

Transcript for Jay Mohr | Mohr Stories (Episode 639)

Full show notes found here: <https://theartofcharm.com/639/>

JAY: I did the unthinkable. Like I'm not going to have -- on my deathbed, worry about it and think about it cosmically but I will never have not stolen again. Like when you cheat on your wife one time, you might as well keep going because you're not going to go to your deathbed as a great husband. You cheated.

JORDAN: Welcome to The Art of Charm. I'm Jordan Harbinger. On this episode we're talking with my friend Jay Mohr. Jay is a comedian, actor, radio host, and a best-selling author. He's also been performing stand up comedy since he was 16 years old, which just sounds irresponsible at this point. After landing his dream job on Saturday Night Live, he was of course cast in Jerry Maguire, Picture Perfect -- 25 movies, over 50 television series -- you've seen him, trust me. Just Google Jay Mohr if you don't know who I'm talking about right now. His book [*Gasp*](#) is about his time on Saturday Night Live while dealing with panic attacks.

So of course, in this episode we'll discuss how he dealt with those panic attacks while working on Saturday Night Live -- literally one of the worst jobs you can have if you suffer from panic attacks. That's a whole thing we're going to get into and of course we'll see how somebody who has clearly made it managed his own cast of impostor syndrome, something we've seen from a lot of high performers here at AoC. There's a lot of vulnerability here, which I thought was just really great, and lots for us to learn from. So here, enjoy this episode with Jay Mohr.

Here's a question for you. I can't imitate anybody like that. He's like an iconic figure. There would be some part of me that if everybody asked me, "Hey can you imitate Christopher Walken," or, "Can you imitate Barack Obama," that it would get annoying because they're asking you not to be you for a second. That would just be really irritating.

JAY: Well I brought it to the table, in all fairness.

JORDAN: It's true.

JAY: I brought it out like, "Here's what I can do. Tada," the dance that we do to get attention, as like mini narcissists and egomaniacs and before we harness it and to use our powers for good. So that's why they bought the ticket, because they like that. I just don't want that angst like, "Is he doing impressions? Because this is," --

JORDAN: When's it going to happen?

JAY: "He's talking about his mom's Alzheimer's and he's talking about blowing a kid when he was 10 years old. This is uncomfortable but he lets us off the hook and we do laugh," and then -- Walken! So I could just walk out on stage and just say, "I did a movie with Christopher Walken," and they applaud and then I can do Tracy, I can do the Chris Farley story, I can do Norm Macdonald. "I don't know if you know the secret to that one, you know. Well really what clicked in for me, you know, is you have to touch your lip -- because I used to be a smoker, you know," but if he touches his lip, I realize all of the stand up specials, if he's a little bit uncomfortable -- and I'm projecting -- he touches his lip like he's smoking.

JORDAN: Oh, interesting.

JAY: So when I started touching my lip it got better. There's a whole run of impressions so if I just put impressions on like bullet points, that's 20 minutes.

JORDAN: How are you noticing when he's uncomfortable and like, that's his tell? That's almost like a poker thing.

JAY: I'm projecting the uncomfortable --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: -- entirely. But I noticed the lip gets touched intermittently and I wasn't doing it. And then when I did it, I became a better impressionist. You know it's amazing, like every impression has -- and Kevin Pollak and I spoke about this a lot -- every impression has a phrase or a word that you can hang your hat on. As lost as you get in the Winchester Mystery House, you can always circle back to the front entrance by -- like Kevin Pollak said, Shatner, he has to picture a marionette doll like, woo, like every time he talks it's because somebody's pulling the strings.

JORDAN: Oh, interesting.

JAY: And like with Waken it's, "Yeah." The word "Yeah." And I realized with all of of my impressions, it's "Yeah," or, "Yes," or something affirmative. And I did all of them in a row once at this theater in the Shrine auditorium. I go, "Here's all my impressions in a word," and I went through all of them and it was all -- like Tracy Morgan, "Yeah," Al Pacino, "Oh, yeah! Yeah, all right," and then like, Norm I'm like, "Heya, yeah, yeah, yeah." And I realized all of them were affirmative and yes and I don't know if they even say those in movies.

JORDAN: You've been doing this for a long ass time. You started comedy when you were 16. That seems irresponsible on the part of many, many adults who probably should have known better.

JAY: The idea of many, many adults keeping track on my whereabouts -- if that was the case, I wouldn't be in show business at all, probably. So it was like my mom and dad were really passively supportive. They never said, "Don't go." I would go not on a school night -- like on a Saturday. The first open mic I did ever was Sunday at noon in the basement of this club called Rascals in West Orange. And it was like, "Hey if you're a teenager between," and then they put, "between the ages of 13 and 18," I'm like, "That is a teenager." Like, even then, I'm like editing. "That's got to go, no, don't need that".

And then I went at noon and I did stand up. I didn't drive yet. My friend James Barrone -- who I name the guy in the sketch

Good Morning Brooklyn after -- he drove me. And you're doing stand up for other teenagers doing stand up for the first time. So what's amazing about comedy -- and Buddy Hackett told me this -- the first time you do it you're using .1 percent of what you're able to do if you keep going. But still, somebody sees something in that .1 percent where they go, "What are you doing Wednesday? Because there's an open mic at Hackensack."

And then Wednesday at Hackensack, you're like at .01 percent because you suck, and somebody goes, "You know, Saturday nights there's this place in Montclair," and then you find your tribe and you realize, "That's why I never fit in anywhere." I was a wrestler which is monastic life. What are you going to talk like a pothead about in history class if you're just going, "I've got a pound and a half ago. I know I can make it but what should I just eat that spinach that's in my locker?" And so a comic and a wrestler, you just keep putting yourself farther out on this island.

JORDAN: It's like probabilities. You've got to multiply them and they become smaller. So you multiply wrestler times comic and you end up with this like weird sliver reclusive personality type.

JAY: Yeah, and then when you land there, you're 100 percent fulfilled with the other one quarter versus one eighth. That's your agraga is people that are also way out on the island. It's like the land of like broken toys.

JORDAN: Yeah the island of misfit toys. By the way I used to wear Drakkar Noir as well, speaking of irresponsible.

JAY: Yeah, you know what's up, right? Drakkar Noir means you've got a nice Camaro. Hose the driveway. Hopefully she's got a big bush, right?

JORDAN: I mean, nobody's perfect. I had friends that were African American and they were like, "Yo, this is the ****. You've got to get Drakkar Noir," and it never occurred to me that I would wear this and teachers would be like, "What the hell is that?"

JAY: Like I'm wearing Hanae Mori today because I realize I look like ass but it's not in your face. Cologne fascinates me. I could meet people at a party -- and I've been trying to do this somehow in a bit but for stand up I'm a horrible writer. I'm a great, "This happened."

JORDAN: You don't think you can write as well as you can just retell a story about about something?

JAY: No because one is the truth and the other is something I'm trying to construct that's just a funny idea. The fool's errand -- and I think for most comics. Comedy now -- like Louis C.K., Bill Burr -- when Katt Williams was like just clicking. It's the truth what he's saying. So if you're going to sit down and write material, I had this epiphany. If you have a big break, as Dennis Miller would say, "You've made a horrible vocational error somewhere along the line. If you have a nametag and steel-tipped Chukka boots." You should have like 40 big breaks.

Being born is a big break. Your great, great, great, great grandparents have to meet and **** in another country. Statistically you're at negative, negative, negative numbers. Three years ago I realized my entire show that hasn't been written yet already happened to me so I've got to just buff the rearview mirror and stop going, "Cologne. Why do we need to smelled?" It's funny though, like, at a party, you have like this tale. Like, "Hey you was the guy that -- I met him. He was ***** fascinating, he was sharp, he had an EpiPen when my wife -- he saved my wife's life. But that cologne was weird that he had."

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: Like, why do we need to smell a certain way?

JORDAN: It is strange but smell does go directly to the memory part of your brain. And I don't mean it goes there physically. There's brain science behind this that I'm just blowing right now but it

goes to the memory part of your brain. So it triggers something and it has less to do with the cologne, right? If it smells like your grandma you might be like, "That guy was just such a grandfatherly like figure," no he just smelled like your grandma's house where your grandpa lived and so you feel comfortable. Whereas another person goes, "Actually he reminded me of something really negative," and it's like you buried your dog and that kind of flower was nearby and so you felt sad. You know, it's ***** weird.

