



Getting 'Fun & Slutty' with Jonathan van Ness

Transcript

Story by Gina Marie Rodriguez

[MUSIC: "A LITTLE WIGGLE"]

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (00:04):

This is Gina Marie Rodriguez and you are listening to the Jersey Arts Podcast.

Today's guest is none other than the ebullient and altogether endearing, Jonathan van Ness or JVN as some may know him. A non-binary hero himself, JVN rose to fame as the hairstylist to heroes. The name Netflix's "Queer Eye" reboot gives to its episodic guests. But Jonathan's been an artist long before "Queer Eye." Beyond the artistry required in his work as a stylist, Jonathan has been on stage as a comedian for years. His web series, "Gay of Thrones," a weekly comedic recap of HBO's "Game of Thrones," where he starred as none other than an opinionated hairstylist, was a hit for Funny or Die.

He's also the host of his very own podcast, "Getting Curious with Jonathan van Ness," and in addition to all of that, he is also a New York Times bestselling author. He's done so much that it's an injustice to try and share it all in this brief intro. So instead, I encourage you to listen to his story in his own words as we get ready to welcome him to New Jersey for his upcoming standup special, "Fun and Slutty" at the NJPAC. As a fan myself, I tried to keep it together, but I'll let you decide whether or not I succeeded.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (01:16):

Hi there.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (01:17):

Hello. How are you?

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JONATHAN VAN NESS (01:19):
I'm good. How are you?

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (01:20):
I'm good. Thank you so much for meeting with me.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (01:22):
Oh my God, thank you for having me.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (01:24):
Of course. I love your plant in the background. I have my own as well.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (01:28):
Thank you. Thank you. I'm at a recording studio today. They're so sweet here.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (01:33):
Awesome. I love it. Would you mind, may I ask your pronouns so that I get that right?

JONATHAN VAN NESS (01:37):
Sure. I use all of 'em. He/she/they. You can use any one you like.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (01:40):
Okay, awesome. And mine are she/her.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (01:43):
Great. Thank you.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (01:44):
Let's start with that. Of course. Okay, I'm really excited to talk to you because I've been a huge fan for a while, so I'm trying to be cool. I will probably not succeed.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (01:53):
Beyond cool and your hair looks so good, queen.

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GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (01:55):

Thank you so much because I tried really hard for you. I'm terrible at doing my hair, but I tried to curl it just for you.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (02:02):

It looks great.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (02:03):

Thank you. Appreciate it. I was thinking about this and I feel like the words 'entrepreneur' and 'multi-hyphenate' are kind of synonymous with JVN. I mean, you are a hairstylist, a founder of a sustainable haircare brand and a pet supply company. You are a podcast host, a TV personality, author, standup comic. So, I just want to know- what can't you do?

JONATHAN VAN NESS (02:29):

I can't sing very well. Yeah, and unfortunately for our crowd, there is a, I do this whole joke that's like an acapella karaoke bit, so just prepare. I don't think a record deal is in my future, but maybe a best comedy recorded album or something. Yeah, I think even more than like entrepreneur for me, it's that really I'm an artist. I think 'entrepreneur' definitely I think qualifies for the Yummers of it all, my pet food brand that I have with Antoni, and that's mostly because I have five cats and three dogs, and at least an hour to 90 minutes of every day is my husband and I tending to our animals. So that part just felt kind of natural and a few of my cats have really had really intense digestive issues when they were kittens. So I just naturally kind of was on this mission of trying to get my cat to stop having violent diarrhea, which not to start our interview with that realness, but that is really true.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (03:36):

I needed something to calm the digestive issues. But as far as my standup comedy and haircare, "Queer Eye", my podcast- I love to make people laugh. I'm a storyteller, I'm an artist, and I love getting to share information and share stories and make people laugh. I love to perform. Standup comedy was one of my earliest passions through people like Margaret Cho and Lisa Lampanelli and Wanda Sykes and Janeane Garofalo and even Ellen DeGeneres. And some of their material, I was probably watching a little young, but honey, I just thought that crowd work of Lisa Lampanelli was genius and yeah, comedy was one of my very first loves, and I can't believe that I get to be in a part in my life where I get to make people laugh and I can hopefully be that comedic inspiration for other young comics.

