



On Their Way Show Notes & Transcript:

Episode 203: Will Stokes (Or How To be An Actor And Musician In A Pandemic)

Show Notes

Episode Summary: Will Stokes (he/him) sits down with Jade Madison Scott (she/her) to talk about his acting process, how he funds his projects, what he is doing to prepare for a post-covid career, and what he's been up to during quarantine.

Guest Information:

- [Will Stokes Instagram](#)
- [Will Stokes Facebook](#)

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EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

**‘On Their Way’ Theme Song composed by Bajio Alvarado
(It’s light and energetic. It puts a little pep in your step)**

Jade (JMS): Hey everybody, it’s me Jade. I am so excited for you guys to hear this episode. So, light backstory, Will is my best friend and has been since high school. Now guys, seeing him continuing to grow as an artist and entertainer has been such a fun ride and he has always been so supportive of me and WGC and I was really excited for this interview, which was a fun time.



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JMS: Anyhow, it's a great time and I hope you like it. Transcripts can be found at wgcpredictions.com, and remember this is a WGC production.

'On Their Way' Theme Fades

JMS: Will Stokes is an actor, musician, and entertainer from Tampa, FL. Hey, Will. Hi.

(Will Laughs)

JMS (Laughing): So, how are you?

Will: I'm doing good. Thank you so much for having me.

JMS: Thank you for being here. Thanks for this. It's not like we just didn't just do this before we started recording anyway. So-

W (Laughing): Absolutely not.

JMS: We already know that the season of On Their Way is all about people from Tampa, from the Tampa Bay area. So, since we know what you're from can you share with us where are your roots? Where do you feel connected to culturally, spiritually and otherwise?

W: Yeah. Well, I grew up, I was born in 1999-

JMS: Woot woot!

W: And I grew up in Tampa right until I went to college. I guess for a year I lived in St. Pete, but I don't really remember it. So, I don't know.



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W: I lived in Tampa and then I went to the Academy in elementary school, and then I went to Tampa Prep for middle school and high school, and I did productions in the Straz Center.

JMS: Go Patel.

W: Go Pa...abso...lot of Patel shows. So I'm very, very, very familiar with Tampa.

(Will Laughs)

JMS: Hmm. So, you're very familiar with Tampa. You went to college of course, uh, to Marymount Manhattan up in New York and you are an actor. So, could you just sort of tell us what you do in your own words?

W: Yeah. The goal is to entertain people in various ways. So, I love to act, I love to sing, improv, basically, whatever I can get my hands on, whether it's musicals or drama. I'm kind of a nut about it.

(Will Laughs)

W: And whenever I get a chance, I like to do things that are very weird and out of my comfort zone a little bit and just, I don't know. I love it.

(Will Laughs)

W: Um, so I'm really lucky cause the last...God, I guess it'll be four years, I've been able to do what I love and it's been great.

JMS: Yeah. We love a graduating senior. We really do.



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W: I do too.

JMS: Uh, but so as an entertainer, I'm going to mostly focus on your acting and your music. So to start off with acting, I just want to know how do you go about building characters? How do you go about forming these, uh, these figures that you portray?

W: It's interesting cause I was thinking about this a little bit ago, and I was thinking about how dependent it is on a show, cause I feel like [when] a lot of people answer that question they're like, "oh, well, you know, I, um, I do this or I do that." You know, it's all very different depending on the person.

JMS: Mhmm.

W: But I even find for me, it depends even on the show I'm in. So, there was a show I did about....it was the winter of 2019 and it was called *Line*, and that was a very different show than I've ever done before. So, the whole concept of the show is people are waiting in a line and like, that's it. So, you had this character and the one I was playing, it with Steven, and he was crazy. I mean, he was for....to make it simple; he was crazy; he was very smart; he liked classical music, but there was no background and it's not a deep show. It's very theater of the absurd. So, that was not what I was used to, you know, I'm used to, you know, having their backstory or, you know, having something to go off of, but for that show, there was nothing. I mean, it was, they would say something in a sentence, like "I like Mozart" and that was the info you had.

W: So, there was nothing deeper, and that was very, you know, especially, you know, being in college, I'm sure, you know, it's a little weird, you're like, "oh, I'm very on my toes. I'm not sure what to do."



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W: I will say for me, what's really important is...costuming. Like, what am I wearing on my feet? How is my hair styled? Is it in a bun? Is it down? Or even like a prop, like a bag, like something like that, where I carry myself more, you know, how does this person walk? How do they talk? Where do their eyes look?

JMS: You're very into the physicality of it all? Yeah.

W: Right. And then really just, I think everything else is, you know, a lot of people do beats, I mean, that's helpful. For me, I just do it in the moment and it's, you know, someone could say something that throws you completely off, but you hear it every night. So, I think with that, you really have to be on your toes, but if you know your character, I think it doesn't really matter what the line...how the line comes off from your opposing character, but it really matters if you know yourself and know what the character would say and how they're going to say it.

