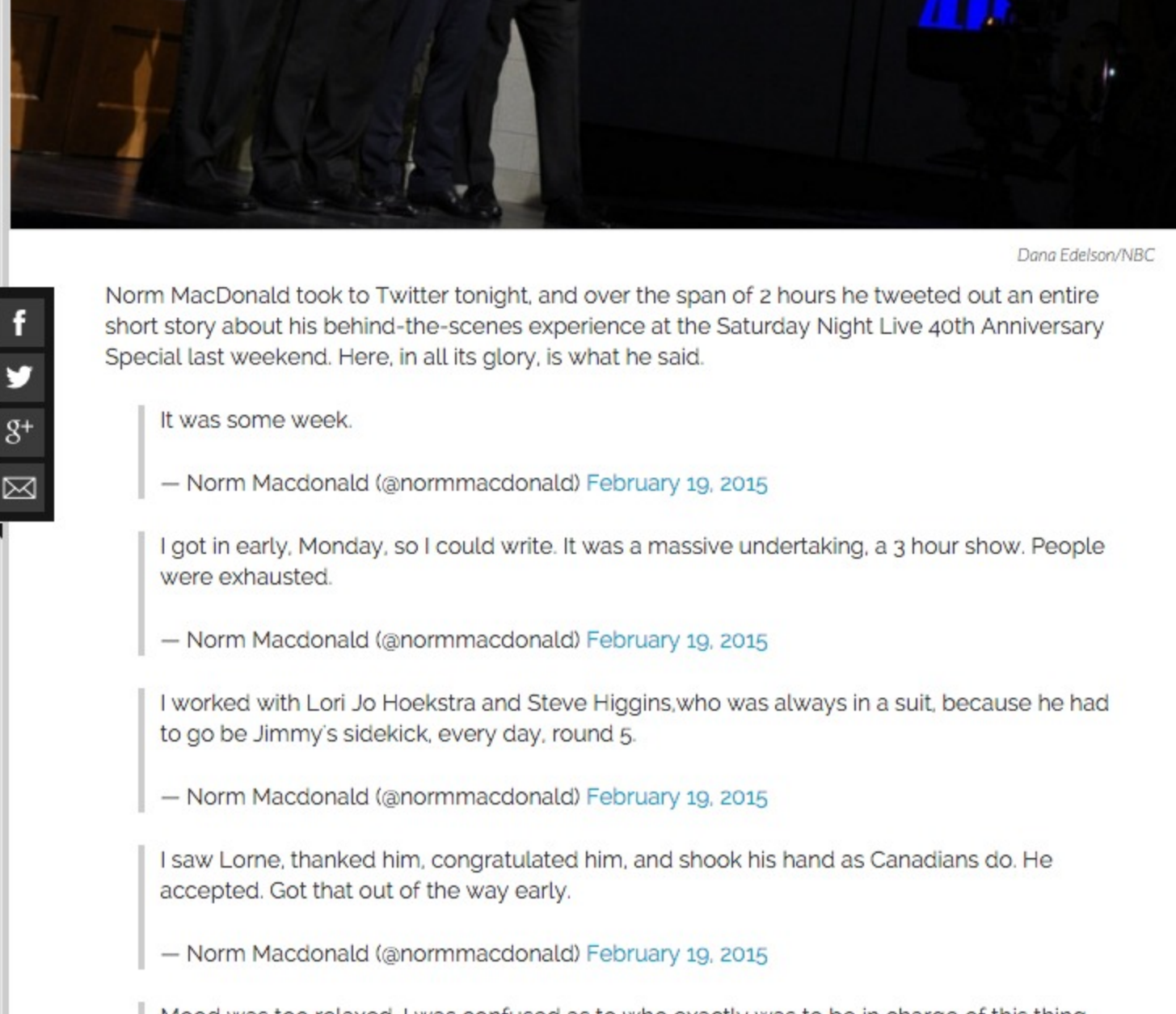


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Norm MacDonald's Epic Twitter Short Story about SNL40, Eddie Murphy, and more

Robin A. Rothman | February 18, 2015 10:40 pm



Chris Eberhart/ABC

Norm Macdonald took to Twitter tonight, and over the span of 2 hours he tweeted out an entire short story about his behind-the-scenes experience at the Saturday Night Live 40th Anniversary Special last weekend. Here, in all its glory, is what he said.

