



Recorded Events

'Oh, I Get It': A Documentary Screening & Director and Cast Q&A

[00:00:05] Welcome to The Seattle Public Library's podcasts of author readings and library events. Library podcasts are brought to you by The Seattle Public Library and Foundation. To learn more about our programs and podcasts, visit our web site at www.spl.org. To learn how you can help the library foundation support The Seattle Public Library go to foundation.spl.org

[00:00:36] Good evening everyone and thank you for coming out on this warm and sunny night. I'm Kristy Gale. I am the young adult services librarian at the University Branch and I'm working with my colleague Micah K. Ryan to put this event on. We're both really excited to bring you a screening of the short documentary, Oh I Get It. It's directed by Danny Tamara and Sarah McCaslin followed by a panel discussion featuring Danny the director and local luminary and recent social justice author Ijeoma Oluo and the incredibly funny and Seattle based comedian El Sanchez. After the documentary we're going to document documentary lasts about 10 minutes after the documentary we're going to have a moderated discussion for about 30 minutes and then we're going to open it up to questions from you for about 30 minutes as well. Yes. So I want to take this opportunity to thank The Seattle Public Library Foundation for making this program possible. I also want to thank our partners Three Dollar Bill cinema for partnering with us to bring you this program. Three Dollar Bill Cinema is a nonprofit on Capital Hill that produces twist Seattle Queer Film Festival and translations. Seattle Transgender Film Festival. Among other queer community events. Sam Berliner one of Three Dollar Bill cinemas senior programmers is here to tell you more about the organization and what they do.

[00:02:10] Thank you. Whoa this mike is cool. Also this is Danny who directed the film so we're both going to talk.

[00:02:18] Hey Danny.

[00:02:21] So for those who don't know this is actually part of our first Wednesday Queer Film Series which as you might have guessed happens on the first Wednesday of each month and shows a queer film. And so we're really happy to partner with the library to bring our two programs together and it works super well. Also we have our table over there the one with the black tablecloth and we have lots of really cool postcards and I want to let you know about both of them. So this one has to do with all of our summertime programming. That was cool

[00:03:01] I thought. So it's like dance. Okay. All of our summertime programming. Who here raise your hand knows about Three Dollar Bill cinema. All right. That's almost everyone OK. If you don't know totally don't worry about it cause now I'll let you know. OK so Three Dollar Bill cinema does a lot of stuff. Specifically our chance festival on our queer festival but also we have a lot of cool things happening over the summer on this fancy rainbow postcard and all the info is on the back including this screening. We also have twist tops with which our top picked films from our festivals and it's a touring festival and they have screenings coming up in Bainbridge Tacoma and Vachon Island also organized by Danny multitalented human. We also have real queer youth coming up which is our queer youth filmmaking kind of like summer camp thing that's so hard to say in front of you. Danny runs it. I'm sure they have a better way of saying it. Anyway it's really cool if you know any youth who are in Tacoma who are available July 15th to 21st. Send them our way. We sell a couple spots open and then the other thing is outdoor cinema. So this year as always we are in Cal Anderson park on Fridays at sunset in August and this year the theme is parental advisory. So is a question mark. The question mark marks important. It means like these are the ones that your parents warned you about but actually they're really fun. So it's Beetlejuice but I'm a cheerleader and Juno so you can find. Right. So you can find all that info on these fun flyers on that table. And now I'm going to stop talking. Thank you

[00:04:53] My name is Danny. My pronouns are he she and they I have many connections to this event. I'm a senior programmer for Three Dollar Bill cinema and I write I program the Queer Film Festival is called Twist and then I run the queer youth film film filmmaking program and I am also the director of this film that you're about to see and I just want to give you a little information about the film. So you have some context. We made the film for a five day International Documentary Filmmaking challenge so it was a very condensed and intense filmmaking process and we placed in the top 12 for the filmmaking challenge which means we screened we World premiered at slam dance film festival which is kind of like the independent alternative to Sundance it happens in the exact same city at the exact same time and it's really weird but they have like more artsy and independent films. So we made it into that we didn't make it into Sundance. Any more context for this film. I also wanted to say that. Some folks in the documentary identify in different ways now than they did in the documentary. So I just wanted to point that out and be conscious of that.

[00:06:19] Anything else I need to say. I don't think so. Thank you for coming. Okay enjoy the film.

[00:06:31] I get this distinct feeling when I do comedy that I'm going to throw up on my shoes. Comedian very funny very often partly because

[00:06:41] I'm a shy and private person but it's been so worthwhile to get on a stage and do that. I was at a comedy show the other day and I was behind the scenes and one of the younger comics came up to me and she said I'm just so glad it's like it gives me so much hope to see like a lesbian your age who still goes out at I'd say it's like 7 p.m. on a Tuesday. Night

[00:07:08] When I started I was told to as a female comic to avoid talking about your mom. Don't talk about your period. My mom wanted me to be gay so bad that I was like now no

[00:07:19] I'm not going to be what you want Mom I'm gonna be a fucking rebel I'm going to suck.

[00:07:30] I used to kind of shy away about talking about being queer on stage. You're really putting yourself out there.

[00:07:35] It's still a really hostile environment especially if you are a woman or a person of color.

[00:07:43] I didn't know what what part of me that comedian would kind of attack next.

[00:07:48] Oh I hate women. The only reason I couldn't be gay is because I could never fuck a man. Because I can never fuck something that I respect.

[00:07:57] I think a lot of liberal white male straight comedians have positioned themselves as the voice of everyone else.

[00:08:05] Guys talk. This guy is Native American. He's like I can't grow facial hair because I'm Native American. I'm like I guess if you try to grow facial hair to be a patchy beard. He is like cherry. I was like it was a joke and it was awesome.

[00:08:23] I would do these rooms where other comics would be welcomed and kind of do a lot better being like oh aren't women loose in my life.

[00:08:32] And like whatever. Right the top of the list when you think of great adventures about women you think of the

[00:08:39] Some people think that that's comedy because it has been for like a long time. They make fun of something about another person that they haven't had

[00:08:47] To deal with. You see everyone laughing who's obviously having a shared experience. You're not in that you are once again reminded that you're in the minority and that that minority status is something that other people find entertaining.

[00:09:02] What do you know about that like you don't get to make fun of that.

[00:09:04] It's like if we go down that road of Hey don't make fun of this don't make fun of that. As long as you're trying to be funny you're OK someone else

[00:09:11] Saying something about your comedy isn't censoring you. That's a discussion we're having as society members we do usually sit and listen to stuff like that.

[00:09:21] And finally we're just saying no you can stand up to those people and you can get up and leave and you can not give them your money or you can ask for your money back. It's scary for a lot of people who have established a career based on

[00:09:35] Diminishing people. You do the sexy stuff. Because like I can't I still can talk about it was that good. The opposite of PTSD. That's what is that called. He's

[00:09:50] Like happy memories.

[00:09:54] I didn't realize how much my material was kind of suddenly political. When you can go up there and talk about white privilege and make white people in the audience laugh.

[00:10:03] And part of them are gonna think about that like oh we do that and I know there are a lot of white people here so please don't get upset if you will because that's what you do. But mistakenly I'm secretly told some white friends I didn't know it. This American Life was

[00:10:32] They started doing standup in Seattle and I realized that I was like one woman out of like 70 people signing up for an open mike.

[00:10:39] The owner of the place who came out first thing goes hey don't do any jokes about your lifestyle you like gave me the swipe.

[00:10:48] Well even doing a lot of comedy shows in my living room. That's kind of the. Same thing that we say that this is gonna be a hate free space that includes no racism no transphobia

[00:10:58] Etc.. Five. People

[00:11:13] I don't know a lot about what's going to happen in the afterlife but I hope that I get there and then they sit you down and like a big gaydar machine and they tell you like who through your life was queer like I want them to like Project the picture of like my sixth grade Spanish teacher and be like he was gay you were all right. You're the first person was not gave us all a misunderstanding.

