

[Transcript] Between Two Beers Podcast / Cori Gonzalez-Macuer: Finding the bright side of darkness

On this episode of Between Two Beers we talk to Corey Gonzalez-McCure. Corey is a Kiwi comedian who has been performing his unique brand of self-deprecating, observational and deadpan humour since 2003.

He was one of the stars of Taika Waititi's breakout comedy What We Do in the Shadows, a writer for Jono and Ben and Wellington Paranormal and a regular on Seven Days. He's won the Billy T James Award, performed a stand-up all over the world and is widely recognised as one of New Zealand's best comedic minds.

In this episode we talk about being Adrian Brody's stunt double and working with Jack Black, flatting with Ben Hurley and their hip-hop group, corporate gigs, Seven Days and touring and how fatherhood has changed him. This episode also deals with themes of mental health.

Corey tragically lost his dad in 2013 to suicide and has wrestled with feelings of blame, guilt and pain since his passing. We talk through the dark and the light and hear Corey's story in full. We're so grateful of Corey for being so vulnerable and cheering his life with us.

His messages to those going through tough times are incredibly powerful.

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A huge thanks to those supporting the show on Patreon for the cost of a cup of coffee a month to get involved head to between2bears.com. Also follow us on Insta and TikTok where we cut up all the best video clips from each episode. This episode was brought to you from the export Bear Garden Studio. Enjoy!

Corey Gonzalez-McCure.

Welcome to Between2Bears. Thank you for having me.

Very excited to have you at Nexport Bear Garden Studio, 10am on a Tuesday and we're into the beers. I love a guest who's open to the challenge of an early drink on a Tuesday.

What happens when you're an alcoholic?

Some of our more recent listeners may not know this but this little podcast started as a very niche grassroots football show and we've heard through our sources that you were once a very tidy footballer who maybe could have gone on to be a pro and maybe the comedy world robbed the all whites of a talented striker? Yeah I mean I don't know about that but yeah I definitely could have. That was my thing until I was like 23 by playing football. I never drank until I was 23. My whole life was just robbed around that. Then I went overseas, played in Chile for a while, got injured, came back here, gone to comedy, started drinking and then stopped doing sports.

Was it Wellington Olympic? Was it the Greeks that you were playing for? Yeah I commented there. They made a push for the Oceania, sorry listeners that aren't football fans, but they went for the OFC Champions League with Auckland City and I went down there. Great hospitality, some club. Oh my god that's amazing. I'm still like really good friends with all of them, like all the Greeks man. I love the Greeks, love them. Yeah amazing stuff. So your football journey has taken you to Guy Williams' social team now. Have I got that right? Yeah I made my comeback on Saturday, scored four goals. What was the score line? We lost 10-9. That's one for the fans, a 10-9 score line is definitely one for the fans. Well you guys had him on the show, he everything's very intense with him so we played for like two hours. We're like Guy it's been 90 minutes like no no no we gotta wait for five proper outs and then they happen then like no no

next goal wins and then again next we literally played for two hours. Wow I can't even walk today. I can't imagine he's the most graceful footballer by Williams. But he's like whenever I used to play like like big tall guys they used to fuck me up like he's a he's not a footballer but he's just imposing and he doesn't stop talking while we're playing like he yells while like he comes at you like yelling yeah chill out bro you're not on stage. Yeah well that's a that's a great point because that like that was an intense episode for us. Oh really? And I wondered whether that intensity just is just follows him around his everyday life. Oh he's a non-stop he's a I don't know how he does it like yeah like surely he's gonna have a come down soon. Yeah well yeah we can only

hope. I've got a message for you too from Ricky Espinoza who keeps inviting you to play for the Chilean team. So he's very keen for you to now that he knows that the boots are back on I'm sure you've been involved. Oh 100%. Rapper FC is it are they? I have no idea. Yeah they've got a Chilean team in the in the Chatham Cup that are going. Oh really? That are going okay. Yeah yeah yeah there

you go. Yeah nice. We're back in the niche we're back in the niche football stuff. What team are you guys? Melville United and Hamilton. You know the mighty Melville mighty Melville. Oh yeah we don't

do that. You do? I'm Queen's Park Rainer. I can't say I'm a QPF. You can say that. I can't even name any of the players now. That's irrelevant. Are they still around? They are still around. I don't even want to I think they're in the championship but I can't say I'm a QPF. Very cute. Stephen had a his own Holloway. I think a hot like a genuine Holloway played for QPR right? Yes right coached them Ian Holloway. Ah there you go and then no relation but it was just a familiarity. I'm a Liverpool fan if you want. I love Liverpool. Ah there we go. But I'm Man City as well. I'm not sure. Man City so when I played football when I was young when I played for like Wines and Reps I was of Chris Killen. Yeah right. Yeah so and he went to Man City where we were like playing together and he was like 15 or something and there was third division and that's why I just followed him since then. Wow. So it's like you were genuinely proper good like with. Oh I was I I could have made it. Fuck. Amazing. In my head I still think I could. Yeah I reckon you are. You still got the lean frame. Yeah yeah yeah you keep yourself keep yourself in good nick. All right I'll do it. So we often talk about guests having tight circles or loose circles on the show which references how much info their friends and family give us about them.

You have one of the most giving circles we've come across. I think that makes it one of the loosest. A loose circle. There's so much gold to work through here and there's so much we didn't know about you and I also want to say unanimously the love and care with the messages has been really touching. Oh that's nice. So yeah really looking forward to getting into this but I wanted to start I'm sort of picking away so it's going to be a bit all over the show but you were Adrian Brody's stand-in on King Kong which meant hanging out with him and Jack Black at the height of Tenacious D. Yeah that sounds like a wild time. It was Adrian Brody's piece of shit but Jack Black was the man he was fucking amazing and Jamie Bell who was a Billy Elliot he was in it so me and him became he was like my best friend during filming and Jack was awesome and they like Tenacious D toured while we were filming and he got me and my mate Steve Wrigley got us a few tickets to go watch them it was it was a really good time but from Adrian Brody. So safe to say that when Predators came out you weren't putting your hand up to be his stand-in

for that film. No no no no I mean I would have done it. Does that mean you've auditioned for a role and I've liked you but just not quite enough to cast you as the lead? No well they casted him I just saw that I had a massive nose and they're like yeah well even though they don't even see my fucking nose in the movie but are there scenes that the casual observer can watch now and now with the benefit of hindsight go that's Cory. Yeah yeah there's a field of them so when we did pick-ups I was like his double so all the pick-up scenes were me as his double and even my mum could tell who I was. And Adrian's presumably as well which wasn't him. Yeah yeah he'll be got him. Like I said his timeline's gonna go a bit over the show but we wanted to take you back to your flatting days with Ben Hurley. He told us a story about how much... No this is a good one this is a good one. This is a relatable one for us. About how much he loved the UK office and he said that you would bring girls back to the flat but instead of doing anything with them you would just put the DVD of the office on and you'd just watch it and entertain yourselves and me and Shay that was us growing up just without the bringing the girls back part. We were obsessed with that show. I mean it carries on it carries on to present day we still quote lines from the office and scenes from the office. I still watch it these days and I find new bits that I haven't like realized that were there. It's incredible right? Yeah. Have you got a favorite episode or a favorite scene? I know it's hard to put someone on the spot like that I was just thinking of when someone threw a shoe over a part. I mean the work training episode... Get the guitar. Like you can't beat that.

Sergio Giorgini. You can still find him. You can still find him.

Oh it's good. It's really good. It's really good. He was 40 when he made that. Yeah unbelievable. Our age. Yeah. That's why it works right? Because he had that real world experience of knowing what it was like to work in a real office and then brought that to life and the characters were also relatable. Oh my god it's so good. I've gone down like mentally I've gone down an office rabbit hole of just scenes and like four quotable bits. Why don't we just watch it and that should be the whole show? Yeah yeah. We'll do a watch along. We'll branch out and we'll do a watch along with Corey Gonzalez-McCure. Okay so dig around in those sort of days and I've heard you described as a lady killer in your uni days. Not literally. I don't know. Oh good all right. Yeah thanks for clearing that up. The quote was we were all dorks but ladies found him mysterious without realising he was just shy and quiet. Yeah well I've just got um I'm pretty sure I'm autistic but yeah it was um yeah. Who said that? Was it Ben or James? Corey I'm not going to reveal the sources. You've 50% of what you've said is correct as to who that might have been.