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GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (04:31):

Absolutely. I think that's so wonderful and I love viewing comedy, but I find standup comedy to be terrifying. If you were to put me in front of a room, I've done it before, I've stood in front of a room and made people laugh. Was it intentional or accidental? Not sure.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (04:47):

Doesn't matter. [laughs]

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (04:49):

Oh no, it doesn't matter. I made them laugh. But how do you come to a point where you realize that's what you want to do, that you want to stand in front of a room and put yourself in this vulnerable position and try to make people laugh?

JONATHAN VAN NESS (05:03):

Yeah, I dipped my toes in really slowly, and it started long before "Queer Eye". I got to, as the universe would have it, I ultimately got to work with Margaret Cho after having just been a huge fan of hers for years on my first web series that I did called "Gay of Thrones". So I got to work with her there, and that was back in 2014, so almost 10 years ago. And she was the first one that was like, 'you were really meant to be a standup comedian'. And I was like, 'I'm meant to be your hairdresser.' And it was through working with her that I got up - I did a couple minutes at one of her shows, then she encouraged me to start doing open mics, and so I started going up on some open mics and I started doing a couple of my friends' shows.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (05:40):

And at first it was really terrifying, but I kept wanting to do it. And I think my actual first set I ever did was - I had to follow, or that was at a comedy place that I booked, I think it was a Nicole Byer show, and it was in Los Feliz or Glendale in L.A. And I remember I had to go up straight after Sasheer Zamata and I was just like, oh my God. She brought the house down and she was genius and she's so storied and iconic and just a really solid comedian. And the whole 10 minutes that I had wrote, it went out of my brain and I ended up just doing an impromptu recap of the 2018 Women's Olympic Figure Skating Final.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (06:30):

People laughed, maybe they hadn't seen the Olympics that year, so I was there to give them the tea, and that was 2018. And so, between 2014 and 18, it wasn't my sole focus. I was just doing it when I had time

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to do it. I was also maintaining a hair clientele. I was still doing “Gay of Thrones,” so it wasn't until I did it for - was really trying for a few years before I was like, oh, I really do like this, and I really do enjoy this craft, and it's fun getting to make your humor and your voice fit into standup and finding how your delivery and how your timing works best on stage. So that's really interesting and it's been really fun, but it's still nerve wracking sometimes and sometimes a new joke that I write flops. You just hope that it doesn't flop in front of 3000 people or 2000 people but I've learned so much on this stage and I love getting to do standup. And my shows are, I think a really inviting and very electric atmosphere, mostly because my comedy doesn't punch down and it is really storytelling based and it's more of kind of making fun of myself and Republicans, which is I think really fun.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (07:53):

[Laughs]. It sounds fun to me. I approve of that brand. I think it's really important to, if you're going to punch anywhere, you should punch up or punch yourself, I suppose, self. So how did that relate to the jump to “Queer Eye?” How did you audition for “Queer Eye?” Did you have to perform a standup? Did you have to? What did you do?

JONATHAN VAN NESS (08:14):

No, no, no, no. That was kind of like a classic audition process. I saw that they were rebooting the show and I had been doing hair for 10 years. Well, let me think about that. 2006, I auditioned in 2017, so I'd been doing hair for 11 years. I was maintaining my own clientele and still doing hair. I was still doing “Gay of Thrones,” and I heard that “Queer Eye” was getting rebooted, and I was like, oh my God, I'm so meant for that. That's totally what I want to do. And so, then I auditioned and I got a callback and I did another audition, and then I got a callback. And then it was a live kind of chemistry audition where was 40 or 50 of us and 8 to 10 people in each category. And then we worked for two days in these auditions, and then I ultimately came away with that spot and it changed my life. Ya know, forever, really.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (09:09):

Wow. I mean, that process seems stressful just to be in a room full of 40 to 50 people knowing that you're being compared. I'm so glad it was you though. I'm so glad.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (09:09):

Me too. Me too.