[00:11:34] You know you just kind of push you open it a little bit more you go a little further.

[00:11:39] So I'm a fat person I mean that really I'm fat. Most of the time I see that in conversation and even like comedy shows someone will say to me No you're not. This is creepy. I actually had someone yell. You're beautiful. Yeah I know. Like well I'm kind of giving people permission to laugh about something that otherwise they may. Use against me. But I know I love being fat their whole approach pros being fat. Here are the pros. Everything.

[00:12:07] I mean a lot of people use comedy as therapy but it's also therapy for the audience. Being able to take an experience. That was

[00:12:14] Traumatic and like even societally traumatic for people and bring it to a place where you can talk about it and laugh about it because they don't feel lecture they don't feel guilt that if you're doing it right and the people who have the best gaydar children like often when I'm at the grocery store or something like a little child like flip their head around and these are watching me across the kitchen and it's like weird like. And if they keep at it the parent is looking on now.

[00:12:42] You can be gay I'm sure I get a gay agenda.

[00:12:47] What gives me hope is that even though you know a lot of these comedians are struggling like in obscurity still just creating this amazing art.

[00:12:58] That's the whole point the whole point is like if you don't see what you want you've created. We don't need to like constantly make fun of people in a way that's not the only way to laugh

[00:13:11] Half the time I'm just smiling right up there. I can't believe that people are smiling back at me about these things that I tried to hide for so long. Walk off this stage and you're gonna go on about your night and maybe I'll actually talk about this later maybe you'll actually talk about what it might feel like for me to be queer

[00:13:29] Comedy. Do you know those moments where you don't know if you can breathe and then you find out you can because you're laughing.

[00:13:39] That's what comedy can do.

[00:13:47] Thank you all for being here. I came to talk to you tonight about cultural appropriation.

[00:13:54] Don't you want to know and you look stupid.

[00:13:58] Dear mom I'm gay. So let's never talk about this again. But

[00:14:07] I've been doing the hormones thing for about a year and a half two years now. Got some small boobs out of it

[00:14:16] So it hasn't been a total bust.

[00:14:19] And where have you been that I have that down. Is this haircut. Sometimes I like to demonstrate girls. I don't really know if lesbians found but I mean like fingers have bones.

[00:14:37] So that must count for something where kids would come up to me to like to see some good between these two. And I'd be like. Both

[00:14:46] Your houses. Like right away.

[00:15:00] Thank you all. I'm going to introduce our panelists and then they will come up here and we will have a discussion about this film and comedy in Seattle. So you've all already seen Danny. Danny Tayara is a filmmaker and festival programmer. They founded Seattle where filmmakers a hub for people looking to make connections and find collaborators. You've already heard a lot about their roles with Three Dollar Bill cinema. But in addition to that they collaborate with many different organizations to bring their projects to completion. This tonight is definitely one example of that and they would also like to acknowledge blanket fort films real girls. Three dollar real cinema and real queer youth for the support they've provided them over the years. And we also have Ijeoma Oluo here tonight. She is a Seattle based writer speaker and Internet Geller. She was named one of the most influential people in Seattle by Seattle Magazine. She's the editor at large of the establishment and media platform run and funded by women. We also have Elle Sanchez here. Elle is a Seattle based comedian writer and comic book reader. L. Sanchez has been performing all over the country since 2010. There can conversationally cynical yet upbeat comedic style weaves together a unique mix of embarrassing personal stories nerdy obsessions social politics and possible over shares making light of their own instances of social incompetence while also skewering oppressive social norms. They have been called Fearless by City Arts Magazine a grumpy nugget of delight by writer activist Mindy West. A local favorite by Seattle alt weekly the stranger and a brilliant new voice. Everyone should know by comedian Hari Kondabolu Grammy Award winning singer songwriter Cami Dawson has cited Sanchez as her favorite underground Northwest comedian while W. Kamau Bell comedian and host of CNN's United Shades of America once said L. Sanchez is the truth.

[00:16:57] So let's welcome them all to the stage.

[00:17:06] I forgot to introduce myself. I'm Michael. I work as a circulation clerk at the University branch library so if you need a library card I can help you with that. Don't usually ask me to speak on stage. So to start us off this evening do you think this film is effective at what it's trying to say and what would make it more effective.

[00:17:24] I mean I guess it depends on what it was trying to say. Danny would know more about that but I do. I was personally affected watching it like you know I had a bunch of people in my house for a few minutes and I said some things about comedy and then. A couple weeks later I was given a link to this video and I was like Oh yeah.

[00:17:41] That's exactly what I love about comedy and it was beautiful to see so many people that you don't normally see talking about comedy. And to me it was someone who's always loved comedy and also has at the same time an incredibly personally and dismayed by many comedians. It was beautiful. I loved it it just felt like a little piece of community.

[00:18:03] I think there are a lot more things that this film could say and I think we did as best as we could in five days. And I think if we had more time we could do it a lot more justice. And I really appreciate all of that. I'm proud of the film. I will say that.

[00:18:22] So I really feel honored to have been in this in this film. It definitely I think that the thing that a says at the lot. The last thing that you say it makes me cry every time. When you talk about if you can if you feel like you can't breathe and then you realize you can't it's your laughing.

[00:18:38] I want to cry right now so good. It's so good.

[00:18:42] I. I loved being in it. I loved the only thing. I've watched a few times the only thing when I watch it is I'm like a could I've not showered maybe before. I was filmed. And that's very clear that it was laundry day.

[00:18:55] I also liked that I was still wearing a denim jacket as a top two years later.

[00:19:01] But yeah when I watch that now I mostly I would like to correct some some things that I said in that and the joke that that I made that that joke about dicks. What can I swear. Is his dick a swear word. What's the rules.

[00:19:15] Okay. I felt when I want That's what I think I cringe about that now because I feel like that that joke comes off as trans phobic and I don't like that. But. So yeah but I think that the film itself is

really important. And I mean even being a part of it at the time made me even think more about the things that were discussed in it and being a part of that

[00:19:35] Kind of show that we did at Kathleen's house was it was a really great moment of community. And I loved doing it. I also love that to keep the show. I was the whole time you could see me drinking beer

[00:19:48] Slick. I had so many of those one talkies but it's very clear. But I love being a part of it. Was great. I think Danny and I have been talking about making something like this happen and I've forgotten until today that this was made in five days so as someone who is very much an outsider to this film I am

[00:20:06] I think I'm constantly impressed that this film was made in only five days of the filming of the editing everything. And so I just wanted to make special note of that. There was a line in the film that really caught me today about comedy is therapy. Why is powerful you as a quote for you as a queer person of color about doing comedy. How is it impacted your life. And Danny feel free to talk about comedy or filmmaking.

[00:20:32] I would say it's it's important. It's its impact on my life in the sense that I feel like I have a voice just that I feel seen in a way that comedy helps me do. But more so in a way because I do get in debates about people with people in person mostly online. But above all a political issues and those don't always end well. But I feel like when I'm doing stand up I'm kind of sharing whether or not the jokes I'm telling are inherently political.

[00:21:08] I feel like just also just being me and being up there and and and being seen as important I mean I've done comedy festivals and really conservative places where they were like competitions and I I lost they didn't like me. But the thing is I even though I would do sits in front of people that would be like are you why are you telling queer jokes at this casino in Montana. And I would like do that. And I know that like yeah I'm not going to win. But then like the fact that to queer people come up to me like we only came to this tonight because we saw your picture and assumed you were gay.

[00:21:47] It's like just one and we hate comedy but we wanted to come see you. And they're just be like that. And it made us feel better because we hate living in Billings Montana. And not to call out Billings. Maybe it's great.

[00:22:01] But so just for those moments I think are important to just just to be included in it to have to do we have someone you can relate to. I feel like that's even why I kept I used to not necessarily talk about being queer specifically and at first I wasn't sure whether or not how I could make it funny to talk about being non binary. But I think it's important to do that because people can relate to. People

have someone they can relate to and they can and you can laugh about things that otherwise might make you feel sad. And I think that's important. It's made my life 100 percent better.

