

# THE COMEDY GAZELLE



# ABOUT THE GAZELLE

When I first moved to Chicago, I was immediately struck by the level of talent in the scene. "Fuck, she's good," I thought as I watched Kristen Toomey annihilate a sold out Laugh Factory. *Why haven't I heard of her before?*

It's a question I come back to often, and a major problem here. The city's bursting with household-name-level talent, but unless you're in the midst of it, it can pass you by.

That's why I started The Comedy Gazelle – to bring outsiders into the heart of Chicago comedy, and to share knowledge that can hopefully make the scene that much stronger. It was also the pandemic and I had shit else to do.

Thanks for your support.

– Jerry

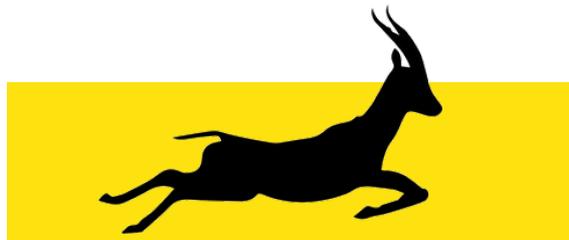
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# INTERVIEW: JOEY VILLAGOMEZ

Joey Villagomez (@joeydaclown) is the epitome of living a life worth talking about. A master storyteller and long-time Chicago staple, Joey's appeared on *Bill Burr Presents: The Ringers*, and is set to record his special, produced by All Things Comedy, March 5 at the Den Theatre. We talked his appearance on *Jerry Springer*, finding your comedic style, the five year mark, and much more.

**I saw you on Stand Up Stand Up and you were talking about being on Cops and Jerry Springer —**

The only one that's true out of that shit is Jerry Springer. I wasn't really on Cops. But it's a true story; my cousin has it on VHS somewhere, dude.

**You said that was the first time you made a crowd laugh. Did that get you thinking you could do standup?**

I've always wanted to do standup. But that day — my cousin got tickets. All you had to do was call into the Jerry Springer Show and they put you on the waitlist and send you free tickets. It was fucking wild. You're outside waiting to get into the studio, just a bunch of fucking ghetto ass people. The episode that I watched was about a midget. It was a little midget dude that hated women cause they treated him like shit his whole life, so he opened up this psychic office and would get these girls to get naked and he would secretly record them. He would dress up like a genie: "I'm just getting them back for the way women treated me." The guests were women that he scammed. And at the end of the Jerry Springer Show, he used to go up to the crowd and let you say shit. The midget was talking about how he's gotten blowjobs, he's gotten pussy, gotten threesomes ever since he did the genie thing. They called him the Teeny Genie, that was his thing. There was a joke back in the day: "What do you call a gay midget? A low blow." So I said that, dude. Jerry came up to me, I'm like, "Hey Teeny Genie, when she gave you that blowjob was it a low blow?" And everybody fucking started laughing, dude. The crowd was like, "Ohhhh," laughing and shit. That was my TV debut, dawg. I gotta find a way to get that VHS.



**You've got all these crazy stories. What was your style like when you first started?**

I'm pretty much the same, I'm just not doing hacky shit. We all got them hacky bits that get cheap laughs cause they work. When I started, I was only doing a solid 10-15 minutes and the first three minutes was all hacky shit, using stereotypes. I was really good at roasting as a teenager; I was one of the top dogs here in the hood. I'd use an old yo mama joke just to get the crowd going. That's the only thing when I watch old videos, like, "I can't believe I used that hacky shit." But my style's pretty much been the same. All my jokes are pretty much little stories. I never did setup, punchline. They're all pretty much something that really happened, or I saw here in the hood, and I flipped it into a funny joke.

