



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:
Episode 204: JJ Curry (Or How To Be A Comedian)

Show Notes

Episode Summary: Tampa comedian, JJ Curry (he/him), sits down with host, Jade Madison Scott (she/her), to speak about his joke writing process, how he gets booked at clubs, how he found his home club, and more.

Guest Information:

- [JJ Curry Instagram](#)
- [JJ Curry Twitter](#)
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EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

**‘On Their Way’ Theme Song composed by Bajio Alvarado
(It’s light and energetic. It puts a little pep in your step)**

Jade (JMS): Hey y’all, it’s me Jade and I’m glad you’re here. This week we’ve got Tampa Comedian JJ Curry in the house.



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JMS: I found JJ when I was going to my favorite Thai restaurant in Tampa, shout out to you Si-am ThaimERICAN Restaurant, where I picked up a copy of Creative Loafing's "Best of the Bay." Now I was planning out the season then so I thought, "God, this will be useful." I was sitting at my dining room table, peeling over the paper with a highlighter like I was Robert Redford in *All The President's Men*, when I saw him, JJ Curry, best up-and-coming comedian! So, I did some research, saw that he was funny, and thought this guy's gotta be on the show, which is what happened. We talk about how he writes his jokes, how he goes about touring, how he warms up a cold crowd and more. As always, transcripts can be found at www.wgcproductions.com. Alright, I won't keep you long it's time for the episode, but remember before we go, this is a WGC Production.

'On Their Way' Theme Fades

JMS: From a small town called Dudley, Georgia, JJ Curry is a Southern Air Force Vet with a very optimistic view on life. JJ has been getting his name across the Southeast part of America with jokes about his upbringing and current events as an adult. He's proven that his words can be accepted and approved by any group of people. He's recently been accepted into the 2020 North Carolina comedy festival. So please take the time to get to know JJ Curry. How are you doing today, man?

JJ: I'm all right. How are you?

JMS: I'm doing pretty good-

JJ: That was the first time I've ever heard that being read out. I was like-

(Jade Laughs)

"Man, I wrote good."

(JJ Laughs)

JMS (Laughing): Well, I'm glad, I'm glad you're satisfied. Glad you're satisfied with the writing and the performance of it all.

JJ: My English teacher would be so proud of me.



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(Jade Laughs)

JMS: Okay, so let's just start off with the same question I ask everybody: where are you from and where are your roots?

JJ: I'm originally from a small town called, uh, Danville, Georgia, but my mom finally made some money and we moved out, and since then we've been living in this place called Dudley, Georgia. Now, now I live in Tampa, Florida.

JMS: When did you move to Tampa?

JJ: Four years ago.

JMS: Oh, okay. And what made you want to move to good old Tampa Bay?

JJ: I was already living in the panhandle or the Fort Walton Beach area, and my brother lived in Tampa. And I wanted to spend more time with my nieces and nephew because I don't have kids of my own. So, I wanted to be able to write jokes about family stuff. So, like, the best way to do that is to be around my family. So, I decided to come here and live with my brother for a little while.

JMS: And could you tell us one of your jokes real quick? About family stuff? Come on, share, share.

JJ: Oh, I'll give you one. I like...this is how I normally like to open up my show. Hi, my name is JJ Curry. That's JJ from good times. Curry like the chicken. It makes it easy for people to remember me. I like to give people information about me so that we feel comfortable with each other. I know you guys cannot tell, but I'm actually 1/8 Caucasian.

(Jade Chuckles)

I know it's hard to tell, but I really am. My grandfather is mixed, that's half. You break a half down, that's a quarter. You break a quarter down that's an eighth. That's me. Now, I don't know how mathematically correct that is, but my cousin used to sell weed and, um, that's how he taught me fractions.

(Jade Laugh)



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JJ: So, I'm really like 3.5 grams of Caucasian, and they used to be a misdemeanor. That used to be a misdemeanor. So-

(Jade Laughs)

JMS: Okay. Um, well, that's, that's, you know, I guess I'm kind of 3.5 grams, Caucasian as well.

JJ: See. Boom.

JMS: Yeah, it's useful. Math, who'd have thought. Um, so how exactly-

(JJ Laughs)

How exactly did you know you wanted to be a comedian?