JAY: Do they make that cologne?

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: If you've ever buried your dog near lilacs, you want to try Doglac. It's daddy issues.

JORDAN: Daddy and Granddaddy.

JAY: Yeah.

JORDAN: And Mom and Dad. And Granddad.

JAY: Why am I sleeping in pyjamas? Because I realized I look a lot more attractive if I got the Fred MacMurray pyjamas with the piping instead of my Jets shorts and a t-shirt that says, "The more I drink, the better you look."

JORDAN: Does it have like a little unbottoner in the back so you can go to the bathroom?

JAY: No that's the Michael Landon. And I like that you brought that up, that's very well done. But I've noticed like, everybody's like disconnect, everybody's like -- the shaking of the birdcage that's screwing everybody up. It's all tied to trauma and by trauma it's any definition like car accident -- and I would never get into it with somebody, I just need them to know like, when I say trauma, that's all I mean. Because I don't want them to back out because they were like raped or something horrible.

JORDAN: Right, yeah.

JAY: And it's either father or mother, rarely it's both because somebody had to be there. And then -- it's fascinating, like, the daddy thing. I do this thing on stand up now. It's like when I first was single after the divorce, I met this actress by chance at The Comedy Store. And it was like four married couples and -- if I said her name you would know her -- they go, "This is so and so," and I go, "Hi, nice to meet you. You need a daddy," and I'm like, "What the **** did I just say?"

JORDAN: Oh, you're like, "Why did that just come out of my mouth right now? What am I thinking?"

JAY: And I realized, I never cheated, I lived a monastic life, like never cheated, never looked the other way and I'm like, "Well you know what? Sin bravely." She goes, "What the **** did you just say to me?" And then -- I do it now on stage -- I go, "That's where you guys would tap out but I don't back into my parking spot for no reason." So I looked at her -- I go, "I said, Missy, look at me. Missy, I said you need a daddy," and that girl goes, "Go on."

JORDAN: Yeah, continue. You've got my --

JAY: And I was like, "Wow, that's a bell I can't unring." Nothing happened because I just ducked out after that but I'm like, people got issues. Obviously.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: It's mother or father and then getting in your own way over and over and over. So when I realized my stand up has already happened to me, that's one piece of my pie chart where I went, "Oh, I'm going to completely get out of my own way," and not spend my time going, "Like, glory holes are funny." Like just the idea of like -- in the restroom here at PodcastOne, there's like

toilet paper between the crack of the door. Like somebody really doesn't want you watching them sitting down --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: -- and taking a dump. Or the parenthetical of that is, "I don't want another cock coming through this. Like, this is too much."

JORDAN: I use this regularly. I'm sick of having my ear tickled. Plug this thing up.

JAY: Yeah. That's way funnier than the C word that I used. Ear tickle. If another guy tussles my hair while I'm trying to grind one out, I've had it .

JORDAN: So you mentioned that the truth element of comedy is important for you -- the stuff that's already happened. So does that mean when you're acting or doing commercials versus doing comedy, do you feel like that's somehow less truthful? Do you like that less because it is constructed, it is fake, you are eating a burger, spitting it out into a bucket, and then taking another bite of another burger and being like, "Carl's Junior," and then spitting that out and doing it again because it's not quite right?

JAY: That's the California Burger you're referring to.

JORDAN: The California Burger, yeah.

JAY: Two patties, grilled onions, special sauce and --

JORDAN: Speaking of glory holes, special sauce on the California Burger.

JAY: Yeah, Lankershim Boulevard there's an adult bookstore where they make the secret sauce. Not for Carl's Jr., for the other...

JORDAN: Right, they make their own.

JAY: I like it more selfishly because it's so much more money. Like if you do a sitcom and you have --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: Like Gary Unmarried. If I have to be Gary, everything I'm saying is made up by a group of writers that I haven't met until then. But when acting is good is - Is it Jimmy Cagney? "Hit your mark, look the other fellow in the eye, and tell the truth." So you just have to, in that moment, you are telling the truth or it doesn't work. This isn't like Woe is me ****. Like, I'm pretty well aware of the show business middle class and I'm not Baltic on the Monopoly board, I'm around like Vern --

JORDAN: Vern -- what are the purple ones?

JAY: You make one right turn -- like, I'm right around there. Another right turn you're looking at like Alec Baldwin, Martin Shorts and then the other right turn you're looking at guys with Sir before their names --

JORDAN: Oh, God.

JAY: You've got to tell the truth when you act, I think. And when you do a commercial, you just -- in that moment -- have to be a great liar but so great of a liar that you're not lying. Like, "I'm Gary, this is my kid and this is my family, and I don't want my daughter to take Chinese, I want her to be able to take boxing," and then the punchline is, "Haha, sayonara Chinese," to the wife, like proving what an idiot I am, which is truthful. So, I think it all has to be the truth. I don't know what endeavor you can do great lying. Well, negotiating is a lie.

JORDAN: Yeah subjective, sort of in the moment.

JAY: Based on a projective which is truthful and then what you add.

JORDAN: The boundaries are still truthful in negotiation because you can't say, "We'll do this," and then it's like, "Crap, we literally

can't do that." That's contrary to the point of a negotiation, right? It's always bordered by the truth. Which is, I think, where a lot of lawyers go wrong. I used to be one so I understand. It's really tempting to stretch things but you can't. You're not supposed to and it doesn't work in the end.

JAY: I think if I was a lawyer nobody would ever go to jail. I'm playing into like Jon Ronson's [*The Psychopath Test*](#). Like, that's a psychopathic thing to say.

JORDAN: Maybe. It's only really psycho if you do it, though.

JAY: When you realize one juror -- that's all I've got to get. And I could just stand there and go, "Cell phone towers?" Cell phone towers they cover now with like a few shrubs.

JORDAN: Right, the fake tree.

JAY: So why are they trying to hide cell phone towers? So this whole thing -- he's going to go to jail for 40 years because of a cell phone tower that they hide from you just verified by that one guy.

JORDAN: The tinfoil hat guy?

JAY: That's it.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: And then like, they're in the room going, "Yeah but the thing about the cell phone towers," and you just hope there's not one guy in the jury room going, "That's not why we're here."

JORDAN: Yeah, right. When you're looking at different audiences when you're doing comedy or anything live for that matter, how do you read and adjust to the audience? Because you've got to be looking at one crowd at one point and going, "Uh-oh. These people aren't in the mood," or, "They don't look like they're going to be in the mood for this," or, "This crowd looks like

they're going to be fun. Let me try this thing." Is it based on the crowd or do you go up there and do whatever you're going to do regardless of whatever you see when you stand on stage?

JAY: So nobody sees a comic hoping they do poorly. It's uncomfortable and they give you the benefit of the doubt. They give you the mercy like the, "Haha, what's he doing?" No, I don't do that with the crowd. I can recognize real early if everyone is there to see me or if everyone's there and there's a bunch of people there to see me too. Like when you take a golf cart down a hill to go fast and it doesn't because there's that governor on the engine -- that's the governor on the engine is, "Oh, they're just at a show and they don't realize there's no show here." Like, I'm talking about real uncomfortable things but the people that have vetted themselves in the last three years of my audience, they are brave and trusting and I take them down.

They go deep into the woods with me with the faith that there's going to be a ripcord of hilarity. Sometimes there's not but I realized sincerity will trump. Da-da-daaa. I was going to talk about my mom having Alzheimer's. My dad didn't tell us. He said, "She's getting forgetful." And she came to visit me last April. I opened the door to my house -- very L.A. I'm like, "I'm not going to pick her up, I'll send a car service." It's so Los Angeles, like, "No, I sent Sal from Aloha Limousine. You're all set." I open the door and she goes, "Is my car in the driveway," and I said, "No, mommy." And she goes, "Why isn't my car in the driveway? Whose truck is that?" "That's my truck." "Where's my car?"

JORDAN: Oh, no.

JAY: And I said, "Probably at your house," and she goes, "How did I get here? Why isn't my car in the driveway?" That's the first thing my mom said to me.

JORDAN: You must have been terrified at that point.

JAY: My father never told us this. He downplayed it and my mom as I know her, the woman of our dreams, wants to know, "Is there an upstairs to this building?" And then my son walks by and she goes, "Virginia," -- my sister's name -- and I went --

JORDAN: Oh, no.