JMS: Mhmm. Okay. And you mentioned, like, that show *Line* was at Marymount Manhattan where you're studying for your, uh, your theater degree and everything. So, I just want to know what stuff have you learned at Marymount that's been most useful to you out in the field while you're actually doing the work?

W: I'm really lucky. I really had a good experience at Marymount. I think above all things, you know, when you grow up, not that Tampa is a super small town, but I think growing up in a place that you're very used to, you know, you feel like a very big fish in a very small pond. And then, you know, not just at Marymount, but you know, there's NYU here. There's Columbia here. There's Barnard. I mean, there's a ton of these schools...Hunter. I mean, there's a lot of schools up here, so I've gotten lucky to meet a ton of different people from a ton of different schools. And just seeing so much talent, you know, from these people is really...it's humbling, but it's also really enlightening, and you also kind of figure out who you are as an actor and who you are as a person.



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W: And so I think Marymount has taught me a lot about what types of roles I like, what types of shows I like. As much as I like doing Shakespeare, do I think I'm going to do Shakespeare forever? Maybe.

(Will Laughs)

Maybe not though.

(Jade Laughs)

So, you know, you kind of find out what you are and I think...there's just a lot of things that I think are not taught, you know? Cause I think when you are growing up, you're in theater classes with a lot of people that don't really want to do theater for the rest of their life.

JMS: Yeah, it's an elective.

W: Exactly, it's an elective. And a lot of times, I think, it's underfunded, it's not taken seriously.

JMS: Yeah.

W: And so, you know, there's a ton of technique that I think you learn. Um, in college that, that you have never really thought about before. So, there were things that I had really good technique in, but I was never actively thinking like, "oh, this is why I'm doing this." I'm like, "oh, I just got lucky because I happened to be better at this technique." And then there's other aspects where I'm like, "oh my God."

(Will and Jade Laugh)

So it's, it's very...it's very nice to actually read academic papers, to watch academic videos about really your craft and what you're going into instead of just winging it or playing an emotion.

JMS: Mmmm. And since a lot of that did stem from you coming from Marymount, how, and you are graduating. God bless-



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(Will and Jade Laugh)

JMS: But since a lot of that did stem from your time in an academic setting, how do you plan on continuing that once you're out of academia?

Will: Yeah. Um, it's funny cause I always, I mean, you know, this Jade, I always like to stay on my toes, and I always like to keep going.

JMS: Mhmm.

W: I like being really busy. And, so even, you know, even when you and me went to school together, in the summers I would go to a summer camp for six weeks, like a theater camp in New York. So, I liked being busy. So, even now I think my degree is, it's like a BFA in acting with a minor in dance and drama therapy. Basically I'm...I've been taking these on-camera acting classes and these voice acting classes online, in the city. I actually found about it through my real estate agents.

(Will and Jade Laugh)

And it's really interesting cause there's people, you know, in TV shows, there's people in movies, or just people doing this in their spare time, but they all like doing it. So it's...you get to do a bunch of different, like one...I think for two weeks we're doing drama. And then we did horror and teen romcoms. And so that was really fun. And then, um, I dunno, I also just have been reading plays lately and then taking masterclasses.

(Will Laughs)

So-

JMS: Oh, and just for, honestly just for me, where do you typically find your plays? Like just on Samuel French? Do you have a store that you go to? Like what...what's up.?

W: Well, especially before COVID, I would go to the drama bookshop or, you know, it's, it's funny cause even as a college student



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W: I'm sure you've probably gone through this or maybe it's just me, but you are given so many reading materials and you don't always read them or you skim them.

JMS: Yeah. Yeah.

W: And so, I have this collection of things and I'll look through them and I'm like, "oh my God, I have not read this."

(Will Laughs)

And so I'm having a new appreciation for it because, you know, it's kind of getting to the point, especially this last year where you really have to motivate yourself and you're not in class, so you kind of have the ability to really slack off, and so for me, it's been more motivating, but, um, yeah, I'll either...I also just talk to, I talk to a lot of like directors or playwrights and see what they're reading-

(Will Laughs)

Or if they wrote something and then I'll try to get it off of them.

(Will Laughs)

JMS: That makes sense. Uh, how do you go about meeting those directors and play-

(Jade Laughs)

With those directors and playwrights? I know I'm asking questions that I didn't put on the document, but I'm, I'm just, yeah.

(Will and Jade Laugh)



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W: No, I think it's a really good question. I...I don't know. I think it's really important.

Basically...first off, I had the luxury and the privilege of being able to go to a school outside of A. Tampa and B. Florida.

JMS: Mhmm.

W: And so I was able to go to New York and, you know, I, I definitely would have saved much more money if I just would've stayed in Tampa, but

JMS: Wouldn't we all?

W: But, um, absolutely.

(Will and Jade Laugh)

Howard graduate.

JMS: Love to hear it.