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GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (09:10):

I absolutely love “Queer Eye.” I'm looking forward to the new season. I know it's going to drop really soon. But I'm maybe not prepared for all of the crying that will come because it happens inevitably every time. I'll start crying maybe five minutes in if we get that far. Sometimes it starts a lot sooner, but that show is so important to so many people, and I'd really like to know what it's like being on the other side of the screen. When you're working with your heroes, what is it like for you to be living in that moment? You guys get to see so much more than we do in the final edit, so just tell me a little bit about what that's like.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (10:01):

It is still, even after doing it for this long, it's still surreal. And I think that the longer that I've done it, the more empathy I have because we've done this or I've done this 70 times or something, or a lot of times after these seasons, and I've had a lot of times on “Queer Eye” or just in public life where I share something about myself and I thought I was really ready, and then when I do, you're like, that was really scary. It can be intimidating. And so it's kind of observing people open up and then knowing that they're going to have this experience of showing this part of themselves to the world. And often in therapy I've learned about not rescuing, letting people have their own experience and letting them feel their feelings, because if you constantly rescue someone from an uncomfortable feeling, then they're never going to learn that they were strong enough to tolerate that situation.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (11:02):

And so it's really, I think the longer that I've done it, I get so protective that it's about letting people have their experience and trying not to rescue. I mean, obviously keeping safe environment, but as far as allowing people to be vulnerable. And for me, I've always, if there's any silence, my instinct is to just fill the silence, fill the air, make people laugh, make the discomfort, go away as fast as possible. And sometimes you need to be quiet. You need to let someone feel something, and you have to watch someone go through something. And so that I think is probably the most challenging part for me. And I think that's where I probably have grown the most. I trust people to have their feelings and I trust myself to watch people have their feelings.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (11:57):

It can be uncomfortable, not a bad way. It can just be, it's a lot being vulnerable and putting yourself out there. It's a lot. And so, I think that's kind of what it's like for me. And then the other piece is I think

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that's probably harder for people to maybe understand is just the physicality of doing someone's hair in a week and thinking about, okay, if they're going to go have a fitting with Tan or they're going to go on a field trip with Bobby, or there's something that's going on either before or after my hair, it's like I can't have it take eight hours if I thought it was going to take four. And I think any hairdresser will know, sometimes there's things that you just can't necessarily account for maybe their highlights. I remember in season, oh my God, what is that? What was that season? It was –

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (12:50):

Do you know the hero? Nam the hero.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (12:53):

It was Deanna Munoz. It was Deanna Munoz and her highlights and low lights kind of her low lights kind of grabbed really dark. And I was like, oh my God, that can't be like that. So I needed to, I just had, sometimes color doesn't go exactly the way that you think that it's going to go.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (13:11):

Yeah. So it's like that part I think is - and then trying, in my career pre "Queer Eye," I've definitely had moments where I bit off more than I could chew. Where a client would be like, 'I want a head full of blonde extensions and I want a bleach and tone. I want a bleach and tone, and I want extensions, but I have lunch in 45 minutes. Do it.' And you have to be like, no. So it's biting off what you know can chew, and then when it's not even just the hero and you waiting for it, it's like 50 or 60, however many people are waiting on that timeline for you to be on time. That part is kind of difficult. And it also is, it's a little - I don't want, well, actually I'll say it can be a little limiting. Maybe you want to do something that's really big and drastic, but you just know it's going to take eight hours.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (14:02):

And for the show, sometimes it just can't take that long. Or sometimes it's even too much for the hero. It's like they don't want to sit there for eight hours knowing that they're about to have this gutting conversation with Karamo or they're facing this thing that's been holding them back. And it's like they don't want to look at themselves for eight hours. So it just depends. And every time it really is so different. Every experience is so different. Every hero's experience is so different and whatever they're coming into the show with is so different. So for me, it's kind of really fun. I feel like I really don't get in a

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rut because everyone is so different and their needs are so different. So that part keeps it really fun and fresh for me. But then there's other aspects of it that are hard, like being on time.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (14:53):

