

# [***Joe Rogan Says 'SNL' Is 'Handicapping Themselves'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BTF-WVW1-DY68-100N-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** "If you're on network television, you're dealing with so many executives. They're all terrified...and everyone's ideologically captured," Rogan said.

**Body**

Joe Rogan has said that long-running comedy sketch show *Saturday Night Live* is "handcuffing" itself, due to the restrictions placed on network TV.

During a recent episode of *The Joe Rogan Experience*, the powerhouse podcaster and guest Neal Brennan sung the praises of late comic Norm Macdonald, opining that his style of comedy did not fit *SNL* during his time on [*the NBC show*](https://www.newsweek.com/saturday-night-live-has-big-problem-1813787?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) in the 1990s.

Macdonald, who [*died in September 2021*](https://www.newsweek.com/comedian-norm-macdonald-dies-61-after-cancer-battle-1629074?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), was famously [*fired from SNL's Weekend Update segment*](https://www.newsweek.com/norm-macdonald-snl-monolog-after-fired-goes-viral-1629280?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) in 1998, with executives citing a dip in ratings and quality. Macdonald shared his countering belief at the time that he was fired because of his constant jokes about O.J. Simpson during and after his high-profile murder trial.

Simpson, whose [*death was announced last week*](https://www.newsweek.com/oj-simpson-death-covid-vaccine-conspiracy-theories-cancer-social-media-1889664?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), was in 1995 acquitted of murdering his former wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ron Goldman.

Following the trial, often described as the "Trial of the Century," Simpson's life remained tumultuous. He was later found liable in a 1997 civil lawsuit for the wrongful deaths of his former wife and Goldman and ordered to pay damages of $33.5 million. Simpson, however, continued to maintain his innocence.

Discussing how comedians' visions often don't align of those of TV executives, Rogan told comedian, actor, and writer Brennan: "*SNL* seems like they handicap themselves, like they're handcuffing themselves...less back then, but now for sure."

Rogan, who hosted Comedy Central's *The Man Show* back in the early aughts and previously spoke about disagreeing with producers over content, went on to blame the issues on restrictions on what can be said on network TV.

"If you're on network television, you're dealing with so many executives. They're all terrified and everyone's scared and everyone's ideologically captured," he said. "There's certain things you can't joke around about. It's like, God, there's so much ground you can't cover. And it's just, you handicap yourself. You just handcuff yourself."

The former *Fear Factor* host, who has made a fortune as host of the world's most listened-to podcast, added that the format of TV also poses issues for those who want to put out content that doesn't necessarily fall within the bounds of convention.

"The real problem is the format is just so restrictive," he explained. "The fact that you have to break for commercials. The fact that you have a specific amount of time, all of that is just, you can't compete with the internet because of that. You just can't."

"And then you have all the meddling," he went on, adding that his time at Comedy Central was "f\*\*\*\*\*\* insane, trying to tell them what is funny and what is not funny. It was insane."

*Newsweek* has contacted representatives of *SNL*, Comedy Central, and Rogan via email for comment.

In November 2022, polling for *Newsweek* by Redfield & Wilton Strategies showed that just one in five people found the show to be funny. That said, 48 percent of those polled said that *SNL* was sometimes funny.

The [*long-running comedy show*](https://www.newsweek.com/saturday-night-live-tiktok-beauty-comedians-1885907?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), which was created by [*Lorne Michaels*](https://www.newsweek.com/lorne-michaels-snl-reveals-key-details-chevy-chase-bill-murray-fight-mystery-1749542?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and debuted in October 1975, is famous for its sketches that often parody headline-making events and figures from ***politics*** and pop culture.

Over the years, an exhaustive list of celebrities have guest-hosted the program, including Steve Martin, [*Tom Hanks*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/tom-hanks?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), [*Christopher Walken*](https://www.newsweek.com/christopher-walken-interview-outlaws-tv-show-prime-video-stephen-merchant-1691914?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), John Goodman, Drew Barrymore, [*Justin Timberlake*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/justin-timberlake?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), and [*Ben Affleck*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/ben-affleck?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships).

Rob Schneider—who worked on *SNL* between 1988 and 1994, going from writer to cast member in 1990—hit out at the show during an [*appearance on The Glenn Beck Podcast*](https://www.newsweek.com/rob-schneider-criticism-hillary-clinton-snl-divides-internet-1738461?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) in August 2022.

The comedian said that a November 2016 sketch featuring Kate McKinnon as [*Hillary Clinton*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/hillary-clinton?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) after her election loss to Trump was the moment he decided the show was "over."

"I hate to c\*\*\* on my own show," [*Schneider told Beck*](https://www.newsweek.com/rob-schneider-louis-ck-kevin-hart-1279636?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships). "When Hillary Clinton lost—which is understandable why she lost. She's not exactly the most logical person in the room.

"Then when Kate McKinnon went out there on *Saturday Night Live* in the cold opening and all that, and she's dressed as Hillary Clinton, and she started playing 'Hallelujah*.'* I literally prayed, 'Please have a joke at the end. Don't do this. Please don't go down there,'" Schneider continued. "And there was no joke at the end, and I went, 'It's over. It's over. It's not gonna come back.'"

Alec Baldwin, who holds the record for hosting *SNL* the most times with 17 stints, responded to Schneider's complaints about the show in a video posted on [*Instagram*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/instagram?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) some days later.

Taking aim at Schneider's criticism of *SNL*, Baldwin noted that the comic had criticized "someone's judgment and you leave out the idea that you had no problem with their judgment when they hired you[...] And of course, [*Rob Schneider*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/rob-schneider?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) had a great run and he's funny. I think he's funny. Rob's very, very funny."

Baldwin, who won an Emmy Award for his impersonation of former President [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) on *SNL*, accepted that not all of the show's episodes are good, as is the case with many bodies of work.

"*SNL* is a live TV show[...] They're in an office at a meeting on a Monday and the show is live by Saturday. It's not easy. Of course, I'm going to defend them. They're my friends, they're old, old pals of mine," Baldwin said.

"I divide the episodes of *SNL* the way I divide everything else. You look at an actor's career, you look at a director's career," Baldwin continued. "I divide it into thirds. A third of it is good, a third of it is so-so and a third of it is not very good. And a third of the episodes of *SNL* have been good, and a third of them so-so and a third not so good. Everybody's batting through 33 [percent].

"It's no different than any other program. It is topical, they discuss what's going on. It's what's expected of us and it's worked. In a couple more years, they're going to be doing their 50th season, so they must be doing something right. Of course, I love Lorne. I love the institution that is *SNL*, I've had a lot of fun with them.

"But you've got to be careful. Someone taught me this in this business; that is you've got to be careful when you criticize people for their judgment and you turn around and pause for a moment and realize, well that judgment of theirs led them to hire you once upon a time."

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2378787/joe-rogan.jpg)

**Graphic**

Joe Rogan

Chris Unger/AFP via Getty ImagesZuffa LLC via Getty Images

Joe Rogan is pictured on April 13, 2024 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Rogan shared a critique of NBC's "Saturday Night Live" during a recent episode of his podcast.

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