W: Love to hear it. So, yeah, that was definitely something I thought about when I was in high school and I always knew high school...I wasn't like. "man. I really peaked during this time."

(Will Laughs)

JMS: I remember our conversations, yeah.

W: No, and some people do and that's great, but I was not one of those people.

(Jade Laughs)

So, I was very excited to kind of...remember where I come from, but almost reinvent myself. I was able to be on my own and go crazy and make mistakes, and it was a really good decision for me to kind of get out of my comfort zone.



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W: And I think a lot of times just the connections that I've made here, it's just because they've lived here, you know, and I was kind of joking with my girlfriend. I was like, “now half the people I'm hanging out with are, you know, 25 and up because they're just in the industry.

W: And I met them outside of school.” So you, you kind of meet these different eccentric people. Like, one of them was my neighbor and they happened to be a line producer and then they introduced me to a director and then I got introduced to a stockbroker, you know, so it's such a small world and this person knows this person, and so you really do start to know people in different fields, which I think is really important because I think a lot of times, as an actor, you want to surround yourself with a ton of different actors, which I think can be wonderful, but I do think it's really important to make those connections, and honestly, not even work connections, have friendships with people outside of acting and even entertainment. And I think that is really important, and I think, if anything, a downside of having this higher education is, I think a lot of people get really hoity toity with their technique and their acting, and they're supposedly great actors, but they've forgotten how to be people.

(Will and Jade Laugh)

So, I've definitely been really lucky to where all the stage managers or political science majors or directors have really helped me a lot, and a lot of the shows, I...actually, all the shows I did at Marymount were not by teacher directors. They were by student directors, and so-

JMS: Oh, that's interesting.

W: Yeah, it was really interesting. And they were smaller stages. You know, they were black box. You would sign up for them. It wasn't like, you know how some, well, I guess a lot of the performing arts schools, you know, if you're in a, they call them like mainstage shows or something like that.

JMS: Yes. Yes. Yeah.



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W: It's like a class and you have to pay for it. Well, these, you didn't have to pay for, it was you just signed up and, you know, if you were in it, you were in it, and I met a ton of people that way. And one of my roommates, I met that way. You know, you, you met a lot of people, and so I had amazing teachers at Marymount that taught me wonderful things and are still my mentors, but I, I really am happy with the opportunity. I was able to work with so many student directors, stage managers, costume designers, you know, through that way and you weren't a little black box. So, I feel like after doing that, you could do a lot of things.

(Will and Jade Laughs)

JMS: Uh, I want to go back to something you said earlier, you mentioned how you were in a, uh, virtual acting class, how you're doing voice acting, and those kinds of stood out to me because they're very, um, they're very precien in a COVID and post COVID world since theater was currently dark all over all over the country. So, how do you see yourself preparing for a post COVID theater world and how you preparing yourself now?

W: Yeah, absolutely. It's um, I mean, as, as I've told you many times-

(Will Laughs)

I think everyone had a very different idea of how their 2020 was going to look.

JMS: Yeah. Yeah. Just a little.

W: Just small, you know, just small details. So, yeah, this year was very different than I'd imagined and even 2021 obviously is very different, and with all this being said, you know, just to preface: my family's healthy, I'm healthy, you know, everyone's safe, I'm not being evicted. So, in the grand scheme of things, it is a very, very minute problem just to preface that.

(Will Laughs)



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W: But, um, it, it was very different. So, at the, at the beginning of the semester, I was in a Marymount show called *She Kills Monsters*, and I was the dungeon master, but I, I can't remember his name. And then I was in two NYU student production shows,

JMS: I remember this.

W: So, I was in *Elegies*, which was a musical, and then I was in, it was a new work and it was based on this 1960s, 1950s play, and I have to remember the name of it, but I can't. So, I was in those three shows at the time. So, and then I worked at this place called *Mountain Bird*, which was a French restaurant, it was-

JMS: Had delicious food.

W: It was so good.

(Will Laughs)

JMS: That vanilla butter, I still think about it.

W: Oh my God that's right. You know your waiter was amazing-

JMS: Okay, Will.

(Will and Jade Laugh)

W: So, I would...yeah, I would wake up and I'd probably leave the house around nine and I'd have class.



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W: Um, I think my class probably started at 10 and then half the time, I'd take the six train down to NYU, and I'd do shows there even till 10, 11, 12, or I'd get off early and I'd go up to East Harlem where I live and I would work at *Mountain Bird* from 6 to 10, and then I clean up till 11. So, it was a lot.

(Will Laughs)

And my weekends were actually busier than my weekdays. And so it was like six classes, three shows, and a job I worked 15 to 20 hours a week, so it was a lot and I loved it. Like, I, I, it was amazing. Like I was eating well, I was.....sleeping. I mean, it was-

(Jade Laughs)

Like, I wasn't sleeping much, but when I did sleep, I really slept. So, it was, it was wonderful. I loved it. And I had purposely done it to where my senior year I was a part-time student, because I was able to do that, everything worked out with that, and all I was going to do was audition. So, I was going to audition the whole year and I was making really good money at *Mountain Bird*, and so I was going to keep doing my waiting job, because it wasn't that demanding, the owners were amazing, and I had a lot of flexibility and they let me take off time for my shows and it was great.

