

# WHERE THE %@#& IS MATT LAUER?

BY BARRY DOUGHERTY

Milton Berle, Johnny Carson, Bruce Willis, Whoopi Goldberg, and Jerry Lewis move over, there's about to be a new Roastee in town. On October 24th *Today* show co-anchor Matt Lauer joins the illustrious roster of star power to have been Roasted "with love" by the Friars.



Matt Lauer interviews Prince Harry and Prince William

If you're wondering if he's ready for this, fear not, according to Lauer, "From what I understand, you basically go in, you pad yourself, you take medication and you sit there and you just kind of brace for the worst." Clearly, he's ready.

Friar Al Roker is braving Matt's wrath by accepting to be Roastmaster for his *Today* compadre. A surefire hit for any Roast is when the Roastmaster knows the guest of honor intimately and is plucky enough to share a few juicy tidbits—all in the name of laughter, of course.



Matt Lauer and Tom Cruise during their, um, discussion

Let us not forget Friar Rob Reiner's roastmastery at his good buddy Friar Billy Crystal's Roast, "What can I say about Billy? He's my best friend. I think sick, twisted Jew just about sums it up." Al may want to call Rob for a few tips for roasting pals.

The Friars don't want to witness someone they admire crumble so they take great pains to find honorees with a sense of humor AND a tough hide. How they deal with the onslaught of jokes is a personal thing, take Lauer's defense



President George W. Bush has a sitdown with Matt

tactic, for instance, "I fully plan to bring an iPod in my sport jacket and run the headsets up to where they can't see it into my ears so I won't even hear half of it."

What makes the Roasts so thrilling each year is the bottomless well of great guests of honor. Be it comedians like Billy Crystal and Drew Carey or actors like Steven Seagal and Danny Aiello or larger than life personalities like Donald Trump and Don King, the Friars have tapped into a fascinating group of prominent individuals. Matt Lauer is the perfect candidate to join those who have gone before him. He may



Friar Al Roker, former *Today* co-anchor Katie Couric, and Matt Lauer host NBC's Thanksgiving Day Parade

be part of the NBC News Team in his *Today* anchoring role but he brings humor and candor to the show as befits not just a Friar but a Roast guest of honor.

Lauer has conducted a number of newsworthy interviews including Prince William and Prince Harry of Wales to commemorate the tenth anniversary of their mother's tragic death. He traveled to Cuba for a rare opportunity to broadcast live from the country. And let us not forget his sitdown with Tom Cruise that garnered a tremendous amount of attention for Cruise's response to Lauer's questions about Scientology and psychiatry. Tom, are you listening? The Friars are "Roasting" Matt!! Feel free to jump up and down on the dais and give him your all.



Matt's *Today* gals Ann Curry and Friar Meredith Vieira

According to Roker, "This should be pretty easy for Matt because we pretty much roast each other every day but, of course, we will turn up the heat on him." Take that as a sure thing from the most popular weatherman in town. If he can't deliver the heat who can?

Producer Friar Mark Krantz is pulling out the stops to make sure that Matt's Hollywood buddies are on hand to enjoy the roasting. And let's hope his *Today* buddies are sharpening their wits for the unprecedented event. Everyone will be watching the morning show very closely after the Roast to see if the heat has subsided to mildly frigid among the co-hosts—not for hard feelings, of course, just a cooling down from all the fun.

Dean Freddie Roman is especially looking forward to Matt's Friarly skewing, "It is always such a pleasure to take a class act like Matt and



Who says news shows can't be wacky—Matt Lauer with Friar Al Roker on Halloween (well, we *think* it's Halloween)

put him center stage at a Friars Club Roast. He's well versed in live television so he's prepared for that anything goes approach to life which is key to enjoying one's Roast."

Matt will have all his friends and family around to ease things—well, except for one member of his family, "I will tell you right now: I'm

*"You take medication and you sit there and you just kind of brace for the worst."*

not going to invite my mom or anything like that. I have a feeling it's gonna be way over the edge for someone like that to be there." Nonsense, Matt, would the Friars do that?

At least Roker is ready, or he will be, by October 24th, "I've never been a Roastmaster. I've been to a couple of these but I am a little nervous I admit, because while I am black I've never worked blue." We have total faith in the man for all seasons. Having been honored at the Friars himself, with an in-house tribute in 2000 and a Celebrity Lunch in 2006, he's well-schooled in the ways of the Friars.

Lauer has the utmost respect for the Friars Club which should help him get through the day. "I figured, what the heck? Everybody in their career, at least on one occasion, has got to go out there and just kinda lay themselves bare. It's for a great cause. The Friars are a



Lauer chats with Sexiest Man Alive George Clooney

wonderful organization, they've done great work over the years. If you can't poke a little fun at yourself or have others do it at your expense, then you should be in a different business." That's the spirit!

Besides, Matt knows full well that he gets the last laugh after all the comics have sparred with his ego, "I plan to give as good as I get!" he admits.