

PATRICK COMBS & HIS SMASH-HIT SHOW, *MAN 1, BANK 0*

What a year it's been...

Off-Broadway for a month and rave reviews such as "*Fastest, funniest, most fascinating show to hit New York in many a season.*" ... An invite to perform at **Just for Laughs** next summer, the most prestigious comedy festival in the world... "Critic's Choice" and an entirely sold out run at the **Piccolo Fringe Spoleto Festival in Charleston**... Sold out shows at the **New Zealand International Comedy Festival**... Top comedy award at the **Montreal Fringe Festival**... and memorable runs in Melbourne Florida and Stone Mountain Georgia. Most recently, a smash-hit run on main stages across the Carolinas...



BIO

Patrick Combs is widely known as a hilarious entertainer, a best-selling author, and an inspirational speaker.

His skills as a comical entertainer have taken him on a rocket ride that identified him recently as one of the "funniest new comedic talents in America." In the past two years alone, he has been discovered by the two most prestigious comedy festivals in the world, **HBO's U.S. Comedy Arts Festival** in Aspen and **Just for Laughs festival** in Montreal, and performed his solo comedy act **off-Broadway**. He's garnered standing ovations across America having performed at more than 1000 events. He's been interviewed on national television by **Barbara Walters**, had his story told in more than 300 newspapers including **Wall Street Journal**, **NY Times** and **USA Today**, been featured on **ABC Nightly News**, **NBC Nightly News**, **Good Morning America**, **CNN**, **Phil Donahue**, **Montel Williams** and **The Late Show**. He continues today to entertain sold out audiences around the world.



Patrick Combs is a former TV personality for Paramount's hit shows, **Real TV** and **Hard Copy** where he was the star of humorous hidden camera segments. As a solo performer, he has toured continuously for fourteen years, entertaining audiences as large as two thousand people, and in theaters such as the Comedy Central Stage in Hollywood, the Herald Theatre at the Aoeta Centre in Auckland, the King Center for the Performing Arts in Melbourne, Exit Theatre in San Francisco, and the American Theatre in Charleston. Patrick always adds "Wow" to an event.

MAN 1 BANK 0 is Represented by Alkahest Artists & Attractions, Inc.
(888) 728-8989 | E-mail: Info@AlkahestArtists.net

PATRICK COMBS: Man 1, Bank 0.

This internationally touring, award-winning, smash-hit comedy has been selling out everywhere.

Patrick Combs tells the true story of how he deposited a \$95,093.35 'non-negotiable' junk-mail check – hoping to spread a little banking cheer to tellers - and how it erupted into a staggering and funny David vs Goliath-like adventure.

"One of the funniest, most fascinating and fastest moving solo plays to hit New York in many a season. Not only is it ninety minutes of nonstop laughter, it's also an edge of your seat adventure loaded with unbelievable real-life surprises." said BroadwayWorld.

"Priceless," said TimeOut NY. *"Combs has his storytelling down to an art."*

Sold out during its OFF-BROADWAY in New York. Also SOLD OUT in Aspen, Charleston, Orlando, San Francisco, Auckland, Montreal, Winnipeg, and Los Angeles.

"BEST COMEDY AWARD" at San Francisco and Montreal Fringe. **"CRITIC'S CHOICE"** at the **Piccolo Spoleto Festival**. **SMASH-HIT** at **U.S. Comedy Arts Festival** and **New Zealand International Comedy Festival**, and official selection of the prestigious **Just for Laughs Comedy Festival** in 2006.

Man 1, Bank 0.

An outrageous true story.

CRITIC'S CHOICE

The reviews are in on Patrick Combs' **Man 1, Bank 0**:

"This guy's got **STAR POWER**." says Hollywood's Variety Magazine. "One of the **FUNNIEST**, most **FASCINATING** and **FASTEST** moving solo plays to hit New York in many a season. Ninety minutes of **NONSTOP LAUGHTER**, it's also an **EDGE OF YOUR SEAT ADVENTURE** loaded with **UNBELIEVABLE** real-life surprises," said BroadwayWorld.com "Combs has his **STORYTELLING DOWN TO AN ART**." wrote TimeOut NY. **HILARIOUS** and **AMAZING**. This is - by far the **BEST PERFORMANCE** I saw. I can't recommend it enough." raves the Orlando City Beat. "If there were a **PEOPLE'S CHOICE** award, judging by it's SELLOUTS, Man 1, Bank 0, would likely win." said the Winnipeg Free Press. "**JAW-DROPPINGLY FUNNY**...literally had us **SCREAMING WITH LAUGHTER**. Patrick is a **BRILLIANT STORYTELLER**." said Janet Munsil, director of UNO Festival. "An **INVIGORATING ROLLER COASTER RIDE** presented by a bona fide, ballsy jester. Combs is the underdog-- he is us." said the Victoria Times Colonist. "In this **TRIUMPHANTLY TRUE** story, Patrick Combs poses the question: is found money your money?" noted the San Francisco Guardian. "More than just '**A HELLUVA TALE**'... With **WELL PLAYED VILLIANS AND HEROES**, Man 1 is something of a comic reworking of **DAVID VERSUS GOLIATH**, or even, maybe, 1984" wrote the Charleston City Paper. "See the performance. Combs is **DESTINED FOR BIG THINGS**." said the Orlando City Beat.

"A wiry, likable West Coast dude who combines hippie earnestness with skateboarder cynicism, Combs has refined his storytelling to an art, using a screen projector, a minimum of props and abundant energy to relate a tale about which he still seems incredulous -- and gleeful... the comedy value of watching a bank beg for its cash back is priceless."

-Time Out NY

"Patrick Combs did something stupid, got into a whole lot of trouble for it, lived to tell about it, and fortunately is a talented enough writer and performer to have turned his uniquely twisted tale into one of the funniest, most fascinating and fastest moving solo plays to hit New York in many a season. Not only is Man 1 Bank 0 ninety minutes of nonstop laughter, it's also an edge of your seat adventure loaded with unbelievable real-life surprises. Top of my 'Ya gotta see this' list."

- BroadwayWorld.com

"What makes this more than just "a helluva tale," what makes it actually something worth touring around and building a career out of, is its look at the smothering of humanity by the modern-day bogeyman: "faceless corporate culture.... With well-played villains and heroes, Man 1 is something of a comic reworking of David versus Goliath, or even, maybe, 1984.... More than simply a good story with jokes and drama, Patrick Combs' one man show Man 1, Bank 0 has something to say about the crazy idealist notion of being decent and human."

drama, Patrick Combs' one man show Man 1, Bank 0 has something to say about the crazy idealist notion of being decent and human."
- Charleston City Paper

"You basically sit there for 90 minutes laughing your ass off, sharing Patrick's still-genuine disbelief at the lunatic chain of events that followed."
- Bob Harris.com

"Gold Medal...both hilarious and amazing. On its own, the story is marvelous. It's the type of tale that inspires the phrase, "Only in America." But no story can be properly be told without a gifted storyteller. Combs fits the bill.... He captivates the audience with a story so staggering, they're forced to immediately invest themselves in the character... I encourage anyone reading this to see the performance. Combs is destined for big things. Man 1, Bank 0 is only the beginning of what I assume will be an illustrious career. Final word: This is – by far – the best performance I saw. I can't recommend it enough."
- Orlando City Beat

"Man 1, Bank 0, is so absurdly inspiring and personal in detail that after seeing this show one cannot help but feeling a whole lot better about the future of our kind... It is writer, director, and performer, Patrick Combs' inventively playful take on his own life that takes his audience on a outrageous joyride, one replete with wide-eyed wonder and slack-jawed glee."
- HowToRockStar.com

"Jaw-droppingly funny...literally had us screaming with laughter. ... Patrick is a brilliant storyteller."
- Janet Munsil, organizer of UNO, the Festival of Solo Performance

"Combs is the underdog-- he is us... An invigorating roller-coaster ride presented by a bona fide, ballsy jester. Required viewing for anyone who has been treated high-handedly by their bank."
- Victoria Times Colonist

"Amazing tale ... wild ride... as unbelievable as they come.... edge of your seat."
- Orlando Sentinal

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Prankster Exploits a Bank's Gaffe And Turns Trash Into Quick Cash

August 16, 1995

By Sharon Massey

Staff Reporter of The Wall Street Journal

Patrick Combs recently performed an experiment that any medieval alchemist would aspire to: He turned a piece of junk mail into cold, hard cash.

The only problem is, he performed the experiment on a bank, and the bank wants its money back.