[00:22:34] General I'm not a comedian I'm a queer person of color who is so rarely funny that when I am I feel like you're all special attention to it. I'm like Do you see that. You see that. Oh my God. I did a funny thing but I grew up with comedy and my brother was a standup comedian here in Seattle for many years. I've always loved comedy. I do occasionally try and be funny. I have comedy has gotten me through a lot.

[00:23:02] And I think for me personally you know as a writer I am so invested in the truth and comedy is such a great way to tell the truth. And it's such an empowering way to be able to do it. And I think that queer communities and especially communities of color and just comedians and color in general are really making the most of that. You can tell jokes and make them seem like you tell lies make them seem like the truth with jokes and then and that's when I think comedy can become really harmful and abusive. But when you have people who have no not many avenues to really tell their truth and they can get on stage and make it a joke and say some real core truths it becomes a really empowering thing and I've always loved that. I always loved you know my brother would call me and be like I'm working on this joke in it.

[00:23:49] And he would tell me this backstory and his thought process and what would come out would be this hilarious thing. But like the you know it would be like this remember that horribly shitty situation I was in where I thought I was going to die and it was the worst OK I've processed it sort of here's a joke you know and I'm like Oh OK. And that's the truth that I think a lot of communities don't have access to in a way a lot of times we end up trying to share a truth because we really want other people outsiders to see it and to hear us because they have to.

[00:24:20] And sometimes that can be really extractive and traumatizing to do to like open yourself up over and over and over again in the hopes that people will see you and understand. But I feel oftentimes with comedy you're giving yourself and you're giving your community a lot of care in the way in which you're opening the truth because you're doing it in a way that that gives that sort of belonging and a little bit of joy to people who otherwise would have to just lay it starkly out there and be hurt by it all over again. And that's one of the things I do love about it is you can be in the room and you can see the things that need to be said that would really really kill you to just say. And you can say it as a joke. And it can come across just as true without actually you know hurting the people who need to have it said

[00:25:07] I just want to add the jump is very funny and Ijeoma has performed just telling stories and anecdotes on a couple of my shows and it was hilarious. So just add that also. Her writing's really funny. I just want to. She's being very humble and very sweet but also Ijeoma's was very funny.

[00:25:24] You know I tried once to tweet out that I was going to be funny and it kept auto correcting it to cunt. And so I kept say I'm going to try and be cunt over and over again. And I was like I get it world I get it

[00:25:38] I get it. Ijeoma the. How we. Originally found you or navigated through the process of like finding who to cast on the documentary. Ijeoma wrote an article called comedy in the war on free speech.

[00:25:56] That's just what sparked our interest. And I highly recommend you read that if you haven't already. I am white and I am Syrian and I often feel erased and my identities as Syrian and as trans and I think filmmaking is a really great platform for lifting up marginalized and underrepresented voices.

[00:26:24] So I thoroughly enjoy the process and this film is a perfect example of that. I also think that comedy in particular is just a really great entry point for people who wouldn't otherwise give a second thought to something like racism or transphobia and I hesitate to say that because I don't want to sound like tone police. I just think it is a really effective method for people who just would not listen otherwise since you all have shared how powerful comedy is with us.

[00:27:04] I was wondering if you can share with the audience some places in Seattle that folks can find social justice themed or like social justice aware comedy. Yeah.

[00:27:14] If you could share that anytime anybody asks me that I always point them to L's shows. Thank you. Yeah. You can pitch them yourself. I know you do this in the shower. Yeah. Really great.

[00:27:27] I've acuity parks show called fist and shout It's the second day.

[00:27:33] It's the second Wednesday of every month and the jewel box. The rendezvous just show. It's a comedy of variety show. Let's go. Hosted by my friend Murray D'Leone and me and it's a standup show but we also have like musicians and burlesque dancers sometimes and a Ijeoma's gonna be on the one on July 12th right. Okay. Wednesday. Yes. So July 12th next Wednesday if you want to come. It's very fun show and it's the majority of the performers are always queer and trans people of color and it's great. And someone today online just told me it's the most discriminatory show in Seattle.

[00:28:10] So cool so cool.

[00:28:14] Yeah. So keep a lookout if that's your thing. Discrimination. But yeah I love that show.

[00:28:22] And also the the show. Or was it. No what.

[00:28:26] So the where Danielle was on the screen. No I'm pointing anyway. Well Danielle was on the screen and talked about being the founder of comedy womb. So comedy womb which is now called Comedy ness is an open mike. That's in the rendezvous every Tuesday. And that's like a safe space open mike. If you ever want to check that out or if you want to try doing comedy you should. I would absolutely recommend signing up for the Comedy Nest which is every Tuesday. So that's great. There's also a show that hope Linden runs called Loud mouth cunts and that's

[00:28:55] Off and on. I don't know what her exact. I don't know if it happens all the time. I think she's moving soon so I don't know. Do you know Sarah. I don't know. This is my best friend Sarah. She's also a comedian. We are in a we're in a Michael Bolton cover band together called Lightning Bolton. Also you should look. Also good

[00:29:11] But yeah. There are like but I mean a lot of the shows in town are in Seattle are trying to be a little more conscious but I can't. Those only ones I can really promise you that you won't see something super fucked up at it.

[00:29:25] Is some the other ones I don't know. I can't I can't I can't vouch. That's that's it.

[00:29:31] Oh well yeah. There was I didn't have a show called Wide shots which was for basically nonsense men but it added Sarah was on that too. Consider yourselves up but it ended earlier it was the last year. January it was January was a great show. Also was told that it's one of the most discriminatory shows year

[00:29:51] Because women let cis men on it which I know is very it's hard out there for them to get some stage time so I get it I get it. So if folks are attending or folks are interested in attending or you know just existing as humans in the world what can folks do to support trans and queer comedians people of color her comedians in their comedy sets

[00:30:13] And careers. I mean I would definitely say first pay for tickets for your shows like oh my gosh. Stop.

[00:30:21] Like DM'ing. Your favorite comedian and being like can you put me on the list.

[00:30:27] You have five dollars. Like like use it to support comedians don't get paid anything like it's terrifying and financially have to be. It's an art form. I would definitely say like support if you with what you can if you can't you know part people make comedy for everyone but if you can please please support.

[00:30:46] Also just like share information about gigs like if you like and respect a comedian follow them on Twitter follow them on Facebook re tweet information about their shows and help be you know their publicity arm and vouch for them and show that you like them. I think a lot of it is you know when people book shows a lot of it's about you know whether or not people can actually show up to fill those seats and if there's a demand for it.

[00:31:10] So start asking you know I know personally for me and just about any art form where you know I'm giving advice. People ask me you know like how do we support you know queer writers writers of color or filmmakers. And I would say one thing is you know actually supported by buying that are supporting the art but also stop supporting things that are the exact opposite of that. Like don't find yourself in like Bro dude comedy fast that's you know full of. Really gross hack you know women love shopping jokes and you know put that elsewhere so that people understand that tastes are changing and helped kind of shift those norms I would say. That

[00:31:55] I agree with a ljeoma everything she said is true.

[00:32:00] I mean I don't know what else like it. I mean that was that that was so great. That was so perfect. I would also say I don't know if anyone is interested in ever doing comedy but if let's say if you are. In. In my experience and I and I try to talk to some other because I've I'm doing comedy about seven years but I try to talk to some people who are still newer a couple of years and or something. And the fear and especially even just like fellow queer comics and fellow see comics the fear is always like

[00:32:27] Well if we make waves we won't get bookings if we don't work with this person who's an asshole then if I don't book this person who says homophobic jokes like I will see I'll be seen as a troublemaker someone that and I just it's very important that you know that I have been very hated by several male comedians in the Seattle community for years. Like for most of my career it is literally affected me zero times like it never like never. Like there are like some shows in town that are run by horrible people who are abusive and terrible and I never do those stupid shows and I never book those stupid people. And yeah they all try to put out that I'm like a horrible person because I'm like too political or whatever. And that's fine. But that doesn't affect I mean they're like doing you know open in whatever boat launches in Wenatchee or whatever they're doing.