JAY: Four days I stayed awake and I was eyeball to eyeball with my mom. I know more about Alzheimer's -- I'm guessing obviously -- then like, "Okay I finished my first year of my medical school where I specialized." --

JORDAN: In Alzheimer's...

JAY: That's all textbook.

JORDAN: Sure.

JAY: I had one patient. It was my mom --

JORDAN: Right.

JAY: -- and it was also my daughter. I never unlocked eyes. I knew her tales. I knew when she was making something up because she was embarrassed. Like she didn't sundown, it was down. Like I put a note on the door, "It's Tuesday. You're at JJ's house in California. You're safe. Call John," or it's in the afternoon, "You already spoke to John, you're safe, you're at JJ's house in California, he's in the living room." Like it got, "Do not go on the stairs," and I realized, that'll make somebody go up the stairs.

JORDAN: Sure.

JAY: They're wet was what I realized.

JORDAN: Right, because you don't want her to fall, yeah.

JAY: But they weren't wet, I just realized --

JORDAN: Of course.

JAY: -- nobody wants to go on wet stairs. So, like I wanted to talk about that on stage. And there was a story in my book [*No Wonder My Parents Drank*](#) about my 14-year-old son and I renting a kayak. He didn't want to do it and so I'm like "Great." He's like, "I'm raising my dad like an apathetic guy that doesn't want to hang out with me." And then I realized he doesn't know what a kayak is.

JORDAN: Right.

JAY: I could have said, "You want a boat," he would have went, "Yeah!" So there's a whole bit about that and when I said to my wife, I go, "This kayak story isn't working because I'm saying it happened to Mackie. It didn't happen to Mackie, it happened to Jackson. But if I speak about Jackson, I have to tell the audience why he does not live with us without throwing his mother under the bus because that's not fair."

JORDAN: Right, right.

JAY: "And then I have to talk about my mom's visit when I realized she had Alzheimer's." And she goes, "Well how are you going to make all the funny?" and I went, "I know." I was like, "Yeah."

JORDAN: That's a tricky one.

JAY: But it's -- that's the joy. And then I like got to like eight minutes left in the set. I wanted to like do the Alzheimer's mixed in -- I did this whole thing about having boys. I wish I had a girl, I love the drama. They know who's stealing cable, they know who's sneaking cigarettes after dinner. They're like, "He's having an affair on his wife and he farts when he pees. Nobody likes him." Like they know everything about your neighborhood. And I was going to tie it to -- I was reading my son [*Harold and the Purple Crayon*](#). She goes, "Would you read that to me when you're done with him, Daddy?" My mom said this to me and instead of bursting into ***** tears, I said, "Of course Jeanie."

I actually had to read [*Harold and the Purple Crayon*](#) to my mom before I went out to do a show which I was late for for a great reason. All I had in my mind was the kayak story and that and, "I've always wanted a daughter, I didn't know it was going to be mom." And then if I put that in the middle of this hour and a half, two hours, I can just regenerate this engine and get going, but I've shared something. I did it. Like four minutes left, I go, "Oh, I didn't even bring this up," and I just smushed the entire thing I told you at the end and I learned something invaluable that night. I'm like, "This isn't getting a laugh and I've kind of bummed everybody out."

JORDAN: Isn't getting a laugh, yeah.

JAY: No, there's no laugh.

JORDAN: No.

JAY: It's horrible. And I said, "So, that's what happened to me right before you saw me walk on stage and you applauded and it was all truth. I'm a lot happier to see you than you know and just thanks for coming out." And they just like, got out of their seats and I'm like, "Oh, my God." Sincerity is so powerful.

JORDAN: Yeah, even with the absence of the laugh, like you said.

JAY: George Carlin closes one of his specials, "How will the earth get rid of us?" and it's basically AIDS. Like, "Well they seem susceptible to viruses and if I do it when they procreate so they'll be reluctant to procreate," and this and that. "It's a dream and we're here for a little while. Anyway, thank you." Like, holy smokes.

JORDAN: So everyone leaves kind of like looking at each other and clapping and then realizing that it's more profound than ever.

JAY: Well I can't speak profound for me, for him I would hope so but for me it was more -- it's sharing. There's no show. And if

something doesn't work that happened to you, you just move on to the next story because you hand delivered a story. Like we used to ghost ride our bikes through this mental hospital that got shut down.

JORDAN: Ghost ride your bikes?

JAY: When you hop off the back of your bike and you just watch it go straight with nobody on it and then it goes into traffic and gets run over and you think it's funny.

JORDAN: That's terrible.

JAY: Your most prized possession is your BMX bike as a kid.

JORDAN: Sure, sure.

JAY: And you leave it on the front lawn and the next morning there would be frost on it and you go, "Okay, it didn't get stolen, good."

JORDAN: Yeah, there's rust on it.

JAY: And you just ghost ride it and we'd skid through the hallways of this abandoned mental hospital and I realized there was a time where I went like, you know, "Ahhhh," and I turned the corner and it's like, if the two girls from the shining were black, I could see them. Pink dresses, white polka dots, pink bows in their hair, "We live in a crazy hospital. We ain't crazy" they said at the exact same time. And I rode my bike down three flights. First time I realized you can actually take a bike down stairs. It's kind of cool. Three flights and out the back towards the railroad tracks which have been pulled up years ago to go back into my dead end street. So down three flights of stairs, out the back, down a lawn, and I look back behind me -- which means they had to go three flights in that time and get to a window and they're looking down at me, "We live in a crazy hospital. We ain't crazy." I still don't know if they're real.

JORDAN: No I would assume that they're not real, yeah.

JAY: And I had to stop saying it on stage because I didn't want that energy if they weren't real. So, if that didn't work on stage -- like, I just move on. It's not like, "Get a laugh," whack a mole, whack a mole. It's Bill Evans piano on Kind of Blue, it's the pauses, it's how little you play.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

JORDAN: You mentioned that you didn't have the fear thing. Are you talking about in general or just with respect to that topic? Because in [*Gasping for Air Time*](#) -- in the book -- you mentioned that you had panic attacks that you had to deal with on Saturday Night Live. That sounds like fear. Was that something else?

JAY: Yeah, I'm glad you said that, man. Panic is a neurological glitch. Your body releases endorphins and adrenaline into your bloodstream at life saving levels for no reason. So, it is different from fear. Fear stimulus response, modern fear now is the absolute response of every argument, everything that you don't do, everything you've settled, the life less lived, fear, fear, fear -- that guy beeping at you that's making you crazy like, "What the ****'s with this guy?" Fear. He's terrified of something. But panic is a neurological glitch where you have no control over it. So, the fear that develops from having a panic disorder is the anticipatory dread of where I might have a panic attack.

That's not the fear that I'm talking about. I'm talking about like -- you're going to meet the Pope. Where fear goes is where, "Oh, I can't wait," goes. And if it's like a negative like the dentist has to rip out 16 teeth, I'm like, "Yeah, let's get this over with man, forget it. Like, let's go. Let's do it." Flying -- like I've been on planes that have been struck by lightning three times and it's either is or isn't. I had an entirely divine experience on this one particular plane and it's maybe a little bit too long for this podcast but then the next time I was on a plane that got struck by lightning I thought it was kind of adorable because it was once and I knew we were going to be okay. I got afraid before I

did April Foolishness for Kevin and Bean one year and I looked at my buddy Charlie -- I said, "I'm like ***** afraid," and he goes, "What?"

JORDAN: Yeah what are you talking about?

JAY: And I realized after the fact there's so much pot smoke, the symptom of panic is shortness of breath and the pot smoke made me have a stuffy nose. And you're talking to all these people that you're meeting backstage so you're not breathing properly and I got shortness of breath and that made me start to get that rumble of, "Uh-oh." It had nothing to do with the show.

JORDAN: So you just basically physiologically tricked your body into having a panic attack.

JAY: You have the best -- I love your podcast, I subscribe, it's always in front of my --

JORDAN: Oh, awesome.

JAY: I've tweeted at you about like the Narcissistic Continuum and everything you do -- Kwik. That guy was fascinating.

JORDAN: Oh, Jim Kwik?

JAY: There's no way that's his real name.

JORDAN: It is. Isn't that funny?

JAY: He's Japanese, right?

