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Your News
Sunday, January 18, 2009

Visiting Israeli, Palestinian comedians turn tragedy to humor
1/17/2009 9:07 PM
By: Heidi Zhou

Charley Warady and Ray Hanania like to think of themselves as the Sonny and Cher of the Middle East.



Ray Hanania and Charley Warady.

"We met over the Internet, on a comedian dating service," Warady said.

"I said right away this guy is going to be my fourth wife," Hanania said.

That's sort of how the two formed the star-crossed comedy team.

"He said, you know, 'It's a risk.' And I said, 'Great,'" Warady said.

Both men are Chicago natives, but have strong ties to the Middle East. Hanania's parents are Palestinian immigrants. Warady has lived in Israel for 12 years, and both have felt the pain of war first hand.

"I know a couple of people who were killed in terrorist attacks," Warady said.

Hanania said he still has family in the region.

"All my cousins have bullet wounds from the first and second intifada. They have rubber bullet marks. They've been arrested. They've been jailed." Hanania said.

Instead of getting angry, the two have found a way to subject the conflict to the scrutiny of comedy.

"There is no 'side'. It's all silly. And it's my job as a comedian to point this out to people," Warady said. "We've been in a roomful of Jewish and Israeli, and Palestinians, and Arabs all together in the same room, laughing together."

Hanania said the routine makes people feel good.

"It didn't change their mind about politics, you're still going to believe what you want to believe," Hanania said. "But you still get this feeling that maybe there is a sense of hope when you can sit with somebody who you think is your enemy and then laugh with them."

Warady and Hanania said they are not under any false impressions about the intensity of

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Laugh about it
News 8's Heidi Zhou shows us how they fight a war through comedy.

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Watch the interview with Charley Warady.

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Watch the interview with Ray Hanania.

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A tenuous peace after weeks of war in Gaza between Hamas and Israel.

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SPECIAL COVERAGE

Looking to get involved in celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. Day or Inauguration Day?

- Check out our listing of [local MLK events](#).
- View our listing of [inauguration celebrations](#).

Be sure to tune into News 8 Austin for extensive inauguration coverage Tuesday.

10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Watch as President-elect Barack Obama takes the Oath of Office and addresses the nation in the Inaugural Address. Watch several musical selections from choirs, famous musicians and bands.

9 and 10 p.m.
News 8 will share live coverage of local inauguration parties.

10:15 p.m.
News 8 will re-air President-elect Barack Obama's Inaugural Address.

Following local coverage, turn to **News 8 On Demand** (digital cable channel 1408) to see the complete inauguration ceremony, Inaugural Address and Inaugural Parade.

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- really upset me.
- reflects poorly on the university.
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the war, and how their efforts shy in comparison.

"They aren't listening to us. They really aren't, and they should," Warady said.

Even so, he and Hanania turn to humor as their weapon.

"Its like Ray and I talk about it all the time. If peace breaks out, we're out of a job," Warady said.

"I think they signed a peace accord in Gaza just to screw our show tonight," Hanania said.

The duo will gladly search for new material if that peace continues. Meanwhile, they'll keep cracking jokes until all the people of Israel and Palestine can walk as brothers.

The Israeli/Palestinian Comedy tour has traveled the world for two years. The comedians say they've found welcoming audiences even in Israel and Palestine.

To find out more about the group, visit www.IPComedytour.com.

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- will likely be forgotten in a couple weeks.
- mug shot of Augie is even more startling.

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