It was some week.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

I got in early Monday, so I could write. It was a massive undertaking, a 3 hour show. People were exhausted.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

I worked with Lori Jo Hoekstra and Steve Higgins, who was always in a suit, because he had to go to Jimmy's sidekick, every day, round 5.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

I saw Lorne, thanked him, congratulated him, and shook his hand as Canadians do. He accepted. Got that out of the way early.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Mood was too relaxed. I was confused as to who exactly was to be in charge of this thing.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

It was to be Lorne Michaels
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Of course. It was to be Lorne.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

They wanted Celebrity Jeopardy.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Higgins had two funny categories already figured.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

I came up with the idea of Celebrity Jeopardy years ago by stealing it, note for note, from an SCTV classic, Half-Wits.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Higgins and I co-wrote the first one years ago and I waited for Martin Short to host so I could ask permission to steal.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

He said that Eugene Levy had written the original. We received permission and beside Darrel and the talented Mr. Short played Jerry Lewis.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

It was always difficult to fit in that final celebrity.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

We never wanted a celebrity to be dumb, although many, even within the show, thought that was the idea.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

The idea was for Connelly to be abusive and Burt to be dismissive.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Sometimes people ask me who the funnier character is, Connelly or Burt.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

The funniest character in Celebrity Jeopardy, by far, is alex Trebek as played by Will.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

The funniest character in Celebrity Jeopardy, by far, is alex Trebek as played by Will.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Without Will's perfect take on Trebek, maddened by the outright hostility of Connelly, the faraway uninterest of Burt, the sketch is nothing.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Nothing but Rich Little nonsense.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

It was always the third podium that was hard to find a man to stand behind.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

It would inevitably only be an impression, nothing but an empty showcase.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

The best to do it was Hanks, playing dumb Hanks. Hanks always got it. And Alec too.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

So we hunkered down to write it, 40th anniversary and all. Had to be the best one. Tough job. Very tough.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Then I was told it was to have a lot of impressions, 10 or 12, so a lot of big stars could be seen impersonating other big stars.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

This was bad news.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Celebrity Jeopardy was never about impressions.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

In real life, Connelly is the opposite of Darryl's take. Connelly was the perfect gentleman, Burt was the funniest guy in the room.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Celebrity Jeopardy was about hope.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

It was about the hope of one man, Alex Trebek, the hope that never died. The audacious hope that never let the facts of the past interfere.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

It was a rhythm piece, as each disaster was signaled by the sound of a buzzer, and each new category signified more, new, hope.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

And the 3rd contestant was the tough one. The third attitude always just out of reach of Higgins and me.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

And now we were being told we would have to do a dozen impressions. The rhythm would be gone.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

It was what it was, though, and what it was to be. How could it be saved from becoming an episode of copycats?
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

And then Higgins had an idea.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

An idea that would blow the show wide open.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Among many other things, this show was to be the return of Eddie Murphy.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Eddie, the man who, in Lorne's absence, kept the show alive. Singlehandedly.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

To every comedian who ever performed on SNL, what Eddie accomplished was unthinkable.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Every Saturday Night at 11:30 Eddie Murphy, a kid, would fill 60 minutes with comedy.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Impossible.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

The last anniversary was the 25th. Eddie did not attend due to a remark by David Spade. David is a very kind man, but his remark was not.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

So Eddie never came back.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Higgins had the idea. A video daily double.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

The category would be potent potables, a common one on Jeopardy, but one we somehow had never done.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

And the idea was that it would be a bar set. And the idea was that Cosby would be mixing a drink in a video that was taped 6 months ago.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

It was perfect. It was all Steve Higgins idea.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

At the end of the sketch, Darrel would choose potent potables. Homebase would be dressed as a bar.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

The iconic doors would open and on to home base would step Eddie Murphy. The audience would know what to do.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Why is Eddie wearing a multi-colored sweater? He steps behind the bar, begins mixing a drink. The audience covers the fact he has not spoken.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

When he speaks, he is Cosby. Eddie Murphy doing a perfect Cosby impression. The audience does not let him finish. The sketch ends.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