JORDAN: That's a great question. I'm not sure.

JAY: "Hey," like somebody in my family -- "I'll tell you one thing, he ain't white, okay?"

JORDAN: Yeah. We can ask him. I'll tell him you asked.

JAY: He was brilliant. Like the story about him and the friend's dad.

JORDAN: Right, the friend's dad who took him under his --

JAY: That took him for a walk like, "What do you want to do?"

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: "Why would you let school get in the way of this?" So, the panic -- you get symptoms of panic and it takes a while to train yourself. These are symptoms of panic. If you stay up 24 hours because you're working so hard then all of a sudden your spatial relations are really out of whack and you start getting that nervousness because that's one of the symptoms of panic and you just slow it down and identify, "Oh, I was up for 24 hours. I'm seeing stars, I have a stuffy nose -- these are symptoms of panic. I have Klonopin in my bloodstream -- 1 milligram a day, every day, so it's actually impossible for me to have a panic attack."

JORDAN: Right, so you can logic yourself back down to Earth.

JAY: And then you don't have to anymore.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: When you drive your car and back out of your driveway -- like today, you didn't go, "Okay, 10 and 2. Hand on this, foot on the break" -- it's become this one thing and not these 44 steps.

JORDAN: it just seems like such a strange and maybe unfortunate setup that you're on Saturday Night Live, you're in front of millions anyway of people -- that's the worst time, other than when you're operating heavy machinery, that you could have a panic attack.

JAY: I put it way above heavy machinery because heavy machinery you could take you could take out the guy you've never liked.

JORDAN: Yeah, right. Right.

JAY: Like if I'm freaking out, "Bye Jerry!" Yeah that was bad and you really did read the book and thank you. It's -- Martin Lawrence was hosting and there was -- yeah, no it was a motivational speaker sketch. "In a van down by the river," but it was in jail and they tied it to a Scared Straight program --

JORDAN: Sure.

JAY: -- where they come out to scare us and it was brilliant and I got in it and I was like, "I can't believe I'm in this sketch with a sentence," and it's Chris -- being around Chris Farley, it's like having the sun on your back. He was the most beautiful man I ever met. Ever. It's like my grandfather -- my maternal grandfather Red Maurice Ferguson and Chris are the two people that -- they have eternal life. They're never going anywhere. I'm getting choked up talking about him.

And so, I remember I'm so excited to be in this sketch, stuffy nose, angst because of the sketch and like, I'm so new -- I'm so lost on this show and I go to my dressing room to put my wardrobe on and they gave me this like hipster jeans -- this is 1992 -- 1992 and there was no pockets because I used to take those Klonopin pills and put them in that little tiny pocket above your right pocket. That's the Klonopin pocket.

JORDAN: Right, the pocket that's not good for anything else but handcuff keys and drugs.

JAY: Yeah and any officers of the law and anybody out there listening, when you pat people down, just check the little pocket.

JORDAN: I'm pretty sure they know about that one.

JAY: No they don't. I know from experience.

JORDAN: Oh, man.

JAY: They do not. TSA doesn't either. So, I'm like, "Where am I going to put my Klonopin? What if I have a panic attack on live TV?" So I got four or five of them and I held them in my hand, because there was no place else to put them, and during that sketch I'm getting all sweaty -- you're under the lights and you're a little nervous -- and my hands are getting sweaty and I had to hold these pills in my hand in a way where there was enough cracks and space between my fingers but they wouldn't fall out on the floor --

JORDAN: Right.

JAY: -- in front of millions of people. Like, "Oh, my God, that guy is a drug addict. He's bringing pills," but I also couldn't hold them too tightly because they'd get wet and dissolve.

JORDAN: Oh, man, in your hand.

JAY: And I was trying to do like what a magician does, like palm it with my thumb, but then that's getting them wet and then the sketch was over.

JORDAN: That's all you thought about the whole time...

JAY: I was never there. But when Chris came through the doors in rehearsal -- he's wearing a prison gray shirt -- there's always something he's going to come out with that's going to knock you on your ass in the best possible way. And between dress rehearsal and air and when it was live, he was just soaking wet. It's just a prisoner in an an outfit, and then he comes out, he's like dripping wet from his hair, he's got the most giant pit stains of water and he's just drenched like the crack of his ass has wet and his crotch is wet -- like that's how bad he sweats in jail. And the moment he comes through the door, you're powerless. Like the sun, you can't stare it.

And there was a mistake in that sketch where they're selling us back and forth for cigarettes -- Martin Lawrence and Chris --

and he goes, "Well, I will sell your punk ass for a pack of cigarettes," and then Chris gives the two cigarettes, goes to the mic and he's supposed to say, "Sold. Seven ***** to the homie in the corn rows," and he goes, "Sold. Seven ***** to the cormie in the home rows -- oops." Just oops into camera before he finishes the sentence and it's bedlam and we had worked out -- "When we go through the breakaway wall and we all fall on top of Chris, let's all stay on top of Chris so he can't come back out and say, "Live from New York, it's Saturday Night." Seven -- Tim Meadows, me, Sandler, Spade, Schneider -- granted, half those guys weigh 85 pounds, but he picked us up like leaf bags in your front yard and just removed us because he had to deliver.

He was the most fascinating man on Earth. He would know when the camera wasn't on him and he would cross his eyes while he was talking to you. So it's like a two shot, two shot, and he would know when the camera was over his shoulder and he'd go, "How about you young fella," with these big crossed eyes and you're laughing and in between dress and air, Lauren would go, "And can we please not laugh in the motivational speaker sketch Jay?" like, "I won't, sure." My wig is sliding down the side of my head because they tussled my hair. You know what it is? It's madness. It's the space shuttle reentering. We see a fireball.

JORDAN: Right.

JAY: Like panels and **** are flying off and the guys on the inside are going, "All right Houston, looks like we're 14 minutes from the Indian Ocean." Like that's what it's like.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: That fireball but somewhere in there there's a calm because you realize what's happening is right.

JORDAN: In [Gaspings for Airtime](#), you mentioned something that we hear about a lot from everyone from Navy SEALs to other high

performers which is that you felt like you didn't belong there, "Who am I kidding? They're going to find out I'm not the real deal. It's only a matter of time." We call it imposter syndrome.

JAY: That was a great episode, by the way.

JORDAN: Thank you.

JAY: There was a bunch of Navy SEALs on.

JORDAN: Mm-hmm.

JAY: You may --

JORDAN: Your spy slash --

JAY: One thousand SEAL missions. He was on the Mohr Stories podcast. I go, "So what's your job title to Pete," he goes, "I fill gaps," and then I go, "All right." Half hour later I go, "So real quick, like what's your actual job title?" He goes, "I watch the people that watch us." I go --

JORDAN: That sounds like a comic book thing.

JAY: I go, "What's the longest you've ever watched a guy?" and he goes, "I had to keep an eye on this Afghan chief for four days because he was like behind this row of bushes, 1,000 yards from our forward operating base and then eventually I just went up with smoke with him." I go, "After four days, what if you just realized he's just jerking off?" and he goes, "That has happened."

JORDAN: Really?

JAY: Oh, Pete's amazing. So, I'm being to blue I think for this. This is my favorite podcast.

JORDAN: Really?

JAY: Yeah, when I discovered you guys, and when my gal came in with Narcissistic Continuum --

JORDAN: Yeah, Linda Carroll, yeah.

JAY: She's in my home. You can always tell who the enabler is in the relationship. There the ones in the self help aisle in the book store. And I just looked up at my bookshelf and I went, "Oh, dios mio."

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: And then we get better and then the narcissist marginalizes further away or they turn it -- so I did not belong there. The odds of you belonging there are zero because they only hire two people. Who belongs as a Navy SEAL? Like, what they put you through. So Navy SEAL, there's an actual test and test and test and they try to break you and I didn't break. I belong here so I'm surprised that the Navy SEALS say, "I didn't feel like I belonged." Because they did what every other Navy SEAL before them did to belong. Saturday Night Live I did stand up comedy twice for 11 minutes, 15 minutes at a time and they I just got the job but I was also a writer and I had never wrote a sketch in my life.

So I never felt I belonged because how could I? I have no discernible skills as a sketch writer. I've never done sketch comedy before in my life. I don't know where anything is. When I write a sketch I'll need a pencil and paper. Should I go to the store and get those myself? It's like conversations on the freeway. No you want to just everything -- you know. Like just nobody --

JORDAN: It's the office of Saturday Night Live?

