

# The Tom Brady roast was a Super Bowl of cruelty

The funny thing about the Tom Brady roast? There weren't many.



Perspective by [Sally Jenkins](#)  
Columnist

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Tom Brady, left, and Rob Gronkowski during Netflix's Brady roast. (Matt Winkelmeyer/Getty Images/Netflix)

Tom Brady must really need money, or attention, or proof that he's a bro. He needed it bad enough to do that Netflix roast, in which he gallantly sacrificed the mothers of his children to clumsy third-rate comics, whose hammy punchlines fell like refrigerators hitting sidewalks, splatting Brady's reputation for intelligence beneath them. By the time the three-hour vulgarian parade was over, there were two conclusions: Football players can't do funny, only coarse, and Brady wasn't the one who got roasted — he stuck his exes with that tab.

Only sycophants blinded by Brady's seven Super Bowl rings could have found the performance comedic. You want funny? Here you go. "God gives you a penis and a brain, and only enough blood to run one at a time," Robin Williams once said. Now *that's* funny, and it's offered here as a reminder of what real comedy sounds like and also as a suggestion of what could have possessed Brady to serve as executive producer as well as star in this blustery burlesque.

Brady's ex-wife, Gisele Bündchen, who since her divorce has been linked to a jujitsu trainer, became literally the butt of the night. Brady's uncomfortable plastic grin was accompanied by the canned heehaws of fake laughter from a crowd whose jaws were stretched tight from the effort of cackling overbroadly at lines like this from Kevin Hart.

“You f---ed your coach. But let me tell you something ... that’s what you do to maintain your happiness. You understand, sometimes you got to f--- your coach. You know who else f---ed that coach? Gisele. She f---ed that karate man.”

Funny? No, just lamely, meanly tasteless, and not because of the language but because it’s pointless. You want funny? Here:

“If God made the body and the body is dirty, then the fault lies with the manufacturer,” Lenny Bruce said. *That’s* funny — because it’s true and cleverly put, and it makes you laugh at your own fixed beliefs, which is the point of real comedy.

There should have been plenty of ways to properly roast Brady: for his dimpled Shirley Temple act at news conferences yet his helmet-throwing rages on the sideline, for his epic loss in a cryptocurrency failure, for the rumors that he had plastic surgery, for his friendship with Donald Trump. Instead, the audience was offered an endless litany of sex organ jokes.

Here was about the closest anyone came to teasing Brady about the crypto thing. “You’re saying, ‘Guys, why didn’t we go to the Crypto.com Arena downtown?’ ” Hart said. “Well, the reason why we didn’t go there is because we didn’t want to remind Tom’s fans of how much money he owes them. He f---ed those people.”

Funny? Meh.

There were the usual predictable “football funny” snide homosexual and trans cracks. “There’s going to be a lot of jokes about me being gay for Tom,” former wide receiver Julian Edelman said. “Well, let me set the record straight. Those balls weren’t going to deflate themselves.” Yuk yuk yuk, the pained audience murmured.

There was a bad Jewish joke, delivered by Brady at Jeff Ross, using former New England Patriots quarterback Drew Bledsoe as the punchline. “I’m about to replace you as the greatest roaster of all time,” Brady said. “So hit the bench, Jeff. Tonight, you’re Jew Bledsoe.”

But mainly it was all about the women. Nikki Glaser hit the same old jujitsu note but then turned to Bridget Moynahan, mother of Brady’s oldest son, Jack: “I mean, you retired, then you came back and then you retired again. I mean, I

get it. It's hard to walk away from something that's not your pregnant girlfriend. To be fair, he didn't know she was pregnant. He just thought she was getting fat, and Tom hates fat."

But for overt misogyny — and contemptible conduct — there was Brady sitting stock still when Hart said this about Bündchen. "How did you not see this coming? Eight f---ing karate classes a day. ... The only bruises she had were on her a--. Everybody should have known it."

Brady was as unmoved as a manikin. There was just one instance in the three-hour-plus groanfest when Brady took exception to something, heard an insult uttered that he just couldn't accept: when Ross embarrassed New England Patriots owner and billionaire Robert Kraft by referring to his incident at a massage parlor. Suddenly Brady rose. "Don't say that s--- again," he whispered, chivalrously protecting the billionaire, though not his ex-wife.

Funny matters. Ever since the Greeks invented comedy, the genre has contained a world of ethics within it. It's the tool with which we gently shame ourselves and the more powerful among us, and thus hold ourselves accountable. It's why Mark Twain wrote that "humor is the good-natured side of a truth," and that "genuine humor is replete with wisdom." Funny is when Richard Pryor says, "I'm not addicted to cocaine; I just like the way it smells." Funny is Williams asking sweetly befuddled, "If it's the Psychic Network, why do they need a phone number?" Comedy, real wit, is our most relieving, noncombative way of bringing social justice to our social foibles and helping ourselves see uncomfortable truths.

Brady's uncomedic roast did the opposite of all that. The uncomfortable truth is that the only person it shamed was him, and not gently.



By [Sally Jenkins](#)

*Sally Jenkins is a sports columnist and feature writer for The Washington Post. She began her second stint at The Washington Post in 2000 after spending the previous decade working as a book author and as a magazine writer.*

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