The show, for all intents, ends.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

All the impressions are forgiven.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

The first thing to do is cut down the number of contestant/impressions and the second is to contact Eddie and to convince him to do it.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

The middle man to talk to Eddie was @BrettRatner, a cool guy who knows a great deal about comedy. He was with Eddie somewhere.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

So, the talks were underway. 'Brett says Eddie doesn't feel comfortable.' Eddie says 'maybe it's ok since he's doing pre-allegation Cosby'
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

And on and on it went. I had not spoken to Eddie or @BrettRatner. I was dead sure Eddie would do it. Most others were not.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Still, there was so much work to do.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Mike and Dana showed up. They were going to do Wayne's World. I joined the writer's room, which Mike helmet, and tried to help.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Mike Myers has an incredible work ethic and no joke is ever good enough and must be beaten, must be beaten. This is what makes him so good.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

This is why he for an creator, a half-dozen perfect comedies. Work ethic, remarkable taste, and never taking no for an answer. I
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Higgins would stick his head in the room from time to time, tell me another celeb had been cut and make me happy. I kept trying to help Mike.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

I didn't get a single joke into Wayne's World. It was a great sketch, and he did a top ten list, best things that SNL.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

When, on air, he announced, 'number 1, the crew', the studio audience, unprompted gave a standing ovation. I'd never seen this in BH.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Jim Downey, the best writer who ever touched pen to paper, showed up Wednesday, with a copy of Rolling Stone in his fist.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

The magazine had listed all 141 sat members and ranked them, best to worst.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

'Guess where you ranked', he laughed and I knew from the laugh it was low. 'As long as I beat...and I mentioned a girl who lasted 4 episodes'
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

The joke was that I really hoped I would beat a girl who nobody had ever heard of. The bigger joke is that I hadn't.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

My mind searched for an even more obscure cast member.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

I remembered the first year SNL hired an older man because they didn't think all kids could play characters of age.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

I remembered the first year SNL hired an older man because they didn't think all kids could play characters of age.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

'As long as I beat George Coe', I said, making a fine joke. Again the truth was a finer joke. Coe had easily outranked me.' And on it went.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

I should say that it was not the magazine that ranked us, but a single writer. I looked him up and found a book he had written.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

He doesn't deserve to be named and his book was sentimental nonsense meant to look like something Dave Eggers would write.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

But, in all fairness, it was not the magazine who did the ranking. At least I think. Anyway, it made for a very funny running joke.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

The idea of jokes approved by a writer the caliber of Jim Downey being called lame by some sappy 'writer' was a great joke.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Downey was in charge of the political pieces, the best of which he had written, and nobody knew what was going on with Update.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

At least that's what I was told the dozen or so times I was asked.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Who was in charge of Update, I asked and eyes would get shifty. Was it the guy that wrote the Rolling Stone thing?
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Still, had to write Jeopardy. Higgins, Lori Jo, and I would stay late into the night, then go to P.J. Clarks and end the nights at 3.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

It was like the old days.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

The old days.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

We worked straight through, me with my Winnipeg Jets jersey, Lori Jo in a beautiful dress. Higgins in his Tonight Show suit.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Downey had remembered a thing Bill Murray used to do around the office, the theme from Jaws, and thought that would be perfect.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

But there was a problem. Bill Murray was in Carmel for the Pro-Am, which he had won a couple of years back with DA Points.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

With Bill Murray, golf always comes first.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

And so it was Saturday and Bill Murray may not make it and Eddie Murphy may not do Jeopardy and who was in charge of Update?
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

And chaos seemed ready to sink it all. So I went to Lorne.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

And Lorne was in his office which overlooks BH which overlooks 40 years of memories. And he was looking out the window, down on to the floor.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

And I was very nervous and he was perfectly calm. 'Perhaps it would help if you called Eddie', and that was that.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

My son got in on Saturday and wandered as the stars became bigger and bigger around him.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

I'm talking to Lori Jo and Higgins and Fred and my son and suddenly Paul McCartney is there.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

And he is in the circle of us and Lori Jo talks of being a vegan and he says his daughter works for Gucci and is a designer, but no leather.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

My son and I look at each other. Very cool.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