All right great um yeah I don't know. I think I was the only comedian that wasn't like fucking that looked like a rapist. I think it's always the quiet ones generally. Yeah mysterious quality. There's something to be said about that. Yeah no it's okay. Okay leading on is this is this period where you made your fake hip-hop group called Dark Tunnel?

Yep yep yep me uh Ben Hurley and Steve Wrigley. We uh so after our comedy shows there used to be

like a drum and bass gig after us and they had a hip-hop guest and our good friend um Dan Crozier uh Justin Smith's husband he had a hip-hop group and um we used to watch them and then we came up with our own hip-hop group called Dark Tunnel for some reason like yeah and we um used to go out and tell people that we were in a hip-hop group and they believed us. Wow yeah you didn't have to lay any tracks or spit any bars or anything like that. No no no no we had a dance

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called The Hopper and we sort of run around like that and then that's all we did they were like oh my these guys are like they went home then probably went home that night going hey we met this great cool Dark Tunnel. Waiting for the Dark Tunnel. Yeah it's gonna drop CD to drive. It's gonna drop CD. It's gonna drop soon. Here's my mix tape. Get your mini disc holder and yeah well yeah because time stamp but when is that what sort of time period is that? Uh that would have been

so I started in 2003 and then me and Haley lived together from 2004 to like 2006 so yeah around then. So we're still mini disc. We are still mini discs. Just coming into Limewire. Yeah yeah yeah a Napster. Was this also your karaoke phase? I've been I've been told to ask you what the best karaoke song is and why is it Flying Without Wings? Because it's perfect there's no chorus it's literally just a it's just a surprise the whole thing like there's it doesn't build up to anything it's just the whole thing's just uh high it's great. Is it and is it a go is it still a go to? Still. I did it um probably three weeks ago at Salumba. Wow yeah any chance we could get a couple uh

no I'll see. Yeah yeah yeah yeah third one third one. Yeah we're at this point need to give a give a shout out to your sister, Alex, because we...

She told me you guys messaged me.

Yeah, we often reach out to people and ask, you know, give us some bits.

She gave us the best, seven or eight big meaty parts.

And one of them was about dancing.

She said, her words were an insane dancer,

and that when you were 20, you would learn all the moves to...

I'm not sure I've got this timeline right,

but Justin Timberlake and Asha and Michael Jackson.

Her words were, you were old enough to know better.

Yeah.

To be learning dance moves and then reciting them for her and your mum.

Yeah.

Is that genuine?

Yeah, yeah.

I'd love to see some J...

I've always...

There's like YouTube clips of me dancing and shit.

Oh, we'll have to find those.

I'd love to see some J Tim and some Asha with me.

Yeah, yeah, I always loved dancing.

Believe it or not, I was in a break dancing crew when I was in high school.

I don't know whether to believe that after the dark tunnel stuff.

So, we'll see.

Well, I'm a double threat.

Yeah, so, yeah, I've always loved dancing and...

Fuck, what did you say there?

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That's great. No, this is good.
It's good to out you.
Self-taught. You just had that rhythm.
Yeah, well, just, yeah, I just...
We love Michael Jackson.
I don't know about now. We still love him, but...
Yeah, well, this is weird. It's touchy-o.
Yeah, well, this is a real area of...
Steven can really dig into, because I've got strong views on this,
but as a father of three, he soon to be four.
We touched on this in the previous episode.
Yeah, it is difficult.
My children are loving Michael Jackson music,
but it's a difficult blend of at what age do you let them know of...
It's a sex talk, but it's Michael Jackson.
It's like, when do you tell them about Michael Jackson?
Yeah, and my decision is never.
Yeah, yeah.
My daughter's obsessed with him.
If I told her, I would have drawn her.
Yeah, yeah, well, that's my thing,
is that you just let them find out on their own.
I think so, yeah. I don't know.
Yeah, I don't have strong feelings either way,
but they're going to find out.
Yeah, yeah, yeah.
But isn't it amazing that that music is still timeless?
Oh, it's so good.
We've been like, ah, Kelly's music is great, but he sucks.
This is exactly the same area.
This is like the pattern of conversation
when you bring up one. That's the comparison.
When the remix recognition comes on, like,
you want to dance, but you can't.
Yeah, you start the trailer, you always go,
Michael Jackson, then you go, ah, Kelly, then you go,
Gary Glitter.
Yeah, I was going to say Gary Glitter.
Gary Glitter's always the next one.
You know David Bain documentary.
Yeah, yeah, yeah.
All right, we're starting to paint a picture.
So we've got Corey the dancer, Corey the fake rapper,

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Corey the karaoke singer,
Corey the in-sync at Madison Square Garden,
repeat watcher.
What the fuck?
Mid-20s.
What was it about that set list that just keeps bringing you back?
I don't know, man. I love boy bands.
So my fingers, I love heavy metal,
and boy bands, like nothing in between, that's it.
That's such an eclectic mix, I love it.
You've got football, you've got dancing,
you've got this musical kind of spectrum.
I know everything about boy bands, like, it's ridiculous.
Wow, next you'll be telling us you had one as well.
You had a hip hop group and a dance crew and a boy band.
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.
Which explains flying without wings then, I guess, as well.
Yeah, totally.
Westlife was like, it was my dad's favorite band.
Ah, there's another, there's another link,
there's another link.
Like every Christmas, he'd be like,
we were like, what do you want,
but just Westlife's new album.
Yeah.
Oh, nice.
Okay, it's all the layers, the layers are peeling down.
But the other side is, one of our sources has said,
you're a bit of a fighter.
And he told us a story.
He said, Corey would always manage to get into fights,
though he's calmed down a lot.
We once were dancing at a fat lady's arms
when Corey came back from the toilets and said,
we had to leave because a bro had attacked him
and he'd knocked him out.
Yep.
Was that Nekisei?
Yeah, I mean, I don't start fights,
but not anymore, there's, no, no, I mean,
I finished them.
Yeah, yeah, I finished them.
I mean, no, sometimes I don't,

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sometimes they finish me, but I know,
it's just, it's good to feel something, you know?
For this real Fight Club talk.
Yeah, it's good to feel something.
Yeah, because there was a story about Thailand.
Did you go over to Thailand and get into some stuff
with a real, was he a kickboxer?
K-1 fighter, dude, I got destroyed.
So we went to, I was in Thailand 11 years ago,
and I was there with like four of my mates,
and we had about the Underground Fight Club
that they have in PP Island, and we went there.
It's literally like just a ring and,
is that all right?
Yeah.
And there's all these like tourists, like they're drunk,
everyone's getting in, you get a free bucket drink
if you fight, so everyone's doing it.
But then they put me up against like a K-1 fighter,
and I didn't know it at the time.
So I met him backstage and we're like,
hey, he's like, have you ever fought before?
I was like, no, not like professionally or anything.
And he's like, yeah, me neither.
And then while we were fighting,
his girlfriend told my mates, he's actually a K-1 champion.
And we went to touch gloves.
He didn't touch my glove.
He just kicked me in the head, knocked me out.
Then I got back up, I was like, let's do it again.
Then he kicked me again in the head, got knocked out.
And then I got angry with the owner of the bar.
Cause like, you can't do this.
And then we got into a fight, he knocked me out.
Then my parents had to follow me back to New Zealand
two days later, so.
Oh, shit.
So I woke up in a hospital,
I'm telling the hospital the next day,
I lost my phone, my wallet, everything.
Yeah, good fun.
So this time, this sounds like a total stitch up, right?
That it was meant to be amateurs against amateurs.

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And they have, well, this guy just took pride in.
Yeah, yeah, this guy just, yeah, yeah.
Amateurs up.
Yeah.
Oh, fuck.
And we're so good friends.
He must have really hated Adrian Brody.
He had boy bands.
We'll be right back after this short break.
Shopee-Fi is the
handels platform
the million of companies worldwide revolutionized.
With Shopee-Fi, you can
online shop in hand to set up.
It's not a program or design knowledge.
Thanks to its efficient
setting up and intuitive integration
with social media and online
marketplaces, you can
over several channels like Instagram and ebay
apply and sell.
Shopee-Fi offers you the tools
that you need to build and grow
your online business.
Everything from a single
trust-based platform.
Try Shopee-Fi for free
and start your business idea
under shopi-fi.de slash cell 23.
Simply shopi-fi.de slash cell 23
enter and start.
Produced for Germany.
Shopee-Fi.
Yeah, wow.
OK.
Right, good start.
I think we've got a little bit of a picture of
glory now.
I wanted to sort of
start the story, tracing it back from
Chile, because you moved over
when you were six.
And, you know, what do you

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remember of that?

