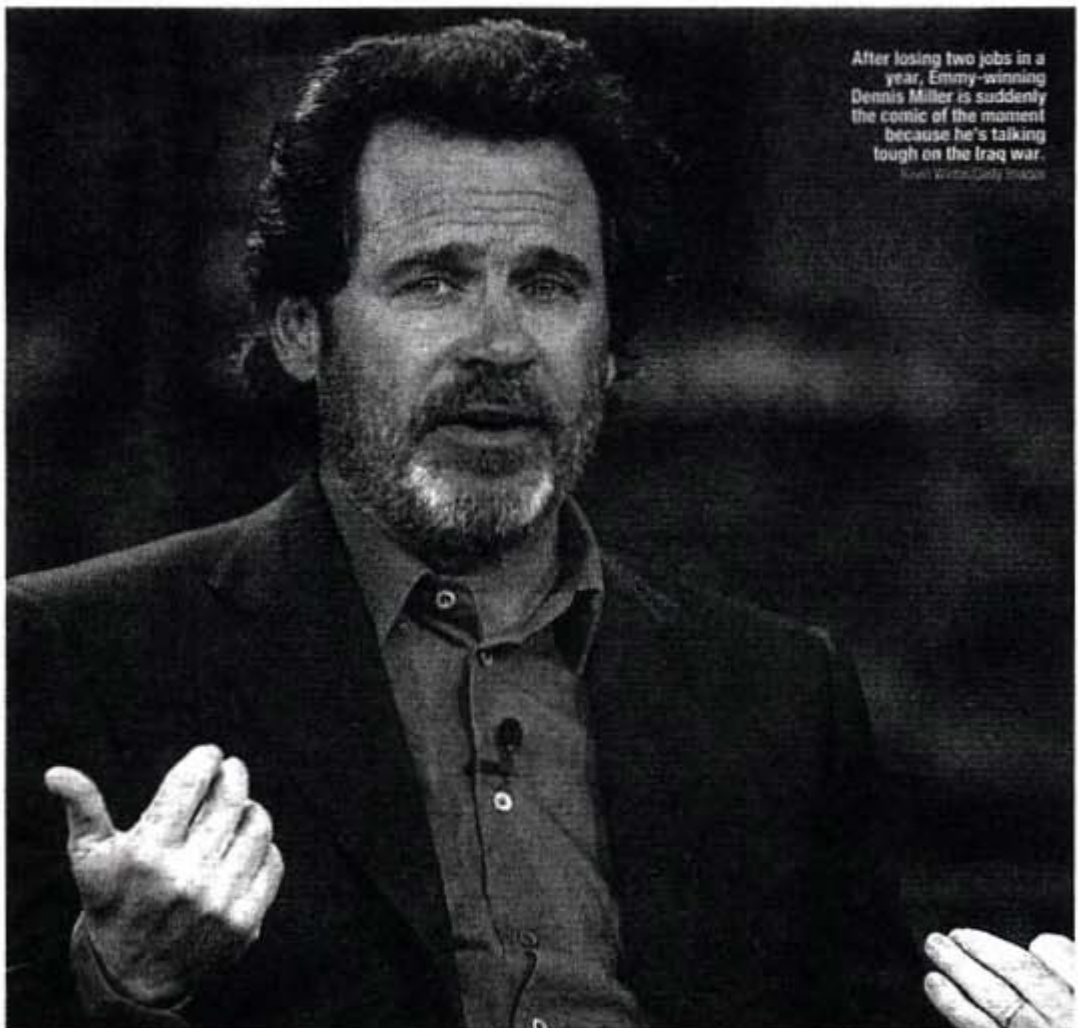


● REALLY BIG SHOW

It's Miller's time

Comedy enters red zone



After losing two jobs in a year, Emmy-winning Dennis Miller is suddenly the comic of the moment because he's talking tough on the Iraq war.

—Kevin Winter/Getty Images

By MICHAEL GILTZ

SO that football gig didn't quite work out for Dennis Miller. (What do you mean those beer-goobers at home didn't get his reference to Derrida?)

But as the Emmy-winning talk-show host airs his latest HBO special, it's clear Miller is in the zone — if not the end zone.

As one of the few Hollywood celebrities to speak strongly in favor of the war in Iraq, Miller is a contrarian. And he's ferociously funny about it.

A recent spot on Bill Maher's show had Miller looking like Grizzly Adams (thanks to a shaggy beard) and letting loose with friendly fire about why invading Iraq sets us up perfectly for dealing with North Korea.

Basically, Miller thinks once we mop up Hussein, the U.S. can turn to North Korea and say, "You wanna piece of this?" —

and they'll understand how serious we are.

He remains the best reason to tune in to "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," where Miller has become something of a regular. His cranky rants add unexpected spice to the increasingly homogenized Leno mix.

And Miller is so comfortable that he makes you want to see him in Leno's seat.

He makes fun of the French and the Germans for waffling on the war, saying on Leno recently, "With the Germans you can never tell if they're not signing on because they don't believe in [the war] — or it's just not on a grand enough scale."

And as for the peace mongers, Miller lets loose the dogs of war on their facile sense of injustice and lack of historical perspective. Then he just lets loose with something enjoyable silly, such as when he said, "If you're in a peace march and the guy next you has a sign that says Bush is Hitler, forget the peace thing for a sec-

ond and beat his ass. This Hitler stuff has got to stop. Somebody in this community [meaning Hollywood, presumably] has to say something good about this man."

Yeah, Miller may well be offensive during his new special. Look for more rants on North Korea, the Middle East, the Catholic Church, the environment and anything else of recent controversy.

No matter what, he always seems to offer the raw and the well-done no matter when or where he is on — in prime time, late night, cable or network, comedy or sports.

He doesn't have an edit function on his brain, except for a few curse words. And expect to hear what you always hear from Dennis Miller: smart, sharp-edged commentary that — God help you — makes you think.

DENNIS MILLER:
THE RAW FEED
Saturday, 10 p.m., HBO