And the 4 of us follow McCartney in to BH and he sits behind the piano and does 6 songs.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

I take a video on my phone of Fred Wolf, striking a Dylan pose, with McCartney in the background at the piano, singing.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

I get all filmmaker and go over Fred's shoulder and get real close to Paul and when he finishes he is looking directly in to my camera.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Then, as he finishes one and goes in to another I feel a hand on my back. The hand of security. Solid hand.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

There is Sarah Palin, gorgeous, and you can understand the charisma. She is irresistible.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Too many superstars to take in all at one time. So happy my son could see them all.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

And then comes Eddie.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

I'm standing with my son, Lori Jo, and Chris Rock. We see Eddie from 100 yards away.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Rock says, 'There he is. Like Ali in Zaire.' Eddie, Bonny.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

It's my job to talk him in to doing Jeopardy.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

We talk in his dressing room a good hour. When it's over, I'm convinced he'll do it.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

He doesn't.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

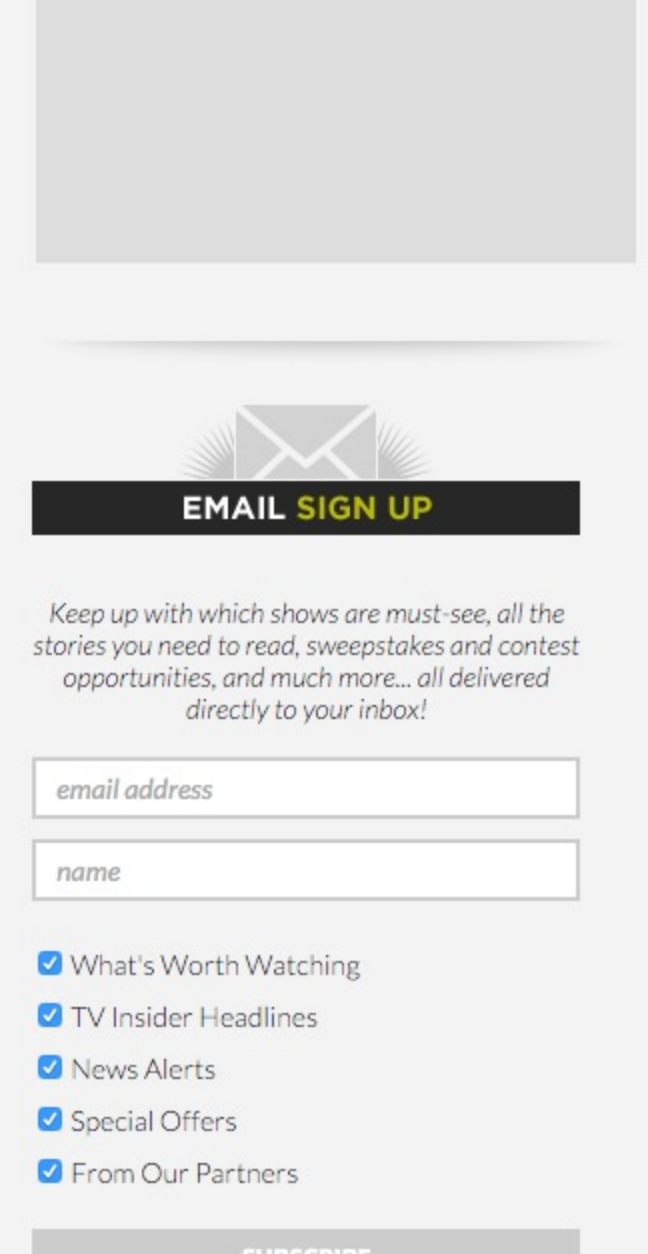
He knew the laughs would bring the house down. Eddie Murphy knows what will work on SNL better than any one.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Eddie decides the laughs are not worth it. He will not kick a man when he is down.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Eddie Murphy, I realize, is not like the rest of us. Eddie does not need the laughs.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Eddie Murphy is the coolest, a rockstar even in a room with actual rockstars.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015