Well, obviously within a week it was actually, my birthday was the day Broadway closed down. So, I was in New York. We had walked through Broadway that day and we...I was just walking around, seeing everything for my birthday. And I was having a glass of champagne and there was these, these people from Tampa and I talked to them and all this stuff. And, um, that's when it came out that Broadway had closed. So, it was like in, really in five days, all three shows got canceled, my school went online. So, my birthday was the first day school was online and it was only going to be for two weeks, and then we were going to come back after Thanksgiving and then my job got shut down. So, I had found out Monday, it was either Monday, the 15th or 16th, that I was leaving because my family was really scared, obviously, they were worried about me-

JMS: Yeah.



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W: And everything had gotten shut down. So I, and the shows were...some of the shows at the time were in limbo so we didn't even know if they were canceled, canceled or not, but by Monday, everything had been canceled. So, I didn't really have a reason to stay here. So, I had found out I was leaving at 5:00 PM and I was on the road in a rental car with two cats at 10:00 PM.

(Jade Laughs)

And I snuck them into a hotel at four in the morning, and then I locked them in the car the next morning cause they didn't say...oh, it was great. And I got them out though. They were only in there for 20 minutes. So, just to just so no one thinks they like killed my cats-

JMS: No, Peach and Pigeon are doing fine.

W: They're doing...well, they get whatever they want, but, um,

(Jade and Will Laugh)

It was quite the adventure and it was quite the journey.

(Will Laughs)

So, um, and then I had come down to Tampa and I'm sure, you know Florida got way worse in the summer with COVID, so then I came back up to New York and so, it was very unusual, not having a show to be in. And a lot of those shows I had just gotten through friends and through connections. So, it wasn't so much that I was....you know, it was just, my friends were like, "hey, you want to be in the show?" So it was, it was nice. Things were starting to pick up a little bit. Yeah. So, it was very, very difficult. And then coming back to New York was very difficult because I really didn't have a job, and then I had to go down to see family and yada yada yada. So, yeah.

JMS: Yeah. Well, that kind of leads into something. So, we've kind of talked about you as a creator who prepares. We've kind of talked about how you're working in your classes, but I also want to know how you work as a business, you know?



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JMS: So, like you mentioned, *Mountain Bird* just isn't open anymore, but you're still taking these classes and doing all these masterclasses and stuff. So, I want to know, how do you fund your endeavors?

W: Yeah, that's a wonderful question.

(Will Laughs)

JMS (Laughing): Thanks, Will.

W: Um, maybe I can, maybe I can answer it for my own good. Um, well, when I was working, cause ever since I was in college I was always working for the most...not, not so much my freshman year, but every summer I would...like, one summer I worked in Tampa for this music school. So, I worked there and then I would bartend on the weekends-

JMS: Yeah.

W: And then I got a peer mentor job at my college, and then I got another waiting job. So, I kind of liked doing different jobs, and so when I would get those paychecks, I would put, I think I'd put 25% away in savings. And then I would try to live below my means because I do have champagne taste on not a champagne budget.

JMS: You sure do.

(Will and Jade Laugh)

W: But, you know, I was lucky because I had family support, I had friend support, you know, and I, I was really, really lucky in that sense, so that that all should be noted.



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W: But because I had that, I was like, “okay, well, you know, since I do have the support of my family and I am able to go up to New York, I want to make sure I put stuff away,” because I had this fear once college graduated way before COVID that I'd have to come back to Tampa, not by choice, but because I couldn't hack it or I couldn't afford to live up there. And I never wanted that to be because I had to, I wanted it to be because I chose to. So, I always wanted to avoid that cliché of the starving artist, when I was given the tools not to be in that position. Um, and I think, you know, cause Marymount is a private, a private college, you know, and like I said, I know a ton of friends from NYU and Columbia, you know, stuff like that.

JMS: Mhmm.

W: I do think a lot of times that “starving artist” trope is really fetishized and I think it can be a little dangerous at sometimes, so I always wanted to make sure that I had money in savings for a rainy day. I watch a lot of the, uh, the YouTube show, *The Financial Diet*. I watch that. So I, I always thought because it doesn't matter, in my opinion, how good of an artist you are if you can't control your finances. You're going to get screwed.

JMS: Yeah.

W: And it's, you know, it's, it's sad to say that, but it's really true. And it happened to me before and, you know, so I've just, I've kind of learned that lesson of, you know, you need to make sure you have money coming in. And so, it would be wonderful to be making a ton of money off of acting and stuff, but especially with COVID obviously, and being a college student, you know, that's not really happening at the moment, and that's okay, but I want the freedom to be able to still put on the shows and to be able to put on art, and I'm not above being a waiter if the waiting job can fund my apartment.