[00:33:21] And I'm like and they're still talking shit about me online and I'm like I'm sorry I have to go. I'm like performing at the Neptune Theater. No one cares what you think. So it's like does it matter. Like not that I'm trying to humble brag but I'm just saying I'm just saying like everything about that stuff that you run into when you run into these things and I try to tell the comics and it's real like if you can absolutely keep your moral standards and do rooms that maybe you don't think are gonna like you I've done rooms where a guy whispered homo at me the whole time

[00:33:50] And it was worth it because he gave me a two minute bit after that.

[00:33:53] That was great about fisting. It was a really good bet. And so it just doesn't matter. I mean half the other people thought I was funny. So it's just like I've I've learned how I've learned how to have my voice more by doing comedy and I and I've learned how to support and I think supporting other queer people of color and other queer and trans people of color has been a huge part of my comedy career as well and helping lift those voices and even if it means that I get stupid DM's. Or whatever from people I don't care about it. But it's really it's really not that bad. I mean I know Ijeoma gets harassed my way. Beyond that I that I would I would.

[00:34:30] Then I'm talking about but mine don't come with shitty jokes though. It's like are these weird like I'm going to try and work a bad joke into this insult like that. This is this is why you're bitter because if you spent more time working on your jokes and less time wondering about what else is doing right.

[00:34:46] I do love when people try it. When comedians try to harass me with a bad joke or like they think my favorite one is someone who tweeted at me that I was their favorite illegal immigrant lesbian or some like that and I was like OK I understand there is still a point there.

[00:35:03] I guess that's just a bum me out.

[00:35:05] But I know that happens.

[00:35:07] But it's it's hard obviously to be the target of those things but I also think it's really important to keep. I'm not gonna let these people stop me for talking. I think it's important and every time I get really stressed out about how often I get harassed or get you know people's fighting with people about different stuff I think about all the other people like I literally when I had this argument I was talking about earlier.

[00:35:31] I got a letter in the mail from this person was telling me how much I mean to them. So I think it's important to be someone that that inspires people not that I do but just to be seen just to feel like you know you're seen because someone else is representing who you are. And so it's important to do that. That's. I'll keep doing it until it's the word till I can't. I guess I don't know. I don't know if I'm as strong as a gentleman.

[00:35:57] No I'm just dead inside. Oh that's perfect. There's nothing there. It gets me and I wait for the pain. And I'm like No it just kind of makes this clunking noise.

[00:36:08] Thank you all for sharing. Thank you.

[00:36:11] Thank you. What you were both just talking about reminds me of another question that we wrote down which is what's your response to the tired rhetoric that P.C. culture is ruining comedy. I mean honestly

[00:36:28] If you can't make a joke that doesn't target marginalized communities you are a really shitty comedian. I mean just. It is not like take it as a favor to actually learn how to construct a good joke like your jokes should last more than 30 seconds. And if you're like this is the hot group now to you know shit on I'm going to make a joke about it. You're not making comedy that less and it's just the thing that cracks me up too is like life is so broad there are so many amazing hilarious wonderful things that happened out there. And if all you can think of is like I need to make this happy joke about women I need to make this hack joke about trans people. Your life is so limited and you probably in the wrong business like you like are not getting nearly enough joy out of life to be able to comment on it. And. I would say even you know as a writer just adjusting my language to be less harmful and we all learn right things that are accepted now

[00:37:30] Are gonna be abusive. Ten years from now because progress progresses and what we think we can ask for now is going to seem outdated tomorrow and we move along with it. And every time I'm challenged with something that I thought was cool and it's no longer cool to do I become. A better human a better writer like my ability to get to the core issues strengthens my work becomes broader it has a wider audience. Like if you're making jokes that don't require 40 percent or 20 percent or even 10 percent of your audience to feel like shit you're broadening your audience and you're broadening the impact of every reason why you thought you loved comedy to make people laugh why not try to make as many people laugh as possible by maybe not requiring your jokes to depend on the dehumanization of a certain percentage of your audience. It just it just makes a better craft.

[00:38:29] Oh yeah. Clap along.

[00:38:33] You're so eloquent. Well I I would say I got I really hate when people talk about P.C. culture so annoy them. Because that's really just a term. People say to be like weirdly enough it's always like you're overly sensitive. But it's like but you're whining about nothing like you're the one that's upset about like you're the one that's going Oh free speech but getting upset when someone wants to have a discussion about something you said because as a comedian it is just because what you say is

[00:39:03] I ideally in the form of a joke when you're on stage it doesn't mean that people can't react to it. It doesn't mean that you're not responsible for what you say. And I get so tired of comedians that think they have some kind of carte blanche. They think it's like they're their amendment rights are being violated because someone has a problem with their joke. That's not true. We're allowed to react

to the things you say also P.C. culture is like in the sense that like I'm sorry that we respect each other more and that's boring to you. Like I don't know.

[00:39:36] I don't understand why that's an issue but like what ljeoma was saying as a comedian your job is to entertain people. I mean that's your job as I know a lot of comedians who for them it's just about having friends or like because like they literally go to open mikes because they have no one else to talk to or or they're just like oh they just want that attention they just want people to look at them for like three minutes and feel good about yourself and to be fair.

[00:40:00] That is the secret of all comedians we're all narcissists. It's all us being like please affirm me. But the secret is you're the audience's was not supposed to know that you're like please affirm me. Where the audience is supposed to feel like you're there to affirm them like you're there to make them feel better. They don't know that you're they're there to make you feel better. That's the secret. And when you cross that line where they feel like they're doing like well they're doing like emotional labor for you that's you're not being a good comedian. No one should leave a comedy show feeling burdened by your problems like the thing they come to comedy shows to feel uplifted because they have their own problems. And so you coming out there and like making their day worse by like making them the butt of your jokes is not what comedy is. And so what make it infuriates me on the logical level of what ljeoma is saying is that you're walking out just already deciding to alienate more than half your crowd just be cut like. Which is not being good at your job. Like you're just going to come out and just decide to not do a good job for more than half of the people that are there and that's. And they paid everyone paid to see you. So just be entertaining that's what you're supposed to do. And I don't understand why a lot of comedians. I mean if they if like they want other like cis straight white guys to be able to laugh about something why shouldn't everybody else be able to laugh too. Like why should everybody else also be able to be like I can relate to that. That's funny. I don't know why can't just be across the board for everyone. And so yeah P.C. culture is just a bullshit term. People make up with so they can just like be assholes.

[00:41:38] It's also like the most like illogical bullshit too because you're like I am a shock jock I'm hilarious I don't like it suck it that's comedy and then you'll be like I don't like it and be like How dare you. Like what.

[00:41:52] Either like it's just words and they don't matter and no one should be offended which means you shouldn't be offended if people don't like it or people stop paying to see it or comedy is powerful and sacred which means you also have a responsibility to not be a complete asshole with it. It's it's one or the other but you can't try and do both and act like you're doing some like sacred service of making people you know of offending marginalized populations for the greater good. And then when they get offended you're like What do you mean this is comedy. You know I mean either you can't call people snowflakes and you know like the snowflake is the person going around yelling snowflake because either you don't care and people are mad at you and you're like fine whatever

that's the that's the gig and you brush it off or you're the one who's hyper offended that someone dared to not like what you're saying or dared to have a response to what you're saying but you're the one who got up on stage. Said I'm going to piss off 20 percent of the people here. So on that either you know I'm not even saying you have to be nice or good comedian. But when people respond when you act like an asshole and people treat you like an asshole you shouldn't be surprised or offended. That's kind of what you were going for.