Mr. Combs, a 29-year-old San Francisco author, was one of 40 million Americans who recently received a fake check in the mail as part of a promotional campaign by the Association of Certified Liquidators, a company that buys and resells stores' unsold goods.

Unlike the other recipients, however, Mr. Combs deposited the \$95,093.35 "check" in his account at Los Angeles-based First Interstate Bancorp, as a lark. He just wanted to see what would happen, he says.

"I was absolutely certain the bank wouldn't cash it," says Mr. Combs.

But lo and behold, the bank credited the entire sum to his account by May 22, the next business day.

Mr. Combs waited three weeks, expecting the bank to discover its error. When it didn't, he withdrew every last penny and put a cashier's check for the full amount in his safe-deposit box at the bank -- and he has a deposit slip and copy of the cashier's check to prove it.

"There's no way I'd leave the bank with that much money," he says. "If fate can give it to me, it can take it away just as fast."

The bank now hopes to do just that. A week after he withdrew the money, Mr. Combs discovered -- when an automated teller machine ate his bank card -- that his account had been frozen, he says. He also received what he describes as threatening messages on his home answering-machine from bank representatives ordering him to give back the loot. Mr. Combs refused. He says he would have returned the money if the bank had been more polite.

"I would have liked the bank to just call me and admit it erred," says Mr. Combs. "And maybe take me to lunch."

First Interstate, citing customer confidentiality, declines to comment on the case.

ACL President Mitch Klass is surprised by the financial uproar caused by his company's errant check.

"No one has ever tried to cash one of our promotional checks before," he says. "I didn't even know it this time. We're going to have to check into this."

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Time Out

New York

July 28–August 3, 2005
Issue No. 513 \$2.99

Bob Woodward
John Irving
Terrence McNally
Antony and the Johnsons

NYC'S
LISTINGS
BIBLE

Summer Smorgasbord:

Man 1, Bank 0
By Patrick Combs. Dir. Robert Dubac. With Patrick Combs, Lamb's Theatre. (see **Off-Off Broadway**)

Don't believe that any bank ever made an error in a customer's favor, outside of a Monopoly game? According to Patrick Combs, creator of the solo *Man 1, Bank 0*, it really did happen to him. In the mid-'90s, Combs was happy with his friendly local bank, First Interstate. So it was purely as a joke that he deposited a "check" made out to him. A month later, and with a \$95,000 nonnegotiable "check" made out to him, he was much better off. He was still waiting for the other shoe to drop. This premise appeals to everyone's wish fulfillment—threats leveled, crazy legal enticement, out of control legal greats enticed out of retirement, panicky talk-show circuits traversed—is what drives Combs's story, every word of which he sweats.

A wiry, likable West Coast dude who combines hippie earnestness with skateboarder cynicism, Combs has refined his storytelling to an art, using a screen projector, a mountain of props and abundant energy to relate a tale about which he still seems incredulous—and gleeful.



CALLED TO ACCOUNT Combs gets tied up on the phone.

While it's hard to believe that this happy-go-lucky San Franciscan was as ingenious as he avers he was, it is ingenious. As his David faces off against the Goliath of the bank industry, his portrayal of panic and pluck may be calculating, but it's no less convincing. Best of all, although \$95,000 is nothing to sneeze at, the comedy value of watching a bank beg for its cash back is priceless.

—Jessica Brunsch

WANT THE DIRTIEST, SICKEST, MOST DISGUSTING



"MAN 1, BANK 0" is playing at the Lamb's Little Theatre. Call 212-575-0300 for more information.

Finders keepers

Patrick Combs finds success after cashing a bogus check

interview More than 20 years ago, Patrick Combs deposited a \$95,000 junk-mail check from the Association of Certified Liquidators, and his bank cashed it. Then an out-of-work inspirational speaker, Combs took the money and ran to a safe deposit box. Despite the numerous threats he received (free accidental death and dismemberment insurance anyone?), Combs lived to tell his story and managed to parlay his ordeal into a full-blown career, complete with the current off-Broadway one-man show, *"Man 1, Bank 0,"* and an upcoming book. Maybe we should all cash bogus checks.

▶ You must have been really hard-pressed to cash that check.

▶ I was in credit card debt. On the outside of the envelope, it said "\$95,000 enclosed." I opened it up and [found] this ultra-real looking check with my name and address on it with the words... "non-negotiable." Then it hit me, like, "hey, this would really be funny to deposit into my bank." I drew a smiley face on the back of the check.

