



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 13, 2016

## Comedy Theaters Made Into Safe Spaces With New Rules

The new age of extreme political correctness has proven to be destructive and pervasive and is churning out a generation of millennials ill-equipped for the harsh realities of the world. In this era of PC on steroids, college [campuses](#) no longer permit free speech, athletes take issue with innocuous words such as "[posse](#)," and musicians are [recreating](#) Christmas classics with a PC-tilt. Sadly, the PC movement rages on, and the latest industry to be affected by this hyper political correctness is comedy.



According to Heat Street, Chicago's Second City comedy theater — responsible for comedic greats such as John Belushi, Steve Carell, and Stephen Colbert — has issued rules for audience participation in its improvisation shows that guarantee a safe space for its more sensitive attendees. Heat Street writes, "Over the weekend, signs went up on Second City's doors warning that the company 'has a zero-tolerance policy and does not allow hate speech of any kind whether its directed towards our artists, employees or patrons' and that anyone 'verbalizing any homophobic, misogynistic, xenophobic, racist or prejudiced comments will be asked to leave.'"

The theater claims that its new rules are in response to increasingly bad behavior by its audiences, and has blamed President-elect Donald Trump's influence for the change in audience behavior in recent months. The club's owner, Andrew Alexander, has said that he believes that the audiences have become increasingly obnoxious and blames the change on "certain demographics on the Trump side," Heat Street reports.

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"I think," Alexander told the *Chicago Tribune*, "that this moment of Donald Trump has resulted in a few people feeling more license to shout out crude remarks and behave crudely. As a result, we have made a renewed commitment to making sure that all of our actors feel safe."

Alexander claims that attendees at the theater — which is located in a predominately white, upper-class and liberal neighborhood — have become increasingly racist and that the audience's obnoxious behaviors have compelled the departure of several cast members, such as Peter Kim, who told WBBM that Trump "gave people carte blanche to act and behave hateful."

A number of Twitter users criticized Kim for his departure, asserting he was too thin-skinned to survive in comedy.

One user wrote, "Second City cast member @peterkz quits after offensive audiences & blames trump. Another triggered emasculated male."

Despite placing significant blame on allegedly racist theater audiences, Alexander admits that several actors left as a result of disagreements backstage. Still, Alexander states that he will be more involved in the company's daily operations and will ensure that the new rules will make the actors feel safe.

But critics contend that Second City's actions are antithetical to what one expects from such a comedic



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giant.

Heat Street opines, “The new system might protect modern students of comedy — most of whom mix liberal ideology with their set lists — but it flies in the face of Second City’s proud tradition of taking on and skewering cultural trends, sacred cows and even loudmouths emboldened by a two-drink minimum.”

Second City is not the only comedy theater to adopt safe space rules. In Seattle, a comedy club called Comedy Nest has also issued a set of strict rules banning any language deemed misogynistic, racist, homophobic, or transphobic. The Comedy Nest has also imposed a quota in which at least half of the comics at the weekly event must be female-identifying.

“In general, the rules make the comedy better,” says Natalie Holt, a co-owner of the safe space. “They make it so people are in a more comfortable place to laugh because they know they’re not going to be the subject of a joke.”

For many, it is difficult to reconcile humor and political correctness. Comedic actor Danny Devito said it best in a recent interview about his latest role in *The Comedian*. “If you’re sensitive, you’re sensitive. It’s a personal thing but comedy has always been irreverent and edgy and about taking the inside curve,” he remarked. “It’s about trying something new because the whole idea of it is the surprise of it and maybe that one motion that’s inside you that takes you aback a little bit that makes funny.”

Unfortunately, it seems the only edgy comedy [approved](#) by the PC police is that which targets white males, conservatism, and Christianity.



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