*The Teeny Genie,  
borderline  
rapist/prankster*



**I think you having to sit on the stool almost helps with that. It's like you're bringing people into a campfire story.**

Yeah, dude. My style was already storytelling, but now when I'm doing sets post injury, I can't move around and be animated. I can be animated from the stool, but I gotta be more descriptive with the shit. There has to be a bunch of little funny things in between, so I don't bore the crowd. I just make sure there's something funny in every part of the story I'm telling. Even quick little things, like sayings I said back in the day.

**Are you working all that out on stage, or are you sitting down trying to add in little details?**

No, everything on stage. For example, Zanies records our sets and will send it to us. I'll watch it and something quick will pop up in my head, like, "Oh, I should've said that." I'll make a mental note or jot it down on my phone and I'll throw it in there the next time I do that bit. But everything's pretty much worked out on stage. I always followed something Dave Attell said. I could sit here and write a joke right now, but it ain't shit until I've tried it in front of a crowd, bro. You have to do it in front of a crowd. It's not a joke until you get on stage and you do that shit.

**Something I noticed you do is you'll be like, "Any weed smokers? Where my weed smokers? Any teachers? Where my teachers at?" You keep engaging the crowd to bring them into the next bit. Is that an intentional thing you're trying to do to keep them engaged?**

It's kind of a tactic I use to see where the bit is gonna go. Like the teacher shit, I have a bunch of jokes about going to Chicago public schools. I have at least 5-6 different bits. So it's one of the things where I kind of test the crowd. "Teachers have it rough, where the teachers at?" If there's a lot of them, I'll drop three or do the longer version of them. If there's not the reaction I'm expecting, I'll still do the teacher joke because I don't like bailing out like that, but I'll do one or two, then move on to the next. It's like, "How much time am I gonna spend on that shit?"

**I'm sure you get lots of variance then within your sets. You're not doing the same set over and over, it's almost tailored to the crowd you're performing to, right?**

Yeah, exactly. I usually do that just here locally, when I ask questions a lot. If I headline up in Madison or the Improv, I keep that crowd questioning to a minimum. I

do a set, set. When you see me asking, it's something local or I got some new shit I wanna try. It's more like a reading the crowd thing. But if I'm headlining out of town, I go in knowing what set I'm gonna do.

**Something I've been really curious about lately is the order of jokes and where you position things in a set to get them to hit harder. How much importance do you give that, and how do you structure your set order wise?**

Every comic has their own way of doing it. I want to get the crowd to like me within the first minute, dude. Let me try to get all these people on my side before I really get into my set. If they like you within your first three or four minutes, even if you do something they don't like, you crack a Trump joke, they might laugh at it cause they're like, "Alright, I like this guy; he's funny." I've always approached it like that. I try to get them on my side first.

**I noticed that. You went up and told a story about Jim Flannigan, who was just before you. I thought that was interesting; there's a lot of different ways to win a crowd over without jumping into your material.**

Yeah, the way I open my sets now... that's all the experience. I wouldn't do that 10-15 years ago when I started. I used to drive myself crazy like, "What the fuck am I gonna open with?" Once I got through that, I would flow. But that drove me nuts for years. Now I'm just comfortable. You just gotta be comfortable, dawg. Especially now, having to sit, it's like, "Alright are you guys really gonna hate a motherfucker that's crippled?" And two, I got jokes. They're gonna come. If you didn't like that little story and it didn't get big laughs, oh well. I got some jokes for your asses coming right now. That's just experience and getting comfortable getting up on stage.

**When I interviewed Nate Craig, he said the mental clock in his head has gotten longer, where he can go longer without getting a laugh, as opposed to when you're newer and need a laugh every two seconds.**

Yeah, cause you know you got something coming that's gonna get laughs. We've all been through that. Knock on wood, dude, but you see how I'm really comfortable talking on stage? I've always pretty much been like that. In 15, 16 years, I never totally bombed, bro. Never. Not at an open mic, bar show. I've struggled; I've had sets where it took me a couple minutes to get the crowd, or half the room didn't get the shit. But total silence? Never. Put that shit in there; I'll tell anybody in their faces, man. We've all had bad sets. I've done shows fucking drunk, where people look at me like I'm fucking crazy. But after 5-10 minutes I got em laughing. I'd get off stage upset: "I fucked them jokes up." But complete silence? A bomb? I swear to God that's never happened to me, man. I've always approached it like that: don't bomb. You're here to get laughs, motherfucker. Whether I have to make fun of somebody in the crowd or something, you're here to get a laugh or two. You're not here to bomb. I always had something funny to say, man. You remember the old Comedy Bar? You were around for a lot of those open mics.

