

# PAPER DAILY

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## STAGE: DIAL STAR 69 FOR LINDA HILL

Linda Hill, one of downtown's most talented comic actors, debuts her new solo show, *Star 69*, at the Kitchen this Wednesday. Wearing a bulky seaweed green sweater with matching tights, the blue-eyed red-head bombshell is all toothy grins, raucous laughter and gangbuster personality when she enters the Kitchen's West side performance space. Hill is rehearsing her multimedia "dark comedy." Substantiating the claim, Hill adds, "We just shot the video where the cops come to question me about the stalker."

Unlike her brilliant 1996 Kitchen hit *Too Many Clothes*, *Star 69* is not a collection of zany characters. "This time it's a whole story, all about me," explains Hill. "There's the San Francisco Linda, the In-therapy Linda and Angel Drake." *Star 69* is based on a real-life experience that occurred ten years ago, in Baghdad by the Bay. Hill was doing

stand up at The Holy City Zoo, "just starting to make a little name for myself," when an obsessed fan began stalking her via telephone. The young, inexperienced Linda from Kansas couldn't handle him, so she created a new character to thwart the stalker. Thus, the ballsy blues singer Ms. Angel Drake was born.

Regulars of downtown performance spaces like Surf Reality have already experienced the super sexy, tough talking antics of Ms. Angel Drake; in this show, fans will witness her birth, and watch as she "teaches Linda how to use her femininity as armor, as opposed to letting her femininity victimize her."



Ms. Angel Drake

*Star 69* refers to the telephone redial system, but Hill saucily admits to simply liking the sound of it. What she discovered, over the past ten years of relating her story to people, is that "Everyone, male or female, has had a similar experience. A lot of women quit performing because they get harassed." Hill tells of two stand-ups in San Francisco who quit because of similar experiences, and "a street mime that quit because a guy threw a brick through her window."

Moving to San Francisco was a "real eye-opener" for Hill. Growing up in a poor white Kansas family, a menopause baby with three brothers almost 20 years her seniors, Hill wasn't encouraged to go to college: "They just saw me as another girl who'd grow up to get pregnant and married at seventeen, so why bother?" Relocating to San Francisco, studying improv while working as a secretary in a real estate firm, and later doing emcee gigs and stand-up while developing her one-woman character shows may have been naively ambitious. "I had my blinders on. I soon realized it was harder for women, and that there was a patriarchy." She recalls from that time, "I said to my black friend, Diane, 'We live in a white male world,' and she said 'Where you been livin', honey?'"

Recently Hill read an article about early feminist novels, specifically, *Fear of Flying* and *The Women's Room*. She remarked, "They're still selling because they boiled down those early feminist issues into simple language. Gloria Steinem said, 'We were all so angry. We were told by our moms and our schools we could do anything.' I was happy to do anything besides fetch water out of the well."

*Star 69* is Hill's personal crossing over, from unaware to angry, from harassment victim to empowerment. "I feel like Nabokov when they asked him about *Lolita*," she muses. "'How did you write this terrible story?', they said. And he answered, 'I had to get it out of me.'"

*Star 69* at The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St., 255-5793. Feb. 19- Mar. 2, Weds.-Sun., 8 p.m. \$12.

TOM MURRIN