I don't know how much you remember when you were six, but your family decided, you know, a better start in New Zealand and talked to us about that time.

So, yeah, I grew up in Chile and there was a war at the time in Chile.

So I wasn't the best place to live and my dad just wanted to get out and find a better life for us.

So he moved to New Zealand when I was like five.

He came to Wellington, sent himself up, got a few jobs, then flew us over when I was six.

And so me and my little brother and my mum came over.

And, yeah, we came to New Zealand and no word of English.

Didn't know anyone.

Yeah.

I know it's hard to put yourself back in the shoes of a six-year-old, but do you, like, when your that decision is being made, like, do you have any preconceived ideas about where you're going or what it's going to be like?

No, I had no idea.

Had you been on a plane and flown internationally?

Never. I've never been to an airport.

Yeah, that blows my mind because sometimes you can read something like that and it's quite glib.

And you like go, oh, yeah, they moved to New Zealand when they were six versus because I watched Funny Roots back in preparation for this.

Oh, awesome.

When you go back to Chile as an adult.

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And I wondered, was that the first time
that you'd been back
to your grandfather's garage?
I think it was.

Yeah, no, I so I went back
to play football,
like, maybe 10 years before that.
Right.

Yeah, but there was a second time.
Yeah, but as an adult going back,
did you have warm memories of
because it's pretty humble
upbringing to use a euphemism, right?
You were all living in a in a single garage.

Yeah, it was awesome.

Like, yeah, there's nothing
but great memories when I go back there,
even though I know I know I was tough
for my parents and everyone I
all I have is just great memories from it.

Yeah, because it's it's such a
you're a Kiwi,
but you've been brought up in a South American family,
which which I I can only comment on
as sitting on the sidelines
would be passionate and loving
and all in as well, all encompassing.
So very passionate, very intense, very all in.
Yeah.

And but then to be taken from that
and move and start a new life.

Yeah, and that was some decision.

Yeah, I mean, yeah, we came here,
we knew no one, none of our families was here.
Like we had to start from scratch.

Like, yeah.

And we've spoken about football earlier,
but did that play a big role in your integration
into kind of into New Zealand?

Oh, 100%.

Yeah, totally.

Like the sports in general, like, yeah,
just that's how I met everyone.

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That's how I became friends with people.
Like in like day to day life,
I wasn't that talkative.
I don't really talk to people,
but sports was like the best,
the best thing I could ever done.
Yeah.
Yeah.
How important is that Spanish?
You've got a daughter.
Do you speak to her in Spanish or English?
Or both.
So, yeah, since she was like,
she was born, we always made it like a rule
that I spoke to her in Spanish.
And she's a, she's pretty good.
Like she, she understands everything in Spanish
and she's can talk a little bit.
And yeah, so it's, yeah.
Like when, yeah, we can't lose the language, you know.
That's amazing.
Like my, my heritage is Pacific Island heritage.
So my mum's from the Solomon Islands.
My dad was English.
And same thing when, when I've got two older siblings,
but when they were born in the household,
mum would speak to my brother and my sister in her language
and my dad would speak in English.
And they've just got such a foundation
in terms of culture and stuff like that,
which is so critical.
And that connection piece,
when you go back to places like you did
when you're an adult to be able to speak the language,
was a huge hit.
But also when you're that little,
when you hear other languages,
like it's like literally your brain just gets bigger.
Like you, you get smarter.
Like it's a known fact.
And it's what people say, like,
like we shouldn't teach like Te Reo in schools and stuff.
It's like, fuck, like it's literally going to make you smarter.

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Like, why would he not want to do that?
And I've always, I'm always fascinated by this,
but when, when English isn't your first language,
when someone's speaking English,
do you hear it in Spanish
and then translate it out into English?
Both, I don't, yeah, yeah, like I dream in both languages.
It's weird.
Wow.
Yeah, it's really weird.
And another part, without spoiling the doco
or encouraging people to go and watch the doco,
your comedy doesn't necessarily translate word for word
into Spanish.
No, it sucks.
Was that the, I've seen you quoted as saying
that was the worst show that you've ever done.
Literally the worst show I've ever done in my life.
Still to this day?
Yeah, yeah.
So I went to Chile.
The whole thing was me going over there
to stand up in Spanish.
And I just translated every joke into Spanish
and didn't get a laugh at all.
And saying that I'm doing the Spankless show
at the comedy festival May 20th.
I don't know if you guys want to come.
It's all your Spanish material,
translate it to English and we'll see how we go.
Yeah, it was terrible.
So moving into the comedy scene,
take us to your first gig,
which was 20 years ago, I think.
And comedy quest that you won, right?
Was it your very first attempt at stand-up comedy
and you've won, what was it, a show?
Yeah, it was the Wellington Rookie Comp.
So it was like a newcomer's competition.
And is this literally, you've never done any stand-up?
Never done it.
And then the next gig was the Royal Comedy Quest,
which is like the big comedy festival thing

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and the national one, and I won that as well.
That was like my third gig.
And then it's all been uphill from there.
How did you, like I vaguely thought,
maybe I'll give stand-up a go.
Do it, you're probably way better than most of the people.
But like the sheer thought of bombing
scares the shit out of me.
Oh, if I'd bombed in my first gig,
I wouldn't have done it very again.
But did you, like how much prep goes into something like that?
Like cause I emcee quite a lot of things
like weddings and stuff and I fucking agonise over
wanting to make sure every little bit is right.
Is it the same for your stand-up stuff
or do you just flow and riff when you get up there?
No, I mean, some comedians do that,
but I have to know what I'm doing.
Right.
I'll write bullet points and then go from there.
But is that the same when you started out?
Was the same?
When I started out, I just wrote a whole script,
like word for word, had to do it.
But now it's easier.
But yeah, the first gig was terrifying.
But I smashed it.
And so there was no performance high school,
there was no drama background, there was no...
Nothing.
I was doing theatre at the time at Vic Uni.
So with James and Kisei actually.
And he invited me to a show and I went and watched it
and I was like, fuck, I'm way funnier than all these people.
So that's why I did it.
Cause that's kind of the, not misconception,
that's kind of the,
we've all got people that we know in everyday life
that we're like, they're way funnier than the comedians.
Like, do you have to be a naturally funny person
to be a comedian?
I find the naturally funny people,
they won't do it.

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Like, most of them won't even get on stage.

And that's why I won't do it.

Yeah.

That's exactly why he couldn't say it.

Oh, fucking hilarious.

Fucks on himself.

Okay.

All right, moving on.

Ben Hurley did suggest digging around
in that era of comedy in Wellington in your early 20s.

Do you have good, do you have fond memories
of that time looking back?

Yeah, it was literally like,
probably the best time of my life.

I loved it.

Like, it came like, just out of nowhere
into this like scene of all these people,
like just the weirdest people that are all friends.

Like, you'd never find them together in real life.

Like, you had like, you had like jocks,
you had like hippies, you had fucking bogans.

It was just, it was, it was so good.

Like, that, that, that literally helped me
so much in my life.

One of the contacts has suggested
there was a celebrity debate you did.

This was with James Nikisi,
where you were up against Georgina Bayer.

Yeah.

And she absolutely destroyed you.

Was it around this time?

Do you remember?

Yeah, there would have been like 2004, maybe 2005.

Yeah, she, yeah, she was great.

We, a whole bunch of comedians were in the debate
and she was funnier than all of us.

Well, what is it about Wellington
that draws comedians there or churns out good comedians?

Yeah, I don't know, man.

Like, they all come here.

I don't know.

I think it's just chilled.

It's just a chill place.

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As long as Judgie is Auckland,
everyone can just be themselves.
It's very alternative.
Yeah, it's,
Wellington's the best city in the world.
Because at that stage,
a tyker and Jermaine and Brett,
are they, is that the same sort of time period
where you're all running around the same sort of...
They would have started before us,
but they, we all came in when they were like getting there.
So, yeah, so, like, we've been here
at least around the comedy club
and like, we used to pay the concords
like 40 bucks to do shows for us.
That's amazing.
And is that like post show
is that where like tips are shared?
Or like, I'm fascinated on,
you know, you get into a locker room in football
and people are like, hey, Corey,
you know, next time the center half
pins you if you spin like that.
Like, is that the same in like a comedy?
Yeah, a little bit.
Yeah, a little bit.
A little bit.
I mean, not really like,
you don't like to sit down and say,
okay, you did this, you did this wrong,
this right, but it just happens during the night
or just the next few days that you hang out.
You just, yeah, like,
I love the bend.
So, our flat was like the comedy flat.
All the comedians were there.
So, it would just happen naturally.
Like people would say, oh, that was good.
Well, that was fucked.
Or is it one upsmanship as well
when you're living with a fellow comedian?
Love trying to get them to like laugh.
Well, he's very competitive.

