuda is primarily talking about himself instead. He also reveals some odd details about his personality. Like when Jim Carrey invited him to his private cinema, Zmuda stuffed his pockets with as much candy as he could, and overfilled his drink and popcorn so that it spilled all over the carpet. What a jerk. He also took advantage of two woman who thought he was Jim Carrey in costume. I'm really not sure why, but he seems very proud that.

I really wanted to finish this, but I could only make it a bit over halfway through before I had to stop. It's just too painful.

Deana says

Having grown up watching Andy Kaufman's antics on TV - from Taxi and Fridays to his weird wrestling phase - I was interested in learning what "the truth" really was here about his death. And while the book is interesting, especially the chapters detailing how Jim Carrey prepped for his role as Kaufman in "Man on the Moon," I was generally disappointed with the rest of it.

Bob Zmuda, Kaufman's friend and writer for 10 years, is obsessed with the idea that Kaufman is still alive and that since it's now been 30 (nearly 31 now) years, Kaufman is going to appear at any moment to declare it all the greatest put on in entertainment history. The book seemed to me to be more of a journal to Zmuda himself about keeping hope alive that Kaufman's death was nothing more than one giant prank. I mean, Zmuda even has venue halls lined up as well as interview slots on morning shows for the eventual return of his best friend and money maker.

Zmuda reminds me a lot of the late Harold Camping, who kept putting a date on the end of time, and then sat in his house waiting to be swept to the heavens with the other faithful. When it didn't happen, well, he just readjusted his date. Zmuda is pulling a Camping, trying to convince himself and everyone else that Kaufman is alive and that his return is imminent.

While I don't believe this, the main question I was left with was, if this really was all a prank, why? After 30+ years, who is going to care? Many of Kaufman's older followers are long dead by now, and the younger generation doesn't even know or care who he is. People in the middle, like me, are also meh about it. With the advent of the internet and reality TV, nothing Kaufman could do, were he alive, would be as shocking as what can be found there at any given moment.

So while interesting, the book strikes a somewhat desperate note by Zmuda. For by remembering Kaufman you will, of course, have to remind yourself that Zmuda is necessary. The problem is, he's really not.

Troy Beals says

I'm still hoping that Andy is out there smiling at us talking about him. :-)

Greg says

Bob Zmuda was Andy Kaufman's collaborator and writer for many years. As such he is a lifetime practitioner of absurdist humour and practical jokes. Anybody who reads a book subtitled "The Truth, Finally" by such an unreliable narrator needs to take it with a huge pinch of salt.

The book gives out very little information that people acquainted with Kaufman's story wouldn't already know. Much of it is taken up with the making of the film *Man on the Moon*, and people who have seen that film aren't going to learn much about Kaufman from this. The bulk of the rest of the book is Zmuda laboriously trying to sell the idea that Kaufman isn't dead and is coming back. Occasionally Lynne Margulies gets to contribute a snippet where she comments on something Zmuda wrote. It's pretty clear from what he writes here that Zmuda is trying to have a lend of the reader; just one more lame attempt at a practical joke.

Sam Sattler says

Avid Andy Kaufman fans know how closely connected to Andy's career that Bob Zmuda was, and for that reason, a new book by Zmuda on Kaufman is likely to grab their attention. But those same fans, knowing Kaufman and Zmuda as well as they probably do, will also know better than to expect "the truth, finally" from this book.

Andy Kaufman was more performance artist than comedian, a man who enjoyed nothing more than getting some kind of genuine emotional response from his audience – be that response negative or positive. Bob Zmuda was Andy's partner in crime for years, and the two of them concocted some great schemes together. There is little doubt that Zmuda helped make Kaufman into a star/celebrity, but there is also little doubt that, without Andy Kaufman, relatively few people would know who Bob Zmuda is.

So what is "the truth, finally" that Zmuda has decided to reveal in *Andy Kaufman: The Truth, Finally*? It's simply this: Zmuda wants the rest of us to believe that he actually still thinks that Andy Kaufman faked his own death thirty years ago, and that he will soon be making his first public appearance since that "death." That's it; that's all there is to it. Zmuda, for obvious reasons, wants to sell books about Andy Kaufman – and he does not want this to be the last of those books, so he's leaving the door wide open to a Truth sequel. Very Kaufman-like, that.

There are, however, some interesting aspects to *Andy Kaufman: The Truth, Finally* that potential readers will want to consider. Fans of "Man on the Moon, the remarkable Andy Kaufman biopic, for instance, will be intrigued by all the details into the making of that film that Zmuda and Margulies share in the book. Too, Jim Carrey fans are certain to be fascinated by Carrey's total immersion into the Andy Kaufman persona that he took on during the entire making of that movie. (That more "truth" about Jim Carrey is revealed in the book than about Andy Kaufman may be what Zmuda intended all along.)

It should also be noted that the role of Lynne Margulies in *Andy Kaufman: The Truth, Finally* is a limited one. Her contributions amount to short pieces in which she briefly reflects on her memories about something that Zmuda introduces and covers in detail. This is very much Bob Zmuda's book, and it shows. One gets the impression that Zmuda enjoys being disliked (much as Kaufman did), and that he almost goes out of his way

here to show all the worst aspects of his own character in order to get an emotional reaction from his readers.

Worth reading? Well, how big an Andy Kaufman fan are you?