**Yeah, yeah.**

There's a real crowd in there. That's why I always tell people that's one of the better open mics cause you're not trying to make comics laugh. I would stick around there and go up and try brand new material, even a joke I made up five minutes ago sitting there. "Let me try this shit out." When you're consistent, you're just doing that constantly. I was getting on stage ten times a week regularly. You're always gonna have something funny to say, even if a joke don't work.

**Do you have any advice for the people who are getting up ten times a week, but for the most part it's open mics? How do you take that next step?**

Put a solid set together, man. Even if you gotta throw a joke out and fill in a new one. You have a killer ass joke, add onto it. It depends on your style, but always try to build a set. Here's how I look at it: a lot of comics get comfortable with just doing the rooms that they do, or their buddies' showcases, or open mics. But if you wanna become a working comedian, you gotta get into clubs. You gotta feature. That's how you build your set. Keep showcasing. Build a solid set so you can show bookers, bro. And if you're not getting into those rooms, it's one of those things where you gotta keep working



and see what happens. There's people who are not funny, but have a really good work ethic and they took the right classes and they get gigs, dude. And they blow the fuck up. Shit happens when you're just out there working, bro. Try to get on those little independent shows because they bring real crowds in. Try getting on those showcases. It can't be open mics all the time; you gotta get in front of real crowds. Build a set, tape your shit, record the audio. That's what I'd do; I'd record the audio of all my sets just so I could hear what the hell I was talking about.

**Are you still listening back to all your stuff, or are you feeling it out in the moment? How are you building your material now?**

I got a lot of fucking material because of how long I've been doing it. I found some DVDs and stuff on my old hard drive; I had a lot of old clips from like 2009. I found a bunch of that stuff and there's a lot of bits in there. Real stories I was telling about my kids and parents and shit. I wasn't a storyteller style comic back then; my shit was quicker. Some of the jokes I'm doing now, I took from them old sets and I'm just rewriting that story and making it longer and funnier. I'm finding this shit on DVDs and hard drives, bro.

**I'm curious cause you draw a lot from your real life, and when I interviewed Kilgallon, he said that as a comedian you have to live a life that's worth talking about. I think there's a lot of comics that are like, "I don't have any stories; I'm not interesting," What would you say to people that believe that?**

It's kinda true about living a life worth talking about, but it just depends on what you're trying to get out. There's some brilliant comics that write silly shit. Remember Tristan Triptow? He was a real funny dude at the Laugh Factory. Off the wall, fucking weird; he looks like a pedophile. And he cracks you up. It's one of those things where it just depends on what kind of comic you wanna be and what you wanna make people laugh at, bro. I lived a crazy fucking life growing up in this neighborhood. My fuckin family's nuts dude, you have no idea. That's the shit I grew up with, and I like being one of those comics that the crowd comes up to after like, "I relate to what you're talking about." I've always enjoyed that after a show: "When you were talking about going to the thing with the kids, I relate to that." Ten years ago, I was like, "That's gonna be the style I'm gonna stick with." It just depends. You can live a boring fucking life, but you can watch TV and write funny shit about what's going on out there. It's all about what the fuck you wanna do, dawg. That's why I don't knock comedians. I don't like hacky comics, but I've never knocked comedians for what the fuck they're talking about on stage. If your shit's getting laughs, fucking roll with it, man.