Wow, I just learned so much in the very few minutes that you were talking, it hadn't occurred to me that you're on a schedule. I mean, I work in film, I understand that there's a schedule, but when you are doing hair, you do have to budget a certain amount of time. That hadn't occurred to me, but it's fascinating to hear.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (15:13):

And getting like 30 people to understand that good hair takes time, and I could do a gigantic change, but they're going to have tape and extensions or wefts falling out, and they're going to hate their life in two days, and it's not going to look that good because if I do something really intense on a Wednesday and then they go sleep on it for two days or three days, if it's something they're just totally not used to or something goes wrong - It's just, there's very little room for error. And so, your plans need to account for that.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (15:47):

So how much time do you have in advance to prepare what you're going to do for their new style?

JONATHAN VAN NESS (15:52):

That's the other thing. All I get to really see is a picture front, side, side back, and then I get to see their little video, but it's like I don't really get to consult with them before I actually meet them and then go to the salon. I kind of need to be ready for anything. So I have all my color ready, I have a lot of extension ready, and then it might be that whatever I thought we were going to do. In fact, that happened in New Orleans for Jenni Seckel. That was in season seven. She got Covid after we met her, so which was kind of lucky because no one else did. And so that was like we needed to actually, that's just whatever. So let me re-say that. So basically when I met her, I was like, what do you think about going red?

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JONATHAN VAN NESS (16:39):

And she was like, just to test the waters. And she was like, I think I'll **** my pants. That's a huge change. I'm not ready for such a big change. I don't want it. I just think I can't do it. So I was like, okay, no problem. We'll just do a little trim. Maybe we'll go lighter. Not a big deal. But then, because she had a couple of days to think about it after all, at the end of the day she was like, I think I do want to go red. And so then I was like, okay, we're dusting that plan back off. So it's like you just kind have to be ready based off of what someone's willingness is.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (17:06):

Right. That makes total sense. And as someone who is nervous when she sits in the hairstylist chair, I totally get that. I've colored my hair before, but I panic every single time. You'd think it had never happened before.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (17:19):

Yeah, it's weird when something is changing color on your head, and there are certain colors that oxidize purple, but really it's red. Or there's certain blondes that oxidize this really weird color on your head, but it isn't that color when you wash it off. So it's nerve wracking if you don't know what to expect.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (17:34):

Absolutely. As someone who doesn't know how to mix color. Yeah, I've had that happen before. I see the purple that is being put on my head when I asked for, see, I can't even give you the right color, but let's say I asked for a red and it looks purple. Yes, I'm going to be having a minor heart attack, and I will say nothing to my stylist. I'll be like, no, no, I'm fine.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (17:52):

And the hairdresser is too. So are we, except for, and we even know what's coming in. You're still like ahhh.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (17:58):

Let's hope this comes out the way I thought it would.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (18:00):

Yeah, you've just got to trust the process.

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GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (18:02):

Trust the process is the best advice anybody could ever give me. Um, you guys just took home what your sixth consecutive Emmy for "Queer Eye" too, right?

JONATHAN VAN NESS (18:11):

Yea, "Queer Eye" did. "Queer Eye" won its sixth consecutive Structured Reality Series. It was the five of us, our first Emmy, because Outstanding Structured Reality Series we previously didn't get, didn't get those awards previously. So we got on that list this year, which was just such a huge deal for us. We were so proud of our work and so proud of what we bring to the show. So, it was really just such a moving moment for us to get that award.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (18:40):

Well, congratulations because that is huge. I would love to talk about gender identity if we can for a moment, because let's put aside the fact that I'm in my thirties, but I really love "Peanut Goes for the Gold."

JONATHAN VAN NESS (18:57):

Aw, thank you.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (19:00):

I mean, how did you come up with that idea? What made you say, I want to write about a non-binary Guinea pig?