JJ: I always been the funny person. And, um, I spent, I was in the military I had some stuff that happened to me and then when people would ask me the story about what happened I would tell them what happened in my own personal way, and they would just be like, "I don't know, wheter to be sad or to laugh at you." And eventually it just went to tell us more stories about how you came up and it just slowly fed into, like, me being able to talk to people. And then I got started doing, like, briefings for, like, military briefings, and then I got a job working at a nightclubs cracking jokes because they were like, "yo, can you hold the line up? We got too many people in here and we gotta hold the line up," like, cool. So, I cracked jokes with people outside and next thing I know, a comedian saw me, handed me his card and ever since then, I just started doing stand up.

JMS: Okay. So, of course, like, the basis of comedy is the joke. I mean, if you don't have good jokes, really, what are you going to do? So could you kind of take us through your process of writing a joke?

JMS: Like the joke you just told us about your cousin and the being 1/8-slash-3.5 grams Caucasian, how'd you write that?

(JJ Laughs)



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JJ: Well, I was...at the time I was living in the panhandle and I was just noticing that there's a lot of, uh, Caucasian people live in that area. And, um, sometimes when I got on stage, it just looked like I was normally probably the only black person there. So, like, I'll be like, I need to figure out a way to break the tension. And I was like, "well, my grandfather is mixed, so what can I do?" And so I wrote the joke as, "alright, my grandfather's mixed. Now, simple math, I know. I love numbers So, like, $\frac{1}{8}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, and I was like, well that's also drug terms?"

(JJ Laughs)

So, I was like, if I can combine all these words together, you'll understand the kind of person I am. You'll know that, like, I understand my family history. I'm also very educated, cause I know, you know, I said I love numbers. I love math, but it also, like, you could see that I grew up in bad neighborhoods. So, that's the only way I would even know that this is broke down, but it all makes sense if you sit there and you're like, not everybody in the bad neighborhoods are bad people.

JMS: Okay. And is that typically how your joke process goes? Like you look out, you observe something and then you reference your own family history and your own personal history?

JJ: All my favorite jokes are like that. Yeah.

JMS (Laughing): Okay.

JJ: I call myself dumb, smart. So it's like, I will say something very smart, but also make you be like, that was kind of a dumb way that he put that together. So, it's a little bit of everybody.

JMS: Hmm. And the basis of comedy is the joke. But when you take a bunch of those jokes out, you make a set. So like, how did you go about making a comedy set? Whether it be 10 minutes, 15, 30, an hour, like, what's your process for, for that?

JJ: I actually like to paint a picture in my head mentally cause I can't, for some reason I can't, I can't I'm I'm dyslexic. So, like, it's hard for me to like, to see words on paper-

JMS: Mhmm.



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JJ: But in my head, I paint a picture of the story that I want to tell. So, like, everything I say will matter at some point in time. Like, this...I'm saying this because of this. So, I like to give people a visual. I give people on a visual trip when they, when they listen to me tell jokes.

JMS: That makes sense. That makes sense to me. But then, but then the question becomes, right, like, when you, when you write a joke the first time, and I'm a writer, so a writer, not of jokes, but like plays and dialogues and shows and things like that, so when you write something for the first time, like it can be good and you can find a thing that you like in there, but you have to refine it and edit it until it's like tight.

JJ: Oh, yeah.

JMS: So, how do you, how do you tighten a joke?

JJ: I-

(JJ Chuckles)

I do a lot of audio, so I, um, if I'm...like a bunch of open mics, I go to a lot of open mics. So, I'll always figure out there's certain lines that I want to say in the joke, but I also give myself the freeway to get to the lines and I pay attention to all my audio. Which way was the easiest way for me to get that line? And which way was the way that got more laughs to that line?

JMS: And, you know, sometimes things just don't work out. Sometimes jokes just...not aren't joking. Sometimes jokes just aren't working out the way you want them to. So, how do you know when to take a joke out of rotation?

JJ: Oh, uh, I'm, I'm always taking jokes in and out of rotation. An older comedian told me that I tell other younger comedians, "don't throw a joke away, just wait for a little while." Because you, you may not have the idea that you truly want to say right now. So, like, there'll be jokes where...I have a joke about my name being Jaquavious I wrote within the first year of my, when I started doing stand up. But I didn't really start putting it into my set until I was four years in because I, I didn't, I couldn't figure out what was wrong with the joke, but as I got older and got better with doing stand-up, I was like, "Oh, it's, it's how I'm presenting the joke. I'm not presenting the joke in the way that..."



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JJ: It's like, uh, I was being more forceful than exciting about the joke. So, it was, it was little things like that that you have to learn about comedy.

