

frontrow ARTS

The conservative media had a field day last month over comments posted on Twitter by two prominent Melbourne personalities – one of them comedian Wil Anderson, whose live-tweeting of the Logies found him again at the receiving end of a loaded barrel of right-wing outrage.

"I'd like to think that I have that much power, but actually, I think what I do is just put my name to the shit that everyone else is thinking and saying," laughs Anderson in response to hysterical tabloid claims that his tweets during the Logies had threatened to end the annual event. "I was pretty aware that if I tweeted at the Logies people were going to write about it, because I did it last year, but I do find the faux outrage really hilarious. People that follow me on Twitter hear that stuff all the time and they tune in for it."

Although Anderson is quite modest about the one-line comedy gold that made that cringefest bearable, rather than simply mud-slinging with 140 characters Anderson picked his targets, and the flavour of criticism, beautifully. This writer's favourite? "In front row for John Mayer. I may not take home Gold Logie but now have herpes." ("I only did that because I couldn't work out how to spell 'gonorrhoea' – it was just too hard to spell when I was drunk so I had to go with herpes.")

Since *Drum's* post-Logies discussion with Anderson – we got him when the Murdoch gutter press couldn't, dear reader – fellow tweeter Catherine Deveny was sacked by *The Age* for her offerings on Logies night. Although Anderson didn't comment on her specifically, his ideas about the form in general certainly ring true.

"I just consider myself a stand-up comedian – that's the truth of it – and so I just try and think of funny things to say. I always think it doesn't matter what the forum is, and when people say, 'Oh, I don't like Twitter', I think that's like saying, 'Oh, I don't like books', or 'I don't like movies'. There are some shit people on Twitter, and there are some shit people writing books and some shit people making movies; it's what you do with the medium that counts, not what the medium is.

"I like that I have a job that I can say what I like when I like, and occasionally people will get offended by what you say. I think and I hope that the people who come to my shows – well, as my mate who's filming the behind-the-scenes for the show said... what people speaking to him said they liked – was that I am honest. You won't get shit from me; I'll try to tell it like it is

TWIT HAPPENS

WIL ANDERSON IS NO STRANGER TO CONTROVERSY; HIS PENCHANT FOR 'TELLING IT LIKE IT IS' OFTEN LANDING HIM IN HOT WATER. NOT THAT HE GIVES A SHIT. LIZ GIUFFRE SPEAKS TO THE COMEDIAN.



and try and do interesting stuff, but at the end of the day you can take it or leave it, it's not for everyone, and I'm sure people will find other things that they like.

"I just hope that I'm loyal to and fulfil expectations; but also go on to challenge the expectations of the audience that I have."

Anderson's new solo show *Wilful Misconduct* is his 15th (or so) and another in an ever-strengthening catalogue. Like all his shows, it's built on a shameless reworking of his name – others in the list have included *BeWildered*, *Wil Of God*, and *Wilosophy* – and the pattern is perhaps an act of blatant narcissism, some cool branding or maybe just a loose gesture towards the show's broad theme. Given the show has already won Anderson praise in several cities as well as a People's Choice Award at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, whatever the formula is, it's working. Having said that, Anderson wanted to make this show about breaking personal boundaries, and as such he's also chronicled its development for audiences with a behind-the-scenes doco series being made and released for free as the shows run.

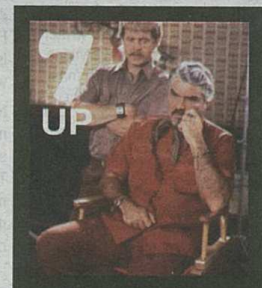
"I've been talking about it for years, having a way of following the behind the scenes of comedy," he explains. "Even though a show normally tours, the people in Perth only see what version of the show makes it to Perth, so this kind of gives a sense of how it all comes together; I really wanted to do it. And we were kind of bumming around and trying to work [out] how to do it – it's quite expensive and we weren't really going to make any money out of it – and then yeah, Cool Ridge came along and said, 'We might pay for it if you like,' and I was like, 'That sounds fucking sweet as!'"

Like Anderson's tweeting, for the Cool Ridge behind-the-scenes series Anderson wanted only to be transparent with his craft.

"I've tried to kind of keep some real honesty in there – like shit where it didn't go right. It's not meant to be a PR piece, but instead it's meant to hopefully give people a sense of the entire journey of what putting together a show from scratch is."

WHAT: *Wilful Misconduct*

WHERE & WHEN: The Comedy Store Thursday 1 July to Sunday 25



ACTORS WHO FAMOUSLY TURNED AGAINST THEIR OWN FILMS

By Cam Grace

1. Sir Alec Guinness - *Return Of The Jedi* (1983)
2. Burt Reynolds - *Boogie Nights* (1997)
3. Douglas Rain (HAL) - *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968)
4. Sean Connery - *The League Of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (2005)
5. Kim Basinger - *Boxing Helena* (1993)
6. Christopher Lee - *Lord Of The Rings: Return Of The King* (2003)
7. John Cusack - *Better Off Dead* (1985)