(Will and Jade Laugh)



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W: So, yeah, for lack of a better word, so, yeah.

JMS: Okay. And then when you determine that you are going out for a roll, what do you do to prepare for your audition?

W: Yeah, I mean, I think, cause there's some times where I've gotten sides and I've gotten the script for it, and then there's other times where you pretty much walk in blank or there's been a couple of times where it's completely improv, and so, you know, obviously vastly depends. But normally what I do is I have a playlist-

(Will Laughs)

JMS: Okay.

W: Even when I'm cast in a show, I have a playlist of things. So, I guess this will go back to your other question too, of like, “what gets you into character?”

JMS: Mhmm.

W: It's really important for me, like, music before I go on, you know. So, I listened to a lot of Mozart when I was in *Line*. I was in a show, *Circle Mirror Transformation*, I listened to a lot of indie music, like a ton of indie music-

(Jade Laughs)

W: And then I was in this show called *Rag And Bone*, and you wouldn't know it from the character at all, but I listened to a ton of, like, either *Queen* or just like heavy metal and, like, that's what I would do to, like, get in the zone and I'd be very quiet and I'd, like, go up to a dark corner.



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(Will Laughs)

W: So, it was, I liked doing that and getting it in my body a little bit.

JMS: Mhmm. Okay, and I also hear...well, I also hear? We had a conversation about it-

(Will Laughs)

JMS: But you mentioned, last time we talked, that you were looking for an agent. So, like, how exactly did you determine: one, that it was time to get an agent and two, how are you going about that process?

W: Basically, I wanted to do...I wanted to start looking for an agent this year, but with everything going on with...or last year, I guess, of 2020, but with everything going on with COVID, I really took a minute back. I redid my work resume. I redid my acting resume, I'm actually finishing that up now. And then in about two weeks, I'm getting headshots and, um, I really just took time to build up materials. So, I was writing more. I was doing songs more. I was reading more, you know. I really took this time to be like, you know, just to take it for myself and work on growing because as you know, especially for theater, which was what I was mainly doing most of the time, that business was not even operational. And even now it's not. And so I really just took a minute to read a lot, to really work on stuff, a lot, work on a lot of personal growth and mental health. And so coming out of that, I know there's some things, like my school does, but I'm also taking it into my own hands, and even...I guess the quote of the day is before COVID-

(Jade Laughs)

W: But before COVID, I really decided and, and I think this is important for everyone to do, "no one is going to give you anything and no one is going to you sugarcoat anything."



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W: And a lot of times people won't say stuff to your face.” So, I took the initiative of, you know, I'm kind of tired of auditioning for these parts or not getting seen or I'm tired of scrolling through Backstage only to know that every single person is 35 today, and I will not be cast in that part.

JMS: No, you won't.

W: So I,

(Will Laughs)

So I decided to really start creating my own things, and I think that's really important. Even if you don't use them for years I think doing that is really important, and I think even if you haven't wrote the show yourself, I think putting up your own things, crowdfunding your own things, teaches you....I mean, this year I've learned more about the backend and the finance side of putting up a show or putting up.....right now, I'm working on, like, an album and a music video. So, I've learned just so much stuff about what goes into that process that I never would have learned and that, you know, not to bash anything, but that school or summer camps or teach...you know, no one teaches you that, you have to teach it yourself. And so that's what I'm saying of, you know, you graduate thinking, “oh, I've learned this craft. I'm such a talented-

(Jade Laughs)

“You know, enter...you know, such, I'm just so wonderful because I went to the school,” but you actually have no real life skills and no financial skills.

W: No communication skills to actually, you know, go out and audition.

JMS: Mhmm.

W: Because there's so much stuff that happens out of that auditioning, and even truthfully, not even just acting most, I think all of the jobs I have gotten have been from me knowing somebody. All of them. My resume, I'm going to be honest my acting resume's crap right now, my work resume's wonderful.



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(Jade Laughs)

W: I really never use my work resume because I just never got jobs through that at all. It was always because I knew someone and even going forward and, you know, this is really important too, like for me, you know, I also, at this point, know a lot of people that I'm going to ask, "hey, do you know anyone I could try out for, for management and agencies instead of waiting to do it with my school or, you know, hire somebody to do it,"

JMS: Yeah.

W: You know, it's...I think those connections are important because, um, you know, it's, it's your circle and it's people that care about you and you know, want to see you do good.

JMS: Yeah. It's building horizontal, networking horizont...It's making friends instead of trying to not kiss up, but like-

W: Right.

JMS: Like to people who are technically above you in a way.

(Jade Laughs)

So, this is a great segway. Thank you for setting this up so nicely.

