

# Inside TSA

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## Beating 'em to the Punch... Line TS and Humor

The general public's awareness of Tourette Syndrome has increased dramatically in the last few years. People may not entirely understand TS, but they've heard of it and that represents tremendous progress. The downside of this general, if sometimes superficial, awareness is that TS provides all too many comedians with an easy joke. For many people with TS, jokes about cursing, barking and ticcing simply aren't funny. Other comedic, but more thoughtful, uses of TS may prove to be effective educational vehicles.

Whenever TS is mentioned in a film or on TV, members of the TSA family call, send e-mails and letters. We've contacted a few of the people who've gone out of their way to alert the Association and asked other members to add their two cents, too. From *South Park* and *The Simpsons* to Rosie O'Donnell and Kathy Griffin, TS is in the air and on it.

### Standing Up to Bad Jokes

As humor is notoriously subjective, opinions vary widely. Comedian Richard Lewis, featured in the HBO comedy series *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, leaves no doubt about how he feels.

*Since the dawn of man, making fun of people has been easy laughs from court jesters through present Dayton... I've made a great deal of success on self-deprecating humor and when I felt people on my journey were out of line or even cruel I coined the expression, "blank from hell" and inserted the person or situation. Proudly, this past year 'The Yale Book of Quotations' honored me with that device. That said, I try my best never to be mean-spirited, go for the easy laugh and even if I stand for practically nothing say from the Bush Administration, I will use humor to make a point and get laughs and not ridicule him. I am very sensitive about this and have tried, not perfectly, during my 38 years on stage to respect others. Of course cheap laughs are easy and lazy on the part of the comedian and although they might feel great hearing the laughs they can hardly feel comfortable in their own skin.*

— Richard Lewis

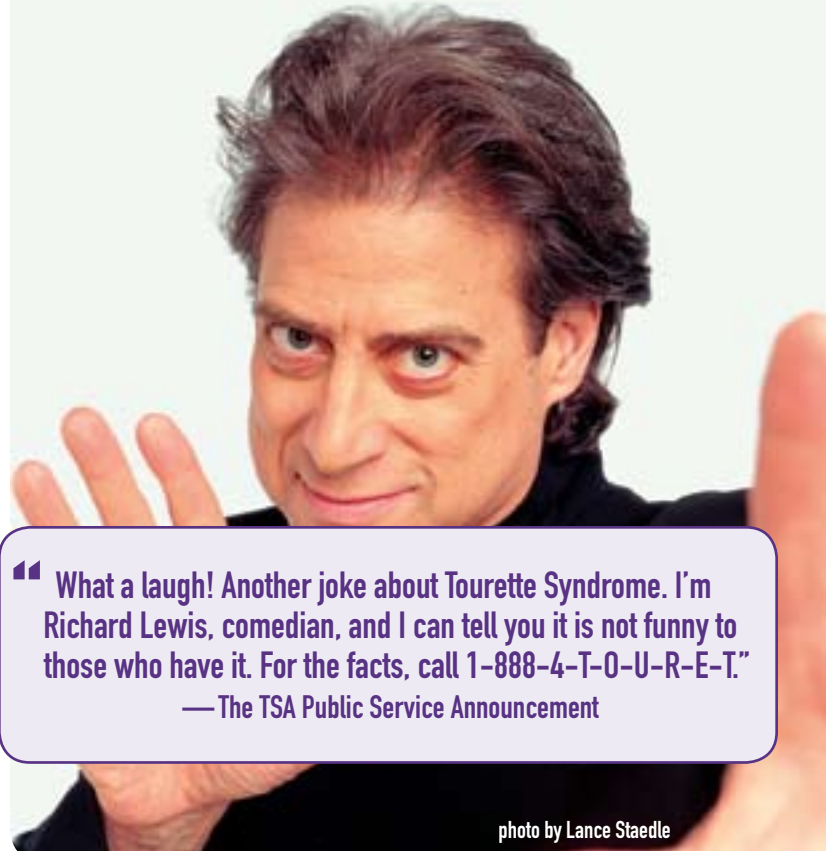


photo by Lance Staedle

**“What a laugh! Another joke about Tourette Syndrome. I'm Richard Lewis, comedian, and I can tell you it is not funny to those who have it. For the facts, call 1-888-4-T-O-U-R-E-T.”**  
— The TSA Public Service Announcement

TS may simply be too great a temptation for “lazy” comedians. Jim Carlisle stumbled on a magazine article on Rosie O'Donnell's new book. She describes her nemesis Donald Trump as a, “... wind-up toy with Tourette's.” Jim didn't think it was any funnier than the quick quip in the TV show *Eureka* that prompted his family to stop watching and contact TSA. As neither the comedian nor her

sparring partner are known for sensitivity, they may be beyond educating, but the damage is done to the readers who may be led to assume the worst of people with TS.

David Stetcher is a fan of the comedian Kathy Griffin's TV shows on Bravo, but he felt compelled to write to her after attending a live performance. She swore and then made an off-hand

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## There's Still Time to Register for the 2008 TSA National Conference

Visit the TSA website [www.tsa-usa.org](http://www.tsa-usa.org) for last minute registration, instructions and information about the conference programs. The 2008 National Conference will feature leading healthcare providers and allied professionals, networking opportunities, special programs for kids and teens, and the opportunity to meet members of the TSA family from across the country and around the world. The conference takes place April 4–6 in Alexandria, Virginia. Registration is open until April 4, the start date of the conference. So check out our website or call (718) 224-2999, ext. 251 to register today!