JMS: Okay. And when you say, learn about comedy, like how, how do you learn about comedy? Obviously, you learned about it by doing it, but like, do you study other comedians, other established comedians, other up-coming comedians? What's your, what's your method?

(JJ Laughs)

JJ: I'm a, I'm a big...I love comedy so I watch all comedy. I look at, I look at how people get laughs. Like there's certain comedians that...like Dave Chapelle is really good with words. Everybody know he's good with words, but then you don't....but then you have people like Jim Carrey who do face expressions.

JJ: So like I...or the way people perform a joke or the way that they, uh, enunciate certain words or the fact that, like, they, or the, the pattern that they have. So, like, I pay attention to all of that in comedy. Like, when it comes down to me I'm, like, really super focused into like the performance, the actual, the word choices. Why do some people use the word vagina over.....I don't like saying the P word, but that-

(Jade Laughs)

JMS: But we know what you mean.

JJ: Yeah. So,like, which word is funnier? It's so many things that people don't, uh, that people take for granted as in a sense of comedy.

JMS: Hm. Okay. So, like that's how you write sets and you study comedy and you tighten your sets. So, like once you have...once you have something to perform, when you have something to produce, how exactly did you go and put that on a stage? Like where do you go to perform?



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JJ: Well before Tampa, I, I did four years of just a bunch of bar shows. I would live in Fort Walton, Beach, Florida. I would drive to Birmingham, Montgomery, Mobil, Pensacola, Tallahassee, Panama City, and New Orleans. To go find stage times.

JMS: Man, you were all around the gulf coast. Yeah.

JJ: Yeah. That was my first four years was just trying to stage, like finally stage, just to perform a joke. And then when I moved to Tampa, uh, my number one spot that people can always catch me at is Side Splitters in Tampa. And that's like my home club. So anytime...I'm always there working something or some kind of joke. So like, it feels good to actually have something that's 15 minutes down the road and not five hours.

JMS: Mhmm. And how did you, how did you make Side Splitters your home club? How did that happen?

JJ: Uh, by force, actually.

JMS (Laughing): Okay.

JJ: Of course, everybody tries to get inside the biggest club in the area, which just happened to be a Tampa Improv.

JMS: Yeah.

JJ: But when I got here, they don't have a good system of, um, vetting in new comics.

JMS: Mhmm.

JJ: They, they, they don't have a good system for it. So, I spend the first two months just trying to get in and Side Splitters had an open mic. I go in and do the open mic as soon as I walked off stage the GM [General Manager], the now owner of the club, literally, as I took a step off the stage, he pointed at me and told me to come here, and that was how I got inside Side Splitters.



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JMS: It sounds like a lot of this is relational. Like, you go into comedy because someone gave you their card. You got a home club because the general manager saw some talent in you.

JJ: Yeah.

JMS: It seems like a lot of this is due to relationship building so what kind of industry events do you go to to continue to meet new people if that's how it works at all?

JJ: Well, before COVID the thing was, uh, comedy festivals and meeting and doing other...like once again, continuously working on the road. Like I stayed on a normal, before COVID, I would always try to my best to hit the road. I'll email clubs and everything, and do open mics just to network inside to get places. So, that would be the number one way, but now because of COVID, social media, uh, networking with other comedians, that would be the only way that you can do it right now. But the number one way is probably comedy festivals.

JMS: Hmm. Oh, one thing that you said that you just said was that when you were on the road, you would just be emailing people trying to get booked and things like that. Is that how you, is that how people typically get booked in comedy? Because I really don't know.

JJ: That the old school, grinding, baseline level. Uh, the other thing you can have is somebody bring you in, or somebody take you on the road with you. So, like, you have, uh, a bigger name comedian that really, really enjoy you, and that really actually like working with you, he can take you on a road with you as a feature or as an opener or something like that. So like, that's, that's another way to get inside. I just don't have anybody that wanna to take me. I'm so lonely.

JMS (Laughing): Oh. Oh no.

(JJ Chuckles)

JMS: So, like once you get booked, whether it be by someone taking you on the road with them, or like email a club owner, and they say, "sure, kid. Why not?" Once you get booked, what are the things that are typically in your contracts?



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JMS: Because for other up-and-coming comedians, I don't know if they would know, off the bat, like this is what I should be looking for. This is a good deal.

JJ: Ah.

JMS: This is not. Yeah.