**That's interesting: thinking about how you want to get laughs. Maybe if you don't have a ton of stories, you're not a storyteller, and you just gotta find your way of making people laugh.**

Yeah, like Jim Flannigan is a very smart comedian. He writes brilliant shit. I sit in the back like, "Fuck I wish I had thought of that." It's all dependent on what you feel comfortable putting out. Jim's got this joke about gambling. He's like, "When gambling was illegal you were gambling money you didn't have. That's the fun of gambling! Now, you gotta plug your bank account to it and take the money out before? No! Back then you call the bookie, you put your money down. The bookie didn't check your bank account. You might have to leave the state, but..."

**That's amazing.**

He was headlining Zanies Rosemont and it fucking murdered. I was one of his openers. The place was cracking up and I'm just sitting there — my brain doesn't have the time to sit there and be like, "Yeah, gambling

was better!" It's weird, you know what I mean? I'd rather, "Oh, I remember that funny shit that happened to me when I was 16," and then write a joke. I don't got time to sit down and break down a gambling joke. It's fuckin weird, dawg. It just depends on what your style is.

**You've had these 15+ year long relationships with some comics you came up with, like Jim. What's that like, seeing someone you've been doing comedy with that long? That's gotta be cool, right?**

Oh yeah, yeah. You know how you have mutual respect for your coworkers and shit like that? There's some of them that are famous as hell. You know Kumail Nanjiani? I can message him on Instagram and he'll reply to me. The dude's a fucking millionaire actor. He doesn't even do standup anymore; he's gonna win an Oscar one day, dude. And it's one of those things where you kind of already knew who was gonna make it. Once you get through the fifth year with these people and then you see them go to New York and LA; it encourages you. Hannibal was one of the guys on the scene. TJ Miller. They took acting and other avenues as far as getting big and rich with this, but it kind of inspires me and keeps me going. I used to rock stages with these dudes. You see what they're doing and it kind of keeps you going, bro. I have faith in something happening one day, you know? If you're good at it and you keep working, shit will happen.

**I'm about three-ish or so years in — I'm curious to see how many people I know that'll still be doing it 10, 15 years from now.**

To be honest with you, you gotta get to that fifth year, bro. Three years is nothing. Your first two years are just getting to know what standup comedy is, man. I've met newer comics who are very funny, but nobody takes you seriously until you get to that fifth year. People always ask, "How long have you

been doing comedy?" And when you say two or three, the seriousness isn't there. So when you get to that fifth and you're consistently working — "How long you been doing comedy? Five years? Oh yeah?" After your fifth year, it feels like work. Not work in the sense where you hate your job, but it's something you gotta keep doing. Once I passed that fifth year and stuff started to pick up, there's no turning back type shit. Then when you get to the tenth year, it's like, "I gotta make this work somehow." It depends on how much you really like the industry. It's a brutal industry, show business. Standup comedy is like the entrance to the shit. Do you wanna be an actor? Do you wanna be just a standup comic? Do you wanna write a TV show? You figure all that out after you hit that fifth year. Three years is too soon to quit or to think that you're gonna blow up. If you're only three years in and you're like, "I'm gonna blow up," — slow down. If you're only three years in, "I'm gonna quit," — don't quit yet. That's too soon.

### **What do you think you should focus on if you're three, four years in?**

Showcasing at a club. Write a solid 5-10 minutes to get into the comedy club and become a regular. You gotta focus on the industry part of it; the comedy clubs are the entrances to the industry. The independent rooms are cool, don't get me wrong, but I'm talking about constantly working as a standup comedian. Gotta get into the clubs, man, cause that's where the fresh crowds are at every weekend. If you're featuring for a big name, there's gonna be a fucking crowd. When I started, I was doing the Mikey O shows, which was dope cause he was the only Latino producer in town. He was letting me host a lot. That's another thing too; that's what makes you very comfortable on stage. Host a lot when you're new. Don't turn down hosting gigs. It got to a point where if I hosted at the Improv or Zanies, hosting was my open mic. That's where I'm gonna try new shit, cause I'm just the host. I'll crack a couple jokes, make them laugh, but I'll try some new jokes. When you're the host, you're the host. They didn't pay to come see you. You get to learn how to do a little crowd work. Hosting teaches you every aspect of it.

