

Tina Fey Acceptance  
Mark Twain Prize 2010

**TINA FEY:** Thank you. Wow. Thank you very much. Thank you so much. Thank you all for dressing up.

God. Listening to all of these speeches and performances for the last two hours, I cannot help but feel grateful that I put a bag of pretzels in my purse.

I want to thank everyone involved with the Kennedy Center, or, as it will soon be known, the Tea Party Bowling Alley and Rifle Range - you can get about nine lanes in here.

I want to thank everyone at WETA and PBS not just for televising this event, but for showing "The Benny Hill Show" so much when I was a kid. I don't know how that qualified to be on PBS. We may never know.

I - I promise to put this award in a place of honor, to make sure that my daughter does not pretend it is Barbie's older husband - who lost his body in an accident.

I never dreamed that I would receive the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor. Mostly, because my style is so typically Austrian.

I never thought I would even *qualify* for the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor. I mean, *maybe* the "Nathaniel Hawthorne Prize for Judgmental Nature" or, the "Judy Blume Award for Awkward Puberty," or, the "Harper Lee Prize for Small Bodies of Work." But never this. And, yet, I hope that, like Mark Twain, a hundred years from now, people will see my work and

think, "Wow! That is actually pretty racist."

Apparently, I'm only the third woman ever to receive this award, and I'm so honored to - to - to be numbered with Lilly Tomlin and Whoopi Goldberg, but I do hope that women are achieving at a rate these days that we can stop counting what number they are things. Yes, I was the yeah. Yes, I was the first female head writer at "Saturday Night Live," and, yes, I was only the second woman ever to be pregnant while on the show. And now tonight, I am the third female recipient of this prize. I would love to be the fourth woman to do something, but I just don't see myself married to Lorne.

I'm so grateful to my friends who came here tonight to perform. Some people came all the way from Los Angeles. And I know you are all busy people with families, and it really - it means so much to me to know that you care more about show business than you do about them.

I want to thank Alec Baldwin for *not* coming tonight. I already have a reputation as a "liberal elite lunatic." I don't need that guy following me around - Johnny Huffington Post. Actually I *do* want to thank Alec genuinely for staying in New York tonight to continue to shoot at "30 Rock" so that I could be here.

So, thank you, Alec. I love you.

Thank you, Betty White, for being here. Oh, my God. I love you *so much* - and you mean so much to me. If I could have half

of the success and longevity that Betty has had, I will be *furious* because I want to *retire* soon, Betty, and you're making us all look *terrible*! You're working to your 90s. *Stop* it!

Steve Martin, I've admired you for so long. And not to make you feel old, but I remember when I first heard your album "Let's Get Small." My mom says I really kicked a lot.

Funny story. Steve's wife Anne and I look a lot alike. Like, a *lot*. And I don't have a joke about that. I just wanted to get that out there. In case you see us kissing later, it's probably Anne and not me.

Jennifer Hudson, thank you for singing so amazingly and beautifully. I apologize in advance for whatever Tracy Morgan tries to do to you tonight and Seth Myers, for that matter. I apologize for that, too.

Jimmy Fallon, I love you. To quote you, "You're awesome!" "You're the best!" "You're my favorite!" "I love you!" "I love you!" "I love you!"

My sweet friend Amy Poehler and I have - as she said, have known each other since we were 21 years old. And most people don't know, but back in Chicago, Amy and I did make our first movie together back there. And if we lose that lawsuit with Joe Francis, it's gonna come out real soon.

Tracy Morgan, you have something that money can't buy an illegal box jellyfish in your aquarium. But you also have a natural charm and charisma that politicians like Harry Reid and

John Boehner would kill for in what I think would be a pretty fun body-swapping" movie. So, let's make it.

Steve Carell - when I - okay. Lemme tell you about Steve Carrell. When I was a student at the "Second City," there was a bench in the theater that you could go and sit on and watch the show for free, and Steve was the star of the Main Stage Company at that time - despite what Stephen Colbert will tell you after a couple of drinks. And we would go, and we would sit on that bench and watch Steve Carrell like he was a rock star. And to think that fifteen years later, I would get to make a movie - costar in a movie with Steve and stand beside him and be paid almost 40 percent of what he was making dreams really do come true.

I want to thank the great Robert Carlock, my friend and partner at "30 Rock." You work tirelessly, and you are never acknowledged, and I hope that you really take my gratitude to heart in this moment, because we are probably gonna cut this part for the broadcast.