JJ: Ugh, comedy is the hard hard world.

(JJ Laughs)

The, the best thing you would want, just by getting on the road in general, is somebody being able to take care of the place you could stay. If they can do that, or they, or they can guarantee you your money. Those two things are two main things that you definitely want to have. If you don't have a place to stay you're gonna be rough. It's gonna to be a rough one, but then they also come as you just stay in their car.

JMS: Mhmm.

JJ: So, you have to learn to give or take, you know. If you really want to do something, you'll figure out how to do it.

JMS: Do people typically, uh, and when you say like, make sure they have somewhere to, for you to stay and make sure they have the money, you're talking about the clubs that, that booked you, right?

JJ: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Clubs, club bookers? A lot of things like a lot of clubs, uh, do have like a, um, they do have a condo or a comedy house, so you don't have to really worry about too much to stay there. Either that or they'll rent you a hotel. So, like, you don't really...like the place to stay really too bad, but sometimes that hotel may have, like, you know, you probably be better off in your car.

JMS (Laughs): Okay.

(JJ Laughs)



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JMS: Alright. Um, so, okay. So in 2020, cause I enjoyed my research here, but in 2020 you performed at The Comedy Zone, Yumbrella, Snappers and Side Splitters and some other places. So, when you're doing something like that, where you're like your touring around the South and things like that, like, who exactly is with you on that? Do you have a team? How do you organize that? How do you make sure you get to point A and point B? Like what's your thought behind-

JJ: It's all-

JMS: that? Yeah.

JJ: It's all me. I'm very-

JMS: It's all you?

JJ: Yeah. Like once I know, once it comes to performing, I am...I'm one hundred percent down for that. It's the other stuff that needs somebody else to take care of for me. So, like you tell me, "hey, I need you here in February" I'll be like, "give me the date, alright. Cool." I will always know what time I need to leave. If I'm going to like North Carolina, South Carolina, I will leave a day early just to stop at my mama house to make sure that I, that, that drive is shorter than what it is before I leave. Like I will always make the extra step to make sure that I'm going to be there on time.

JMS: Okay, cool. Um, also in 2020, I saw that you headlined your first show. So, to headline a show is that the same booking process as a regular show? And did it feel different from your previous gigs?

JJ: Right now it is different. The first one I did was in Side Splitters. They finally gave me my first one-night after being there for like three years. So, that was super exciting. And, but when I normally work on the road, I always aim to feature because, to me, to me personally, I don't have enough fan base to try to sell out a room, but there'll be clubs and places that will actually give me a chance just because they're like, "we'll give you a chance." So, like those, those places, I 100% appreciate. So, those are the ones I make sure get the full thing.



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JJ: And so the approach for it is different because if you're, if you're headlining a show you the last person they gonna see, you're the reason why they're there. You gonna get majority of the time. I have to make sure it was worth the money. Like, it doesn't matter what the host or the feature do. It comes down to me at the very end and I like the opportunity. I like the chance of them knowing that there can be a rough show up until this point, so it's up to me to make this better. I like that.

JMS: One thing that I did see, well not see, but one thing that I did hear you say earlier is that one of the reasons that you don't necessarily like headlining when you're on the road, like when you're outside of your home club, is cause you haven't built up that kind of fan base yet. So what are you doing to build your fan base? How do you market yourself?

JJ: I need to get better at social media.

(JJ Chuckles)

That's the main reason. That's the main thing. So, I have to start figuring out my own way to present myself on social media. Uh, another thing I just started, I just started my own podcast. Uh, the Curry Chicken Podcast with my friend Ricky Hicken, who's also another comedian and from this area. So, we started that. I'm into, like, writing scripts and stuff like that too. So, I'm slowly figuring out everything outside of standup. I just have to do better with the social media aspect.

JMS: Okay. And when you're writing these scripts and you, like you said, learning to do more outside of standup, uh, why exactly is that?

JJ: The goal...my ultimate goal, is to get to the point where I can write a...write for a show or do something. I don't need to be in front of a camera.

(JJ Laughs)

I just want to be able to write it to the point where I can do the writing for a show of some sort on the side and do my comedy on the weekend, and just live. And that would be, that would be a satisfying life for me. Like I will be at ecstatic just to be able to do that. So, that's why I was like, I need to show people I can do more than just stand up.

JMS: I see. So, you're just trying to, like, show off your, your range of talent and things like that.



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JJ: Yeah.

