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Spring Hill - Two Ways About it

Matt Rife and Iliza Shlesinger Talk Comedy, Controversy, and Creativity

00:00:00 Did you **** a relative of mine? <laugh>. I You have great eyebrows and they look familiar. That's all I'll say. No. I'm gonna be getting dms from like young girls that are like, don't touch him. No, I think, I think you're gonna be just fine. Yeah. Maybe the, maybe the gays. The gays. My dm. Yeah. The Gaze <laugh>. Welcome to two ways about a art class. I'm your art instructor. B and we'll be painting with Matt and Eliza. We're gonna be drawing freehand today. We're getting creative. There is no right or wrong way.

00:00:38 Oh, there's A wrong way. If you make me look like mask, I'm gonna be very upset. Animated, pronounced. An easy way to start drawing a face is just by drawing a circle or an oval. Very lightly. Try not to draw both of my breasts. Just do the one. Keep It around. I didn't even notice you had two, to be honest. Thank <laugh>. Then we'll make lines, But he doesn't have an oval face. Like there's a very pronounced jar. You're already an egg. Don't even worry. It's not an, it's not an oval. Whatever shape you think it's,

00:01:10 It's a cut jam. This is already offensive. No, no. This is good. All right. And then after you guys draw the shape of the face, whatever you think it is, just draw a line straight down the middle. Can I flip mine? Because actually I feel like it would look better. Whatever You upside down is my, This is Your thing. I am trying to make you look gorgeous and I think I'm gonna end up hurting your feelings. And the intention was to like a Michelangelo. Ask David. You were in a car with me on a marble.

00:01:36 I was trying. I They didn't have the budget for it. So, uh, quick, funny. Not really that funny story. You were the first comedian that I ever met when I visited LA for the first time outside the comedy store. I was with Eric Griffin. Yeah. He was like showing me around LA for just my visit. You took me to the Comedy store and you were out in the back patio and I was obsessed with your comedy Central half hour. Oh my God. At that time. Thank you. And I thought you were the first person I recognized.

00:02:01 Kirk Fox was second <laugh>. Take that Kirk, if you're watching Second Kirk. I remember that. And then you moved to LA I did. I did. I moved here when I graduated high school, early when I was 17. So this, I started standup when I was 15. So this is my 13th year doing standup. How, how long have you been doing it? I've been doing it, it's almost 20 years, but I still think it's like 18 or 19 years. Oh my God. Um, I started comedy in Los Angeles, even though I'm not from here. After college I moved to LA and I hit the ground running at like 21.

00:02:30 Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. Um, so I'm like an LA raised comedian. And so I, I think the hallmark of a career in LA is like when you remember venues that are all now like CVSSs, Uhhuh, <laugh>. Like I just Drive down Mel and I'm like, oh, I did drugs in there and did a show. And that laundromat, they used to run an open mic and you start to sound old 'cause you're like, That is because nothing's there anymore. Nope. And and none of your friends, none of the people that you start, most of the people you started with are not still doing it.

00:02:54 Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So I have very few people like touchstones to call and be like, do you remember Masters Cabaret on third? But when you start, like nobody wants you and nobody's gonna pay you. So I have to go to like Santa Barbara to get 20 minutes and, and like chicken fingers on a work night. Oh yeah. Did you start here? No. Thank God. No. I started in, uh, at the Columbus Funny Bone. Because you're from Ohio. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. That's right. Yeah. I was living with my grandpa at the time and he lived probably like 15

00:03:18 minutes from there. And, uh, I found out, I was like, I had just turned 15 and I, I had heard about what an open mic was. Apparently that's where, you know, performers go to like drive for the first time and you Could get in. So I had to email Dave Stroop, you know, the owner of the, the whole club series. Um, and I was like, Hey, I know it's, it's like a strict 21 and up and everything. But if I had like a parent or chaperone with me, like could I come do it if had my grandpa with me and he came, he came.

00:03:42 I couldn't believe he said yes. Any club owner I would, if I was a club owner, I would say, why would I risk my liquor license? Which is, you know, all of a comedy club's money. What am I supposed to be continuing to draw by the way? On the top line? Uh, the top horizontal line. That's where the eyebrows grow go. So whatever shape the eyebrows are, just draw a light line. I'm already up because I'm just doing your general shapes and your eyes are not this round. So I'll fix it in the No, no, no, no.