▶ So when did you realize the check cleared?
▶ Well a couple of days went by, and I hit up my ATM machine for 40 bucks. My balance suddenly jumped to \$101,000! I felt like I was in "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" with the golden ticket.

▶ You've been making money now on the circuit telling your story. Does it

feel different to earn it rather than just finding it in the mailbox?

▶ I think it's an enormous, enormous difference. I didn't know what I did was illegal. Now, I just completely value what I earn.

▶ How did the one-man show come about?

▶ I posted my story on the Internet. And my Web site was getting like millions of hits. So I thought, "I'm gonna put out a tip jar." It takes two hours to read. That's two hours of entertainment if they want to send me a dollar. People started sending me tips in the amounts of \$10, \$20 and \$50. So over and over, all I got was reinforcement that people liked the story a lot.

NANA EKUA BREW-HAMMOND

12-PAGE WEEKEND SPECIAL | NEW YORK WEEKEND, JULY 22-24



Mets on the rise

metrol

See Eric



Man 1 Bank 0: Bank Error in Your Favor, Collect \$95,093.35

by [Michael Dale](#)

"I know it was wrong, but you're just as twisted as I am for laughing!" Patrick Combs did something stupid, got into a whole lot of trouble for it, lived to tell about it, and fortunately is a talented enough writer and performer to have turned his uniquely twisted tale into one of the funniest, most fascinating and fastest moving solo plays to hit New York in many a season. Not only is *Man 1 Bank 0* ninety minutes of nonstop laughter, it's also an edge of your seat adventure loaded with unbelievable real-life surprises.

It all started ten years ago on an unremarkable morning when Combs, then residing in an unremarkable section of San Francisco, received a piece of junk mail promising remarkable results by purchasing a book on selling real estate. As an example of the wealth that awaits him, the letter included a sample check, made out to Patrick Combs, for \$95,093.35. Since the check was clearly labeled "Not Negotiable", Combs thought he'd do something silly and deposited it into his account, via an ATM. He didn't even sign it, instead putting a happy face where the endorsement would be, hoping the bank clerk whose hands it landed in might have his or her day brightened up by this bit of nonsense.

The check cleared.

Figuring the bank would spot the mistake very shortly and simply void the transaction, Combs lived a few carefree days collecting dozens of ATM balance statements and continually calling customer service just to hear the computerized voice tell him he had over \$100,000 in his checking account; a practice that served as a sort of combination narcotic and phone sex.

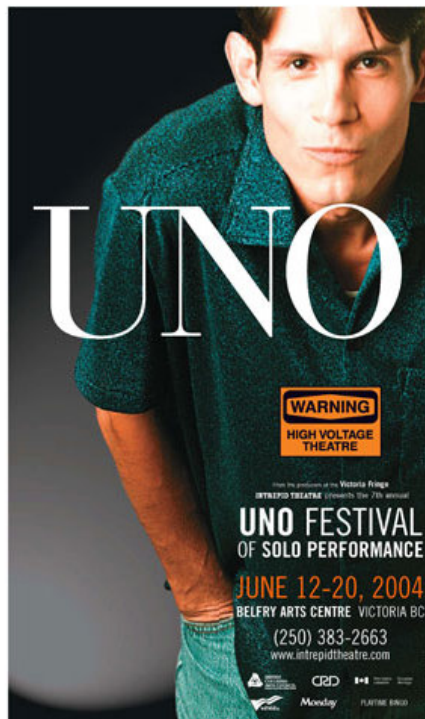
But when it became apparent that his balance was not going back to normal, Combs researched into the situation and eventually discovered that what he did was perfectly legal. Although common sense says the check was obviously fake, the letter of the law said it was legitimate and it was the bank's responsibility to notify the recipient within a specific amount of time if it bounces or else it forfeits the monetary amount.

What follows is a five month escapade involving angry phone calls, a possible death threat, hundreds of emails (both ominous and supportive) and media coverage that included national television and worldwide press. And just in case anyone believes any part of the story to be false or fabricated, Combs' performance includes the actual documents involved, with details provided in a slide show presentation.

What keeps Patrick Combs from seeming like some punk kid trying to get away with something is that all throughout the story he is upfront and honest with everyone involved. The only thing that stands in the way of resolving the situation is the bank's refusal to admit someone made a mistake. As directed by Robert Dubac (Mark W. Travis is credited as consultant), Combs is a likable nice guy in ripped jeans and a t-shirt with an enthusiastic knack for story-telling and a goofy sense of humor.