JMS: Yeah. Um, one thing I do want to ask about though, cause this is how I learned about you, and it's pretty good marketing, I just want to know how you, how you did and went about it. So, um, in Creative Loafing's *Best Of The Bay*, uh, you were the best, what was it...best new comedian, best up-and-coming comedian, and that was you. So, like how did you go about, uh, getting that article written about you? How did you go about becoming the Best In The Bay-

(JJ Laughs)

For that Creative Loafing edition?

JJ: Well, that...well, first of all, that was just a huge surprise. Um, I didn't even know anything about it until I was at an open mic trying out some new jokes when one of my friends, the dude that actually won Tampa Bay Best Comedian, Cam Bertrand, and he called me and was like, "you know, you won the award tonight." And I was like, "what award?" And he told me what happened. I was like, "oh, snap."

A lot of the guys that do *Best Of The Bay*, there are, they'll have like the comedians and stuff. So every, you just have to, like I say, anytime that people saw me perform, my goal was to make sure that you knew who I was once I walked off stage. So every time I perform, I'm perform with the same energy, I want to make sure we hear for a good time. We gonna laugh. It doesn't matter who's before me, it doesn't matter who's after me. But right here in this moment, we're going to enjoy this time. And I just had that. That's been my attitude since I started doing standup and it just feel good that somebody else recognized that and decided that I was the best up-and-coming.

JMS: When you do show, do you have like pre-show rituals and post-show rituals to get your head in the game?

JJ: Uh, pre-show? About two hours, about two hours and 30 minutes before the show, uh, I'll listen to audio of all my old standups, of all my old sets, just to make sure I have certain jokes. Uh, I listen to...every time I perform, I pay attention to, like, what kind of crowd reaction I have. Uh, and then maybe for the last hour, I'm just listening to R&B music all up until the time I walk on stage. Yeah, there's a lot of love songs in my life.

JMS: Aww.



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JJ: You know, aww.

JMS: Okay. So, that's your pre-show ritual. So, when you're onstage say you have a crowd that's kind of cold. They're not really here for everything you're doing. How do you warm that crowd up?

JJ: I figure those kinds of crowds you....it's more like I let my personality go a little bit more free then. Just cause I like....I feel like if you're a comedian, somebody told you your whole life, you was funny. You're not doing this because you didn't....nobody, somebody at some point in time in your life told you, you was funny. So, if you ever come down to the bare minimum, let your personality go.

My stepdad used to tell me all the time: if you ain't got nothing else to say, just talk about your life. And ever since then, that's just been my deal. Like, so....whenever I have cold moments or nobody's feeling it, I just, it is what it is, but at the end of the day, you're going to get my personality and I'll figure out something to get you guys going again.

JMS: I see that. I can see how that, um, how, yeah-

JJ: It's a rough one though. Sometimes you just gotta take it like, this is, this is going to be a great one.

JMS: Uh, Oh, question! Where exactly do you keep your jokes? Like, when you let them out, um, like, do you, do you actually physically write them out? Do you record them? How do you keep track of them?

JJ: I can't. I can't write.

JMS (Laughing): Okay.

JJ: I just can't. Like I said, I'm, as, it's more like, I'm more paranoid spelling words wrong, and I having bad grammar for words sometimes. So, like I have, I literally do just strictly audio is always audio sounds somewhere.

JMS: Mhmm. I see. I see. And another question, I'm going all out of order, but they're coming to my mind.



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JJ: Oh, you're fine.

JMS: But, um, another question, so clearly COVID kind of closed down clubs. I mean, I know Tampa Improv is doing some shows cause I mean, like DL Hugley was just there, but like comedy clubs were essentially shut down cause who's gonna be inside sitting all close together for like a couple of hours? So, how are you adjusting during this, during this COVID time?

JJ: Uh, there's a few clubs they're still open. Like, they'll let you in for like, you know, minimum numbers and stuff like that. I actually have lupus.

JMS: Mhmm.

JJ: So, like, I've always been a very, uh, distant person from people just cause I've been dealing with this for the last eight, four years or so. So, um, to me, nothing really changed as of like the personal boundary thing.

JMS: Gotchu.

JJ: Yeah. But the whole working aspect, you know what I'm saying? I do zoom shows. I did a...man. That's, that's another reason why I started the podcast and everything else, just cause they do shut stuff down I still have a way to get my voice out for people to listen. So, those are the things that you do. You know what I'm saying? You just, you find park shows. You'll do outdoor shows. I did a parking lot show in July at Raymond James Stadium with three other comedians.