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So, we always try to get one up on each other.
Because he said you were hyper competitive as well.

Yeah, yeah.

And so was he.

He gets very angry if I get something on him.

Ah, shame we didn't know you
before we had the episode with him.

All right.

We could have got some real gold.

This kind of blends into the timeline of booze
because you mentioned earlier
you didn't drink until you were 23.

And there's a real feeling,
well, I'm probably quite accurate
that the comedy scene late nights
that alcohol is a part of it.

Yeah.

What was your relation?

I mean, was there a reason you didn't drink before
and then was there a reason at 23 that you started?

I didn't drink just because I was an athlete, I guess.

And my parents didn't drink.

So, it was never a round race, I never,
it wasn't there, it wasn't Tim Singh or anything.

And yeah, then when I started comedy,
I did it and I really liked it.

So.

Was that, because you'd already been on like you,
like you didn't need,

I guess you didn't need the booze to get on stage.

Yeah, first go go, I didn't drink at all,
like first figure because I didn't drink at all.

But then did you find that alcohol was able to then,
I guess, relax you or?

Yeah, like 100%, yeah, it's quite sad.

Like I got to the stage where I was like,
I did a couple of shows in Queenstown like years ago
and I was there for a week, did a week of shows
and I was drinking like a hot flask of whiskey
before every show.

And I probably didn't need it,
but I just got into the,
I got a very addictive personality.

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Yeah, but now I, yeah,
I don't drink before shows anymore, so why not that much?
There's a real sort of cultural shift,
I feel that happening with booze.
And I know I'm on a show called Between Two Beers
sponsored by Export Gold from Export Beer Garden Studio.
But I mean, Shae doesn't drink anymore.
People don't.
Yeah, yeah.
Shae's 600 days sober.
Really? Oh, cool, bro, that's awesome.
Yeah, yeah, since we started this year.
You're good?
Yeah, man, like I think for me,
like having to sit with stuff that I'm thinking and feeling
rather than like I was a classic suppressor
and then smash, have a night out,
and then just, then it was gone.
And then build it back up again.
And this dude was like, oh, you probably don't need that.
Which is why I was interested in like,
you seem like the stand-up thing astounds me
that you were able to just get up and go without that fear.
Like it's really inspiring to kind of think that,
oh yeah, I can just get up and do it.
But yeah, no, I do.
I do feel, I've just come back from a holiday,
like a family holiday.
And there's certain responsibilities
that come when you're the non-drinking guy.
You're doing the airport runs,
you're the reliable one,
you're making sure everything's done.
So I was kind of like, oh, I wish I was kind of hung over
a couple of these mornings that I could just sleep through.
But for the most part,
it's been a really cool decision for me.
It's been, it's gone really, really well.
Dude, that's awesome.
I did like 112 days up until like two months ago.
And that's the best I've ever felt.
Yeah.
I'm gonna do it again, nothing.

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Yeah, yeah, it works for me.
I never say yet do it, you'll feel 100% better.
But if it works for you, then for sure, man.
Like for me, it's been great.
Yeah, you're still doing meth though, right?
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.
Habitually.
Perfect.
Yeah, you gotta replace one vice and another.
Oh, exactly, yeah, yeah, yeah.
Yeah, take one out, one door closed,
the other one opens.
There's a really incredible, powerful TED talk
you did six years ago,
which is titled, Out of the Shadows, My Father's Suicide.
I watched it in preparation for this
and what struck me about it was how real you were about it.
Didn't sugarcoat it, told it as it was.
And I think it's that authenticity and that bravery,
which is so important in helping people.
And I know that that is a big part of your message now.
And if you are open to sharing in as much
or as little detail as you care to,
can you talk to us about the events that led up
to 2nd of August, 2013?
So, yeah, it's part of my TED talk, it's on YouTube.
So I was in Wellington in the 2012.
I was doing What We're Doing in the Shadows,
filming the movie.
And so I moved back to Wellington.
I was living in Auckland, moved back there to do that.
Moved in with my mum and my dad.
And I was all sweet.
Like, I was awesome being with my parents again
and they loved me having me there.
But I could tell something was weird between them.
And yeah, I just kind of like got more and more,
I don't know, fuck, I look back on it.
I'm like, I should have fucking said something,
but like they were just not talking to each other
or like my dad would just be just grumpy for no reason.
I'd be like, ask my mum what's happening.
She's like, I don't know.

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Like, so that went on for like months and months.
And like literally, I fucking should have said something.
And yeah, so came down to my mum left.
And I hadn't, the whole time I thought
that my mum was doing something bad,
but she wasn't.
It was just, she was leaving my dad
because he was quite abusive
and we didn't know about this.
And so she left and then it was just me and my dad
for a whole week together.
And he was just grumpy.
And yeah, came down to like, I left one night.
My mate, he was like, Josh Millen.
Well, he follows you, your fucking podcast.
He's like, my best mate.
And he came to my place, picked me up,
took me back to his house.
And I left my dad.
I was like, I can't do this anymore.
And he's like, he started crying.
He goes, why does everybody leave me?
And I was like, well, I'll stay here.
Like, just, I'll stay here.
We just say, I'll stay here.
And he's like, nah, lead, get out of here.
So I left.
And yeah, anyway, went out that night.
Went on a date, actually.
And we're pretty good.
And then the next day, I was trying to get hold of him.
And he wouldn't message me back.
My sister kept messaging me the whole day, saying,
have you heard from dad?
I was like, no, I'm sure he's probably just asleep.
And we called his work.
He wasn't at work.
And even then, didn't click that something bad was happening.
So I went back home at six in the evening that night.
And I was like, the key should be in the litter box.
And it wasn't there.
But then the lights were on in the house.
And I was like, OK, he must be home.

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And I knocked on the door, and no one answered.
I broke in through a window.
I got in, and I saw the light in his room.
And I was like, OK, he must be there.
It's all good.
Orton's living room into his room.
He wasn't there.
Then I turned around, and the living room door was shut.
And I was like, OK, fuck.
I know what's on the other side.
Just got on the phone.
I called my mom.
No, I called 911 first.
And my phone was dying.
So I called 911 and said, please come.
My dad's killed himself.
And then I hung up.
And they were like, don't hang up.
I hung up.
Then I called my mom.
Then called my sister.
And they were just, yeah, like the two worst fucking
fun calls you could ever make.
And then I was like, fuck.
I might just fucking kill myself as well,
because I can't tell this.
So I went to the kitchen to get a knife to kill myself.
And I didn't.
And then I found out after two ambulances came.
And my mom said that she knew what I was going to do.
She's like, one of them was for me.
And yeah, that was it.
And then we all moved into Josh Millan's house that night.
We stayed there for like two weeks.
And it was like, what happened was horrible.
But I always remember that those two weeks at his house
were just so amazing.
Everyone was so lovely.
We never felt loved like that before.
That guy did everything for us, man.
Like, shout out to him.
He's the fucking love of my life.
I love that dude.

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Well, Corey, thank you so much for sharing that.
If it's OK, we've got questions that we
want to ask about this, but we want to do it sort of with the mission.
Having that friendship and that support, it was important.
But how much did it mess you up in those days, weeks afterwards?
Were you on Suicide Watch that whole time?
Yeah, I think I've been on Suicide Watch my entire life.
But yeah, that was, yeah, everyone,
even since then, everyone's always looking up for me.
Like, still to this day, like, everyone's, yeah.
Yeah.
Yeah.
And how do you process?
I've sort of heard you talk about this and seen a few things.
But processing feelings of guilt of things
that you might have tried to do differently, which obviously
is not the case, but those are natural things I would imagine
to think.
How do you work through that?
It's hard, like, still to this day.
Like, if I hadn't left my dad that night,
he wouldn't have killed himself.
Like, if I'd been there, he wouldn't have done it.
And he might have done it another day.
But on that night, on that day, that wouldn't have happened
if I'd stayed there, if I hadn't just ditched him.
So, and people were like, you know, he was messed up.
He would have done it anyway, but yeah, I know.
But like, on that very moment, if I'd stayed with him,
he wouldn't have done it.
So, like, I would never get over it.
Like, literally, I have nightmares every fucking night
about it.
It's like, it's a confronting story.
Like, I've heard it a couple of times now,
and it never gets any easy to hear.
The bravery that it must have taken to put yourself
in the discomfort of talking through it
to a room of people in a TED talk as well.
What drove you to that decision to share publicly?
One of the, got to be the fucking hardest thing
that you've ever had to deal with.
I just like attention.