Quite a week.
 — Norm Macdonald (@normmacdonald) February 19, 2015



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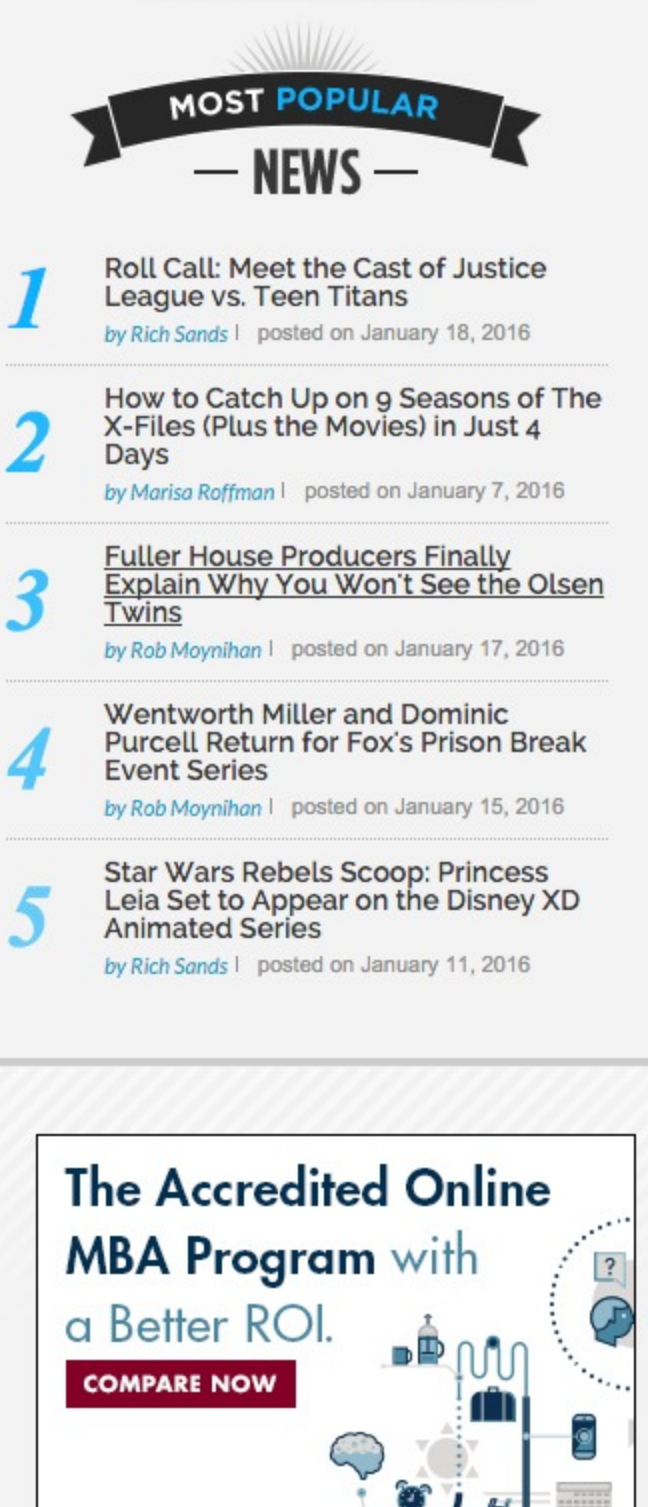