JJ: Sweat, the wettest show I ever did. I never sweat so much in my life-

(Jade Laughs)

But that's, when you do thing like that, you get opportunities when they come.

JMS: And you mentioned, I'm going to get to that Raymond James Show so we're going to put a pin in that, but you mentioned that you did Zoom shows. How does that work? How, how, how did you organize that? And like, what's that like?



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JJ: Being able to like...doing all the traveling that I did I actually met a few people that had...that ran them. So, they would just email you, you do that, and then you just pretty much talking to a camera, just like, it's almost, as if we're having a conversation right now. And the way I approached them was I would always tell them, book me with a comedian that I know so that way I can just have a conversation with that one person and just let you guys hear it.

JMS: Mhmm, Yeah. So kind of like a podcast, yeah.

JJ: Yeah. I would just reference that one person though. Like, and when I have jokes [that] involved me talking to multiple people, I would just say, like, I would just talk to one person.

JMS: And that Raymond James show you mentioned, how did you guys organize that? Like, what was your, what was getting permits like? What was all the process to make that make that a reality?

JJ: They reached out to a Side Splitters-

JMS: Oh, I see.

JJ: And BT, they asked to BT if he had a couple of talents and he just, BT said "I got a four local talents that would love to do your show." And he gave us, he gave them our number. We talked numbers and then was off to do the show.

JMS: And do you, do you often do other collaborations with other, with other comedians in the area? I know you have one with Rickey Hicken with your podcast, but-

JJ: Yeah. Oh yeah. That's, that's the only way to do it. I would much rather work with comedians I know than comedians I don't, but it's only for conversation piece wise. Like, it's hard to talk to somebody, especially me, like I'm a very quiet person offstage. So, like, it's hard for me to start like breaking down barriers and walls. Like, I have worked with big comedians and never said a word to them just cause I was like, I just don't know what to talk to you about.



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JMS: Okay. Have you found that it's easier or harder to write jokes during COVID? Cause I, I know that a lot of people aren't out. Not a lot of chances to have new experiences. So, how has your joke writing being affected by the pandemic?

JJ: It was, uh, in the beginning it was terrible. I couldn't write a joke at all. And then I was super depressed. I'm not, uh, it was....so it was like, it was hard for me to have my, uh, JJ-go-energy at the time. So it was just, I had to take, I actually had to take another, like two, three months break from comedy just to, like, get back into like, uh, a happier foundation than I was. It was rough.

JMS: Mhmm, and now?

JJ: Oh, we good now!

JMS (Laughing): Okay!

JJ: We smiling. I'm showing my gap and all. We are back.

JMS: Then has your joke writing process change at all during the pandemic? Has it shifted in a way that you've noticed?

JJ: It made me pay attention to the people a little bit more. And I was noticing that like, when comedians come up and do five, 10 minutes of Coronavirus jokes, like you can see that they were tired of it. That's also during this time when they was the paying attention for the Open Bay Comic. So I was, when I did my coronavirus show, I wasn't talking about, I always just made references in other jokes that I know I was already doing. So, it was like, I give people a time span of like, this is...they're like, "oh, we're gonna talk about the coronavirus on this part of the joke, but not the whole joke is going to be about coronavirus." I think I gave people a freedom to get away from the idea of like the thought of it. So, it was easier to listen to me.

JMS: Oh, I see. And you mentioned that you noticed that while watching, like other people's sets, do you watch other, uh, up-and-coming comedians often? Like do you often go to their shows and watch their sets and things?



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JJ: Uh, not shows, but I'm always at open mics. I always sit in the corner [at] open mics.

JJ: They think I don't listen because I'm always have a pair of headphones in, but my headphones don't have any sound going through 'em. So I just sit in the corner, play my little game, and I listen to their jokes. And then if I found, if I listened to them a few times, I'll start watching they set, but I'm not watching to be...Like, I'm watching to pay attention. Like, oh, how are they presenting? Then I give them little clues, like, "hey, step out, step out, closer to the stage or move the microphone stand." I was like, you should do more with your hands. On this joke you should address one person. Like I'll give them a little, I'll give him a little helps and bits, tidbits that I learned over the years.

JMS: And what, and what would you say is the most important tip that you've learned over the years?

