Week 2: Lenny Bruce
Lenny Bruce

• Born as **Leonard Alfred Schneider** in Minneola, NY, Oct. 13, 1925
• 1941 Ran away from home at age 16 and joined U.S. Navy in 1942.
  – Served on merchant marine on USS Brooklyn in North Africa and Italy.
  – 1945, after doing comedy routine dressed in drag for shipmates, was given dishonorable discharge.
• 1946 took to stage as Lenny Marsalle, a stand-in MC for one of his mother’s (Sally Marr, b. Sadie Kitchenberg) comedy shows
• 1947 changed his name to Lenny Bruce to do standup in Brooklyn, NY.
• 1948 Appeared on “**Arthur Godfrey’s Talent Scouts**” radio show
Lenny Bruce

• 1949 begins to play in “good” clubs such as The Strand on Broadway and the Tick Tock in Milwaukee.
• 1950 Meets stripper Honey Harlow, his future wife (m. 1951-1957). They move to Florida where he forms the “Brother Mathias” foundation to solicit funds for a leper colony in New Guyana. Quickly busted for it.
• 1954 major car accident in Pittsburgh, PA, that puts Honey in a wheelchair for four months.
• Moves to California to work in burlesque clubs.
• 1955 daughter Kitty is born
• 1957 divorces Honey, moves to San Francisco at Ann’s 440 Club
Lenny Bruce

- 1959 releases LP records from nightclub performances:
  - The Sick Humor of Lenny Bruce
  - I Am Not A Nut, Elect Me!
  - Togetherness
  - Interviews of Our Time
- 1959 appears on Steve Allen Show “Airplane Glue” sketch
- 1961 February 2nd Concert at Carnegie Hall
Lenny Bruce Busts

• 1957 Florida for impersonating a priest
• 1961 September Philadelphia arrested in for narcotics; charges dropped when police realized it was for prescription drugs
• 1961 October: SF Jazz Workshop, for obscenity. “To Come” bit, plus using the word “C******”--acquitted. Law enforcement monitor every performance after this.
• 1962 Dec. 5, Chicago, Gate of Horn, convicted
• 1962 October banned from Australia
• 1963 April banned from United Kingdom as undesirable alien
• 1963 October 12th West Hollywood for saying “shmuck”.
• 1964 April, Café Au Go Go, Greenwich Village, NYC. Convicted for obscenity.
Lenny Bruce—The End

• 1964 May, hospitalized with pleurisy
• 1965 autobiography, “How To Talk Dirty and Influence People”, is serialized in Playboy magazine and published by Playboy Press
• 1965 October Lenny declared legally bankrupt in SF. Since the Gate of Horn, busts of Lenny now include busting the nightclub owners as well, so no one will book him.
• 1966 July 24th and 25th, Fillmore auditorium concert with the Mothers of Invention
• 1966 August 3rd, dies in Los Angeles of morphine overdose