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And the views show that.
No, it's, I don't know.
It's just, it's like, I had it like a voice.
I got asked to do a TED talk, and I was like,
what should I do it on?
And that's like mental health or something
that we can all relate to.
And even before they happened with my dad,
I'd always talk about it, talk about my own mental health.
And then, you know, just the way to,
there's so many people out there who don't talk about it,
who need help, who want someone else to talk about it
so they can relate to it.
And yeah, I mean, like, I'll do anything
to just help someone who's down and out.
Is it part of your own healing process,
or does it, when you do talk about it publicly,
does it bring all of those feelings back?
It does.
So, yeah, I go around the country doing talks and stuff.
And right before I go on stage, I hate it.
I'm like, why do I do this?
Like, this is horrible.
Was it the same for you today?
Nah, not really.
No, no, no, this is fine.
But, because there's only like four or three of you, so.
But yeah, I'm like, why am I doing this?
But then when I get on stage and I do it,
and then I talk to people afterwards,
and they come tell me their stories,
I'm like, this is like so worth it.
Yeah, because I imagine you've touched lives of thousands of...
Oh dude, I've heard like, my story's bad,
but I've heard the most horrific stories
from people that come up to me after my shows.
Like, the stuff they say, like,
it makes what happened to me seem like a Disney show.
Which it 100% isn't,
if it's any Disney show that I've ever seen.
Well, we should make it.
We'll do the, what, the office watch along,
and we'll do a version of Disney with Corey.

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In that Ted talk, you spoke about how obviously, everything was difficult, but you recalled how he had helped talk you out of doing something similar years earlier.

Yeah.

That's got a mess with you as well, but can you talk to us about your own mental health journey and where that went?

Yeah, so, I mean, like growing up in Wines, and I went to like an all boys high school, like, it was very like sports, fucking like, no one ever talked about mental health. We had so many dudes that killed themselves at high school, and no one even mentioned it, like no one even talked about what was wrong.

So I even knew what mental health was till I went to uni pretty much, I started doing comedy.

And yeah, then I was like, cause I was always very quiet, very anxious my entire life.

And yeah, then I started doing comedy, I started being more outspoken, and meeting other people, like the comedy scene, like everyone's on the speaker room pretty much, like most people are, like.

So yeah, meet people like me, and then, yeah,

I accepted it, and then I got diagnosed with like, like heart out depression, and ADHD,

and then after a while, I got diagnosed with PTSD.

We'll be right back after this short break.

Around the same time, you're filming the pickups for what we do in the shadows.

So, like, you've got this incredible body of work at a time of incredible personal trauma.

When you look back at that piece of work,

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is that polarizing for you as well?

A little bit, but luckily, like,

I'm not a very good actor,

I just play the same character

in everything I've ever done.

Ricky Gervais?

Yeah, exactly.

So I'm just like a deadpan sarcastic guy,

so yeah, you can't really tell.

But yeah, it was like,

while we were actually doing it,

and like, like, like Tucker and Jermaine,

they stopped filming for one day

when that happened for me,

so that was nice.

And yeah, then I came back,

I just went back the next day,

like, I went by sister, actually,

she came with me.

Yeah, I just had to keep busy.

I had to, I couldn't,

didn't want to sit around doing nothing,

I had to go back to work straight away.

I thought I made everyone very uncomfortable, I think.

Yeah, was that a game?

Because in life, we're going to encounter

people who have been through trauma,

and then we're in everyday situations.

Like, was there anything that people did

in that situation that was really beneficial

to your wellbeing?

When you were back at work?

Yeah, no one talked about it,

everyone was just, just nor.

Like, yeah, that's, and I think that's the thing to do,

like, when you see someone that goes through that

and you meet them or you hang out with them,

like, just don't, don't milk it,

there's so many annoying people that milk it.

You gotta judge it, you know,

you gotta see someone to see what they're like.

Some people like attention, like me,

but not like in that way, but yeah.

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There's a balance, right?
Like, don't talk to people about it
when something like that's happened,
but on the other end of it,
and I've heard you talk about this,
what can you do to help people
from doing something like that?
Like, this is part of the message to get out there, right?
Like, if your dad had someone to talk to,
if you had, what, a better support network?
Yeah, like, he was just,
he came from like a Latino culture
where no one talks about anything.
It's all very macho, like, yeah.
Like, if he had just literally,
like, the advice he gave me,
if someone had given him that,
like, he'd probably still be here.
Comedy's an interesting one, eh?
Because, particularly your comedy,
because it flirts with such dark themes,
and you are very deadpan, and your style is unique.
How much, sometimes, of your material
is you processing what you're going through
in your real life?
So much.
Yeah, and is that, like, a really positive outlet for you?
Yeah, it's the best.
It's better than getting a psychiatrist.
Yeah, but then when people are, like,
laughing at it as well, like, does that help the,
like, kind of, because I know Pax Asadi uses his platform
to talk about racism and issues like that,
so is it the same for you with some of the darkness
that hangs around your kind of character?
Yeah, yeah, totally.
Like, don't stand up as the best, like,
very, very, or again, for me,
and talking about the dark stuff,
and as I said before, like, my talks about mental health
and stuff, like, you talk to people afterwards,
and they come up to you, and they share their stories,
and that's, yeah, it's all worth it, like, just for that.

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But then did your comedy change at all,
post your father's passing?
Not too much, to be honest.
Like, I've always been quite dark,
and, like, I like defending people,
so quite offensive, and then after that,
I just got, I think I got angrier for a while after that,
got angrier, but now, I'm all right now,
but yeah, I went for a stage where I was just angry.
There really is something in that vulnerability piece,
by you sharing that in front of 60,000 people on TED Talk.
It gives permission, I was reading through the comments,
and the amount of people that then share their own journey,
and what happened to them, it just gives them permission,
and it's something I've noticed with the podcast too,
I was crying in an episode a few weeks ago,
and I feel like it's elevated conversations I have
with friends outside of the podcast,
because they see that they have permission
to be a bit deeper with you.
Yeah, yeah, hard, yeah, like, yeah,
you put yourself out there, so, like,
you guys probably get it, like, your mates probably see this,
and they see a different side of you, maybe,
and so when I'm on stage, I like,
my mates who aren't in the comedy scene,
they come to my shows, they're like,
whoa, this is like, I've never seen this from you, you know?
Yeah, I wondered about that,
you're on stage persona versus your private persona,
are they miles apart, are they tightened?
I'm quite similar, like, I don't have,
like, a stage persona or anything,
but, yeah, I definitely, I talk more on stage, obviously,
and I'm, yeah, more open, and, yeah,
as I said before, I'm more offensive, and, yeah,
so, my friends see me like, whoa, okay,
is that what you're like, oh, you're a grain supporter, right?
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.
Can you tell us about how, what happened affected
your relationship with your family,
because Alex said that you've got
an incredible relationship with your mum,

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and you talk to her at least once a day,
often twice a day.
Two or three times, yeah.
Two or three times a day.
Which is so cool, is that as a result,
have you always had that bond?
Oh, always, yeah, yeah,
even before what happened with my dad,
like I talked to my mum so many times.
And even more now, like I do school pickups,
I get my daughter and I don't want to talk to other parents.
So I'll just call my mum every time at like five to three.
I call her and say, yeah, so no one can talk to me.
And then when she doesn't answer,
I pretend to be on a phone call to her.
Now I read this really incredible profile,
Steve Braunius did on you a few years ago
and it detailed the depth of that relationship
with your mum, which I just thought was so cool.
It's like, if something good happens to you, tell her.
If something bad happens to you, tell her.
And you've just got this bond, which, yeah.
Oh, she's the love of my life.
She's just perfect.
She's the strongest woman that's ever lived.
She's been through so much shit even like from,
when she was like, from, from, she was born,
like being through so much shit.
And she's still the happiest person ever, like,
but also like, don't fuck with her.
Like she'll literally like come at you.
Because as a family,
you've all got the same tattoo as well, right?
The Tanto tattoo,
but yours is slightly different to the rest.
Yeah, I got mine on my neck.
They got theirs on,
I was the last person in my family to ever get tattooed.
Believe it or not.
Yeah, like my whole, my whole family right there,
they're all like covered in tattoos.
I was the last one to ever get tattooed.
And it's prominent, man.