### **When you're doing longer sets, I know audiences can get tired or catch onto what you're doing. It's hard to hold someone's attention for an hour. What are some things you've learned that've helped you with that?**

Man, you gotta just be interesting. I never spend too much time on one topic. You can't bore the crowd, dude. Lately I've done a lot of corporate and holiday parties, and they don't go the way clubs go. I'm doing 30, 40-minute sets where my first five minutes I'm struggling just to get them, like, "Alright, take me serious, I'm fucking funny." That little half hour can take forever cause that first five minutes it's like, "Jesus Christ, these people don't wanna hear this shit." When you're killing it goes by fast, and when you're not... that's why we say, "They made me work for my shit, they made me sweat a little bit," cause you're trying to pull out the laughs. When you're doing a long set, you just can't be boring, dude.

### **When you do have to work for it, are there any tricks you've learned to help you bring people in?**

Honestly, for me what works is always having them funny bits just ready to pull out. I already know my sets. If that doesn't hit that hard, I know what I'm gonna pull out. You know how with athletes they say the game slows down for them? When I'm on stage and it's not going well, in my head I'm already pre-thinking: "Don't do the next one, do that other one." It's weird; I'm putting shit together in my head while I'm talking.

### **Do you feel like that takes you out of the moment? Like you're worried about what you're going to say next?**

No, that's the moment I'm in. It depends. If the joke's not working well, I'm thinking, "Get out of there and get them laughing." But if the joke's killing, I stay in that moment. Put it this way: if I don't like the moment, I'm trying to



change it. But if it's a killer ass moment and everyone's having a good time, I'm already thinking of what I'm gonna do next to keep that shit going. If I'm in front of a hood ass crowd, or a cleaner older white crowd, I know what tags to pull out and not use cause they wouldn't get it. All that shit's popping up in my head as I'm talking. And that's just from constantly getting on stage.

**That's interesting. You're not like, "This is my set." It changes from crowd to crowd.**

Well, that's because I have so much material. You have to build up that material. I'm trying to go back to my early days. When I started I was a little more boisterous and ignorant, dude. One of my escape plans was making fun of someone in the crowd. If a joke wasn't working well and I see someone in the front, "Hey man, what's up with your shirt?" I was one of those dudes, bro. That's why it's hard to answer those questions because I haven't been in those situations for so long. For the past five years, I go in with a game plan and I pretty much know what I'm gonna do. Once you're doing it full time 15 years later, you have sets, dude. You have a five-minute set, you have a 10-minute clean set, I have an hour I could do, an old 45 minutes I could do. It's weird.

**When I interviewed Kilgallon, he said he tries to have a "year one mentality" and ask himself if year one him would be excited about where he is now. Do you have an answer to that?**

I don't know man, because it's different for every comic. I know comics that have been doing it 6-7 years and they got something big out of it. I had a family the whole time. I never left to LA or New York earlier in my career, but if I did, something would've blown the fuck up, dude. Put it like this: all I can pat myself on the back for is that I never stopped doing it. I never gave up. It's just one of those things like, "Damn, you stuck with it, dude." I never stopped. Since the first time I got on stage I never stopped. I never took a break, just stuck with it. I've been on stage at least once or twice a week, except during the pandemic, like consistently for a long time, dude.