(Will Laughs)

When you were talking about making, making your own things and making your own things with people, you know, so that you don't have to wait on the beck and call of someone else, and I know for a fact that you did at least two really cool things

(Will Laughs)



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JMS: This past year, uh, when it came to creating...not creatively creating, when it came to creating music and theater. So, first things first you, uh, try to put on production of *Hedwig and the Angry Itch*.

W: I did.

JMS: You did, and it was a journey. So, can you tell us about that, how that came to be and what that was like?

(Will Laughs)

W: Yeah. Oh my God. So, that was a very, very, very exhausting and long process to say the least, but I am so so grateful I go to do it.

W: So, it never actually got put up as you know.

JMS (Laughing): Yes, I know.

W: It will. It's just gonna take a couple of years, but basically I was working on that. That was going to be the fourth show I was going to be in, in six months. And I had decided I wanted to put this show up myself.

JMS: Mhmm.

W: Because a lot of the shows...actually, and there was another show I was going to be in this spring that...so I guess there were five shows I was cast in that I...that got canceled. But for *Hedwig*, I had just realized I wanted to put on a show in New York and I wanted to work with people because I, I just know so many talented people and really good friends, and so I decided, well, why the hell not? Why should we not do this?



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W: And so I had reached out to one of my friends, Nick, who's a director and I had met him through *Line*. And anyway, we had started talking. So I had, you know, formally in case you don't know, you have to reach out to whatever publishing company is in charge of the show. So for this, I think it was DPS. So you reach out to them and it takes, I think it, it can take two months to get approved. So, it's like at least a month, maybe two months. And so I had found out the week of my birthday right before COVID that, um, that I had gotten approved because you have to get approved and you have to get approved for a venue. New York and LA specifically, it is much harder because if there's another production going on, you are in the back end of that, there's a professional production you can't have two going on at the same time. I mean, it's, it's quite a lot of rules and quite a lot of things that you have to do. And so I had taken \$1,200 of my own money. I put away in savings and I had bought the rights for *Hedwig*. So, that was only for three days, and then we had...there was this one venue that we have talked to and we have locked them in and I think they were, I want to say they were 7,000 for three days.

And so, long story short, COVID had happened, and this was in May, and we had reached out, it turns out the place we had booked they have sound issues, and if you know *Hedwig*, you need to be loud, and I, I don't think we could do drums or anything electric. So, it just wasn't the venue for that show. So we had contacted DPS and they had said, "oh, just apply and in a month, you know, because of COVID, we're busy now." So I did. I waited a month and I applied again, well, I get an email back that a professional company wants to do it, and so I have to wait till 2022 to apply.

(Will Laughs)

So, it was very difficult. It was a lot of hoops jumping through, but I learned more in those six months than I had learned in like a whole year of college. I mean, I, and I was able, you know, we were doing meetings every week. We had built a team. So, it was very difficult, needless to say I was down in the dumps about that.

JMS: Yeah.



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W: So, what I did is I had taken a lot of those same crew and we had added on more people and we had changed it to what I'm doing now, which is I have written songs for many years and I had recorded a lot in high school and I would go to Nashville and stuff, but, you know, just for fun, it was something I liked doing, but I really wanted to do it myself and so, um, we have a music producer, his name's Phil, he's great. I'm going to produce some of the stuff. Nick is directing it. So, we are doing a music video. We have a press kit. I'll send it to you, but we, we have a whole thing about it, and I had written a lot of these songs, um, during COVID. This has turned into a little EP and hopefully I'll be releasing it...I think we're going to try to release it this summer, but we've made a lot of progress. We are in the middle of doing these four tracks. We have booked, through a friend that we know, um, Rebecca, shout out to you, we had booked a location in Connecticut to do these four, we're doing four music videos. Costumes. I'm talking to a costume designer, I think tomorrow. So it's, um, it's going really well. I got to bring on choreographers. I get to actually pay choreographers.

(Will Laughs)

So, I'm really, really lucky and really happy about it. So, it's called *PosterBoy*. So, that's what, that's what it's called.

JMS:; Alright, well let's talk more about this cause I did want to get into your music career as well. So-

W: Yeah.

JMS: So, *PosterBoy*, you were writing it in this COVID time cause it was just how you were feeling. So, like, tell me. What was your process for writing the songs? How did you know when a song was done? Do you use sheet music to edit down? Do you just record it straight out? Come on share.

W: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. I, um, it's crazy to say this, but I actually, I don't use sheet music. I write the lyrics down on pen and paper in chicken scratch-



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(Will Laughs)

W: And I play the chords all from memory. And so I that's how I do everything. And so I would wake up or...the first song, it's called *City Girl*, I woke up at around four in the morning and I couldn't sleep, but I had had a dream, and I just kept hearing this thing in my head. And so I'm not just to preface, I'm not that great of a piano player at all-

(Jade Laughs)

W: And so let's just clarify that, but I had woken up and I...that month was just really hard. I'd come back and I was alone in New York and I just, there was a couple of toxic relationships that fell through and there was just a lot going on and I had lost my job. So, I wake up and I get out my keyboard. I didn't even have a keyboard stand at the time and I'm sitting in the kitchen table and I'm sitting on a poof on top of a chair-

JMS: A what?