Man 1 Bank 0 plays a limited run that ends on July 30th. Given its all-too-brief New York stint and its comparatively reasonable Off-Off-Broadway ticket price for such an outstanding hour and a half of entertainment, I'm putting this one at the top of my "Ya gotta see this" list.

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(Official UNO Festival Poster)

Charleston Magazine

The Art Issue, May 2005

CRITIC'S CHOICE

Theatre

Some may remember a funny story in the national media back in 1995 that got a little airtime when news stations took a break from the O.J. trial. A young prankster deposited a junk-mail check for \$95,035.35, and through a series of mistakes on the part of the issuer and the bank, it cleared. That prankster was **Patrick Combs**, and his tale of what ensued is the subject of "**Man 1, Bank 0**," playing at the American Theater during Piccolo Spoleto. Combs is a brilliant storyteller, and his hilarious monologue has won numerous "best of" awards at festivals around the country. Since Combs didn't endorse the check—and because he waited until the money cleared to get a cashier's check—what he did was not a crime, so it's

okay to cheer his shenanigans as we get vicarious revenge for all those \$20 "insufficient funds"



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF GOOD THINKING

Impish storyteller Patrick Combs

charges. The play recounts his efforts at trying to get the *Wall Street Journal* to run his story, experiences on the talk-show circuit, and what he finally ends up doing with the money. It's about personal ethics and not letting fear win—and the extreme difficulty in getting a bank to admit they made a mistake. —**Kristen Rhodes**

"**Man 1, Bank 0**," *May 28, May 29, May 31, June 3-5, various times. The American Theater, 446 King St., (843) 554-6060*

40 | CHARLESTON

Comedian cashes in on bank joke

By Donald Munro

The Fresno Bee (Updated Sunday, March 7, 2004, 4:35 AM)

Patrick Combs is fascinated with cash.

We're talking about the stuff that's cold and hard. Not checks or credit cards. Not the electronic blips that flit between accounts like impossible-to-catch fireflies.

In many ways, money has become a strangely abstract concept in our society. Most of us never see the majority of what we earn before it's whisked away.

Anything more than pocket change can be titillating -- and nervewracking. Cash has an aura all its own -- a pungent sensibility. It even smells.

So when Combs sets up the stage for his touring solo show "Man, 1, Bank, 0," which he's bringing to the second weekend of Fresno's 2004 Rogue Performance Festival, he gets a kick out of spreading money on the floor. Real money. At least a couple of hundred dollars' worth.

And between shows, he wears a special shirt to which he's pinned dozens of bills.

"That shirt freaks people out because I'm walking around outside in it," Combs says. "It gets the most

amazing reactions from people."

Considering the topic of his one-man show, the emphasis on cash is appropriate. Combs has a story to tell that audiences love. In 1995 he received a phony check in the mail for \$95,093.35 as part of a promotional campaign. You know the kind: quasi-official, sort of flimsy, with "NON NEGOTIABLE" in tiny letters stamped at the top.

So what did Combs do? He deposited the check in his bank account. And it cleared.

The story even made the Wall Street Journal.

"The beauty is that it's the craziest story most people have ever heard," he says this week from Hawaii, where he's performing for a few days before heading to HBO's Comedy Arts Festival in Aspen. "It's certainly the craziest story I'll ever live."

Then again, the appeal of "Man 1, Bank 0" rests mostly on his telling of the story -- especially when he's describing how the bank officials try to get their money back. (The part where he throws money at the audience helps, too -- especially when people realize it's real, even though you're supposed to give it back.) The show won the Best of San Francisco Fringe Festival award and Combs won for best solo male comedic performance last September.

Though it's his first full-fledged solo show, Combs has a lot of experience in front of a crowd. He appeared on Paramount's "Real TV" and "Hard Copy." And he's toured the country for years as a comedian. In 1996 he worked with award-winning monologist Spalding Gray. And he's studied with Mark Travis, a solo-show coach who helped actor-writer Chazz Palminteri develop "A Bronx Tale."

Which makes him a little more national in scope than most of the entries at this year's nonjuried Rogue Festival. If there's such a thing as a headliner, he's it. The first weekend of this year's festival is dominated by local talent -- from names that are familiar to Good Company Players subscribers to mystery players eager for a first-time stage experience.