**A lot of people have different advice for new comics. I get the sense you'd say it's very much stage time and getting up as much as possible?**

That's how you get comfortable talking in front of people, dude. That's what it basically comes down to. You're not gonna know what you're doing until you get in front of people. Just consistently getting on stage in front of different crowds. Small crowds, big crowds, just getting up, dude. 2019 was one of the few years where

pretty much every gig was dope cause I got that Comedy Central shit and I was just getting booked on cool shit. But before that, I was doing ten shows a week and seven of those shows sucked. But I was getting on stage and working my shit, recording the audio, coming home, listening to it, writing down tags, then you headline a show a week later, you fucking murder. It's just part of the process, dude, just getting up.

**Is there any advice you've gotten over the course of your career that still sticks with you today?**

Yeah man, one is the getting up. I've heard that from a lot of comics that are successful, just constantly getting up. Another — it's something that I haven't done yet, just because of the way the business is —but if you want to make money, you've got to be versatile. I regret not taking a full acting class 10 years ago. Writing, I should've taken writing more seriously five years ago. Now I am, but five, six years ago I should've. A lot of comics told me that, even Bill Burr told me that when I did the taping. He slapped me in my back like, "Take some fucking acting classes, dude." It's not just about standup anymore. Once your face gets out and you're funny then you can tour, you're gonna be filling out arenas cause you got fans that've seen you on something. It's not just about standup. You gotta be versatile now, dude. I wanna take another voice acting class. I need to do that shit. That's the advice that's sticking with me right now. I regret not doing a few of those before the pandemic.



**And what's the dream for you? Are you trying to have that acting, voice acting type career?**

Not big with the acting, but the voice acting and the writing, that's something I definitely gotta get deeper into. Especially the writing. Cause working with All Things Comedy and talking with Bill [Burr] and the shit we got coming up, a lot of my material can be turned into something else. So writing is something that I'm gonna get deeper into.

**Last question. Is there anything you'd change about the Chicago scene if you could?**

I love Chicago, don't get me wrong, but I don't care about that stuff as much as I did before. Six, seven years before I was one of the, "You gotta preserve the Chicago comedy scene!" Now there's so many people moving here, I don't know half of these motherfuckers. Half of them aren't even from Chicago. It's just different, dawg. I'm gonna be completely honest with this shit: I've been injured and then the pandemic, so I'm not out there like I used to be, but I see what happens on social media – comics hyping up their friends, putting out a 30 second reel that got laughs, but it's some cheap crowd work. Then I worked with some of these people. I've been on shows with some of these newer comics and they suck, Jerry, I'm telling you. And not in the way like, "Hey bro you suck!" It's just not what I'm seeing on social media. Like far from it. You know, the comic that goes on Facebook like, "Oh my god, I saw fucking what's his name do a set! Everybody should be booking him!" You know what I'm talking about?

**Yeah, a lot of blowing smoke up people's asses.**

Yeah, exactly. Then I'm headlining at Comedy Bar and they got this motherfucker featuring for me and he's just bombing all weekend. Bombing hard.

**Well, that's my favorite answer yet. "I don't know these motherfuckers, but they suck."**

Yeah, it's a lot of blowing smoke up their asses on social media. I'm not saying, "Oh, quit" or "get the fuck out of here!" But it's like, "Alright dude, you're not as funny as your friends are making you seem to be, man." I'm not an asshole to these people, but work on your shit. Comics still have a lot to learn. That's why I'm telling you, Jerry, three years, don't put yourself low or too high, man. You still got shit to work. There's still time to work, dude.



