

Twelve Rounds of Laughter

COMEDIAN JOHNNY TAYLOR JR. PERFORMS THE SPORT OF STANDUP AT THE BIG DIRTY

By Will Kennedy

California comedian Johnny Taylor Jr. stops short of calling his audience an opponent. He says there is something similar, though, to how boxers react to adversaries and comedians sizing-up their audience when they first come on stage. Taylor Jr. knows because he boxed as an amateur and also co-owned a combat sports gym in his twenties.

Host of *The Hard Talk* podcast on The Hard Times podcast network, Taylor Jr. brings a new hour of comedy to Eugene Thursday, July 21 at The Big Dirty. He recently opened for well-known standup Brian Posehn (*Mr. Show with Bob and David*) on a string of dates.

With a wry take on everyday life and an interest in mocking the orthodoxies of both mainstream and alternative cultures, Taylor Jr.'s comedy is autobiographical and storytelling in nature. "It's dark a lot of the times,



but life's dark sometimes," Taylor Jr. says.

In a YouTube clip, Taylor Jr. compares his own three marriages, which ended in divorce, to an inning of baseball. "I like to get married a lot," Taylor Jr. quips on YouTube. "Three up, three down, retired the side in order."

Comedy is like boxing because part of the comedian's job is to adjust their set to what an audience is reacting to in the moment, Taylor Jr. tells *EW*.

"To my discredit," he says. "I wish I adjusted more for what I see from the audience; sometimes I'll do a bit I know the crowd isn't going to react to well. It's this antagonistic nature I have. I want the crowd to go home and have an existential crisis," he says.

More than anything, though, Taylor Jr. says audiences are never a comedian's enemy because "they're rooting for you," while you're up there on the stage.

In addition to hosting a podcast on The Hard Times, Taylor Jr. also writes for the website TheHardTimes.net, known for underground music scene satire and parodies of indie, heavy metal and alternative band culture.

Early on in his stand-up career, his material included some politics. In a YouTube series *The Nonfiction with Johnny Taylor Jr.*, a project he's no longer involved with, he parodied the alt-right conspiracy-theory perspective that's common on many online platforms.

These days, though, there's less politics in Taylor Jr.'s material. "It's hard to make fun of some of this atrocious shit" that's going on in the headlines, he says. "I just tell my life story."

With two comedy albums to his name released on Stand Up! Records — 2014's *Tangled Up in Plaid* and 2018's *Bummin' with the Devil*, both of which charted on Amazon and on iTunes — Taylor Jr. says material from his show in Eugene will likely end up on his next record.

He's also been acting more recently, including an upcoming TV show, *Press Pass*, about a fledgling basketball organization, shot in the mockumentary style of *The Office*.

Acting, Taylor Jr. says, is "definitely a different muscle to exercise. I never really wanted to be an actor; I always wanted to be a stand-up." But these days, unless you're doing a bunch of other things like acting and podcasts, "you can't do stand-up how you want," he says. ■

Hosted by Seth Milstein, Johnny Taylor Jr. performs with Eugene's Angie Bloomfield and Seattle stand-up Dane Hesseldahl, 8 pm Thursday, July 21 at The Big Dirty; \$10, 21+.

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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE STATE OF OREGON IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF LANE Probate Department. In the Matter of the Trust Estate of: THE STENZEL FAMILY TRUST dated September 25, 1968, as amended and restated. Case No. 22PB06010 NOTICE TO CLAIMANTS (ORS 130.365 to 130.370). NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Matthew J. Stenzel, Successor Trustee of the Stenzel Family dated September 25, 1968, as amended and restated, and all subtrusts established therein (the "Stenzel Family Trust"), has filed a Petition for Determination of Claims of Creditors pursuant to ORS 130.365. The purpose of such Petition is to determine the claims of creditors of Yvonne R. Stenzel. Name of Trustor/Decedent: Yvonne R. Stenzel. Name of Successor Trustee: Matthew J. Stenzel. Address at which claims must be presented: Landerholm, P.S., PO Box 1086, Vancouver, WA 98666-1086. Date of first publication of the notice: July 7, 2022.

Jonesin' Crossword

BY MATT JONES

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Across

1. Mettle
6. Fan ___ (writing collected on Archive of Our Own)
9. Glass part
13. Limber
14. ___ Vista (Google rival, once)
15. Paris-area airport
16. Tabloid target
17. Roald who wrote "Matilda"
18. Malfunction
19. Made it to the bonus round?
22. Letters on a beach bottle
25. L.A. athlete
26. Expert on IRAs and the IRS
27. "Duck Hunt" console, familiarly
28. Plot point in some sci-fi horror films
32. "Project Runway" mentor Tim
33. Quarter-turn from NNN

34. At some future time
37. Aconcagua's range
39. Hotel room fixtures
41. Comedian Will who played Kenny Rogers and Bill Clinton on "Mad TV"
42. Steers clear of, as an issue
44. The Jazz, on sports tickers
46. "Sharknado" star Tara
47. California's fourth-highest mountain (and part of a chain sharing its name with a "Pacific" city)
50. Buenos Aires's loc.
52. Stretch of history
53. Apprehend
54. Reaction to a funny TikTok video, maybe
55. "Weird Al" Yankovic's stock-in-trade
59. Slurpee's rival
60. Old-fashioned record player
61. Be eco-friendly
65. Top point

66. "I'm ___" (bakery-themed tune from "The Amazing World of Gumball")
67. Email folder
68. Tom ____, "Animal Crossing" character based on the Japanese tanuki (raccoon dog)
69. Roulette wheel spaces, for short
70. Not for minors

Down

1. Carpet cleaner, briefly
2. Ripen
3. ___ Wayne
4. Couturier Cassini
5. Energized all over
6. Brouhaha
7. City with an Ivy League university
8. Jacques Cousteau's ship
9. Movie-watching spot
10. Act that may specialize in balancing and horn-playing
11. Belgian tennis player

"Almost Paradise"

—they're nearly anagrams, off by one letter.

- Mertens, current world #1 in doubles
12. ___ Kennedy and The Conspirators (backing band for Slash)
14. Obstinate
20. VCR insert
21. Natural water falls?
22. Lengthy tales
23. Coin sound
24. "Just Keep Swimming" movie
29. Calendario opener
30. Race, as an engine
31. Fabric problems
35. "... say, and not ___"
36. High-altitude tune
38. Sore throat culprit, perhaps
40. Stunt double, e.g.
43. "The \$100,000 Pyramid" host Michael
45. Jai ___ (indoor sport)
48. Manufacturer of Gummi Bears
49. Spain and Portugal's peninsula
50. From former Formosa, for example
51. Elmo's inanimate nemesis
56. ___ Squad (Best Buy support service)
57. "The Last ___" (apocalyptic video game series)
58. Drop in the mail
62. Dog at the end of "Family Ties" credits
63. Note after fa
64. Abbr. on an office business card