JAY: Yeah and it wasn't malevolent, it wasn't like this backstabbing, cutthroat -- just everyone surviving and they will help you eventually if you meet the person that helps you. But like, everyone's on computers, I'm writing it out longhand -- "Where

do I hand this in?" "Oh, yeah, give it to Claire." "Oh, thanks. Who's Claire?"

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: We're on the entire 17th floor and it's three in the morning if she's still here -- "Oh, no, no. She'll be in tomorrow." "What time?" "What?" and they're gone.

JORDAN: Oh, God.

JAY: So I knew I belonged once I was in the door. I just knew I needed somebody to go, "Oh." Like, "Do I put Phil Hartman or do I put Dad?" Like I didn't know that, if you write a sketch. Like, motivational speaker "Dad speaks to his kid." Son, David Spade, Daughter, Christina Applegate. Do I put Chris? Do I put Phil? Do I put -- like I didn't know any of it.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: How long is the sketch?

JORDAN: The mechanics, yeah.

JAY: Because I've never like read one aloud. So, but once I was there, I read the Reeves [biography of JFK](#) and like when he first ran for senate, he just looks at Bobby and goes, "I just refuse to wait my turn," and I went, "Wow, yeah." Like, there's this pecking order and especially stand up, like, "Why's he on the Tonight Show? I've been doing it so long." Well, maybe you suck.

JORDAN: Oh, man.

JAY: Maybe that guy had the balls to jump to the front of the line. You go to the front desk of a hotel and go, "Would you take my Wi-Fi off for me?" and they go, "Why?" and you go, "Just because I asked," they go, "Sure."

JORDAN: Sometimes yeah. Ten percent off.

JAY: You're not really going to charge me for parking, are you? Like, "No, I'll take that off."

JORDAN: And delete.

JAY: Yeah.

JORDAN: And no consequences whatsoever.

JAY: So I just knew there was a process where you have to be the bailiff with no lines for a year. Second year you get a bunch of sketches that you wrote. Christopher Walken's Psychic Friends Network, Good Morning Brooklyn, some update pieces -- then the third, fourth year I wasn't willing to do it because it was hurting me. I was leaking oil. And I think any performer and any athlete, you must know when you're being lapped on the racetrack. You have to know it, otherwise you suck in perpetuity. So when I'm sitting there and I'm the bailiff, if I yell, "All rise!"-- that's what I did on Saturday Night Live.

That becomes embarrassing and I know I'm lucky to be there but I also know there's a guy that wrote his own pilot and he's in L.A. and he's going to shoot that pilot for \$25,000. And if he gets picked up, he's going to make 50 a week. So, I'm being lapped. I've got to go. So, they made the decision easy for me because after my second year they wanted two weeks to decide whether or not they're going to pick me up for a third year. Then they asked for another two weeks. Then when they asked for the third two weeks, my agent said, "In my experience, people will know if they want to work with you or not," and then I went, "Well then I'm all set."

JORDAN: Yeah, yeah.

JAY: Lauren said to us once, "If you don't like the way it is, there's the door. You can be the third lead on a sitcom next week," and I remember going, "Oh, my God."

JORDAN: That sounds awesome.

JAY: "What am I doing here?"

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: Do I want to be the great SNL guy for 7 grand a week or do I want to go out to L.A. and just cha-ching, cha-ching, cha-ching? So, after I left Saturday Night Live, two weeks later I'm on the Jeff Foxworthy Show as his cookie brother. He was right. There's the door. You could be the third lead on a sitcom. So I knew I belonged, I also knew this is not how you drive this car, and I knew no, wrong lever. I like the expression, "Don't spook the thoroughbred." But you've got to let me run.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: I'm getting spooked sitting around.

JORDAN: It's very surprising to me to read in [Gaspings for Airtime](#) that you suffered from stage fright as a performer especially -- on Saturday Night Live it's the worst place to have any kind of stage fright and it just seems so counterintuitive. And your vulnerability in there is very admirable and almost surprising. In fact, you tell a story and forgive me for bringing this up, I'm sure it's not your favorite story.

JAY: It's in the book.

JORDAN: You stole -- right.

JAY: It's in the Library of Congress. And I was thinking this --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: -- as you were talking. You're going to talk about Rick Shapiro.

JORDAN: Yeah, the Irish bartender guy.

JAY: I knew what you were going to say.

JORDAN: And correct me if I'm wrong here but I guess you stole an act for a sketch from somebody that you'd seen it before --

JAY: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- and then SNL gets sued. How do you shake having a reputation as a --

JAY: I haven't.

JORDAN: -- a thief of material?

JAY: I haven't.

JORDAN: You haven't?

JAY: And I was being honest. There was an apology written. And that's the only book I thought -- let's not **** eachother. I, in the moment go, "Oh, wow. Like, I'll be lauded if I cop to this."

JORDAN: Because nobody ever does.

JAY: There's a big difference, as you pointed out in The Art of Charm podcast -- you guys really do a great job of differentiating and separating being a narcissist and having the disorder of narcissism --

JORDAN: Yeah, yeah.

JAY: -- in Narcissistic Continuum. Narcissistic Personality Disorder -- you have to have narcissism to get straight A's. You have to have narcissism. You want to please them so much that you're going to work overtime. Like, for me, I'm in AA, right? And when I go through my steps and I realize my resentments and stuff, it all comes back to ego, it all comes back to me, like, "Why aren't you looking at me the right way?" How could somebody who

talks as much as me feel like they're not being heard? Marriage, job, job, job, relationship -- like, it doesn't make sense.

JORDAN: No.

JAY: But in my childhood, I wasn't because I was a child of an alcoholic parent, my sisters were eight and nine years older than me -- there was nobody hanging around with, so if I wanted attention, I had to like jump my bike like Evil Kenevil over 18 ***** school buses and learn some show tunes -- Sing Out, Louise -- to get everybody to look my way. So, you have to understand this, Jordan. If I wrong you somehow, and I come to you as soon as I can and go, "I've got to tell you something. That was horrible what I did to you and I'm sorry," and you are going to say to me, "I appreciate you telling me that." You're telling me great job but it's because I did something awful. Like, "You were a little handsy me with bride," I go, "You know what? I was really like manic. I thought I was being funny. I'm sorry. I'm really," --

JORDAN: Did that actually happen?

JAY: On the advice of my council, I cannot confirm or deny or answer that question. Never -- why do I keep hitting Bert's nose?

JORDAN: I don't know. I'm going to move Bert back a little bit here.

JAY: Who's your favorite Muppet?

JORDAN: Great question. Actually --

JAY: It's very telling, the answer.

JORDAN: You know, I would have said Animal up until just now and now I feel like that's just a thing I was -- felt like I was supposed to say.

JAY: Fear. Why are you second guessing? Like let's --

JORDAN: I'm trying to think of other Muppets though, that are not Bert and Ernie.

JAY: Why? Why? On an elemental level, why are you renegotiating who your favorite Muppet is? I know you're --

JORDAN: I think I just -- try more interested in being honest rather than giving an answer that I think people expect, which is Animal.

JAY: I'm not dodging this stealing question, I'll circle back to it. I'm a good --

JORDAN: No, no it's okay. I'm literally --

JAY: It does all track if you've seen me do stand up. For two hours you're like, "What the?"

JORDAN: Who are the -- there's Fozzie --

JAY: Any Jim Henson person. That could be the Muppet Show, that could be Sesame Street --

JORDAN: Do you like Fozzie because he's a stand up comedian?

JAY: I would slit his throat.

JORDAN: I think he's the most annoying Muppet, for sure.

JAY: If we were on a lifeboat and we were getting a little low on water, I'd go, "Hey why don't you fish. See what you can catch," and I would hold his head under water. As John Lee Hooker says, "Till the bubbles stop coming up."

JORDAN: I do like Kermit. I know it's a lame answer but I like Kermit.

JAY: Why?

JORDAN: Because he's the lead role.

JAY: Both of your answers you negotiated backwards --

JORDAN: Yeah, I negotiated backwards. I feel like they're on...

JAY: -- from what you like.

JORDAN: It's because I want to pick the best choice.