# **BONUS: Joey Villagomez's Top 10 Chicago Comics**

**THESE ARE ALL HARD WORKING COMEDIANS NEW AND OLD THAT MAKE ME WORD HARDER. AND ALL GOOD FRIENDS OF MINE.**

**1. JIM FLANNIGAN**

**2. KEN FLORES**

**3. T MURPH**

**4. VINCE CARONE**

**5. DAVE HELEM**

**6. KRISTEN TOOMEY**

**7. JOE KILGALLON**

**8. KEVIN BOZEMAN**

**9. MO GOOD**

**10. AND ME DAMMIT!**

## SHOW SPOTLIGHT: THE BIG ASS SKETCH REVUE

*Cassidy Kulhanek, Michael Serio, and Patrick Murphy (@kidnapped.comedy) are the producers of The Big Ass Sketch Revue, an exciting new show that brings together Chicago's biggest names in sketch comedy across all its different schools. Don't miss their first show on Thursday, January 5 at Sleeping Village!*

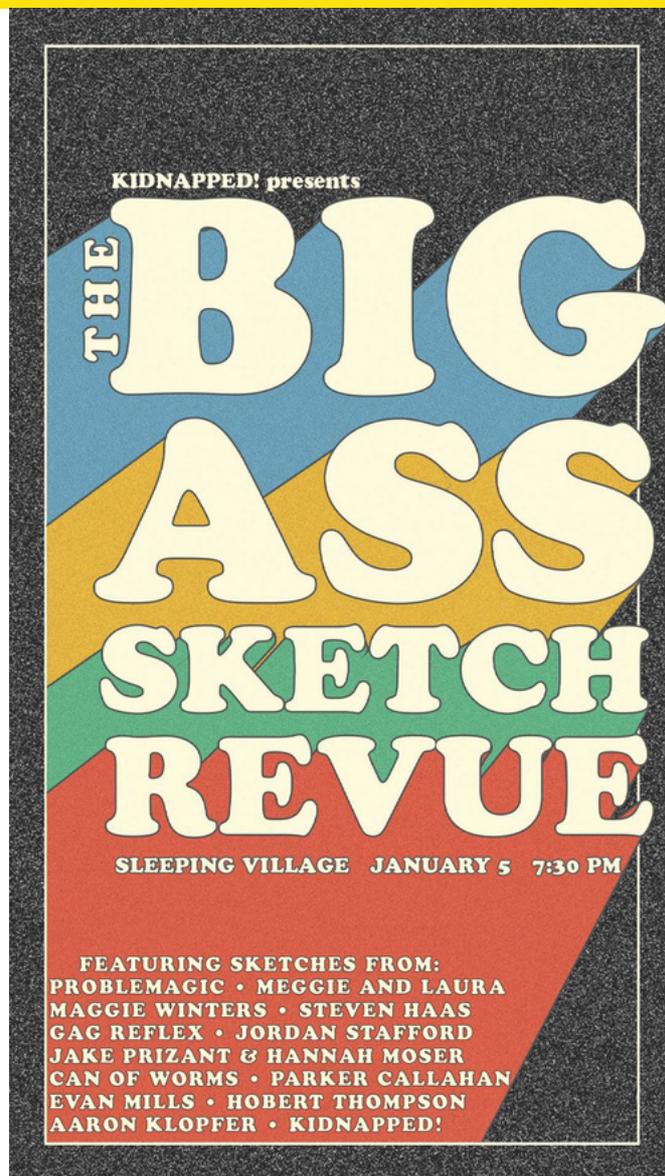
### Can you tell me a little more about The Big Ass Sketch Revue?

**CK:** The Big Ass Sketch Revue is a revue of sketch from all around the city and all different kinds of sketch. There are going to be teams doing sketches, solo sketch artists, and video performers as well. Usually, you have to bop around the city and go to a bunch of different venues to see all these different artists, but we're bringing all the different schools of sketch under one roof for the show. It should be a really great variety and a diverse group of ideas and approaches to the medium of sketch comedy.

**PM:** I think our idea going into it was to create a showcase of a lot of different types of sketches. In Chicago, there's so much sketch history, but it's not being presented in a singular place. Or maybe it's a lot of variety shows, but then there's musical acts and stuff. We really wanted to showcase the sketch comedy happening in Chicago.