[00:43:07] And there are consequences to that when you're an adult Yeah I think I think it's so sad and tired when comedians think their racism transphobia like homophobia just embolism everything that they think that that they think that that shit is edgy that that's what kills me I'm like.

[00:43:26] Except for people have been literally making those jokes since the beginning of comedy. So you being like it's so tabu. I don't know have you all ever heard of racism. It's like yeah. It's

[00:43:39] Like what are you talking about. Like I don't

[00:43:41] Like do you think I've never been called these words before in my lifetime. I have been like by other children or people on the bus or whatever. Like you're not you're not doing anything different or interesting.

[00:43:52] Like I don't it's like you're literally perpetuating the worst part of comedy since forever and so it's not even new it's not even shocking it's not. It's only shocking that you think it's funny. That's why people are like uncomfortable that they're like really right now at this time you're doing not like I'm confused like why. And so there are some people who like everyone is just too uncomfortable. I go there and I'm like people have been there for decades. You're just there with other assholes. Yeah

[00:44:23] Well like the first time I was called the N-word I was like what six. And I survived it. And if the closest you can get to the N-word is making a joke about it you are less edgy than I was as a 6 year old. Actually being called these words like if that's the closest you're gonna get is making a joke about it and you're like give me my medal. And people are actually surviving this. You have nothing like nothing at all.

[00:44:47] You're just playing dress up in other people's oppression and that's weird and mean and it's not brave to manufacture situations where you can be close to other people's pain without actually having to take any responsibility for it or feel it in any way. It's not comedy. It's not art. It doesn't forward anything it doesn't. Nobody leaves the room feeling like they have a better understanding of it. They felt like they put a costume on for a while and it was fun. And they're even more distanced from the population being discussed than they were before because they're taking people's real life pain and real life experiences and turning it into thought exercise and turning it into a play and turning it into mockery. And people have already been surviving it. They're the brave ones. Everyone who

can sit in a room. Anybody you can you know any person of color who can get past the age of a seven. Is braver than any new you know white comedian who's out there trying to make jokes about race because they live it every day and they're not out know they're they're still showing up and it's just not as brave as people like to think it is. It's not brave to court other people's pain and say you survived it.

[00:46:04] Q In the sake of time I want to make sure that you all get a chance to ask questions. So this is your chance to start thinking of questions. I'm going to ask one last question of you all before we open it up to Q and A. And that's kind of a two part question. What's next for you. Are there any upcoming projects you're excited about. And Danny if you could also speak to what's next for this film.

[00:46:27] I would like to make this into a feature film.

[00:46:31] Yeah I think it's just a matter of getting of timing and getting all the people involved that I would like to get involved. These two have already casually committed to doing some more interviewing for the feature film but then I'm gonna have to find that way again.

[00:46:50] I think I threw it away. It's gonna be confusing I'll also have to grow my hair out.

[00:46:57] Don't worry. It's just I mean there's only so much white people will get and I don't I don't want that. Like we said that hurt said. Where

[00:47:07] To find my old glasses. I. Don't shower it's good. It'll be a while.

[00:47:16] There is a light again. There's a lot more I think this film could say and with 90 minutes I think we can do that as far as what's next for me. I am always making short films. I was doing documentary for a long time and I'm now mostly doing short documentary short comedy films which has been fun because sometimes I just need fun and to not talk about things that are depressing and documentary is. I. That's one of the things I like about this documentary is that it's peppered with all of these jokes and it's like for a second you can just like get out of whatever is bringing you down and just like enjoy the joke for yeah a second. And I want to do more of that. So I'm working I'm developing a web series it's called Deep Space Les. It's based on a play called Deep Space Les written by Oliver Strauss. It did a run a two week run at Gay City a couple months ago. So we're writing a web series we're probably going to shoot in the winter and then release it in the summer of next year. Really excited about it because it's all just like funny and and hopefully none of it's going to be sad. It's just gonna be a bunch of like bitchy lesbians on a spaceship that runs on Crystal energy and the purr of cats

[00:48:54] And every cat on the ship is named Jodie Foster.

[00:48:59] They do weekly diva cup boils and I guess that's all I'm going to say. If you have more questions come talk to me word. Or if you want to help. Get

[00:49:09] Get at me what's next for me.

[00:49:13] I have a comedy album that's going to come out hopefully in the fall that I recorded earlier this year. The Jonas Brothers is gonna help me at it but I'm really I don't know. I might have to sell purposely. I'm going to try and move it around to see if I can get it published but I don't know. Or is that what you say about albums or published. I don't know. Put out there anyways so keep an eye out for it. It's called the hard femme soft Butch werewolf. And

[00:49:41] I totally get it. So that coming up.

[00:49:44] I mean I've got a lot of shows coming up I'm performing at pride in Charleston South Carolina. If you're up there in September I will I show is coming up.

[00:49:55] Also yeah also I'm having a baby I'm pregnant that's happening. Oh no one cares. That's cool. Fine.

[00:50:04] I didn't. What. No that's 100 percent true. Yeah. Yeah. Lisa

[00:50:12] Thank you. Yeah. The other parent is also a comedian so this poor child and poor poor child

[00:50:19] Feel really bad for them. But yeah. So yeah.

[00:50:24] Well you know I'm not pregnant at all.

[00:50:28] I have a book coming out in January called.

[00:50:30] You want to talk about race. So I'm gearing up for the ensuing months of having to talk about race which I'm not looking forward to in the slightest. So you know it's always good to write books about things you don't want to do.

[00:50:45] I am writing I'm doing a lot of public speaking and it's the summer. So right now I'm just trying not to kill my children who are I have a 1000 square foot house and I have three electric guitars two acoustic guitars a piano. It was way late in the house and someone taught my son Don't Stop Believing last year.

[00:51:12] And when I find them I'm going to hurt them because it's it's horrifying. And so I'm trying to finish my book at it. Well they a teenage said it's you know squeaks out Don't Stop Believing while pounding away on the piano over and over and over again. And it's it's it's not the worst thing that could have happened to me but I have trouble sometimes thinking of worst things that could have happened to me. So that's kind of where I'm at right now. Yeah just working a ton and love with my kids and writing and trying to you know keep my head above water and try figure out what I'm going to do after the book comes out and I'm doing some teaching writing classes this summer if anyone's interested online. And I do have a lot of fun teaching those and I try and make them like accessible to people who normally don't have the contacts necessary to kind of break into the writing world. And so I aim them both price and focus wise online. You know a lot of the stuff that. Is kind of handed down usually white dude to white dude when you're getting into the writing world try to kind of circumnavigate that and find a more ethical way to still be effective and get into the writing world.

[00:52:29] Thank you all for sharing with us.

[00:52:32] So now it's a chance for you all to ask questions Who.

[00:52:37] Who are your biggest comedic influences.

[00:52:39] Coming up my number one is Elvira Mistress of the dark. A lot of people don't know what she was like in the Groundlings and stuff. She's very funny. She writes a lot of the jokes that she does and not just when she does the horror hostess stuff but in her feature film which is really good that you should watch. She has so many good one liners in it and as a little kid I loved I loved her so much. I was totally inspired by her whole thing of like kind of knowing. Like being very self aware of how she was what she was presenting as like being this like sexy whore hostess lady but also like making fun of herself but still feeling in control of it and and how and how she was like so like such and I always read her as 100 percent feminist. I always thought she was so cool and so I. I love Elvira. That was my dream. I'm in the fan club I have a card. A local bar. So good. I met her what sort of horror convention those performing it and I told her she's my biggest comedic influence and she goes. Are you serious. I'm like yeah I totally know about your whole life story.

[00:53:48] And I was telling her so and she was God. No one fucking knows that about me. She was really cool. We hugged. We took pics. I love her.