JJ: Uh, moving to microphone stand is one. And, uh, showing confidence on stage then that would be like, being able to walk up to the edge of the stage or being able to, like, talk to address one person, but not let them take control of the crowd or letting them take control of the room. So, it's like a, it's like a, it's like an intimate dance, but you got to lead the way the entire time.

JMS: And when you say, take control of the room, what exactly do you mean? Like not letting the audience member take control of the room?

JJ: Sometimes a heckler will take over the entire room. So, the show would go from being me telling jokes to me having to address one person the entire time but...sure, they're hearing laughs, but there's people that's like, "we didn't come here for this" and you have to appreciate those people too. So that's why I say, "don't let them take over the room." You still have to, you still have to do your job. You still have to tell your jokes.

JMS: Okay. Um, what are the best open mic spots in Tampa?

JJ: Sundays you have a Side Splitters, cause it's not in many mics right now. So it's Sundays: Side Splitters. And, uh, Wednesday, there's an open mic in Palm Harbor called de Bine Brewing Company open mic. It's ran by Matt Fernandez. Those two are probably the best two mics in the area.



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JJ: There's another couple one's coming up right now. Like, uh, John Jacobs who's uh..., John Jacobs another local talent, he has, and Shaun Harper, they have in three rooms right now is on a Monday, Tuesday and a Wednesday. So, I don't know the name of it though. They just started. So, they're slowly getting people into those mics.

JMS: And when you were doing comedy up in the Panhandle and around the Gulf coast how were those clubs at all different from the clubs in Tampa? Was the vibe different?

JJ: Oh yeah. They didn't have clubs. So, it was a bunch of bars. So, I would just go to a bar full of Black people then the very next night I'll go to a bar full of bikers and then-

(JJ Chuckles)

I'll do a room full of all I would to go...I would go to Tallahassee, do a room full of liberal kids and the next night and go do a room full of conservatives. So, like that...just being up there for four years, dealing with that, it taught me how to talk to everybody. Like, how to get my jokes across to everybody. It did matter who... my ideal crowd is a mixed crowd. Like, it's going to have older people. It's going to have conservatives. It's going to have liberals. It's going to have White people. It's gonna have Black people, but at the end of the day, we're all going to walk out and go "that was a good show."

JMS: So, then the question becomes how did, how did you, uh, figure out how to play to different crowds? Like what parts worked for those liberal crowds, conservative crowds, Black crowds, White crowds, et cetera?

JJ: If you just....it was just be honest honesty and just address....and I don't...and not necessarily saying....the only side I pick is the Black side because I'm Black. So you have to-

JMS (Laughing): Okay.

JJ: But I'm going, if I'm going to give you my argument, like that's the only side that I know that if you're not pro black lives matter, I may offend you. But I, afterwards, after that, I have to give you, like, to me, I have to give you my knowledge and my facts so that way you can be like, "well, I mean, he's, he's at least he was funny about it, so alright, cool. I may not agree with his opinion but his idea, the reason why he fills this way makes sense and it's hilarious."



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JJ: And then the liberals and conservatives, when it comes to political material, I'm right down the middle because I don't, I'm not a political person. I don't...I smoke way too much weed to be a political comedian.

(JJ Laughs)

So, I don't even know if I'm able to say all this, but I like to go right down the middle. So, like when it comes to, like, politics, as much as I'm going to talk about the Right, I'm going to talk about the Left as well.

JMS: Okay. I remember that you said that, uh, it's all you, are you interested in getting a team, especially if you're going to go on larger projects like a larger tour?

JJ: Yeah. I would love to have a team. I would love to have...but, like I said, I'm not big enough to carry a full team. So, um, once that, once it gets to that point where I can start carrying people with me or have people...like, my influence can start reaching down to other people, then yeah, I'm going to take people. There's a couple of young comics right now that would love to take on the road. I just can't right now. It's just like, it's just too much. It's too much going on right now for me to take them on the road. But once everything has opened up, I will slowly introduce them to the road life.

JMS: And how will you know it's the right time?

JJ: Um, well the goal is always slowly to build a team as you go. Like right now I know I took a couple of comics on the road with me before the pandemic, just to show 'em like how to get there and the approach. And then the goal is to, like, constantly be like, "hey, I got to do this, bro. I gotta do this room in Georgia. Anybody down?" Or "blah, blah, balh or we're going to do this room with South Carolina or Tennessee." And they'll be like, "hey, I'm bringing you, come on, come with me." And that way they'll get comfortable with them being on the road. So, that was like, that would be my ultimate goal is just being able to like, take somebody with me every time I go somewhere else.

