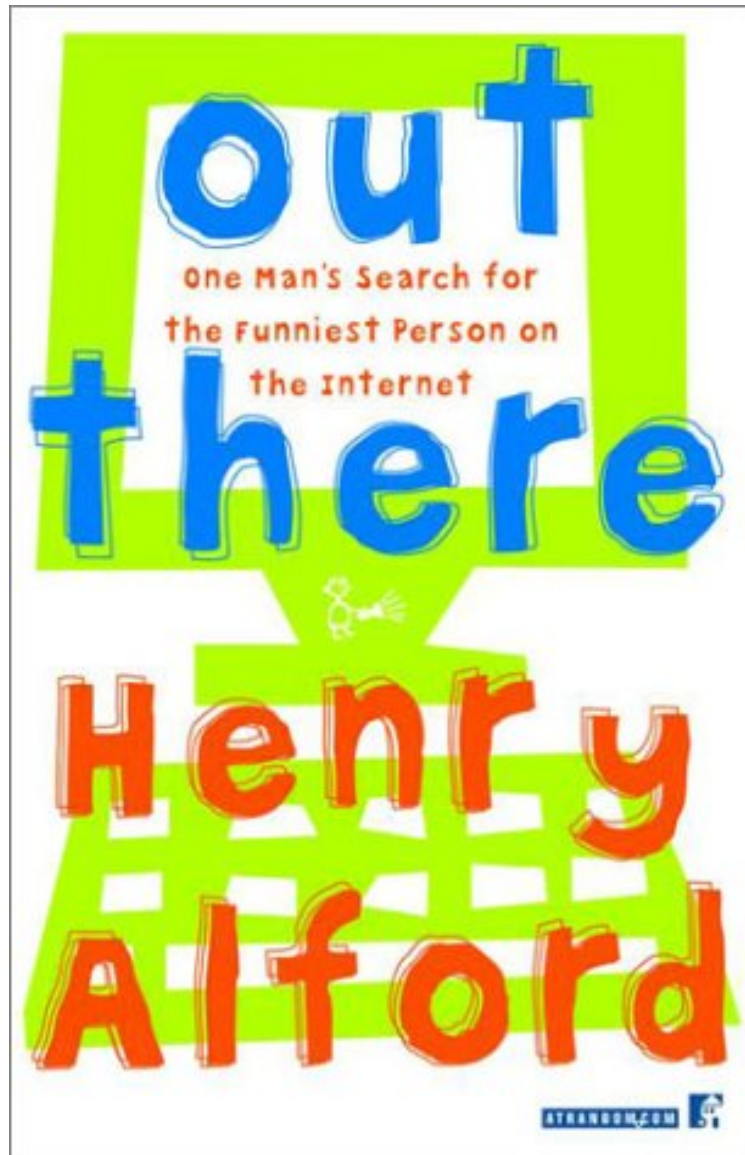


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Out There: One Man's Search for the Funniest Person on the Internet

Henry Alford

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Henry Alford : Out There: One Man's Search for the Funniest Person on the Internet before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Out There: One Man's Search for the Funniest Person on the Internet:

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is your friend for information about the internet. You could find all of this information yourself.³ of 3 people found the following review helpful. Smart FunBy A CustomerThis brief volume brought me a lot of joy; specifically, I had tears of laughter during the dialogues with the artificial intelligence called AOLiza. Reading Out There is not unlike reading the front section of Harper's Magazine, where you find a lot of fascinating raw data; it also reminded me of that TV show in England that's an anthology of outtakes from that week's most bizarre (and hilarious) cable TV shows. Alfred's book takes a highbrow approach to a lowbrow topic, which makes for some fascinating cross-pollination.¹ of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very funny a must buyBy Edward B. BrickleyFirst, let me say that I am biased. My web site is mentioned at the beginning of Chapter 2. When Henry first contacted me my first thought was "Uh oh, this looks like a process server trying to locate me." Imagine my surprise when he told me he had written a book and I was in it. When he sent me a complimentary copy I read it and found my self chuckling in agreement, especially in his opinion of people posting to my web site. So I consider this a must buy if you are looking for interesting sites on the web.