But Combs says that more than big names, the important thing about a fringe festival is the atmosphere of creativity and optimism.

"I felt all the artists at the San Francisco Fringe Festival were taking risks with their shows," he says. "And they were people with exceptionally good moods. If the performers are really enjoying themselves, the audiences have much more fun."

A good strategy for an audience member, he says, is to see at least a few shows -- and to purposefully pick performers or genres with which you're not necessarily familiar. Fresno's Rogue Festival includes 40 performing groups along with an independent film festival and a slate of art gallery shows.

"There's really a pleasant surprise of having something sneak up on you that's great," he says. "And even if it isn't, just go in with an open mind and appreciate all the small great moments that are in every performance."

Especially if the performer throws a \$5 bill at you.

The reporter can be reached at dmunro@fresnobee.com or 441-6373.

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ORLANDO INTERNATIONAL FRINGE FESTIVAL EXPERIENCE

Fringe Festival 2004: Sifting through crap to find gold

By James Buell Orlando CityBeat Writer

Posted May 24, 2004

Gold Medal:

Man 1, Bank 0 (running time, 75 minutes):

Written and performed by Patrick Combs, Man 1, Bank 0 is the true story of Combs' adventures depositing a junk mail check for \$95,093.35. What ensued after his initial deposit is both hilarious and amazing.

On its own, the story is marvelous. It's the type of tale that inspires the phrase, "Only in America." But no story can be properly be told without a gifted storyteller. Combs fits the bill.

Displaying an almost Crispin Glover-like cadence, Combs controls the room with a genuine approach to storytelling that invokes the type of comfort normally reserved for friends and old acquaintances. He captivates the audience with a story so staggering, they're forced to immediately invest themselves in the character.

I don't want to ruin the ending. I encourage anyone reading this to see the performance. Combs is destined for big things. Man 1, Bank 0 is only the beginning of what I assume will be an illustrious career.

Final word: This is – by far – the best performance I saw. I can't recommend it enough.

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New Zealand Online:

ENTERTAINMENT STORY

Bank's boob gets a laugh

SUNDAY , 17 APRIL 2005 STUFF ONLINE NEWS, NZ

By TIM HUME

Ten years ago, in a moment of whimsy, American Patrick Combs deposited a \$US95,000 junk-mail fake cheque into his bank account.

For good measure, he drew a smiley face on the cheque before handing it over. He thought the prank might, at best, raise a giggle from a bored teller - "if anything's going to make a banker laugh it's somebody banking a stupid fake cheque" - and was staggered when he found the amount had been credited to his account and he could withdraw the money.

"I didn't know whether I was in trouble or whether it was the luckiest thing that ever happened to me," said Combs, at the time an unemployed graduate with \$45,000 debt. Now Combs has turned the experience of his six-month battle with the major American bank over the transaction into a new career as a "documentary comedian".

His show, Man 1 Bank 0, comes to Auckland next month as part of the Oddfellows International Comedy Festival.

The performance tells the true story of his dispute with the bank, which featured all the cliched twists of a Hollywood potboiler. The bank's initial blunder in clearing the cheque was overshadowed by its stumblefooted reaction to the mistake.

Combs says he was sent veiled threats that he would be dismembered: "My

mother's primary concern at the time was the bank would kill me," he said. America's pre-eminent banking law guru came out of retirement to help him fight the case. Combs even gained a "deep throat", a dissident bank worker who would leak him secret memos, signed "Viva la revolution".

He did not want to give the show's ending away by divulging whether he kept the money, but said he had fun along the way.

"I used to print out receipts with my balance on it and hand them out with my phone number on them to any girl I met," he said. "I never got any game but at least I tried."

The comedy routine has become an unexpected diversion from his other career, as a successful motivational speaker and author. It came about two years ago when, having retold the story at every party he attended, Combs decided to try it out on a fringe festival audience. The show was a hit and he was eventually picked up by American TV network HBO.

New Zealand is the furthest afield the show has travelled, but Combs was confident the humour would translate, as people hated their banks the world over.

He said telling the same joke for 10 years had not yet palled - but he did not know where his comedy career could go, as he could be waiting some time for another corporation to implode in front of him in quite the same fashion.

"Only the truth is this funny," he said.