Matthew says

It's fascinating reading the stories of Andy Kaufman's writing partner for 10 years. If anyone had an intimate portrait of an off the wall artist it was this guy and Andy's long time girlfriend. The author still has this resounding belief that his friend really did fake his death and he'll be back sometime to go FOOLED YOU! I'm not sure if it's meant to be BS or if he truly believes Andy is just kicking around enjoying a new life. Either way it gets a bit repetitive in story format and Bob tends to repeat himself on a lot of things.

With the new Jim Carrey documentary coming out on Netflix in the next couple weeks, this book is a behind the scenes look at a lot of what is going to be shown in that film. A fun read, if not a bit repetitive.

Spencer Hall says

You'd be better off reading Lost In The Funhouse by Bill Zehme.

Bob Zmuda spends most of the book saying that Kaufman is going to return from the dead, over and over and OVER again. It's an infuriating read, especially when Zmuda starts addressing the reader as if they're Kaufman himself - "I know you're reading this Andy" etc. He mentions that his own family are concerned about his mental health as he's obsessing about Kaufman returning from the dead. Most of the rest of the book is about the filming of Man On The Moon.

I have great respect for Bob Zmuda but I really didn't enjoy this book other than a few bits of his tidbits on working with Jim Carrey.

I already knew the book's big "shock" revelations from reviews of the book before I read it. They are that he was bisexual, may have died of AIDS, his grandfather's death had a big effect on him and HE HOAXED HIS OWN DEATH AND WILL BE BACK ANY DAY NOW, I SHOULD KNOW, I WAS HIS BEST FRIEND

I don't know if I can bring myself to read his other Andy Kaufman book. Thoroughly disappointed

Jim Zubricky says

I found this book through an article on Slate.com, and the premise behind this book (could Andy Kaufman still be alive after all these years??) was very interesting, and right away I wanted to read this book.

I believe the authors make a good case, but there were parts of the book (near the beginning) that were slow and I was not as entertained and laughing out loud as I was during their stories of filming "Man on the Moon" and after. Once you get to those chapters, the book does move very nicely, and once you're done, you kinda do hope he's coming back soon.

Hbomb says

Yikes. While reading this book I kept asking myself if this was some strange extension of Andy's brand of comedy. Could Zmuda be putting us on or does he truly believe Andy is still alive? There isn't much "truth, finally" in this book. Half of it is the making of Man on the Moon and Jim Carrey shenanigans. The other half is pure speculation. I picked up this book to learn about Andy Kaufman but I leave this book feeling mostly pity for Bob Zmuda. He has seemingly invested so much time and effort in Andy's return. So much so that he claims he already has arrangements for Andy's return and first interviews booked and million dollar paychecks waiting. It's quite sad. That pity I felt didn't last long though because I find it difficult to feel bad for someone when they brag about tricking two women into sex by pretending to be someone who is pretending to be someone else. Ugh. Skip this book.

Patrick says

While Zmuda is pretty consistently petty throughout, the book does shine a bit more light on the mystical enigma of Andy Kaufman. He is convinced Andy will return which begins to feel a bit pitiful considering the amount of time and effort he's given to the man. Tragic and tremendous. Also, pretty homophobic. So... difficult to digest, but still worth your time if you want to know more about Andy's legacy.

Mediaman says

This is one strange book--it's supposedly about Andy Kaufman but it's really a bunch of one-sided opinions spewed by his self-centered writer Bob Zmuda. And a few comments from Kaufman's girlfriend (why she gets a co-writer credit is unknown because she contributes very little to the book other than a few paragraphs here and there). The book gives some insight into why Kaufman was so crazy, but it's mostly Zmuda telling us how great he and Kaufman were--something that most of America would probably disagree with.

The big problem here is that there is no real perspective on Kaufman--we get a hyped, over-praised version that claims he was a genius ahead of his time. No, he wasn't. He was a lousy comic with terrible timing who intentionally infuriated everyone he worked with and challenged them to fire him (almost all of whom did). Zmuda sounds like a guy just trying to make money off Kaufman's death by writing this book that is mostly supposed to convince us that Kaufman isn't really dead. It's a stupid premise that is repeated "to death" in the book, to the point that you just want Zmuda to shut up and tell Kaufman stories!

Oh, there are some good ones here. Kaufman's bisexuality. Kaufman's banging every prostitute at the Bunny Ranch. Kaufman plotting his fake death. Jim Carrey being almost as crazy as Kaufman. And Zmuda doesn't hold back his hatred for certain Hollywood types (Danny DeVito really gets it but there is way, way too much about the DeVito-produced Man in the Moon movie here) and his disdain for Kaufman's family members. But that doesn't make for a very entertaining book. The best part is that the book does reveal the reason why Kaufman was the way he was--his beloved grandfather disappeared when he was a boy and Andy went nuts. The grandfather had died but Andy's parents told him that the old man had moved away to a foreign country without saying goodbye. Andy withdrew, started seeing a counselor, and his parents didn't reveal the lie until years later. No wonder the comic was screwed up, acted like an old foreign man, and

repeatedly tried to fake his death.

This thing is a mess, very much the way Kaufman was. For Zmuda to think this is great writing shows what a failure he and Kaufman really were. The book's title is even misleading--there isn't a lot of truth here. Just a lot of biased hype that gives Kaufman's writing partner and girlfriend the chance to wring more money and fame out of the long dead comedian by claiming he's still alive.

John Kussner says

MEMO 2 BOB ZMUDA: BOB, GET IT THROUGH YOUR THICK SKULL - ANDY IS NOT COMING BACK!