I'm not gonna get emotional tonight -- because I'm a stone-cold bitch. But - [chuckles] - but I want to thank my family.

They say that funny people often come from a difficult childhood or a troubled family. So to my family, I say, "They're giving me the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor! What did you animals *do* to me??? God! Now, I - I know my mother and father are so proud of me tonight. So, this is probably a good time to

tell them - I'm putting you both in a home. We'll talk about it later.

My father and my brother taught me to play baseball in Cobb's Creek Park across the street from my house, and my dad used to say to me, "If you throw like a girl again, we're going in." I think this prepared me for working at "Saturday Night Live" - not because of gender roles, but because if I got really mad, I could *whip* things at people across the writers' table.

I met my husband Jeff when we were both in Chicago, and I had short hair with a perm on top, and I would wear oversized denim shorts overalls. And that is how I know our love is real.

As always, thank you for your patience. I love you, and I look forward to still being married to you when you look - [brandishes the statue] - like this.

At some point in the future, our daughter Alice will find a DVD of this broadcast, or - I don't know - download it onto the subdermal iPhone in her eyelids. I don't know how far -- in the future we're talking about. But I hope that it will make her laugh, and I hope it will explain to her why her parents looked so *tired* all the time.

The one person without whom I really would not be here tonight - except, of course, for my mother, who is pretty sure she delivered me, even though she had a lotta "twilight sleep" -- the other "one person" is Lorne Michaels.

In 1997, I flew from Chicago to New York to have a job

interview for a writing position at "Saturday Night Live." And I was hopeful, because I had heard the show was looking to diversify, which by the way, only in comedy is an obedient, white girl from the suburbs a diversity candidate. But I remember - you know, I came for my job interview, and the only decent clothes that I had at the time - Lorne is right - was I had a pair of black pants and a sweater from Contempo Casuals. And I went to the security guard at the elevator at 30 Rockefeller Plaza, and I said, "I'm here to see Lorne Michaels." And I - I couldn't believe the words that were coming out of my mouth: "I'm here to see Lorne Michaels."

And I went up to the 17<sup>th</sup> floor, and I had my meeting with Lorne. And the only thing anyone had told me about meeting with Lorne, having a job interview, they said, "Whatever you do, do not finish his sentences." A girl I knew in Chicago had done that, and she felt like it had cost her the job, and so, "Whatever you do, don't finish his sentences."

And I was there, and I really didn't wanna blow it. And Lorne said, "So, you're from?"

And it just was *hanging* there.

"So, you're from?"

And, finally, I couldn't *take* it anymore, and I said, "Pennsylvania! I'm from Pennsylvania - a suburb of Philadelphia!" just as Lorne finished his thought and said, "Chicago."

And I thought, "That's it! I blew it."

And I don't remember anything else about the meeting, because I just kept staring at him, thinking "This is the guy from the Beatles check! I can't believe that I'm in his office!"

And, you know, I could've never have guessed then that a couple years later, I would be sitting in that office until two, three, four in the morning, thinking "If this meeting doesn't end, I'm gonna kill this Canadian bastard!"

And as intimidated as I was that first day, Lorne, I'm so proud now to call you my friend. Not to you, but to other people. I tell other people we're friends.

The last time that I was in Washington, it was in 2004, to take this "Life" magazine cover photo with John McCain. And Sen. McCain gave my husband and me a - a tour of the Senate, and we all spent a lovely, busy afternoon together. And I have it on good authority that this picture of Sen. McCain and myself has been hanging in his office by his desk since 2004. And he has been looking at it every day since 2004, getting ideas. So, I guess what I'm saying is this whole thing might be my fault.

I would be a liar and an idiot if I didn't thank Sarah Palin for helping get me here tonight. My partial resemblance and her crazy voice are the two luckiest things that have ever happened to me. And, you know, politics aside, the success of Sarah Palin and women like her is good for all women - except, of course -- those who will end up, you know, like, paying for their own rape

kit 'n' stuff.

But for everybody else, it's a win-win. Unless you're a gay woman who wants to marry your partner of 20 years - whatever. But for most women, the success of conservative women is good for all of us. Unless you believe in evolution. You know - actually, I take it back. The whole thing's a disaster.

All kidding aside, I'm so proud to represent American humor. I'm proud to be American. I am proud to make my home in the "not-real America." And I am most proud that, even during trying times, like an orange alert, or a bad economy, or a contentious election, that we as a nation retain our sense of humor.

Anyway, I don't want to go on and on and on, because I know we still have to talk about the other four nominees.

So, thank you, and good night.