Join investigative humorist Henry Alford as he navigates the wild world of internet personalities celebrating individuals ranging from the movie reviewer Filthy Critic to the cartoonist Angry Little Asian Girl; from online stock trader Tokyo Joe, who conducts much of his business in the nude, to a lovable Kansas contractor who critiques hardware and power tools and answers to the name Too Pig in search of the one who warrants the distinction funniest.

From the Inside FlapJoin investigative humorist Henry Alford as he navigates the wild world of internet personalities celebrating individuals ranging from the movie reviewer Filthy Critic to the cartoonist Angry Little Asian Girl; from online stock trader Tokyo Joe, who conducts much of his business in the nude, to a lovable Kansas contractor who critiques hardware and power tools and answers to the name Too Pig in search of the one who warrants the distinction "funniest".About the AuthorHenry Alford is the author of two acclaimed works of investigative humor Big Kiss: One Actors Desperate Attempt to Claw His Way to the Top and Municipal Bondage: One Mans Anxiety-Producing Adventures on the Big City. He has been a regular contributor to The New York Times and Vanity Fair, and a staff writer at Spy. He has also written for The New Yorker, GQ, New York, Details, Harpers Bazaar, Travel Leisure, The Village Voice and Paris .Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.Chapter 1It is commonly saidbut I believe it anywaythat the Internet is glutted with individuals who produce an unceasing and meaningless din: crackpots who are madly typ-typ-typing into the night, keyboard commanders run amok.This is true. The Internet is thick with people who regularly blur the line between writing and spamming.But buried diamondlike within this whorl of wire are the rare exceptions: a handful of people who distinguish themselves by the originality of their vision and by the zeal with which they hurl it into cyberspace.I'm talking about people like the Frenchman, now living in southern California, who captions the erotic photoplays on his website in a misspelled and mangled English, producing gems of dialogue such asA little enthousiasm could do marvel around here!I'm talking about people like the Michigan bed-and-breakfast owner whose ad assures us,Everything is garnished.I'm talking about people like the movie reviewer on a Christian site whose review of the South Park movie catalogues various "examples of ignominy in this celluloid developed in the fiery pits of hell," including the scene in which "an all-male chorus line wore pink bikini briefs," and the fact that the Lord's name was taken in vain seventeen times, and, perhaps most upsetting, thatAngels were portrayed as nude-very nude-females.Chapter 2If you want to avail yourself of a strange vantage point on American culture, you could do worse than to turn to the site Anger Central [www.angry.net]. Anger Central is a collection of shortish screeds and diatribes sent in by random plaintiffs and organized alphabetically by topic.Here is invective, regularly spaced. Here are troubled minds unburdened by tact or grammar (these troubled minds are nude-very nude).Sometimes, when I am having a kind of slow day-one of those days when I find myself devoting a loosely measured amount of time to determining my body weight on Mars (60.3 pounds)-I will scroll through Anger Central and see what people are angry about. I'll while away an hour or so, intrigued by the fact that people get just as worked up over very tiny sources of outrage (e.g., potted meats) as they do over large ones (e.g., the Catholic Church). Under the category "Things," for instance, I'll find rants with titles such asBeing blackBeing laid offCable company, TucsonducksHiroshima bombironyMORALSNuts and RaisinsVomitingYard salesZippersAnd then I'll buzz through some of the listings under the heading "People," intrigued by what I find there:BITCHTwo faced Back Stabbing BitchNon-confrontational bitch on the busBitch sister in lawHappy Bubbly BitchKB the thieving bitchlying sons of bitchesMarla the BITCHParanoid bitchPREDATORY BITCHESsasquatch BitchRehab BitchJeremy BenthamAyn RandIowa SeptupletsYouWhile reading the rants themselves can soon enough go stale-a lot of these people wish they could get on afternoon television-imagining what kind of person wrote each one is reliably involving.Also, I find I have questions. Did the person who wrote the rant entitled "my cousin the navel flaunter" also write "needy masseuse"? And in the self-interested, nonutilitarian stance taken by the person who posted "Jeremy Bentham," do I detect the literary stylings of "Happy Bubbly Bitch" herself?As it turns out, my questions will never be answered: all the posts on Anger Central are unsigned.Indeed, the Internet often poses the question of authorship. Sometimes the item in question is unsigned; other times it has more than one author-such as the unnamed graduate students who write