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It's prominent on the neck of Tanto.
And that is, that's your,
your families were telling each other
that they love each other.
Yeah, so Tanto is, when I was little, I think they say,
so Tanto means a lot.
And we say, I love you a lot,
but Tanto was the one that say,
so Tanto, whenever we, yeah,
every phone call we're like, Tanto, I love you.
Oh man, that's awesome.
Yeah.
And then came Freddie.
And I, again, Alex,
she's written a couple of quotes,
I'm gonna read one now
and then she'll read the other one at the end.
But she said,
he's the most incredible father to Freddie.
Our dad had that same love and friendship with all of us.
He's a mirror of our dad.
Freddie saved his life.
She was, is a blessing to our family.
She healed all our hearts, especially Corey's.
Yeah.
Yeah, that's, she literally did save our lives.
Everyone, like my whole family.
Yeah, it's just a different kind of like,
she's talking about my dad,
like my dad with my daughter,
with my sister, sorry, was like, amazing.
Like the way he was with us as well.
I always wanted to be like him.
I was, I always wanted a little girl.
Like I saw him being amazing to my daughter, to my sister.
And I always said, I want to have a little girl
when I'm, when I, when I'm a dad,
cause I want to be like my dad was to my sister.
And yeah, like,
and Freddie's just come in
and just literally saved everyone's lives,
literally saved all our lives.
She's around here somewhere.

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How old is Freddie now?
I don't know, probably seven.
No, she's seven, she turns eight in July.
Yeah, that's what Alex said to you.
That's cool.
How has that, other than saving everyone's lives,
how has that fatherhood journey changed you as a person?
I don't know, I'm just,
I've just always got something that I've got to worry about,
but in the best possible way.
Like before that, I don't like give a shit about anything.
I was just waking up, doing whatever I wanted to do,
fucking shit up, fucking my life up.
Yeah, but now I've got a purpose.
I wake up every day.
I'm like, like, and now her, baby mama,
she's like my best friend
and she's staying with me at the moment.
She's in between houses.
So we're all staying together at the moment.
And it's, it's like, it's so perfect right now.
It's like the, yeah.
Like, Freddie's the happiest she's ever been.
Yeah, it's just ridiculous.
Like being a dad is the best thing in the world.
Like, I could, like, what?
Yeah.
For all of the, the, the deadpan and the,
are you in a good, like you seem like
you're in a really good place right now.
Like you seem like the pieces of your life
are falling into place,
despite your delivery sometimes
of some of those really positive messages.
I mean, like, there's nothing wrong going on,
but I'll always be like a bit, you know, up and down.
But yeah, right now, like, yeah, I've got Freddie.
Even though I'm unemployed at the moment.
Hey man, join the club.
I'm in, I'm in there with you.
All right, yeah.
Yeah, I've got like, yeah, nothing going on.
Yeah, I'm definitely like, yeah,

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I don't think I'll ever be as down as I used to be.
Just jumping on that unemployed part,
like the life of a performer
is a fucking rollercoaster, right?
Cause is it right that for three years before
what we do in the shadows, you weren't working
or you weren't actively in entertainment?
Yeah, I took a few, yeah, I took a few years off
from stand-up or anything.
Went on the doll.
Oh, that was going to be my question,
is how did you, how did you make ends meet?
Yeah, went on the doll.
And then I do like random gigs every now and then,
like under the table ship.
And then I was a drug dealer for a while and that was all right.
That pays well.
Until they catch up.
Don't do your own.
I just did too much of I On Stash.
And I had a lot of people, a lot of money
and then paid that off and then stopped doing that.
Yeah, what was the question, sorry?
Well, like that time period,
I guess it's the stop-start nature of what you do.
So like in your downtime,
I guess you've got the danger of being alone
with your thoughts sometimes too,
if you're not being stimulated.
So I guess, how do you look after yourself
or how do you manage that now?
You got the dad obviously, but.
Yeah, dad, I try to exercise,
like I try to go to the gym every day or most days
or do some kind of exercise.
Was on the podcasts, try to do some writing.
Watch the office.
Yeah.
Like literally like that.
If I'm ever feeling down, I'll just put the office on.
The office was Seinfeld or Arista Development.
I'll just watch them and I'll be like, yeah.
Yeah, happy place.

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I never got behind Arista Development.
Oh, it's so good.
Yeah.
Seinfeld too, I was a bit part of it.
Oh, really?
Yeah, a little bit polarising.
Yeah.
The office, I can get behind fully.
You've got Seinfeld tattoo on me.
Oh, I'm sorry, I offended you.
Serenity now, what's the episode?
Serenity out, yeah, yeah, yeah.
When George's dad, whenever he gets stressed out,
he goes to himself, serenity now, serenity now.
So I got the tattoo on him just to remind myself
just serenity now.
I thought you were gonna say, I got tattooed, I'm out.
How many?
Sergio Georgini.
How many seasons of Seinfeld are there?
Like eight.
Eight seasons with like 20 episodes per season?
Yeah.
My wife discovered Seinfeld.
My wife.
My wife, about eight years ago before we had kids
and watched all eight seasons.
And she hates it?
No, in the span of it, it was a ridiculous amount of time.
She discovered Seinfeld and just devoured it
in all its glory.
We'll be right back after this short break.
I'm gonna pull us out of the mental health space
and then we'll touch on it again at the end.
But before we do, I just wanted to really,
there will be a lot of people listening to this
who really resonate with what you've shared in your story
and how you've gotten out of it.
And I just wanted to give you the chance
to send a message to them, what are the tips?
What can they do?
How can they get through the tough times?
Yeah, I reckon like when you wanna talk about it, do it.

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Don't feel like you got pressure on you.
If people say, like, how are you going?
Like, what's happening?
Like, are you all right?
Like, feel free to walk away.
Like, you gotta be in the right mood.
And like, I had that so many times
after what happened with my dad, people come up to me
and they're like, oh my God, I'm so sorry,
but like, that's, like, I appreciate it,
but it's just so annoying.
Like, me, myself, I just wanted to be by myself.
And when I was ready for it,
I went out and approached people and talked to people.
But yeah, like, don't feel like you have to,
don't feel like you have to talk about it.
But know that you can.
Know that it's there.
There's support for you from so many fucking places.
But, and also it's, people think it's taboo
to talk about mental health and suicide.
It's not, everyone, everyone talks about it these days.
Like, everyone talks about it.
So there's so many people that are there for you.
Yeah, we have to talk about it.
It's such a problem in society.
Is New Zealand one of the worst places in the world?
Yeah, yeah.
Electricity in the, what's it, is it GDP?
GDPs?
Yeah, it's like the worst suicide rates in the GDP.
Well, thank you.
You're such a good spokesman for it.
And I know there will be people that are, yeah.
Getting me a job.
Get a lot from this talk.
Okay, so pulling out of there,
I wanted to talk about your relationship
with Jermaine and Tyker because was that a friendship
that grew from these sort of amateur comedy gigs
and you grew up together.
And then, like, their star grew
and you auditioned for roles on their shows.

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Like, how did that whole relationship develop?
So I, when I won the raw comedy quest,
Tyker was a judge.
So he made me win.
So that's the first time I met him was that he was a judge
in the comedy competition.
And then I met Jermaine just from the Concordstone shows
at Elba.
And, yeah, one day, Tyker calls me and he's like,
do you want to do, we're doing a vampire,
a short film for a vampire thing.
Do you want to come do it?
And I was like, yes, sweet.
And they literally only got me
because I was the only ethnic comedian around.
And I remember, Hurley actually,
and regularly they were like, oh,
they literally only called you
because you're the only ethnic comedian.
And I was like, yeah, thanks for looking me now.
Yeah, broke.
Yeah, then did that.
And then, yeah, just insane, just through comedy,
like more Tyker and Jermaine, like Jermaine.
Oh, so after what happened with my dad,
Jermaine paid for all my therapy.
Wow.
Like he literally paid for all my therapy
and him and my mum are real close now because of it.
Like he checks up on me all the time.
Yeah, Jermaine's a fucking man.
That's so cool.
When you were filming the scenes
and what we do in the shadows,
did you know it was gonna be as big of a hit as it was?
Like was there a feeling on set
that this thing has this real momentum to it?
It was hilarious.
We laughed a whole, it was like six weeks
of nonstop laughing, but yeah,
we thought maybe it would get like,
go to like Rialto maybe in New Market
for a few weeks, it'll be it.