00:04:03 I'll fix that is not Supposed to. This is just the sock. I'll fix it in. You have, you have Matt, I haven't had you stare this much at me since I did your lowkey outside backyard shows. That's not true. I have your Instagram <laugh>. I'm gonna leave this here for you guys. Thank you to work on. That's was, were you drawing Matt or I don't know, a woman. A man in drag. Like, We're gonna go with a man in drag. Tell me the difference. Yeah, Can I see your hair? See like, I had hair right now, but I feel like every few years in comedy there's like a comic who like, I,

00:04:36 I hate to say changes the game, but like Dane Cook was like the first internet comic, right? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> like the MySpace comic. And then what you did with TikTok. Like, I, I guess I've always meant to ask you that, but I never like, got up the courage to

text you. Like, was it just like, I'm gonna film myself and then you just clicked into something? Was there more thought behind it? It was a total accident. Um, I I I hate social media more than anything in it Loves you in the entire world.

00:05:02 I, well, it loves to hate you. Depends on who you ask. Yeah, yeah. Depends on whose page you're on. I don't know. I I kind of assume I have success just because it's, you know, that's like my generation's thing. Everyone's a streamer. Everyone's a YouTuber. How old you? I'm 28. 19 0, 28. Wow. Okay. Um, so I, I never wanted to do it, but around late summer, early fall of 2022, I wanted to quit comedy. I wasn't getting any spots around la I could, I was struggling to get a one nighter anywhere in the country.

00:05:30 It's like I just, I had no money. Um, but I was like, before I do that, I don't really have anything to lose. I was like, let me just try posting some old clips of mine. And I was created an account and a couple of 'em did like, you know, a couple hundred thousand views and I was like, oh, interesting. Okay. Kinda immediate gratification joining this app. So then I, uh, I bought, I bought camera equipment that I could not afford. Uh, I had to borrow money from a friend and then I had to ask another friend to teach me how to edit my own videos.

00:05:57 So for the following, like six or seven months after that, I was doing these one nighters for like 35 people just to get the clips. Oh yeah. Pressing record as they're calling me on stage, running back there. Were there other comics doing that? At the time, I had only seen Schultz was doing it. Sam Morere was doing it. Uhhuh. So just a couple of guys out of New York. I will tell you that I always respect comics who hustle. And I feel like for me, that's the number one thing. Yes, it's of course important to be funny, but people who have a work ethic.

00:06:31 Oh Yeah. I always think that that's actually imperative. And when you like hit first, my first thought was like, I gave him a hundred dollars for his first special. Can I have it back? No, You gave, you gave me like \$500 for that special. Has it compounded? Like I need, like I want an ROI, There's no interest on top. I can have it back. No, but I definitely, I can buy you a Starbucks now. Like, you Venmo it to me. There's no contract. But I remember when people were shitty about you. Not that I, I mean we're comics.

00:06:55 We all know what people think. I think my favorite part is how much it bothers other comics because I'm like, the knock against him is that he's successful. He figured out something you didn't figure out and he's attractive. I just remember how shitty people were to me. And also, 'cause I am your friend and I've known you and I've actually seen you work hard when people are like, yeah, well Matt Rife. I'm like, uh, I'm sorry. He figured out the internet in a way you couldn't. And he made \$800 million last

00:07:19 Year. I did not make \$800 million. I'm be very clear about that. And he like, you're just jealous. And that's what it comes down to. I'm like, what's the real knock against him? The Consistent argument for, for any comic that people don't like. 'cause they go, oh, they're not funny. Right. Well, what's the science that's that that proves someone's funny? Just 'cause it's an opinion based fact. It's completely subjective. It's not a science. Would, would you say your each one of your shows has gotten better as you've

00:07:41 put them out? I would hope so. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. I would hope so. I mean, I think being an artist like that is your hope to evolve and always be checking yourself and commenting on yourself and your relation to the rest of society. Uh, and hopefully making a ton of money while doing it. And hopefully your fan base grows with you. Yeah. Like if your fans all stay the same age, I mean, I guess that's a superpower, but I think there's something really beautiful in like getting older, which you'll see.

00:08:04 Are you guys ready to paint? I thought this was the whole exercise. Nope. We're, I didn't realize there was paint. Okay. Okay. We're using colors. There's so many colors right here. What's that white one called? Air one <laugh>. It's called Canceled Air one <laugh>. So with the amount of shows that you put out and the amount that you constantly tour, how do you come up with your new shows so fast? I get up almost every night and it's not for a need to create material, it's because I genuinely love the work.

00:08:38 Like, I'll do two spots in a night, almost five or six nights a week. I do all my writing on stage. There is no pen and paper, there's no sitting down. And then any comic knows that you get up there and you just talk it out. I mean, that's why there's a live crowd. Yeah. So you can see what works. And I just enjoy that. And then whatever is good, I tend to remember. And whatever is bad, I try to do a couple more times just to make sure no one actually likes it. I also can't write anything down.