Plotbyte's dumbed-down answer to Cliffs Notes [www.schoolbytes.com], like this one for *Wuthering Heights*: Nobody knows how Emily Bronte wrote all this because she was really reclusive and never really dated or had any friends. This book is so confusing because everyone is somehow related to everyone else. It is like a backwoods trailer community. You know, where everybody is "cousins." But usually the reason why we don't know the identity of the person we're reading on the Web is, of course, a function of the medium itself: the anonymity of being online precludes our knowing. On the Internet, most of us use a "handle" that is not our own name. Moreover, some people, under the guise of their handle, are pretending to be someone they're not. One of the first lessons we learn when we go online is this: the presence in a chat room of more than one person identifying himself as a "teenage lesbian" is a strong if not certain indication that, in fact, there are no teenage lesbians currently chatting there. But this tradition of dissembling points up an essential aspect of online culture: anyone who has ever worn a Halloween mask or made a prank phone call knows that, with your actual identity masked, you can-and sometimes will-do things that you otherwise might not. You're more daring, more likely to utter "Cowabunga!," more likely to lead a fully-clothed conga line into the swimming pool of the unknown. Granted, people operating under false identities occupy a small portion of Web traffic. But I submit that the oftentimes raw quality of what we encounter online owes something to this lowering of accountability. Left alone in his parents' house while they are away, man cooks up a slightly exaggerated version of himself. The Internet has opened a floodgate. About a year ago I noticed that whenever the people in my life needed to convey a message forged in passion-a rebuke to a slight I had dealt them, the recounting of something that had made them laugh, the unveiling of amorous feelings-they tended to e-mail me rather than write a letter or call me or tell me in person. Increasingly, I pursue this line of action, too. If I had to, say, chastise you-and let me simply state right here, Reader, that as of page 8, I am already feeling a lot of hostility toward you-I would be tempted to convey this criticism electronically. Why? For several reasons. First, of course, I hate it when you yell in my ear. Second, when I communicate with you electronically, I am not Henry Alford, an actual breathing freelance writer who lives in New York City, where he tries to reconcile the gap between precipitously steep mortgage payments and the writing of "humorous" volumes yielding less-than-Grisham sales. No, I am Hankalf, an abstraction. No, I am Hankalf-carefree, frisky, unmortgaged: a scamp! Third, the medium itself is the ultimate in McLuhanesque cool; if face-to-face communications are the most direct route at my disposal, then screen-to-screen ones are the most remote. From the stronghold of this remoteness, I will rocket at you my poisoned arrow. If a lowering of accountability removes the filters from our e-mails by allowing us to present ourselves to the world with fewer restrictions, then the concept that media critics call "disintermediation" opens the valve of websites and Web commerce. Disintermediation is the removal of middle management-editors, publishers, agents, brokers, copy editors-who have historically acted as intermediaries between writers/producers and their readers/consumers. (The economic ramifications of this movement, of course, are huge. I pity the travel agents and small-bookstore owners and merchants who grow less relevant in the face of the techno-behemoth; in the future, only the very, very rich or the very, very poor will ever lay eyes on a human member of the service industry.) Disintermediation is both a blessing and a curse. A blessing because more people are given an opportunity to showcase their goods in the marketplace; a curse because many of these goods are starting to attract fruit flies.