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But then, yeah, it just blew up.
It's ridiculous.
Are they just normal people to you, Tyker and Jermaine?
Yeah.
That's, yeah, that blows my mind.
And I guess that's the great thing about being a Kiwi
as well is that you can, like you say,
Jermaine will check up on you,
you can probably flick a text to Tyker and go,
hey man, why didn't you cast me in Next Gold Wins, asshole?
Yeah, exactly, yeah.
Dropping in some of his suit.
I can play in American Simone.
Yeah, exactly.
But like it is that still, there's that connection.
And it's just, it's Wellington as well.
Like we're all from Wellington.
Like everyone, yeah, like these guys,
like Hurley, Dye, Steve Wrigley,
like we're all just, just nice.
Not me though.
And that, what we do in the shadows,
sort of a gravy train for lack of a better word.
Like you went to Venice Film Festival and Berlin,
so was that for that?
I went to Berlin Sundance.
Sundance, that's what I was thinking about.
Yeah.
Was that for what we do in the shadow?
Yeah.
Was that, what was that experience?
Wasn't real life, man, it was, it was ridiculous.
So I think we were away for maybe six weeks.
Went to Sundance, then we just stayed in LA
for a while, then went to Berlin.
It was just like, like, I can't even explain.
Like, it was ridiculous.
Like we like, I'm hanging out at parties.
There's like Selena Gomez next to me.
There's fucking like Nick Cave walking down the road.
Like Jake Jones halls, watching me breakdance at a party.
Like, fucking ridiculous.
Yeah, we're going, fucking Adrian Brody's quiet these days.

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I don't fucking ever see anything.
It's the fucking Kong film.
It's funny like that.
Is that what it's like?
So people go, oh yeah, we went to Sundance.
And again, sitting on the sidelines,
no one knows what that actually means.
I had no idea when I got there.
So, yeah, like Tyker, he doesn't, he's not like,
oh, we're going to do this, like it just happens with him.
Like, and everyone knew him, everyone knew Jermaine.
And yeah, like we just went everywhere,
got in everywhere, got so much free shit.
We got like fucking Nintendo Wii's.
We got like free boots, like like \$700 jackets and stuff.
Like every party can think of we went to like,
when you say everybody knows him,
is that like that cast of A-Listers
that you were just reeling off?
Is that literally like those people going,
hey Tyker, hey Jermaine, like.
Dude, Tyker's even bigger than those people now.
Fuck, that is wild.
That is wild.
And you had him in your bar just riffing some comedy stuff.
Yeah, yeah.
That's so cool.
Does the whole cast, like what's the cut off on cast
to get to go on these trips?
Like, is it all the major characters?
Like, surely you got to be in the poster.
Your name's going to be in the poster?
I'm pretty sure the whole trip was sponsored by New Zealand.
So they got, and they asked us if we,
if you've got a partner, you can bring them.
I was single, I didn't bring anyone.
But yeah, it was literally all the main people.
Like, yeah, like Reese.
Was Jackie there?
Jackie, what had been there?
No, but yeah, everyone, everyone came.
Yeah.
Even like the editor, one of the editors came.

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Yeah.
Fucking epic.
Did you say six weeks you're there?
No, we were in Sundance for like week and a half.
Then LA for maybe two weeks.
Then Berlin for another two weeks.
Or what do you mean, like five weeks or something?
And is that press tour stuff as well?
Like, are you doing interviews and stuff?
Yeah, we're doing like, yeah, like, at Sundance,
like we had a day of press, we would go to like the Hollywood
Reporter, Variety, all these different things.
We just sit in chairs and they'd ask us questions.
Fuck, that's pretty wild.
There's a lot of strings to your bow.
There's the stand-up comedy, there's the acting,
there's the writing.
Where, if you had to break it down,
like are there parts that you enjoy more than others?
And when you look back on maybe the last decade,
like what to those have you done most of?
I like, like if I could pick one of them to make a living,
it would be writing.
So I love writing, but yeah.
And I don't know, they're all the same.
Comedies like might be my thing for so long.
So, and that's where my friends are,
and that's what I do like a few times a week.
It's my job.
And then acting, it comes around not that often.
So when that happens, it's exciting.
So I do that.
But yeah, it's hard to say, but yeah,
if I had to make a living out of something,
it'd be writing, I think.
When you write something, can it sit there for years
and years and years and it gets pitched
and it doesn't get picked up and then it just takes
the right producer or someone to go,
this is fucking gold sitting right here.
100%, that's all it is.
And how many pieces of work have you got stacked
kind of that you could drop at any moment?

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Well, like a million ideas.
But yeah, so me and mate Lewis, my old writing partner,
we sold a show to FX last year.
And it's not gonna be made now,
but hopefully maybe in the future.
But yeah, our manager, like we sold it.
We got like fucking 150 grand for it.
Our manager goes, our manager in LA, he's like,
so this might either get made in two months or never.
So it's never, but that's what it's like.
So like 99% of like scripts never get even commissioned
or get funding.
And then from that 1% that gets made, 99% of that 1%
doesn't get made into an actual show.
So we got to the 1% of at least selling a script.
So do you fire these scripts off to a bunch of people
and then you kind of don't hear back
and then you get a call saying, oh, they're gonna buy it?
Like is that a, that must be a pretty cool call to make
or how does that?
Yeah, pretty much like, yeah, we'll just,
yep, literally write stuff or write a pitch deck
or like a two page fucking sample of what you're doing.
Or in our case, like our thing,
we literally just told them an idea
and they were like, yep, write it and then.
That must be a wild meeting to go into.
Like the pitching meetings.
That was, yeah, it was during COVID.
So it was all like in Zoom.
It was, yeah.
Yeah, like Lewis and Johnny Brough,
who's a other writer of us, they, they can talk.
So I just in the background.
Is it your role, just the quiet guy
that chimes in every now and again?
Every now and then I'll come in with some gold
and then spit it.
You got a little side chat group
where we're killing this guy.
We're killing this guy.
We've got them going.
What about, and I know we've had a few other comedians on,

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they talk about corporate gigs
as quite a good sort of income spinner
or supplementary to their work.
Do you do a lot of corporate stuff?
And is that different?
Not as much as other people,
like Hurley makes a killing from corporates,
like like all the seven days,
they're like corporate and ego and stuff.
I don't know if you, I'm not really a corporate comedian.
I'm, I'm a liability.
So you referenced some of those other seven days characters
as being more suited to corporate gigs.
Seven days in itself is a kind of a weird situation.
Like, what's your experience been on the show?
Were you like a foundation member from 2009?
I think it started.
Yeah, yeah, I was there from the start.
It's just also, it's like,
we're all, it's such a tight community.
We're all, it's just hanging out with your good friends,
telling jokes, it's fucking awesome.
Yeah, the competitive element to it, right?
Like, you only get on the,
what did they film for like two hours
and they cut it down to 30 minutes or something?
Yeah, two hours now, but it used to be,
I did like a five hour shoot once.
I was, yeah, sometimes it used to go into midnight.
But you don't, but you don't get screen time
unless you come with good jokes.
Yeah, you got to get in there.
Yeah.
I don't really, I just come in with like one joke per thing.
Just get it in there and then I'm out.
Like a great highlight reel, just 30 seconds.
And we have 20 years of one, one line gags.
So Henry always talks about how like the Kiwi,
the, like the tour,
different gags hit in different places.
You're, again, I've referenced earlier,
your style's quite unique.
Do different gags hit in different places?

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Oh, 100%.

Every town's different.

Yeah, there's, sometimes you have to dumb it down for places.

But yeah, every place is different.

Like, we're lucky, like I go to Auckland all the time

in Wellington and there they get it.

They get like some of the weird stuff

or like political stuff.

But yeah, you go to, you go to the suburbs,

you go to the towns, you go to the districts.

You definitely have to dumb it down, but sorry, but you do.

But it's not just New Zealand.

Cause I, again, researching gigs in the Middle East.

How does your stuff go down in the Middle East?

Well, I, when I got there, it was in front of expats.

So it was, but before we got on stage,

we got given a list of stuff we couldn't talk about.

So you couldn't mention like anything about America.

You couldn't talk about Coca-Cola.

You couldn't talk about like women working.

It was a mess of a lot of shit you couldn't talk about.

So I'm sure this show of all time.

Yeah, couldn't talk about Shortland Street.

It was weird.

Yeah, that was a, yeah, that trip was fucked.

I, last night we, I got, I sleepwalk quite a bit.