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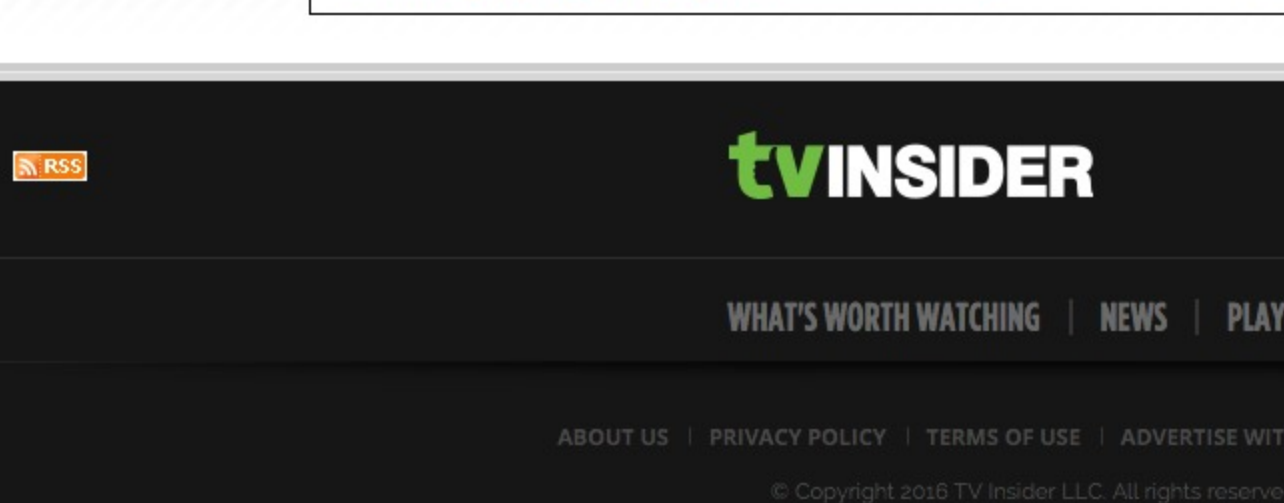
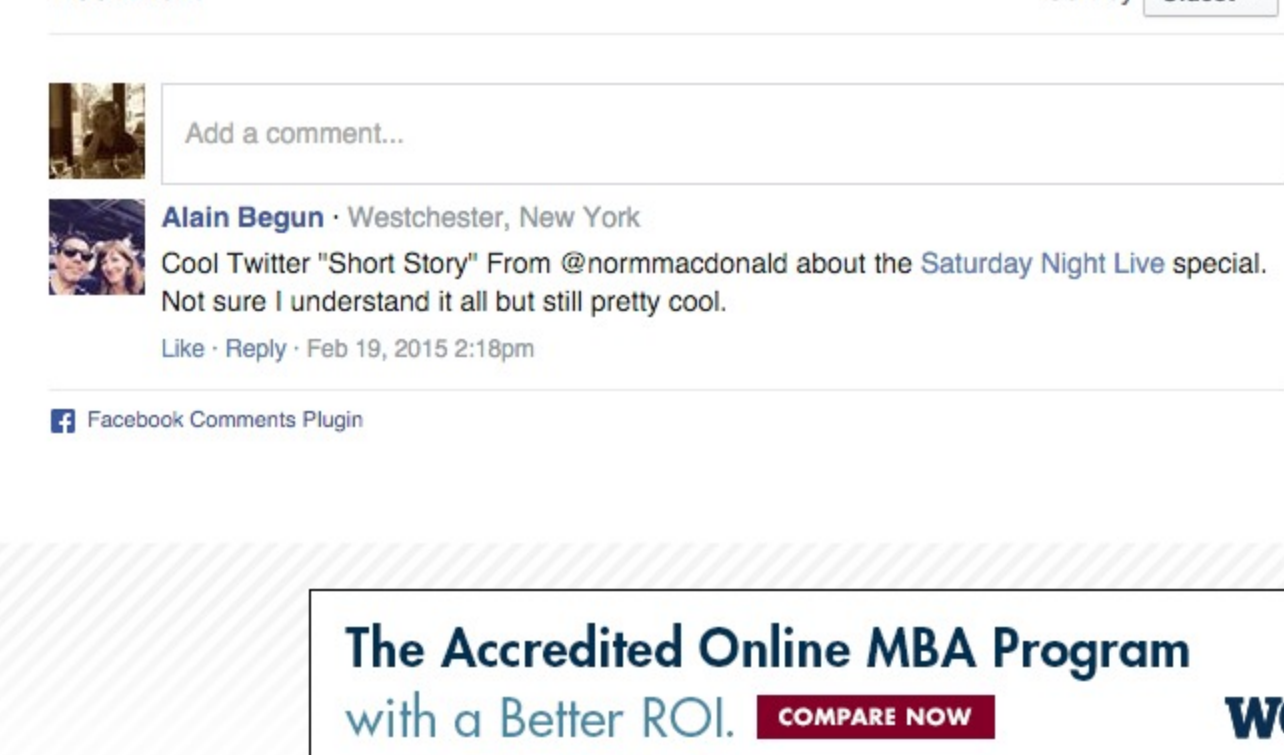


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