JONATHAN VAN NESS (19:07):

Well, really just because I am a non-binary person, and when I thought about children's books that I grew up with, whether that was any Dr. Seuss book or like, oh my gosh, my Brain the Night Before Christmas, that cute children's book. Everything is like "he" and "she," and not that any of those books ever explicitly point out the gender binary, but they do by default because that's how they're written. And so I wanted to write something that was for young people and also for queer parents that wanted to show their children a story in a different way. And in "Peanut Goes for the Gold." We don't talk about gender identity, we don't talk about, we are not talking about patriarchy or the history of the binary or feminism or it's, I mean, all we're doing is talking about a young Guinea pig named Peanut who loves rhythmic gymnastics and whose family is really excited about their rhythmic gymnastics journey.

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JONATHAN VAN NESS (20:12):

And they're written about with they/them pronouns. I mean, Peanut doesn't really go on a - Peanut doesn't really discuss their views on gender identity or why they use they/them. So it's very all ages and so easy and so heartwarming and really it's about a young, it's just about a family being supportive of their family member. And so that's really kind of the inspiration behind it. And it's been interesting seeing something so innocent be so hotly debated. And I mean, there's been several counties in the U.S. that have tried to ban Peanut. I never thought in my career that I'd be on a banned book list, but here we are. But I was really proud of St. Johns County, Florida because my book did get on the chopping block to become banned, and then it didn't get banned. That was back in 2022. I don't know where we are now on that.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (21:03):

But yeah, I think this is a really interesting time where, I mean, people have really, as far as Peanut goes, have come out of the woodwork at me in several instances, whether that was death threats or threats of violence or just really intense fervent animosity around Peanut. And I think when anyone reads the book, you realize how innocent and how innocuous, I don't know if innocuous is the right word, but just how innocent and sweet. And this is just a story about a young person chasing their dreams and being supported by their family. And that's really all. Oh, and turning, oh, what would've been mistake into tens across the board moment, which I think is another story about resilience and thinking on your toes, which, don't we want all young people to think on their toes and be resilient? So yeah, I love Peanut. I loved getting to write that book, and I am excited for my next children's book that's coming out this year. So yeah, I think I wish I would've had more material as a kid that would've showed more possibility and showed the world in a bigger way, not a more constrained way. So I hope I can keep making, keep doing projects that help expand the way that we look in the world.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (22:22):

Well, you mentioned that it's not really delving into the binary or the history of patriarchy, but I think it's important because children learn by example. So you're setting the example that it's okay to use the pronoun they for whomever, and it's funny because I don't want to butcher this, but there was something that I saw online a long time ago that I thought was really sweet for people struggling with how to rewire their brain to use they when they're speaking about someone. Because when you grow up in the binary, you're very used to, like you said, using he or she for a singular person. But there was something that I saw online where I think it was a parent of someone who had just recently come out as

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non-binary, and they said, okay, I'm going to tell myself that you are walking around with a little mouse in your pocket all the time so that I can remember that when I speak about you, I say "they" because there's two of you. And that was the way that they trained themselves to rewire their brain. The Guinea pig and the mouse - the analogy kind of came together in my head, and that's how I remembered it. But I really think that it's important that you are writing for children and that children will grow up in a world that isn't just the binary. So thank you for doing that.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (23:38):

I saw this - Oh, you're so welcome. I saw this thing online that I loved that was like when people say it's grammatically incorrect to use they/them, and it's like, 'oh, someone left this pen here. I don't know who left it, but I think they must have left it. The person, they must have left it.' And so it's just, if you don't know, maybe someone doesn't know or they do know, but it's just they/them. It's not, it's like if we can understand how to talk about the internet, I'm sure we can understand a different pronoun, but it's hard for people.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (24:07):

It is hard. I mean, we politicize everything. And that's really the major issue here, right? Because what you just gave, the example of the pen is a perfect example. I mean, everything is semantics and it's kind of unfortunate, but words do matter. If you don't mind, I saw something online that I'd like to read to you. It was a comment on your Instagram, and I know that comments can be a little bit scary sometimes, but I promise this is positive. It was by someone named at @icacklealot, and I think her name is Deborah Allen, but she left you a comment about the upcoming season of "Queer Eye" and she said: "I love you JVN. You have made my life richer, fuller, and prouder since I started watching you on "Queer Eye." Watching you become an empowered human who shares their vulnerability and an activist, you've given me the language and filled up my courage cup to fiercely honor, love, support, defend, speak truth to power for my beautiful queer child.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (25:03):