[00:53:57] I would say like growing up I had almost none because I was the least funny child ever. I was just walking your eyes is a kid I. I hated to laugh and found nothing funny. But as I've gotten older I would say like I've definitely like lately just I have for the last couple of years really been loving Maria Bamford Baron Von. His last two albums were really solid as far as how they're put together. Of course you know also having a brother who did comedy for a very long time I think has definitely influenced me as a writer because my brother and I are really similar in a lot of ways and we also

lived. You know we're 18 months apart in age so a lot of the things with which he's been able to joke about are kind of shared life experiences which means like I can take a look at you know how he's kind of took. A different viewpoint of things that I also experience and that's definitely influenced me when I want to try a different tack or you know be a little liar is I've definitely been influenced by his style as well which now is mostly you know targeted around writing and performing you just really perform anymore. But I would say like whenever I also am super competitive with him. So what I do try and be funny. It's mostly like will I be funny enough that my brother won't be like lame which he does still all the time. And occasionally I am funnier than him when we're in the same room and I feel super excited about that.

[00:55:22] Either so I'm really curious. Elle what is in your

[00:55:27] Fanny pack. I'm sorry you what you want to. What is in your fanny but what's in my fanny pack.

[00:55:33] You want to know what's in it. It's not a diva cup. I can know it's my keys.

[00:55:40] I mean my wallet my charger for my phone so my lipstick. Oh. Oh yes my spark wallet is in there.

[00:55:52] Yeah just just various I know nothing cool. I'm sorry. It's pretty it's disappointing isn't it. I mean yeah it's really just boring stuff. Sorry. There a letdown. I feel bad. My question is about crossover. So sometimes you have comedians who are a minority and they can play well to

[00:56:18] Others like them. Like I'm Jewish and so I'm familiar with Jewish comedians who can go play the JCC audience really well but could also go play a mainstream audience really well and they might tell fewer Jewish jokes. But you know the their Jewish sense of humor is still there. So I'm just wondering do you have any interest in crossing over and if you did like what would you have to compromise and just how would your opportunities look different.

[00:56:52] Crossing over in like in like you mean like performing for like not clear brown people.

[00:56:58] I mean I do that all the time. Sadly most of my life. It's exciting when I get to be in rooms full of other queer people other people of color. But no I do. I perform for straight audiences all the time. I perform for like I said I did that dope competition in Billings Montana.

[00:57:20] But I perform it shows where I am. I did it. I'd traveled recently to Pocatello Idaho performed in a bar there called Charlie's. It was great. And it was the only like a bar I think of Pocatello. It was great. But I but I perform like four I guess like for straight audiences or four audiences that are into safe spaces like a lot. I do I do. And yeah they're. And like I was for it I make

conscious choices about what jokes I'm going to do in those situations. Sometimes I think it's really important to still do my queer jokes and my jokes about being non binary and stuff because I think those people should hear that. And I think that I can make it relatable to them by making it funny but not where they're laughing at me but we're laughing at the ridiculousness of people having problems with those things.

[00:58:08] So to me I think it's I consciously do those jokes in other rooms. I think it took me a couple years to realize there is a way that you don't have to change your voice or change what you're doing to still be relatable. I'm always scared. There has been times where I'm at a show and I'm like These people are gonna hate me and I'm always scared. And I always always. LA Times. Sometimes it doesn't work. Sometimes I walk out on stage and people already hate me. That has happened before where people are like nope. But one time I did a show full of. Really conservative white people and I don't know that they were conservative. They're just all wearing Kamau. I don't know if that was related. But like. They were there. The guy was the guy I was opening for was a very like raunchy like conservative kind of comedian guy that says a lot of racist jokes but I really needed the hundred dollars at the time. And so I was gonna go. I was gonna go out and open for him. And then the the the Booker told me hey don't go out there and do any jokes about your pussy. Then I. So I went out and this is like a room of maybe like 100 people. I just I literally just told them the story of my first abortion in like detail and there was like no jokes

[00:59:28] Here is like no jokes at all.

[00:59:32] They hated it. It was like a weird art installation of some kind. And then I just got my check and I left.

[00:59:42] I was like whatever I already felt like because the minute I walked out and there was like jeers and whispers I was like I mean I don't know. And that was like that was like four years ago.

[00:59:52] I wouldn't do that now I'd probably try to win over that audience. But at the time I was like man I want to take an early bus back to Seattle. So I'll just do this. But I think it's a I think it's totally possible to crossover. I've had instances instances where I can do it and times where I haven't tried hard enough and I didn't. But you know it's always it's I think it's always important to challenge yourself in comedy to not necessarily preach to the choir or whatever to to and I think part of the most important part of telling the jokes I tell is so people feel seen but also to like slightly educate other people not in a lecturing way like this I don't have all the answers clearly but like just share my experience so people can it can be normalized for people where it's where it's weird and different. You know I think to it's important for me at least what I've seen in multiple art forms is it's usually not the artist that crosses over it's the audience that crosses over and a lot of times if you're doing work with integrity and you're doing really good quality work especially with comedy people don't like to admit they didn't get a joke

[01:01:00] And they will be like Why is everyone laughing at this. I'm going to look this up like like my mom's the prime example like my mom calls me probably three times every day to get me to explain something that's being said on the Internet and. You know she's will admit she doesn't get it. And instead of being like Screw this the internet's not for me. She's like I want to be able to be sly and next time I talk. Like be in on this joke so I'm just going to call it Jonah and force her to explain in excruciating detail what this means. And also she'll call me like it's an emergency to her she'll call me like four times in a row because I won't pick up the phone. She'll just keep calling you call I get I'll be like what. And she'll be like OK. No. So first off what does beef mean like when you're talking about someone having a beef what is that. And then there's a thing here and people are laughing. I'm pretty sure it's a joke. Can you explain it. And I'd like I'm interviewing but she was like OK.

[01:01:54] So explain fast and I like Mom I don't answer for a reason. It was like I know and that's why I keep calling because you pick up but a lot of people are like that and maybe slightly less annoying ways.

[01:02:10] And I often find like in some of our best comedians even from marginalized communities are still out there like telling like the queers jokes ever but what happens is non queer people are like those people look like they are enjoying that joke a lot.

[01:02:26] And I need to get in on that. And then they start like googling and asking their friends you know and and that's how culture changes and then you have

[01:02:36] People who get it and appreciate it.

[01:02:37] So often it drives me completely bonkers to hear people say like I'll be in a writer's forum and they'll be like that one writer of color who's like I don't want to be known as a black writer I just want to be known as a writer.

[01:02:49] And I'm like oh shut up I want to be known as a black writer because I'm a black writer and I'm always going to be a black writer and when I'm writing my grocery list that's a black grocery list. And

[01:03:02] What I want is I want the audience to see me as a black writer and I want that to be part of the wonderful reason why they love me so much and I want it to be the thing they appreciate. I don't want to be a default or sadly my identity doesn't exist it exists in everything I do even when I'm doing really boring things and the audience will adjust and they and so long as we don't you know keep trying to baby them and sometimes they won't get it at first but people like to laugh.

[01:03:33] And if you're if you know what your audience is and you're making them laugh other people want it on that and they will do the effort you're already doing the effort of crafting a great joke.

[01:03:44] The audience can meet you halfway.

[01:03:50] Hi. I just wanna say thank you all of you for having this wonderful panel. I think this is like the first time I've seen a lot of panels but it's been so diverse as like you have a writer you have a comedian and a filmmaker. So this is really cool. And a librarian. Yes. That. Point. Thank you. And so is just incredibly bank of knowledge right here on the stage. So just wondering you know I know we've all seen great funny shows and seen you know wonderful films and read great writing and like oh can I do something like this like just wanting from each of your perspectives like if you can give maybe a few tips or or even as a great librarian you know some great tips of how someone can get in that game you know or how so I could get started or even just write to entertain themselves or their family or their friends and you know I just love that the little film was just you know it's just someone's living room and that was really cool and just wondered what your thoughts were just as someone who wanted to kind of get into that. Like how what was what would be your vice.