(Will Laughs)

W: And the sun and the sun is like rising and I start singing. And I'm really lucky I have wonderful neighbors, shout out to Will and Aly

(Will Laughs)

But they, they heard it and they were like, "oh my God, what's that song?" So, I was like, "oh, you heard everything at seven in the morning?" So, because by the time I had written it down and so I just written it...and I...God, written? I WROTE it in like an hour.

(Jade Laughs)



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W: And so how do I know a song is done? Well, I know it's done on the keyboard. Recording? I'm really picky. I'm really mean. So, I can't tell you when a song is done, you just know. It's like how...it's just a feeling. It's a feeling, you know, nothing is ever done. It's always a work in progress, but especially when I'm recording tracks and you know, it's my name behind it, and I've made very bad tracks before don't get me wrong, but you know, now that I'm kind of on my own and I've done the recording before I, you know, I want to make sure I will put my name behind it, and so I won't put my name behind something unless it is really good quality and it's something I would listen to. You know, if I wrote this song, I might as well listen to it.

(Will Laughs)

So, yeah. So, that's what I do, but it's funny. Sometimes I just hear something in my head and I'll write down, well, I'll, I'll start playing first and I'll just start muttering lyrics there. Like it it's just, it comes out like gibberish. Um, and then I'll write the gibberish down and it's like decoding. It's like a puzzle. And, um, it's just whatever feels right.

You know, I have songs that are, you know, people are like, “oh, do you have a song based on this person?” And obviously, yeah-

(Will and Jade Laugh)

The short answer though is, sometimes it's on a feeling because I think a lot of times, you know, we like to repeat toxic behaviors. We like to be with people that can hurt you, or maybe you make a lot of mistakes and hurt other people, and so, you know, I'll listen to a song, and, you know, verse one, I'll be like, “oh, that's this person,” but then, you know, the second verse is someone else. And so it's kind of about finding that theme of what ties those people together, you know. Is a jealousy? Is it desire? Is it heartbreak? You know, something like that. And I think, you know, with acting, it's very, you know, different, you want to be on the impulse, but with music, it's REALLY impulsive, and it also, for me, it just, it comes from, I know it's corny, but it's all from like my heart and how I'm feeling. And so, you know, if I, if I'm crying while I'm writing a song down, it's not that I'm just so emotional, but it's the fact that I'm like, okay, so this means this is right, this is going somewhere. And a lot of the songs I write are normally pretty dark.



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(Will Laughs)

W: It, you know, it's just, it's the way it is, and then...but I want a beat behind it, and so I'll play it on the keyboard, but I hear the strings, I hear the drums. And like I said, I'm not that amazing on keyboard, I just...I dunno, I just I'm able to, to hear it, and I love doing that. And that's why, you know, I'm not that good of a dancer, but I, I know choreography from when I was, you know, in elementary school or kindergarten or something like that, I just, it just sticks with you and muscle memories. And so I'll go back to songs...one song is called *Venus Flytrap* and I'd recorded it, and it was good. It's a very long story, but it just never, we never released it and it never went out and I wanted to do a different version and I wanted to do it behind my name. And, um, you know, I had wrote that song when I was 15. So, revisiting that was very interesting because I remembered the initial intent of why I was writing it, but now it also has a new connotation to me when I sing it. So, it's very interesting. So, I hope that answered your question.

(Will Laughs)

JMS: It did answer them. You also are making the music videos for it, you said, and you recorded it as well, so how'd you go about: 1. finding a recording studio to book in; 2. Booking it-

(Will Laughs)

Well, yeah, but how'd you go about booking it, but how did you go about the recording process and the details and minuta of that, and then how did you go about finding MV directors and crew

JMS: Organizing and shooting that, especially shooting that during the pandemic?

W: Yeah, so, it was funny. I had reached out to lot...I mean, I know I want to say friends, but I...so, the director for *Line*, Nick, he wants to do a lot of music videos, and I knew he's, I mean, he's VERY talented. He knows what he's doing.



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W: And then Phil is a music major and he and Nick happened to live together, so I went to Phil and then, um, one of my other directors, Alison is really good at casting, so she's helping me with casting. And, um, then Rebecca, she's a really good stage manager. Me and Nick brought her on. And then, so I started looking at choreographers and I had hired Becca and that choreographer got me a costume designer, and so I, I was able to just find people that really wanted to work and we're doing it for a passion project. And then as far as studios, it was either in someone's house or I've been doing it in my house for a little bit. So, you know, it was, you have to make it your own and, you know, I think for me, I mean, I am a Pisces, I think for me, you get caught up in the fantasy, but it's really intimidating, you know, it's like, "okay, I'm going to buy all this stuff to record stuff. Oh my God, I have to record stuff. I don't know how to do this." You have to learn. No, one's going to teach it to you. And so...or you're going to spend a lot of money having someone teach it to you. So, it's, um, you really have to take that initiative of 'don't quit', you know, and don't be afraid of failing because even with something like *Hedwig*, it doesn't mean it's over it just means it's on pause for now, but I would have never learned half the stuff I would've learned if it wasn't for that. And even being back in the city and all the stuff that happened with COVID. I met so many people and made so many friends that I never would have met if this didn't happen. So, I'm not going to say it's a blessing in disguise, but I'm saying, you know, you have to take the most of the situation you're in.