You've helped me make my community stronger, braver, and politically active. Thank you for putting yourself out there, for giving me a model to build from and for being one of my guides by my side. I am a mother who is proud of my queer non-binary child from the moment they were born in 1997. I knew I was a mama to a magical human being who needed my power and love to lay a yellow brick road for their path into a better hopeful future. May you take needed rest and healing breaks to care and

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nurture yourself to keep in the work.” And I wasn't sure if you had seen that on your Instagram, so I wanted to share it with you because we're speaking about parents and the message that you're sending to children and through these children's books. So I wanted to share that with you on behalf of Deborah Allen, who I do not know. I just thought she wrote something very lovely.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (25:48):

That made me tear up, that was so sweet and so nice, and it's always a good reminder to remember why I do things. So that was really sweet and thank you Debra, and I didn't get to read that, so thank you for reading it too. That was really beautiful. Thank you.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (26:01):

Of course. No, I think it's important to remind everyone that we have a purpose and you are doing wonderful work and like I said, I'm a huge fan of yours, so if I can help remind you of that, I'm glad.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (26:13):

Thank you so much.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (26:14):

Of course. So before we keep talking about everything else that I want to ask you about, “Fun and Slutty,” tell me about Fun and Slutty!

JONATHAN VAN NESS (26:21):

Yes, I love “Fun and Slutty.” This is my third tour. It's my third international tour, which really blows my mind. I did “Road to Beijing” and then I did “Imaginary Living Room Olympian,” and now I'm doing “Fun and Slutty.” So, this is my third hour and I just can't even get over that I used to be intimidated by writing 10 minutes of comedy for myself, and now I'm doing my third hour show. So yes, growth. This show though, is really about, it's set up as an adult sex ed class. So this is definitely my most adult material. This is not for kids. This is giving 18 and up show. I think in some places it's like 16 and up with a parent, but let's double check. I forget how this one goes, but it's a sex ed class for adults, and that's really what the set is like. It's about owning our sluttiness. It's about being clear on what sluttiness even means, which spoiler alert means to experience pleasure, be that sexual or not.

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JONATHAN VAN NESS (27:24):

It's about owning sluttiness and kind of de-stigmatizing what slutty is, and it's about owning our power and it's about making fun of Republicans. And also at the same time as making fun of Republicans. I'm sexually attracted to some of them and I don't know what that's about. So we're exploring that. That's a lot of what my set is. I don't know if it's my trauma, I don't know if it's growing up in the Midwest, but we are unpacking trauma. We are doing adult sex ed class. It's also kind of like this show is a handbook for staying alive. It's tools for staying alive in a comedic way as told by a standup comic. So it's very funny, it's very crass and I think my brand of standup is in that more Wanda Sykes like Margaret Cho, Janeane Garofalo-esque vein, which is more storytelling. There is set up and punchline, but it is storytelling. It's like pulling from our experiences and that's what I used to inform my comedy.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (28:31):

You just said it was a sex ed class for adults, and I swear to God, I just got so excited. That was the best pitch you could have given me and I'm really happy to see this show.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (28:41):

Yes!

JONATHAN VAN NESS (28:42):

I need these New Jersey people to know, honey. Newark is just this 20 minutes from the city. It's not that far. Newark, get out there, come see the show. We can't wait to have you.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (28:52):

Absolutely. And NJPAC is a wonderful, wonderful venue. So everyone please come to NJPAC. Absolutely.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (28:58):

Please, yes.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (29:00):

I think if it's okay with you, I will also be co-opting fun and slutty as my new daily motto.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (29:05):

Please do it.

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GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (29:06):
Great. Thank you. I appreciate your permission.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (29:10):
Yes.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (29:12):
But okay, I'm really excited for the show. You said it's an hour long show?