[01:04:51] I mean when I talk to new writers or aspiring writers the number one thing I say you know is definitely to just actually be writing to keep writing. It is so scary to put your thoughts out there I think in any form. And so people just kind of have these dreams They got halfway through they shortchange themselves. It seems that it's it is it is a very tough thing to do. The first piece I ever put publicly I had I swear to God a panic attack that lasted two days before it went like because I was so terrified of just actually putting my thoughts out there know that you know. Even if it's shitty it's no more shitty than all of the shitty stuff that's already out there and it has just as much right

[01:05:36] To be out there as anything else. And you just keep working at it and working at it. But also I would say you know find the spaces where people that you identify with are and connect and support them learn from them. I think you know I and I know a lot of other people in in the arts and I know. I can tell by Elle's actions that they feel very similar like we view other people in our art form as co-workers in like this really weird disjointed office where we never have to make eye contact and. We want better co-workers. And so I'm always super excited to help anyone and give tips of like where a piece should go and people message me a lot. I mean get it don't all message me because I'm also highly disorganized which means I'm gonna miss half of it but people like just me all the time saying you know what would be a good avenue for this. Do you know you know a good blog forum do you know a good editor I can send this to and I just want better co-workers. I want to be able to when I look at what's happening in the day find pieces of writing that are smart and funny and nuanced and responsible and I know a lot of comedians it is a lonely world. If you're a comedian who is not a you know a.

[01:06:53] A bro dude and you want more co-workers and definitely look for that community and support the community and be known by the community and then just kind of take a risk I mean and also like watch people bomb at it like watch people bomb watch someone get up in and open mike and just sit there and do like that weird like eating the microphone thing and like don't make eye contact. And then like there was there was like that when do that you still always just do that the whole time for like 10 minutes and you couldn't hear what he was saying. But the sky didn't fall down. Right. It wasn't like nobody's threw eggs at him. He got up. He did his thing though the worst that's gonna happen to you is you make it heckled occasionally but it's not going to ruin your life and know that see the worst you know see the worst piece see a piece that falls flat that no one reads and see that the sky doesn't fall down and you can handle the worst. So then you get out there and you do your best and it will get easier but connect to the people that are out there and know that other people from archways populations who are who are in the arts and in public spaces really do desperately want other people to be doing it too. And

[01:08:01] We've all been really creative in finding our way in. And it would be silly to insist other people reinvent the wheel and not you know give them some tips and you know kind of take them down.

[01:08:13] You know if they want the same path that we went down but definitely reach out yeah I would say similar to what Joel was talking about.

[01:08:21] I when I started doing comedy I mean I always want to be a standup comedian but it didn't seem like a realistic goal or thing that was really gonna happen I assumed I'd have to like live in Hollywood or something and I don't know I don't know what the rules were either so it worked. I was like I don't think that's gonna happen for me. But it was similar in the sense that like the one I moved to Seattle two of my close friends just happened to become good friends with three work friends and stuff. Were both stand up comedians who are also queer also people of color and they wanted me to do comedy too. They were like You're funny you should also be a standup comedian.

[01:08:56] And I was like No I'm not as funny as you guys but. And then I started doing it and then once I started doing it and I just didn't want to stop doing it mostly because I'm very competitive and I don't want to fall behind. But I also think the important part of doing comedy

[01:09:12] Is you have to actually really like entertaining people because if you don't if that's not why you're doing it you're going to have a lot of issues throughout your comedy career because that comedy is a way to meet people. It's not going to be the self affirming thing you thought it was gonna be like if you're doing it just because you want people to tell you you're funny and you're a good person. That's not it. That's not going to happen most of the time.

[01:09:38] And if that's your intention it's gonna be very clear to people watching you tell your crappy jokes. So I think it's important that you want to entertain people and every and everything else of that like I want entertain people want to make people feel good and that's where it also comes out where I want to entertain people I identify with people who identify with me. So that's important to me too. But I think it's a huge part of doing standup it's you know one of the best advice I ever got was that you never stop being nervous. And that's true. Like I've never gone before a show and not felt nervous. I mean even like after seven years like I'm still I'm still nervous before I walk on stage I'm still afraid no one's gonna like me I'm still afraid it's gonna go terribly wrong and sometimes and sometimes it does and that's just what it is.

[01:10:25] I think it's just like you can't blame the audience. You have to blame yourself unless you're in Billings Montana or whatever. But like

[01:10:33] In general like it's just you know it's it can be very comedy can be really great but it's not. If you want it to be great all the time it's not.

[01:10:45] But to me it's still worth it. I really enjoy being a comedian at this point I've been one so long I don't know what else to do. And I haven't I don't have enough jobs on my resume at this point to get a real job. But I love doing comedy. I think it's anything anyone can do it. You really just need to go to an open mike and try it out. The hardest part to get over is the stage fright usually for people that and also learning your voice which is really hard. The hardest part. Harrisburg comedy is who am I going to be. What's my voice going to be. And for me what I decided early on is I'm really bad at writing one liners I'm really bad at like political observations or current events. And so I just talk about myself. I just tell personal stories of my life and that way no one can copy your material too because it's just like you know it has the same. No one has that weird whatever I said that thing about plague on both your houses. No one did that as a kid besides me probably maybe they did. Maybe they'll relate they'll get excited. Not a lot of them are also standard comedians though. And so it's like I think the best way to do is you can tell stories about your life and just anecdotal stories formed in a in a joke which I won't go into long that's boring. But just they can totally work. I've. That's what I've done my whole the whole time and I was told at the beginning. You're not a comedian you're a storyteller. But like Who are those people. They're gone. Who cares. I mean that's what I do. I think it's I think stories are great. I love I love my. I love stories. People think they're funny and better than me being I don't know. There are really there are people who write really good one liners and like observational comedy but most of them aren't those people who are who are stuck. So yeah I am very bitter.

[01:12:28] I want to take a look at everything. I mean I think what you said is great.

[01:12:31] And I think also super important to respect your audience in writing or in comedy. I respect their feedback as well. Like you're never going to hit a point where you're so good. That every joke lands or every essay you write is a winner. And you if you stop learning from that you're going to get

stale. I can always tell even when really really established comedians have stopped working on their comedy stopped paying attention and just said like No I'm famous. That's funny you just don't know it yet. That's not an attitude you're ever gonna wanna take it with your audience. Maybe if it's not your audience if you're like Who are you people you're not going to like any of this know that don't you know change your whole act but respect your audience and listen to that feedback and constantly pay attention. Is this joke still working sometimes a joke that worked six months ago is not working anymore. Times change and constantly constantly practice like it's never you're never ever gonna hit the end point where you're like I don't have to work on this anymore. I don't have to get better at this because even if you became like the pinnacle of your craft at the moment the art change and it's just going to become stale almost immediately so just always keep working on it even if you're just sending it to your friends on Facebook and saying What do you think about this.

[01:13:49] If those are the type of people you want to make laugh or the type of people you want to educate or you want to reach in your work then actually pay attention to the feedback they give. And even if it's an audience of five. Makes that audience everything and work to them and keep working towards them and keep writing to you give them the best product that you want to get them to feel what you want them to feel and it's going to be better because even if there's if there's five people you know who are responding to that work then there's five million people out in the world that will respond as well and when you're right you take it to a greater stage. It's going to be such better quality and ready to just appeal to them right away.

[01:14:28] Access to resources for filmmaking can be a huge barrier. So I just want to share with you all the resources that made it possible for me to be where I am real queer youth is the queer youth filmmaking crash course that I now run it's a seven day long program it's sliding scale zero to two hundred ninety five dollars and it happens in July every July. We just expanded to Tacoma so we have a session in Seattle and Tacoma. A lot of the youth that come through our program don't pay anything. We also provide lunch and bus fare and all kinds of things. So that's cool. Blanket fort films is a nonprofit in Seattle that provides free gear rental like professional gear rental and mentorship to underrepresented and minorities minority communities. So check that out.