JAY: But it's your choice. I like ***** Rowlf, the piano playing dog, because he wasn't used as much and his fur looked really soft and I needed a hug as a kid. I'm like, "He's probably like really huggable," --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: -- but then I realized it's Bert. I love Bert. And on your iPhone there's --

JORDAN: Why Bert?

JAY: He's never having a good time but he doesn't start that way like, "Ernie look at this," you know? "I did some of this and that."

JORDAN: Oh, that's right.

JAY: And then Ernie goes, "I can't hear you. I've got a banana in my ear." And he goes, "No, I -- that's what I also wanted to tell you is you've got a banana in your ear," he goes, "Sorry Bert." Like, "We won the lottery," -- "Can't hear you, I've got a banana in my ear," and it's this slow burn.

JORDAN: That's right, I forgot about that.

JAY: And on your iPhone there are way too many and not enough Bert memes where they do like a CSI Miami -- like Sesame Street actually did slow pans towards him, he's reading a book, he looks up like he read something offensive, he's got a dead arm, he's lifting a weight and he falls over -- like, I encourage all your listeners, next time they're sitting down on a toilet, to just

type in, "Bert," under those memes and hopefully there's some toilet paper in the crack there so nobody can spy on you.

So, Rick Shapiro was a comic and he is still and he's a genius. Such a genius, there's like a danger to him when you watch him. There's an uncomfortability. His mind is the next level of mind that has not been harnessed yet. He's brilliant. And he did this bit he did about an Irish bartender. "Oh, you like stories do you? Here's a story. You're fired. Get out." He's like, "Well I don't work here." "All right, well how'd you like a job that pays \$5 million a week?" "Yeah." "Well now you're fired." And it was two months, I'm in my second season -- I had nothing. Get on the air and I went, "This is bad." I wrote that as a sketch which is the sin. There's nothing -- murder, rape, mayhem, pestilence. just --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: -- just stealing is it. People will hashtag me from -- you know fan bases from like other podcasts -- Mencia Mohr. They're like, "Who'd you steal that from?" and it takes a very long time to realize social media is a bathroom stall and people are just writing **** on it.

JORDAN: Yeah, of course.

JAY: So, I put it on paper -- because I everything I wrote didn't go through and I see Mike Myers write things every week that don't get through. That week it was the golden ticket, it was -- just had a halo around it, and it just kept advancing and advancing and advancing and I'm going -- I'm well aware of the cosmic joke that this is just moving forward.

JORDAN: Right, like you're scared now that it's actually going to get picked even though you wrote it because you would have not gotten picked.

JAY: Right and I wrote it poorly because Rick Shapiro is a genius -- like I wrote it kind of sloppily and it got picked to go on the air

but it can still get cut in dress, it can still get cut in the second dress rehearsal -- the live dress rehearsal -- NOPE.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

JORDAN: So for the first time in your career you're like, "Please cut this one."

JAY: Yes.

JORDAN: "Get rid of it. I made a mistake."

JAY: And the chapter prior, I believe, ends with, "I did the most unthinkable thing. I stole." And I went, "If I'm going to write this book, I'm going to write all of it," and the narcissist and the ego goes, "He's going to get a lot of credit, like, you know, he was really honest." And we're talking about it now. Nobody ever would have known. Non disclosures all around.

JORDAN: Really?

JAY: Rick Shapiro knew.

JORDAN: Yeah, because he's too sentimental...

JAY: And that would have been word of mouth on a part of the country that I never would have heard about.

JORDAN: Right. It was just going to be inside baseball and then you just blasted it out to everybody?

JAY: He's on the team. I launched a ***** three round home run and I knew what the pitch was. It's a part of it. It's the history of what it was and if I was going to be honest, I had to be honest. And it's when I discovered -- while writing the book -- I am the villain. Farley is the hero and I'm the villain.

JORDAN: Did it affect your career though?

JAY: No, it affected my heart.

JORDAN: That's worse.

JAY: Like I did Maron's podcast and he just kept pinning me against this wall like, "But you steal," -- like, and I've known Marc my whole life. If you come see my stand up, it's impossible that a syllable is lifted because my mom's Alzheimer's, my son's name is Meredith.

JORDAN: Right, it's all about you, yeah.

JAY: My father in law is a Meredith, it means lord of the sea in Scotland.

JORDAN: Didn't know that.

JAY: That's what happens on stage too. It's interesting. So like the idea that I steal, if you come see a show -- pick a night -- it's laughable. I stole and I admitted to it thinking, "You know what? That'll be a nice like 'We'll put this to bed.'" But not in today's age of Instagram --

JORDAN: No.

JAY: -- Snapchat, now -- Minute Rice in a ***** microwave, like now, now, now -- like, there's too many bees in the hive and they don't do **** Greg Proops told me, "If you look up anything about you on the Internet, you are and deserve to receive whatever's written about you."

JORDAN: Greg Proops.

JAY: He's the smartest man in the world. So I did it because I wanted to be honest and I thought, "When in life does a human being get a platform where they're going to ship books to different cities," I never left my house and I get to like make an amends. And then like feedback 15 years later was -- I heard Rick

Shapiro on somebody's podcast go, "Well, he never apologized to me." Like, well, I don't have your number. Now I need it.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: Because now for 15 years, you're still so angry with me and that breaks my heart --

JORDAN: Yeah, that sucks.

JAY: -- that this guy -- I did the unthinkable. Like I'm not going to have -- on my deathbed worry about it and think about it cosmically but I will never have not stolen again. Like when you cheat on your wife one time, you might as well keep going because you're not going to go to your deathbed as a great husband. You cheated. That's why I never cheated. Like -- because the one time it's over.

JORDAN: It just takes once.

JAY: So it was very cathartic to get it out and I didn't realize the blowback would be 15, 20, 22 years later -- who'd you hear that from? Never at a live show because again, it's impossible. So, it wasn't like taking the bullets out or this -- I just needed to be truthful and tell every single thing that happened. I mean I'd tell you what color the carpets are. They're blue. Everything was blue, including me. So Meredith -- on stage, I do like my son -- they're idiots. Get out of the tub, put on our pyjamas, and then I forgot to tell him to try to use the potty. He'll figure it out. Too late. Wet carpets -- two legs in one leg hole. Boys are dumb.

JORDAN: Yeah. Yeah.

JAY: But without it being like --

JORDAN: I know.

JAY: -- "You ever noticed guys and girls are different?" But I don't know how my son doesn't drown when it's raining. It's just --

we're playing a game -- who can run closest to the moving cars and like girls don't play games like that, they play games --

JORDAN: How old is he?

JAY: He's 24.

JORDAN: Twenty-four years old.

JAY: Yeah, he just graduated Syracuse with honors but -- no, he's six. He just turned six

JORDAN: Six, okay.

JAY: So then after like an hour of talking, sharing, speaking -- a lot of kids stuff -- I go, "So my Son Meredith," and somebody will do exactly what you did and --

JORDAN: Your son Meredith?

JAY: There's a nervous laughter or like they think it's a bit.

JORDAN: Right.

JAY: And I will just pause and say, "You guys want to talk about that right now?" And they're like, "Yeah."

JORDAN: Can't really say no.

JAY: So I'll give you a very truncated version. They think the next like 11 minutes -- they don't know I've done it before -- so it's ***** silent. I have full custody of my older boy Jackie. I just started dating my wife Nick, I went to court and I fought for what was right. Judges love moms, we know this.

JORDAN: Yeah, that's --

JAY: I'm not going to say anything negative --

JORDAN: For sure.

JAY: -- about anybody else. It's not fair. They're not a part of the show and not a part of our shared experience right now. But a judge said, Pothead comic and hot new girlfriend -- full custody. You get in touch with the state for when you can see him with somebody else watching," and that's -- fill in your own backstory.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: That's it. That's all I say. So, my girlfriend wife went to work and for the first time the dust had settled, I was entirely alone with a two year old and he was having a meltdown and I'm like, "Let's just count to five and just relax," and he's like, "One, lefty 50, 5, one, two," -- I go, "Stop. No, no, no, just count to five. Listen to me," and he kept going, "Forty, A,B, C, 5, L," and I'm like, "This is not a joke." I thought, "Maybe he's autistic and this is it because he's comfortable"--

JORDAN: Yeah, sure, yeah.