00:09:01 I'll, I'll bullet point something at the most, it has to be organic. Something has to happen in real life. Usually. Like me just joking around with my friends, I'll say something and go, Ooh, I already know I can build off of this. So I actually like put some thought into it. Yeah. It, it has to come natural. So that being said, uh, I'll be incredibly stagnant for, I mean, I'll, I'll go two months without thinking of a new bit and then I'll write 15 new minutes in one day. Oh yeah. This idea that like, you need to always be writing.

00:09:25 You have to, the longer you do it as an artist, you realize that like it ebbs and it flows and you can't force it. Yeah. And it's just that, it's like if you ever written a joke in a month, like it's not gonna stop. Like no one who's funny just stops being funny. Yeah. I was talking to someone recently and they mentioned a joke that you had and she was like, yeah, and you know, I liked it. And then it, you know, it upset me and I was just like, one, who the fuck are you to walk through this life thinking that you can't get upset?

00:09:47 And I was like, but b like he is a very nice person. Like Matt is not, you're so sweet. And you're actually very nice to women. Like for whatever derogatory jokes there may be. Like, just from knowing you, like I know a little bit about like what your personal issues are and how you actually treat people. I've never had someone go to a show and be like, Matt Rife was a dick to me. Like, I just don't think you're an angry person. No, I try not. I try not to be. You're Like not Now I Hear you're a quite often <laugh>.

00:10:20 All right you guys. So after the skin is done, let's start putting in the details like the eyebrow color, the pupil color, and the lip color. Talk to me about cancel culture, Matt. Uh, I don't think it's a real thing. I think, I think we're very lucky as, uh, as comedians to have our entire fate lie in the fans of the people. So unless you do something extremely bad, something, you know, illegal, I don't really believe cancel culture is a, a, a real thing for us. Um, it, it hasn't affected me in the way that anybody would assume.

00:10:51 So in the way That people would like it to. Oh, of course. I mean, they, they try, I mean, I'm not exaggerating every single day somebody's trying like a new thing to get them canceled. Yeah. But it's like, you know what, it bothers me because cancel culture, if it comes from a place of actually calling for change, like if you historically like always assaulted women and said horrible things about women, it's like, yeah, maybe this guy doesn't really deserve a platform. But the idea that one joke a comic made is emblematic of their entire u

00:11:18 like their entire body of work is insane. And the idea that you are beholden to be a version of what they thought you were yesterday, today is antithetical to the idea of living and evolving on this planet. That Was a lot of words I didn't understand. I'm just saying like, it's always done by the have nots. 'cause other people are too busy doing. When, when, when you

are writing your new shows now, is there anything that you're like cognizant of? No, I think that we have learned a lot, uh, these last few years honestly in

00:11:46 society about the way other people perceive things. Whether it's the words that we use or the way that we phrase things. Like it was okay to say for so long It's coming back by the way. It's coming back. But there's certain things or the, the way that marginalized people are like, Hey, like that actually is pretty awful. And then you think about it and deep down you're like, this actually doesn't make me feel good. It's not about minding your P's and Q's, it's about what's the punchline I can give that will get the biggest response.

00:12:10 I never want people to leave feeling , but I also need to always be heard. And I don't wanna go for low hanging fruit. And, but I also believe in being an equal opportunity offender. And that's also what drives me insane. Somebody can listen to you make fun of every other demographic throughout your show. The moment it affects them personally. It's the problem. So that's, you can't pick and choose. You can't pick, I, I said this on stage. I say it on stage and uh, I think it's that thing of like just

00:12:35 sticking to your guns, saying what you need to say. But I think the intention is always the important, like what is the actual intention? And I know for a lot of comics it's to get a laugh and it's like, but I think when you have a big audience, you do have a responsibility. If you've ever positioned yourself as someone that has something to say, you can't go back and be like, I was just making a joke about blind people like <laugh>. I, I think, I think you have to think about like what you mean to

00:12:59 your audience, whether you intended to start as that. You kind of just become what they want you to be. I can't wait to see what you guys have created. Big reveal now on three. 1, 2, 2, 3, 3. Oh no. What? And you had to draw my name Above the case. The police should identify my body. What? This is so good. No it's not. You didn't gimme a mouth. You gave me a home plate as a face. This is tructure Me. This is, This is, and I Gave you an earring. Do you not have an earring? You didn't even finish my nose.

00:13:36 I couldn't have Where did you see the earring? I look like a drawing of a homo sapien in a Natural history Museum. Thank you for pointing out all my insecurities. This is, I appreciate it. I gave you cheekbones of a God. No you didn't. I want these ch No, I look like a Warhol. This look like tusks. Those look like tusks. Eliza. This is a drag queen. Matt Rife. Oh m. Trying to Give you structure, sweetheart. The teeth actually The teeth. The teeth. I like. That's a nice touch.