**MAN 1 BANK 0 is Represented by Alkahest Artists & Attractions, Inc.
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Revolution of One

Check-cashing story has sufficient funs

By Jonathan Sanchez



THEATRE

Piccolo Spoleto

Man 1, Bank 0
 June 3 at 4:30 p.m.
 June 4 at 6:30 p.m.
 June 5 at 3 p.m.
 \$15
 American Theater
 446 King St.
 554-6060

Throughout *Man 1, Bank 0*, Patrick Combs' thoroughly winning, true tale of cashing a \$95,000 junk-mail check, the only question looming nearly as large as "Does he keep the money or not?" is "When is he going to get a lawyer?"

But even after poring through legal tomes, going on *Montel*, having his story all over the national news; being accused of fraud, and even figuring out that the money really is legally his, Combs never retains counsel. The way he tells it, he never even seriously considers it.

And while he never really comes out and says why, the underlying answer seems to be that 95 grand is one thing, but when you bring in the lawyers, sooner or later you're talking real money.

To actually hire representation, Combs, in his twenties when the story took place, would be entering "their" world, taking a step down the slippery slope that leads to the kind of inhuman behavior this show stands against.

Combs is lively and personable and funny, if at times a little over-the-top and occasionally corny. But what makes this more than just "a helluva tale," what makes it actually something worth touring around and building a career out of, is its look at the smothering of humanity by the modern-day bogeyman: "faceless corporate culture."

Combs is continually looking for the face behind the name, whether it's the cute red-headed teller, the barrel-chested bank attorney, or the hippie turcoat bank employee who sneaks him confidential memos about his case. He won't hire a lawyer, but he'll look on the cover of the massive law book he's been researching and track down the retired professor who wrote it.

With well-played villains and heroes, *Man 1* is something of a comic reworking of David versus Goliath, or even, maybe, 1984. And, as he says often, it's all true. These repeated claims of authenticity really help. Everyone loves nonfiction these days, but how do you suspend your disbelief?

He peppers the story with joke after joke, some from the true account — a bum with a sign that says "Please help, my dog needs a sex change" — and some directorial — he creatively shows with a phone cord how addicted he is to hearing his bank balance.

This recently-revamped act is headed for Off-Broadway, and with its snappy, PowerPoint-aided presentation, it's easy to see why. Using cued music standards ("The Hallelujah" chorus, theme from *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*), and well-timed graphics, Combs is actually able to make reading a law book the most dramatic moment of the show.

Which can't help but bring Lenny Bruce to mind. His brilliant comic career derailed by censorship, Bruce bored his last audiences to tears by reading from court transcripts and the Constitution. Maybe if he'd had the right software and projection equipment?

Playing before a rapt, packed house of the empty-nesters who frequent most festival events, *Man 1, Bank 0* is evidence that Piccolo may soon eclipse Spoleto Festival USA in terms of quality theatre offerings. And that's not even taking into account the ticket cost. **C+**



R E V I E W

B+ More than simply a good story, packed with jokes and facts, Patrick Combs' one-man show *Man 1, Bank 0* has something to say about the crazy, idealist notion of being decent and human.



Cash a Novelty Check and You Get In Big Trouble — and Spawn a Solo Show, *Man 1, Bank 0*; NYC Debut Plays to July 30

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A CONTEMPORARY
ARTS CENTER

October 25, 2005

To Whom It May Concern,

ART Station Theatre in Stone Mountain, Georgia recently had the pleasure of presenting Patrick Comb's one-man show "Man 1, Bank O." We knew the show to be a real crowd-pleaser from our own experience seeing him perform in the Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston, SC. earlier this year. Patrick exceeded our expectations by just how well it was received by our suburban, mostly senior audiences. The riotous laughter of recognition was only surpassed by the genuine standing ovations that Patrick received each evening. The audiences even felt comfortable and connected enough to engage Patrick in unsolicited praise and discussion during his post show wrap up. The feedback that ART Station received was all very positive and supportive for bringing this piece to our community.

We found Patrick and his management company, Good Thinking, Inc. to be very professional and yet easy to communicate with regarding securing the contract, execution of the piece and wrap-up. His use of multi-media greatly enhanced the performance and was easily adapted for our particular set-up.

We would highly recommend this piece to any theatre and to patrons of all ages and backgrounds that have ever had dealings with a bank. Even the bankers in our audiences had a great time.

Viva la Revolution!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "DThomas".

David Thomas

Artistic Director