**I was talking to one of the producers of Comedians You Should Know, and he said they started CYSK because they were frustrated. Was there any frustration that led to you starting this? What made you want to put it together and get it going?**

**MS:** There hasn't been a lot of sketch shows. Where you see pure sketch is at Second City, but that has such a barrier to entry, especially with the price points now. You'd see some at variety shows, but it's become so disparate and so hard to do, especially post pandemic, that a lot of sketch shows, and sketch groups, have died down a little bit. You have to get together to do it and with the pandemic, you don't really have people getting together, writing together anymore. We were getting frustrated that



the sketch community in Chicago was slowly dying off. What we wanted to do was put on *the* big show for sketch, so we can start building up that community again and show people, "Oh, there's something you can reach for here." And also, we don't want it divided by theater. A lot of sketch is divided, and a lot of times the people on the Annoyance sketch teams don't necessarily work with the Second City sketch teams. Even the standups who do sketch, you don't necessarily see them working with the improvisers who do sketch. So, we wanted to put them all in one space to show there's still a sketch community in Chicago and it's still strong.

**PM:** I think what's nice about that is if you see, "Oh, there's this sketch show happening; there's avenues for sketch to

be put out this way," it kind of drives people who might be interested or have always wanted to do it. It spurs that conversation. We hope that there's a bulk of people interested and that it just grows and grows; that's absolutely a dream that would come out of it.

### **Do you guys have any advice for somebody that's trying to get into sketch or might be interested? How would somebody get started in sketch?**

**MS:** Everyone, especially people who are in comedy, you're always sitting around, laughing with friends about certain things. Those always make the best sketches, the things you don't even think about. A lot of people don't realize that those group of friends should be the people you're doing sketch with, the people you know the best. The number one thing is to take those ideas and write them down. Don't be afraid to write down stuff that makes you laugh.

**CK:** I think improv can be a good way to find your community, but I think Michael is absolutely right: finding people that you trust already that you can work with is really important, because when you're coming into sketch, you don't want your ideas to be too precious. You want to be able to collaborate and be malleable and find the best thing for the sketch, not necessarily the best thing for you. My big advice would be to truly be open to collaboration and not be so driven towards your set ideas.

### **Is there a submission process for anyone interested in doing the next show?**

**CK:** As of right now, there isn't. Sleeping Village is talking to us about making it a series and doing it a couple of times a year. As we move forward with doing it again, there's going to be more of a process, but we haven't started working on the logistics of that just yet because we're so focused on getting this first one done and getting it done really well.

**PM:** I think that's what is so great about the implementation of video into the show. It does allow for an ease of submission. It's very easy to get eyes on a video or send a video in. Maybe people that are more video focused or great editors or have interesting ways of producing video content can submit, even if they're not doing live shows. That's definitely something we think is interesting and want to highlight in a show like this.

### **Are you guys yourselves doing any sketches, or are you just focused on producing?**

**CK:** We're gonna do a couple sketches as well. We kind of structured our sketches within the show to help distinguish the different acts of the show. The show's gonna have two acts and an intermission, and we're kind of at the top and bottom of either act, so that you have a clean entryway and exit point from each act. Aside from that, we'll be behind the scenes running things and making sure that things go as smoothly as possible.

**PM:** Have you ever been to Sleeping Village?

**I haven't.**

**MS:** They've mostly been doing up and coming alt bands and traveling bands. When we were talking with them, they were super excited to start bringing comedy into their space. They've had Sarah Squirm come in and perform there after her first year on SNL, but it's mostly been bigger, more well-established acts, rather than local acts. So, we're bringing more of the local scene into the Sleeping Village sphere.

### **That's awesome. And if I'm a local comedy fan, why should I check out this specific show?**

**CK:** I think that no matter who you are or what your sense of humor is, the group of people we've put together for this show has such a range of points of view and such a range of senses of humor, that anyone will find something that they enjoy at this show. Not only that, but the show is very variable from act to act, so it feels brand new the whole way through. I would recommend it to anybody.

**THE 2022  
GAZELLIES**



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