JMS: Are there any of them in particular that you really want to play? Like any clubs that are like, "yeah, that's on the bucket list for me?"



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JJ: Of course, the ones in New York and...anywhere in New York, anywhere in LA, like those two will be the....those two...it's not even necessarily clubs. There's certain comedians I just want to work with, in general.

JMS: Oh, like who?

JJ: My, my top two is of course, Dave Chapelle-

JMS: Yeah.

JJ: Of course. Uh, and Roy Wood Jr.

JMS: Oh! I like Roy Wood Jr.

JJ: Roy Wood Jr. is, like, one of my favorite comedians so I would love to just work with him.

JMS: What about him draws you to him?

JJ: He's uh, he's from Birmingham. So, and he also started....like, we met a couple of years ago and he's from Birmingham he started doing comedy in the exact same area I started doing comedy in. So, we was talking about classrooms and stuff and it was just to the point of just like, I would much rather, I want to, it's more like I want to work with him. I want to tour with him so I can pick his brain and study.

JMS: Gotchu. Okay, oh, and we're coming towards the end, but I wanted to ask this because one good turn deserves another. So, I saw you and I saw you as, like, a really cool up-and-coming comedian in Tampa. Who do you think are other really cool up-and-coming comedians in Tampa to watch out for?

JJ: M'kay. So, there's three comedians in Tampa that I absolutely love to death.

JJ: Matter of fact I'mma give you five.

JMS (Laughing): Okay.



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JJ: I'mma give you five. I'mma give you five. Okay. Female comedians. There's, uh, Katie McCoy and there's a young female comic who just started. Her name is Kai Saunders. Those two ladies are hilarious. Uh, there's a guy in St. Pete named Jay Legend. He, I, I feel like he's my little brother. This dude is super funny. He's getting really good. He's getting out there. Uh, there's another guy named Matt Carter. I think he's hilarious. He should be getting way more work than he's getting now. And then there's this other dude...there's of course Ricky Hicken. That's my partner in crime. He's always going to be great. That's an asterisks on him. He's he's with me, but there's another guy named I feel bad. Cause he gave me all these dudes, but Far Zimmerati. I feel bad cause I gave you all of these dudes, but Far Zimmeratir. Yeah. That's another one right there. He's a, he's hilarious. The six people I just named are probably the, the next up-and-comings I think people should be looking out for.

JMS: All right. Well, I will gladly be looking for their sets on on YouTube after this-

JJ: Yeah.

JMS: But, JJ, we're coming to the end of the interview. This has been great, but we're coming to the end of the interview, you're clearly up-and-coming and on your way. You've already been named best up and coming comedian in the Bay. You're touring. You're doing all these shows. You have your podcast. You're expanding your talents. So, JJ, I just want to know how will you know when you've made it?

JJ: When I can stop using my disability check to pay bills.

JMS; Alright.

(JJ Laughs)

JJ: Uh, once that happens, I am good.



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JMS: Yeah. Sometimes it really is just that simple. Yeah. Alright, well, can you tell the people where they can find you?

JJ: You can find me on Facebook on the JJ Curry comedy page. And an Instagram, Twitter, and Tik Tok you can just type in @iam_jj. Real simple. Or you can just type in JJ Curry cause I'm Google.

'On Their Way' Theme Song composed by Bajio Alvarado

JMS: Hey, you know what you just did? You just listened to episode 205 of On Their Way season 2. On Their Way was created, hosted, and edited by me, Jade Madison Scott. The theme was composed by **Bajio Alvarado** and the logo was created by **Amaka Korie**. If you liked this episode then you may be delighted to know that there was actually more to this episode. That's right an extended interview with JJ is available at our Patreon. If you go to our wgcreproductions.com, go to the header, click Patreon and subscribe you can access the extended version of this episode as well as extended versions of all season 2 interviews. Subscriptions like those help us fund our whole shindig. You support us by purchasing our merch from our store which you can access by going to wgcreproductions.com and clicking "Store" in the header. I have the sweatshirts which I would 10 out of 10 recommend. You can also help support us by following us at IG and Twitter, @withgoodco, and telling your friends about us. Podcasts are better when you have someone to talk to them about. Alright, I'm all out of talking points. Thank you for listening to the episode. I'll catch you next week and remember to take care of yourself and each other.