[01:15:26] Blanket fort films dot org also three dollar bill cinema partners with blanket fort films to host a sliding scale often at no cost. Filmmaking classes for queer and other minority adults. So three dollar bill cinema dork Yeah. So I want to speak really briefly to the ways the library can support

[01:15:48] Folks who are interested in getting into kind of a new art form. One thing that I'm thinking of right off the bat is we have something called your next skill basically a librarian will look at through the resources we have available and like let's say if you said you wanted to get into writing they would pass on some like personally a personalized resource list that would be available to you for free that's available we also have our Seattle right series that happens in the fall. I'm looking at the other librarians to make sure I'm speaking correctly we also have playback which is a way that local artists

can get their music online available for free. We also have a collection of E published I think of you publish books so self published. Is it called selfie selfie. And so that is something that you can probably get poetry writing kind of any sort of written text on. I don't know that we have any comedy classes. Maybe that's something we need to work on and then we also do do like different technology based things so if you're interested in different technology things we have some classes around that. I know my co-worker Christina is putting on a digital photography thing for teenagers through our summer of learning programs if you know any teens who are interested in photography or Oh. Teens through 26 so that's available and you can ask one of us for the sake of time we do need to wrap up here really quickly so if there's one last quick audience question and then we'll need to be brief up here I was just sort of wondering as an artist so this is for all three of you.

[01:17:18] Sorry for letting librarians but as an artist as you as a person start to evolve and you see your voice start to change. How do you remedy that within yourself and within your greater community. So Elle you were saying you regretted that Dick joke from the from the film. How do you grapple with that personally and with those around you that are holding you accountable.

[01:17:44] I think it's really important to listen to people because I've had like situations in the past where I think this comes up a lot like I'll try to say this as quickly as possible. I think this comes up a lot especially right now where where you see like let's say people talk about the problems with it like white feminism and something within Fez feminism as a whole has been like let's talk about periods because that used to be taboo. We weren't allowed to do that. Let's feel empowered about vaginas. But then people are like but not all women have vaginas and all women have periods and then some people are like that makes me angry. I just felt empowered by this thing and then that's like that goes across the board for like older queer people that don't like the word queer or don't like they can have like oh how many letters are we going to have in the LGBTQ whatever or like people that are like oh no but like what are your product.

[01:18:39] What do I have to care about your pronouns.

[01:18:40] And I think what that all comes down to is not even so much people being assholes as much as like when you get older you feel you have a fear about becoming irrelevant. You know and when did things change and progress you feel like you're not a part of it anymore of something that made you feel like you were had a community when you otherwise felt marginalized. And I had that experience myself because I've I've talked about things I thought were really feminist and then been called out for them being transphobia. And I think that's real. I think the most important thing that you have to do is go. And like I like I'm a non binary person. I don't dignify as trans. But if a trans person told me like what you said is transphobia I think it's like why would I to decide what this person should or should not find funny about like the Trans experience they're trans I'm not you know so why not listen to them.

[01:19:31] I think it's important to be open to those to the people who give you feedback and it's. And and yeah I mean the number one feeling is why you will argue is because you're embarrassed like I've argued you know like you're embarrassed that you didn't know something you're embarrassed you look like an asshole and you didn't mean to but get past the ego get past the defensiveness and just learn how to be a better person. You know it just like happens I've had this happen in my comedy career and it's it's just it's a learning experience. And you know I'm embarrassed about things I said like six months ago but I'm you know it's just part of what I when I first came out it's not binary there's a lot things I didn't know about being non binary because I've never been part of that community and you just say things you learn things and you move on and you just try to be open and respect to other people. I think that's the most important and it's and it's able to do. I mean you're able to do that people make mistakes as long as you own the mistake it's because part of apologies is not just to say I'm sorry you have to change the behaviors you have to listen to people and actually learn.

[01:20:37] And I don't always. I'm not like a perfect person but I mean that's my intention in life. To do that. And so I mean you know like 20 years ago is against affirmative action I'm so embarrassed about that now. But at the time I was like I don't want to beat like kind of like this thing like I don't want to say I go into this college because I'm Mexican and I go here because I worked hard. It's like you know OK. And now I look back and I'm like that is very embarrassing. But you know you just you learn you and you become a better person and like a jumbo was saying earlier you know progression will things progressed. That's part of it. And the fear of being out of the loop being irrelevant being embarrassed you had to just let that go. You could follow follow the progression if you want to be a part of it. And yeah we're gonna fuck up and make mistakes. Just own when you do that's all.

[01:21:20] Yeah I would say definitely commit to you either want to look like a good person or you want to be a good person and you commit to one or the other. And if you're committed to being a good person and you see human beings as flawed people who make mistakes that means you're going to commit to learning once you're made aware if you're just committed to looking like a good person it's really easy to shut down and say I don't want to re-evaluate what I thought I knew about myself and a lot of times especially with higher ego in our if our work is about how we see the world

[01:21:52] And we kind of get put up as voices of something and then we find that we've been wrong about this aspect. It can be really bruising and it can be a real struggle to your identity and your status. And anyone who has status read anything that's gonna happen I would say first off tie a lot less your status around that but don't put so much your ego into your work even if you are a very observant person you're observant in the moment and it's never going to be 100 percent. But also I would say it is we have to get used to looking at the ways in which we fall short and looking at the ways in which we hurt people because we all do we live in a system designed to make it really easy to hurt people and really hard to not hurt people. And we it doesn't that doesn't negate our responsibility it just makes it a problem that everyone is subject to it's going to come for everyone and I would say we need to know that we need to have that sort of humility when we are looking at our


communities and know that right now while we are mad about something else we are also oppressing and harming someone in a way that we don't know. And we have to be ready for when that comes for us and be able to accept that with the same amount of responsibility that we would hope someone who's harming us would accept it but also to look at it as an opportunity if you are doing something for public consumption and you have an audience and a portion of your audience comes to you and says I am unable to connect to your work or I am harmed by your work I'm unable to enjoy your work because of this.

[01:23:21] Yeah it sucks to know that maybe you've been hurting people this whole time but whether you know it or not you still would have been doing it. And now what you have is an opportunity to not do that and change discourse to normalize acceptance and inclusion. Whereas before you were normalizing exclusion and it's a wonderful opportunity and it's a wonderful opportunity to model that sort of growth for other people so they can see that it can be done. And if the worst thing that happens to you is that you're made aware that you've hurt someone else you've had a very good day and you can kind of incorporate that into who you are. And people can see that you won't die. And and then suddenly you have more friends and so be grateful even if it doesn't come gently. It's an opportunity to actually expand your world and your audience.

[01:24:09] So one thing I support guys real quick I swear I just really quick to say something has helped me in comedy also as a person as I told myself all the time that nobody's a good or bad person. People do good or bad things. So when someone tells you a messed up people's problems always go I'm a good person and I'm like you did something bad and that's really all it is. So just try and do good things. And one of them is to recognize good something bad no one's inherently good or bad. That's the thing that always makes me feel better when mistakes happen when you know how you can learn from them because. And just saying. But I'm a good person when you fuck up is like the worst response. So just yeah that's the last thing I gonna say. Thank you bye.

[01:24:53] Yeah I would echo all of that listening is I think the most important thing you can do. If somebody says that you that they are hurt you have to listen. This film. I. There are things that I would would do differently if I could I self identify as a perfectionist and I see things that are wrong with this film and it's impossible to change it because it is made it's done. It goes on the festival circuit and it tours around the world for like a year and a half. And and it's still here in the same exact way it was when we made it in 2015. And so it's it's hard to watch something over and over and over again and like know that I wish I'd done it differently. But staying silent is the worst thing. I think you can do. And so even though it's not perfect to me I think it's important that it was made and that I listened to feedback and that I stay accountable to implementing that feedback.

[01:26:01] My goodness. Thank you all so so much. Can you give our panelists a. Round of. Applause



[01:26:12] This podcast was presented by the Seattle Public Library and Foundation and made possible by your contributions to the Seattle Public Library Foundation. Thanks for listening.