And I woke up in my underwear in the kitchen of the hotel,

which is like 11 stories down from my room.

That's some walk.

Yeah. And apparently like in the Middle East,

like that you can get a rest, like go to jail for that,

like walking around with no clothes on.

And yeah, then I went back up to my hotel

and my hotel room was flooding.

I don't know what the fuck happened that night.

It's a hell of a night.

Is that the wildest night you've ever had?

Or is it?

Like the most unexpected wildest night.

I don't plan any of that.

Being a stand-up comedian on the road, international acts,

like it must be an incredibly,

I heard you tell a story about,

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I think maybe you work in the UK or London or something,
and you travel two hours and you're doing a gig
in front of two people and it's just all the time.
Like that, it must be so challenging to push through.
Oh, I didn't do it that much.
I went to London, maybe,
I was there for maybe four months, four years, I don't know.
And yeah, I went there to be a comedian
and you literally have to like travel two hours on train
or a bus or like another comedian drives you somewhere
and then you do a gig in front.
Like literally I did one, I went to like Rochdale or something.
It was like a three hour train ride.
I got there with two people watching the show
and I had to do a one hour show to two people
for like 80 quid or something.
But yeah, I couldn't do it anymore.
So people like Hurley, like Rhys Darby,
they went over there, they did that for years
and they smashed it like, so yeah,
I don't know how they did it, I couldn't do it.
Yeah, a certain type of character that sticks that out.
When you've got two people in the audience,
is it just an interacting one with them?
You can't do your normal set.
You just say, what do you guys do for a job?
It would be like you doing a comedy set to us.
Yeah, you're on a weird date.
Or a great date.
I mean, are you guys keen?
Just three hour train ride back to London.
Okay, I'm just going to pick away at some of this stuff
titled random stuff.
She has put it at the bottom of our notes.
Alex has actually said,
you're the most dramatic person ever.
Oh, fuck off.
One time, she told you.
Line sinker.
Said, one time she told you who'd won an Oscar
before it played on TV and you threw the remote at the wall.
Yeah, sounds about right.
Fickin' to the Oscars.

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And was there a gag gone wrong in South Auckland where you played a blind guy and then had to drive off in your car afterwards and got some heat for that?

Oh, I do.

So when I worked on Jono's new show, do you remember Jimmy the Dwarf?

Yeah.

Yeah, so me and him, we did a sketch where he was my guide Dwarf.

He's just Jimmy these days, Dwarf.

Yeah, yeah.

Jimmy the person.

Sorry.

Ah, sorry.

I love their attention.

I love their attention.

I love Jimmy.

So he played my guide Dwarf and I went to the Otara markets and I was the blind guy and I had a guide Dwarf and he'd take me everywhere and walk around and then something happened, he ran away and I was just a blind guy and the security and the people who ran the markets took me in and the police, they took me into the offices. They wasn't planned, they took me into the offices.

I had to pretend to be blind for like one hour.

Well, they're like trying to find my Dwarf.

Then Jono walks in and he's like,

hey, Cory, we found them, we'll get you out.

So then I walk out like that

and the last clip of that was me taking my glasses off, getting in the car with Jimmy next to me and driving off.

Like, so guys, and all these people got so angry, they're like, fuck.

As well.

Are you quite a recognisable character in New Zealand?

Like, do people come up and go,

hey, you're Cory the comedian?

Not, I don't know, it's New Zealand.

No one's famous in New Zealand.

But does the spotlight sit comfortably with you?

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Yeah, I don't know if it's a spotlight, but like,
people are always nice, everyone's nice.
Every now and then you'll get like a dickhead,
but yeah, no, everyone's nice.
I've got like, yeah, my mate Josh Millen,
he's always, I'm always with him
and if anyone's a dick, he goes crazy.
And my sister as well, and my mum as well.
And you can fight too, we've established.
Yeah, no, no, we've got a problem.
No, no, no, I'm not saying you've got a problem.
Peace and love and all that fucking shit.
Yeah.
Do you know what the word odious means?
Is that Nikisei?
First ever review.
Did you genuinely have to go to the dictionary
to find out what that meant for the review?
Pretty much, yeah, we had no idea, yeah.
Yeah, we did a first ever comedy festival show,
me and James Nikisei, what was called,
overstaying a hunk.
And yeah, we had our mate, Dan Crozier,
Justin Smith's husband, he opened for us doing his rapping
and they got the best review,
or the whole fucking season,
he's like, the rapping was great.
But then these guys came out, they were odious.
Stevie threw that word and I was like,
oh, they must have stunk the joint out straight away.
Yeah, no, it was, yeah, odious sounds like a DJ.
Like a shit from a bass DJ.
DJ odious from Dark Tunnel.
Nice.
All right, before I start to wrap us up,
can we just reflect a little bit on, you know,
you're 40-ish, you've got a lot of years, 41.
39, I thought, is it?
Oh, we're going to 39.
We're at 39.
I'm at 30, I'm at 30s, I'm at 30s.
Tim De Profast says 39, I don't know.
Yeah.

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David Brink, when he goes, you're 49, you're 30s, you're 30s.

We're in our 30s, we're all in our 30s.

We're all in our 30s.

There's a lot of life, there's a lot of career left,

you build up such a good body of work,

and you're so, as people will be able to tell from this,

so witty and intelligent and clever,

and there's so much goodness to give.

Do you, are you the sort of person that looks into the future

and thinks about what you would like to be doing,

or is there a path that you would like to chat?

I shouldn't, I should do it more, but I don't.

As long as Freddie's healthy and happy,

that's literally all that matters,

but then other stuff, like, I mean,

I would like to be rich one day.

Yeah, I don't think, yeah, that's one of my faults,

I think I just take every day as it comes,

I don't have any long plans,

I don't think about buying a house,

I'm still trying to pay rent, like, I don't, yeah,

I don't, yeah, every day is just, I just,

I go day by day, my whole life is just day by day.

I think that's actually what is really appealing to you

as a person, your authenticity,

it's like you're just, you're literally in the moment

and you're answering questions with a straight bat

as honestly, and-

Dude, you gotta be honest, man,

like, I'm the most honest person in the world,

and it's why I've been in trouble a lot,

I'll say whatever comes to my mind, yeah.

And that authenticity, again,

is what keeps people coming back,

so I wanna thank you.

No, thank you guys.

Just warming up now, because Shae's our outro guy,

I say this every episode, but before I throw to him,

thank you so much for coming on,

thank you for sharing your journey

and the difficult times and the highs and the lows,

I know it's gonna make a difference to people listening,

and it's, yeah, seeing someone who is in such a good place

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who has been through the absolute worst thing
is really inspiring, so.
Thank you, man, so thanks.
I love your show, thank you so much for having me, yeah.
How much am I getting paid for this?
Yeah, we'll sort that out.
Yeah, case of export golds on the way out.
And a pretty z-card or something.
And a brand new Between Two Beers shirt by Image Group.
Hey, look, I don't think there's been a more
salient example of light and dark on this episode,
like, the light that you bring
and the comedy that you bring is amazing,
but the uncomfortable truth that you're burdened with as well.
That's a nice way to put it.
You balance that so well.
I love the kiwiness about you, but I also love,
and I think my people just jumped off the canoe earlier
than your people did, like the South American,
the family nature that you have as well,
and it's encapsulated in a quote that your sister wrote,
and I'm gonna try my best to get through this
because it hit me last night.
So these are her words, these are Alex's sister's words.
What happened with our dad obviously
fucked us all so much and will forever.
Corey could have chosen to give up,
and there were so many times where it seemed like
it was going that way, but he just turned his life around.
He didn't let depression beat him,
he's helping people by telling his story,
and he's just so real about it.
He doesn't sugarcoat it, he tells the reality which is,
things don't get easier or better all the time,
but you learn how to cope.
He saved my life as well as so many people with his words.
He's truly an amazing, amazing human.
I'm incredibly lucky to have had him by my side
my whole life, and I think not only her words,
but as Stephen said in the intro,
the love in your circle that comes forward
when people bring your name up is incredible,
and testament to the character that you are

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despite the struggles that you've been through in your life, and I'm glad that we've been able to spend some time to unpick some of that, and to see that light and that dark.

It's been great.

So thank you very much.

Thank you guys, I appreciate it.

Cheers Corey.

Cheers.

Hey guys, if you've made it this far, hopefully that means you've enjoyed this episode, and if you feel strongly enough about it to share on social media, that would be much appreciated.

Also, make sure you subscribe to the show in your podcast app and leave a review.

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