JMS: Hmm. All right. And I think, I think that's a beautiful way to end the interview. Well, no, no, that's not true because you have one more question to ask-

(Jade and Will Laugh)

So, Will, you're making the most of the situation you're in. You're meeting new people. You're doing great things. You're going to go record your music videos.

JMS: You're gonna release *PosterBoy*. You're going to graduate college. That's a crazy sentence like that, we're both graduating college this year, wow. Um, you're going to graduate college and you're going to continue to just be a wonderful person and a wonderful creator and entertainer. So, Will, you're clearly on your way, so how will you know when you've made it?



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W: Oh my God. Jade, I like how your goal for this is to try to make me cry every time.

(Will Laughs)

JMS: Did it work?

W: Oh, absolutely.

JMS: YES!

W: I think that's a really good question, because I think for me in a lot of ways, I feel like I have, and then there's a lot of things, you know, I don't think there's a certain answer. I think for me ever since I was a little kid and, uh, you know, obviously Tampa, I love Tampa, we can talk about Tampa too. Um, love Tampa, but for me, I always..it was a dream of me...Uh, let me rephrase that.

(Jade Laughs)

It was a dream of mine to be able to move to New York and do theater and to act and to write songs and to make connections with people. I am so grateful that I'm able to do that. So, in that sense, I mean, I have an apartment here. I have cats here. I'm in a relationship. I have friends. I was making money. You know, I'm able to pay my rent and I'm able to have the freedom to put up my own shows. I'm able to audition. So, for me, I mean, I feel like I'm the luckiest guy in the world. But you know, I guess a goal for me was, you know, one day I would like to be fully dependent on my entertainment jobs and my entertainment career.

W: You know, to support my income and my living and, you know, cause I don't want to wait tables for the rest of my life, but yeah. So I just think it really depends on how you look at it, and so I kind of think of them as checkpoints. I'll be like, "okay, I want to do this," and once it's done, I'm like, "okay, what's the next thing." Because you know, as an artist, I feel like for me,



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it's, it's never enough. It's...you know, that feeling you get when you perform or you do an art or you know, you're on your best friend's podcast-

(Will and Jade Laugh)

There is a feeling to that that you never get and you can never get again, and so even, you know, growing up most of the time, doing musical theater and doing plays, you know, now I'm doing a lot of voiceover and on-camera acting and...it's just as long as you're adaptable, I think you do make it. And I think, you know, as long as you realize what you have and also what you want, because I feel like I get to do things every day that, you know, even walking through Central Park, you know, I'm like how many people get to say that that's five minutes away from where they live. So, I just feel really lucky, but I also...the more I accomplish, um, the more I want to do cause it's, it's never gonna be enough.

(Will Laughs)

JMS: That's really nice.

(Jade Laughs)

JMS: All right. Well, where can people find you? Where can people find your projects? Share your information.

W: Absolutely. So, my Instagram is WillRStokes. That's probably where you can find me the best, I think. I also have a Facebook. I also have a Snapchat.

JMS: Oh, you still have Snapchat?

W: I, I think I do. I think it's like WillRStokes12. But yeah, I have an Instagram, um, and for Instagram and Facebook, especially that's where I'll post everything. I think PosterBoy is going to be coming out in the summer, um, I think at least the songs are in like June.



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W: And then, um, yeah, I think there's going to be....there's a couple other projects, but you'll just have to have me on again because they're in the beginning stages.

(Will Laughs)

'On Their Way' Theme Song composed by Bajio Alvarado

JMS: And you have just finished listening to the third episode of On Their Way season 2. On Their Way was created, hosted, and edited by me, Jade Madison Scott. The theme was composed by Bajio Alvarado and the logo was created by Amaka Korie . Hey, did you know that you can access an extended version of this interview if you subscribe to our Patreon? Now, you do! It's true! If you go to wgcpredictions.com and click Patreon in the navigation bar you will be taking to our Patreon page where you can subscribe and get access to extended interviews among other things. You can also support us by going over to our shop, which you can also find on our website, and buying some of our merch! You can also always follow us on IG and Twitter @withgoodco and tell your friends about us. Alrighty, I'm all out of call-to-actions. Thank you as always for listening. I hope you were able to get a useful nugget or two out of this interview. Next week will be our interview with Tampa comedian, JJ Curry. Until next time, I hope you take care of yourselves and each other.