JAY: And then he just kept going and going. I'm like, "Just count to five," and I realized I'm yelling at a two year old and it scared the**** out of me that I was alone and when I'm alone with my son, I go, "Just count to,"-- like that's my childhood.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: No way. So I got down and I prayed. I said, "I need patience. I need patience. I am begging you for patience. I'll serve forever." Ding-dong. My girlfriend's father --who's a rocket scientist -- was coming from Jet Propulsion Laboratories in the Valley just happened to stop by the house. Never gave him the address -- just happened to stop by the house to say hi. His name is Meredith. I prayed for patience, it rang my doorbell.

JORDAN: That's so amazing.

JAY: Oh, he gets down on the ground, he goes, "Count to five for me," and he goes, "Lefty, 50, 1, 25, 40, 50," and he goes, "That's right." And it was like, "That's another way to parent."

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: I mean God, like he's not going to walk through high school hallways like, "Lefty, 50, 5, 4, 1,"

JORDAN: Right. He'll get it eventually, right, yeah.

JAY: He won't get nothing and like it. So, I -- onstage I go -- "So I named my son after an answered prayer," and I look over in the corner and I go, "So **** you," and that gets a big laugh --

JORDAN: Yeah, sure.

JAY: -- because they were let off the hook, you know?

JORDAN: Sure.

JAY: You didn't ask me this but I listen to the podcast enough to know, no one is ambivalent about me. Nobody is like, "Meh." It's either, "Oh, my God. Like, I love that guy, man," or, "I ***** hate that guy," and I don't know why. And it's been -- maybe in the last two years -- I've been actually able to take the sandbags off the hot air balloon and just realize that's that. That's me. Maybe it's no fear, maybe it's because I have joy -- I don't know what it is. Rick Shapiro I crossed and left tracks so I wouldn't drown. I have never crossed anybody. I only want to be helpful. My intent is my worst enemy. I can't tell when I speak the difference between my Monarchs and my Viceroy's.

Like, I'll send out like a nice caring message and somebody brings back this poisonous butterfly like, "Why? Why?" I'm a reaction addict. I exhaust myself trying to make that right and it took me far too long to realize they're picking up the wrong shit. My heart is my heart and that's that. Once you have a kid

you really just have to knuckle down -- knuckle down? That sounds kind of homoerotic.

JORDAN: Buckle down, maybe?

JAY: "Hey why don't you and me later go to Crunch Fitness in the steam room. We can knuckle down."

JORDAN: Now it definitely sounds --

JAY: And fight for what's right and when you're going for full custody of a child, that's not ripple effects, that tsunami after tsunami after tsunami after tsunami -- but if you know you're right, it's just like having a house on the ocean. Like, you've just got to weather that. There's going to be damage. The shingles are going to fly off. There's going to be sand in your stereo.

JORDAN: In [Gaspings for Airtime](#) you said, "This is SNL," you know, Saturday Night Live, "It's the hardest year of my life." Now you've got a small kid, full custody of the small kid and you just got divorced or you're going through the divorce -- does it still stand that SNL was the hardest year of your life or have we graduated to this year?

JAY: Yes because there was such ambiguity and confusion with every moment of my waking hours and I was drunk and I wasn't well.

JORDAN: Mm.

JAY: When you make a decision like a divorce, people say, "Well hey, leave no stone unturned." I left my wife certainly because there's no stones left. They disintegrated. I've held them so long and this is -- could have been done two years ago but out of respect to the institution and I want to be married to this person for the rest of my life and I'm going to keep giving them an opportunity to show up. With my son and the wife and the thing and like -- that made me go back to AA to get well without drinking or drugging. I was fired from a job because they

thought I was on drugs. I did a Boys and Girls Club benefit and in my mind that's what I would put with absolute, in court, penalty of perjury -- that's me. And the feedback was, "Is he on something?"

JORDAN: Really?

JAY: And I realized, apparently I'm behaving in a way that people that don't know me are calling people that represent me and wondering aloud if I'm on drugs because I'm acting like a dry drunk. Because when I got sober in 1998, May 5th -- Lankershim Boulevard and Riverside -- I said the word powerless and I went "Uh-oh." I never got a sponsor and I never did the steps.

And I'm not advocating. Do your thing. But, when you're going through a divorce, houses -- I don't care -- I can't convince the other side. Take it. I will live in the rectory at Saint Monica's church. I'll jog with Father Tim, I'll play chess with Monsignor Toole. I don't care. "But this guy is coming with me because he's never going to be as confused as I was," and he's four at the time. And then the only response to that, when you're dealing with fact, is personal attacks because desperation has a very distinct scent. And now I'm going to say I'm not necessarily talking about my situation but in any business, any thing -- desperation has a very distinct scent and you pick it up. Like when Phil Jackson said posse -- do you remember this at all?

JORDAN: No.

JAY: When he said LeBron James and his posse -- the president of the Knicks, Phil Jackson?

JORDAN: Yeah I know who that is, yeah. Yeah.

JAY: He said, "Well then LeBron and his posse." Like, LeBron wasn't happy about it because you can't say that about a black guy. It became this racist...

JORDAN: Really? It's a cowboy term, for one thing, but okay.

JAY: That's what you and I think --

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: -- and we'll continue to think but the black community as a whole, got together, and unbeknownst to you and I Jordan, it's not okay. But we didn't know it.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: Phil Jackson was in the news for a year. Nobody thinks Phil Jackson is a racist but desperation has a very distinct scent. The Knicks are a hot bag of **** terrible since he's gotten there, so they just went -- and they just never stopped asking him questions. Nobody asked him questions because they thought he might be a racist, they asked him questions because that scent, that wafting thing -- so, you could find yourself in a situation where you can smell the desperation.

Yes, SNL -- hardest year of my life because the divorce, I knew facts that were not okay and not sustainable, I presented these facts to somebody who may or not be the person we're speaking about, and I said, "These need to be addressed because this is not sustainable." That person's response has led me to believe they lacked empathy and compassion and were a little disconnected or a lot disconnected. So I would bring it up again and again and again and I went insane because I was never looking out for me. So March 14th I went back to AA to just get my **** together because I was sick. And it was in Redondo Beach. I took a 90 day chip last night. I was like, "Wow."

JORDAN: Congratulations.

JAY: Thank you but it's like I didn't need that much help on May 5th, 1998. And I'm more sick now getting better than I was on May 6th, May 7th, May 8th, May 9th and it's because people like me, who go to the extreme -- chemically and biologically -- are like, "What are my faults? What are my defects of character?"

That's why I love living in liminal space. Like everybody freaks out with liminal time and space. As a comic, it's all we know.

You sit in a hotel room all say in Albany, somebody goes, "You ready? I'm downstairs," you get in their car, you don't know them. It's weird. Then you get dropped off at a theater, you walk in, and you go on stage and that hour and a half is now, now, now, now -- like the hyperspace button in Star Wars like -- it's real. You walk off stage, back to the hotel room, airplane is the most liminal space and time there is because you're nowhere. You're on your way and you just left. And you don't work for a month. That's all we know. But being a comic and having liminal time and space as my life -- liminal space is the only time you can really look at you and work on you.

"Why did I lose that job of 20 years and how do I get another job so that never happens again?" So during the marriage you go, "All right, hold on a second." So I had all liminal space to self fearless moral inventory and excavate until I came out the other end and there was light coming up my ass and out my mouth. And you realize, "I can't possibly be wrong here." So it wasn't the hardest because there was data and I could put the mail in a mail slot, I could write down data in its appropriate place, and I could do the math problem and go, "That equals divorce and I'll just do it again a different way." That was oddly logical.

JORDAN: Huh.

JAY: SNL was not logical because I didn't know what to do.

JORDAN: This seems like there's so much pressure. There's constant rejection, there's competing in this weird way -- on Saturday Night Live and off Saturday Night Live, doing something cooperative like improv, cooperative like marriage, while also making sure that you get enough screen time for your job. I didn't mean to parallel a marriage with Saturday Night Live but it almost seems to naturally fit.

JAY: No it's a perfect coupling.

JORDAN: It's strange you've got to do this competitive thing.

JAY: Nobody knows how to be -- you've been married what -- six months?

JORDAN: Not even. One month.

JAY: Who taught you how to be married?

JORDAN: Nobody and --

JAY: Who's going to teach you how to be a father?