JONATHAN VAN NESS (29:18):
Yeah, sometimes I go a little over, so it's like -

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (29:21):
Please go over.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (29:22):
Maybe it's like 90 minutes. I think between our opener and myself, it's probably like a 90 minute show.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (29:26):
Okay, that's better because I was going to say an hour is not enough.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (29:30):
I talk a lot. Sometimes I do go off. We'll see, sometimes I go really over, but I'm at least on stage for an hour.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (29:38):
As long as we know the minimum, that's fine. But I'm going to vote that you stay on for much longer because the more, JVN the better.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (29:45):
Yes.

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GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (29:45):

Yes. I love you. You are fantastic. I'm so grateful that I had the chance to speak to you today,

JONATHAN VAN NESS (29:50):

Thank you, Gina.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (29:

So that's all for me. But if there's anything that, like I said -

JONATHAN VAN NESS (29:58):

So full-fledged. JVN Hair, it's at Sephora, got the podcast every Monday and Wednesday. We're doing a beauty podcast every Monday. It's called "Pretty Curious". And then we have our "Getting Curious" every Wednesday. We have some really interesting episodes coming up on the history of marijuana law, where marijuana is, or where marijuana law is now, why I'm so obsessed with video games. I got a little addicted to Fortnite in the last three months. Didn't see that coming. We're getting the psychology of video games. We had my nail tech who is, or my nail artist who is not my - She's, she's like really the leading most it girl nail artist in the industry, Mei Kawajiri. She was our guest on "Pretty Curious" this week. So I'm really proud of the podcast work that we're doing. "Pretty Curious" every Monday, "Getting Curious" every Wednesday and if you're into podcasts you can follow us on @CuriouswithJVN, and I'm just doing a lot more work over there, so I'm excited for our pod journey too.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (30:55):

That sounds amazing. Now that you brought it up, "Getting Curious" on Netflix though, I just watched that. Amazing. I was watching, there was the episode on bugs, which I mean was so important because I learned a lot about bugs and the fact that bugs are not, or insects and bugs are not one and the same all the time, but just a really fascinating show. So I'll plug that for you too, "Getting Curious" on Netflix.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (31:24):

Thank you. It's cancelled. So you don't have to plug it, but my podcast is still alive.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (31:28):

Canceled, doesn't matter. It still exists on the network now.

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JONATHAN VAN NESS (31:31):

And you never know. I mean, sometimes streamers just take stuff off. So we need people to keep watching those six episodes. So please look.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (31:37):

Exactly. Please do. Because I am, and I think that everybody should, but I think it was really -

JONATHAN VAN NESS (31:42):

Yes, Gina. Maybe if it goes viral late like "Stranger Things" did, it'll come back. So you never know.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (31:48):

Yeah. What do they call that when they do, when people campaign to bring the show back? Maybe that's -

JONATHAN VAN NESS (31:53):

It's like a petition or it's, what are those things called?

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (32:00):

It might be petition.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (32:01):

It's definitely a petition, but there's that one online that it's like the thing. It's like that, whatever we talked about so much, how could we remember everything, Gina? We did good.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (32:09):

I know. Well, I'm starting it now. I'm starting the petition for "Getting Curious" now.

JONATHAN VAN NESS (32:13):

Please do it. Tell 'em.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (32:14):

You are wonderful. Thank you so, so much.

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[MUSIC: "A LITTLE WIGGLE"]

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (32:19)

Jonathan Van Ness is bringing his third worldwide comedy tour, "Fun and Slutty" to the NJPAC in Newark on February 2nd at 8:00 PM.

For more information, be sure to visit njpac.org.

If you liked this episode, be sure to review, subscribe, and tell your friends. A transcript of this podcast, links relevant to the story and more about the arts in New Jersey can be found at jerseyarts.com. The Jersey Arts Podcast is presented by ArtPride New Jersey, advancing a state of creativity since 1986. The show was co-founded by and currently supported by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

This episode was hosted, edited, and produced by me, Gina Marie Rodriguez. Executive producers are Jim Atkinson and Isaac Serna-Diez. And my thanks to Jonathan Van Ness for speaking with me today. I'm Gina Marie Rodriguez for the Jersey Arts Podcast. Thanks for listening.

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