JORDAN: Oh, God, I'm terrified. Yeah, I don't know.

JAY: You can't be terrified, it's life. You're going to be great because it's yours and it's all you care about. And whatever you lacked as a kid, you're going to overflow this child to the point of annoyance with --

JORDAN: Great.

JAY: -- which is going to teach you whatever things you have with your dad -- he's given 100. And it's going to be more -- how is that 100? Because it's like we're all waiting for our dads or our moms to like come around --

JORDAN: Right.

JAY: -- to give us what we need. That's you in a onesie with anchors on it. I have a son. I'm in the barbershop yelling, "I've got a son!" That's how he feels about you. That's how she feels about -- like, we're all waiting for that. That's 100. So then you have to like switch it and have compassion and realize, "This person's father -- my grandfather -- must have been a son of a *****. If this is 100 and I feel this way and not seeing and undervalued, and my way is right, I know it's right, but nobody's asking me

my opinion. Then his father must have been -- oh, wow." So you almost like -- you have to look at your parents like they're wearing like an oxygen mask, like they're not well, they're sad -- but then, it never reached you, that sad. That's what they did. So you being a dad -- you can have fear and faith at the same time. If you met the gal of your dreams and you want to have a baby, go! You want to know what fear is? Both my sons were at the neonatal intensive care unit.

JORDAN: Oh, man.

JAY: They were just very -- they were just young. But there's babies that die.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: There's babies that aren't there when you go the next day. My son's heart would stop and, "Bing-bong." The alarms go, "Bing-bong," because you can't have like, "Wah wah wah," --

JORDAN: Right, because it's just all the time.

JAY: "Watch out, Norton!" You have to have quiet alarms. My son's just goes, "Bing-bong," and I see he's flatlining. I look over at a nurse and she goes, "Grab his big toe," just -- you know how you whisper through a window even though the person can't hear you?

JORDAN: Sure.

JAY: That's when we should be yelling. Like if your friend is on the inside of the --

JORDAN: Yeah, sure.

JAY: -- Subway store, you're like, "No, you couldn't go around the back? Are you going around the back?"

JORDAN: Right.

JAY: Like, you whisper. She's whispering from 30 feet. "Just grab his toe. Just wiggle his big toe," and I grab my son's big toe -- he weighs three pounds -- and I wiggle it. His heart starts! And I'm like, "What the?" And she goes, "It's bradycardia. It's really weird." The neonatal intensive care unit nurses at Cedars-Sinai and probably many, many -- in every hospital now -- realized, if you wiggle the big toe and squeeze it and wiggle it, it restarts the heart of an infant.

JORDAN: Who knew you could pull start a baby?

JAY: Like a lawnmower.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: But like, the fear is, when you have that baby and take him home, now all of a sudden this truck you drive is a ***** faberge egg --

JORDAN: Right, yeah.

JAY: -- and there are far too many people around.

JORDAN: Right.

JAY: And you're just driving and there's like car seat behind you, facing the other direction, he's got his own mirror so he can look at himself -- even though he can't focus yet -- you've got your rearview mirror synced up with his rearview mirror so you guys can kind of communicate in this alternate reality you've created in these mirrors. And then you're like, "Red lights? Whoa. What if nobody goes and respects the law?"

JORDAN: Yeah. Yeah.

JAY: Like that's terror. Getting the baby from the hospital to the home and realizing, "I don't know how to have a baby." He was two the first time I was like alone with him.

JORDAN: That's a long time to then wake up one day and go, "Oh, wait, I don't have an instruction manual for this thing."

JAY: Your parents come out, they visit, there's the grandparent, you have a girlfriend, you got, you know, a nanny -- you want some help, if you can afford it, you get somebody to hang out.

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: Come at five in the morning so I can wake up at seven.

JORDAN: We live 10, 15 minutes away from her parents so that's why I pay California taxes. So that grandma and grandpa can come over and, you know, give us much needed rest at some point.

JAY: Yes. But and the coupling of a marriage with Saturday Night Life, I think is really brilliant because you don't know how to do it and they go, "Well, you've got it." Here's the ring, I do, so just, "Kick ass." Be funny. Be married. "Well where do I hand in the sketches? Nobody tells you. And what people don't realize before a marriage is, like people get married because they think it'll improve something. If you have tennis elbow before you get married, you're going to have tennis elbow on your 10 year anniversary.

JORDAN: Right.

JAY: It solves nothing.

JORDAN: You have it in both elbows at that point.

JAY: Rob Bell, [*The Zimzum of Love*](#) is a great book in a relationship. There has to be a death to be in a marriage because you have to accommodate somebody's life from DNA -- all the baggage, all the harm, all the trauma, all the tears, all the love, all the laughs -- there's not enough space. So something has to die and with me it was the snarky like, "My way or the highway." Like I'm not

even sure what all died. Bert Kreischer said, "There's no doubt Nikki killed the Tupac that lived inside of you."

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: And I went, "Yeah."

JORDAN: Nice.

JAY: Because there's a circle -- that zinzum is that space between two lovers. Something has to die. That's brave. But you didn't even realize getting married was probably the scariest thing you've ever done. You have to be brave to get married. Hail hail to the lucky ones that refer to those in love. For better. But you weren't scared because you knew. On SNL I knew -- I was scared because I had a medical problem. And there's hopefully not a shelf life to either. What is it John Lennon? "Life happens when you're busy making other plans."

JORDAN: Yeah.

JAY: So just make sure your next show is hotter.

JORDAN: What do you want to leave us with? What are you feeling?

JAY: Well first of all, I'm really happy to be on the podcast. I would love to come on again and speak to anything specifically you want to talk about.

JORDAN: Yeah, happy to have you.

JAY: And the fact that you knew so much about the book thrills me. The fact that this whole thing was the book and you tied it to modern day -- so you like time travelled with me like, I had to go back in these scenarios, and I had to go back and reconnect these dots in this linear time. I didn't expect that so thank you for doing that. But also, your podcast is important. There are podcasts where guys get together with their buddies and they talk about weed and hockey and like, "Hey man, who likes

teeth?" Like there's a podcast got anything. Yours, when I discovered it, there's not one episode where I don't go, "Holy ****, that lady said the exact same sentence 14 times and sounded different 14 different ways because of where her hands were." Do you know what I mean? Like, it's a really important podcast. I'm just thrilled that I got to talk to you and just don't stop.

JORDAN: No plan to stop, man. Thanks for coming on, brother.

JAY: Buddy, you're the best.

JORDAN: Great big thank you to Jay. The book title is [Gasp for Airtime](#). There's a lot of things he's working on as well. Of course those will be linked up in the show notes for this episode. If you enjoyed this, don't forget to thank Jay on Twitter. We'll have that linked in the show notes as well. And tweet at me your number one takeaway from Jay Mohr here. I am @theartofcharm on Twitter. As usual, we will be replying to your questions and feedback for Jay on Fan Mail Friday and if you're looking for the show notes, tap your phone screen or go to the website.

I also want to encourage you to join the AoC challenge at theartofcharm.com/challenge or text AOC to 38470, that's A-O-C to 38470. The challenge is about improving your connection skills and your networking skills. It's free, it's unisex, the whole point is some drills and exercises to get the ball rolling, get some forward momentum on that.

We'll also send you our fundamentals Toolbox. I mentioned that earlier on the show. That includes great practical stuff. Drills, exercises, everything ready to apply right out of the box when it comes to nonverbal communication, reading other people and especially their body language, attraction, networking, influence, persuasion, negotiation strategies -- a lot of great stuff there for the soft skills. The stuff that we teach here at The Art of Charm. It's designed to make you a better networker, a better connector, a better thinker, a higher performer -- that's

all at theartofcharm.com/challenge or text AOC to 38479. That's AOC to 38470. For the full show notes for this and all previous episodes, head on over to theartofcharm.com/podcast.

This episode of AoC was produced by Jason DeFillippo, Jason Sanderson is our audio engineer and editor, show notes on the website are by Robert Fogarty, theme music is by Little People, transcriptions by TranscriptionOutsourcing.net, and I'm your host Jordan Harbinger. Go ahead, tell your friends because the greatest compliment you can give us is a referral to someone else, either in person or shared on the Web. Word of mouth is everything. So, share the show with your friends, share the show with your enemies, stay charming, and leave everything and everyone better than you found them.

