



THE LIFE OF A TALK SHOW PRODIGY

Ieden Wall

BY ANGELA LEVINE

"I WAS
TRANSFIXED
BY THE ART OF
SPONTANEOUS
CONVERSATION
AND THE
PERPETUITY AND
IMMORTALITY OF
A RECORDING."



Mark Breslin, one of the famed producers of *The Joan Rivers Show* says, "some comics are just born to be a talk show host and Ieden Wall is one of those rare individuals."

According to Wall's mother, even at the tender age of seven, he was already traveling everywhere with his beat-up cassette recorder, interviewing whoever he could commandeer.

"I was transfixed by the art of spontaneous conversation and the perpetuity and immortality of a recording," says Wall.

The spry comic is not your average host.

He wields a sharp orator's tongue, and is booked out regularly for speaking engagements and motivational seminars. He lectures prodigiously on spirituality and kabbalah. He uses his quick wit to MC corporate events and hosts a regular web TV show for Index Media. And he is currently preparing for the release of a new book called *The Wisdom of Wall*; a lifelong collection of poems and proverbs.

If you think the girth of his skill-set was something that came easy - guess again.

Wall's life is the stuff of a great Hollywood movie script. ▶

MARK BRESLIN APPEARED AS A GUEST ON LATE NIGHT ON THE ROAD WITH IEDEN WALL 23 YEARS AGO AND THE TWO HAVE BEEN FRIENDS EVER SINCE.



At age 15, Wall and his twin brother were caught in a complicated family situation, leaving them to venture off on their own and fend for themselves.

Wall admits that this chapter of his life haunted him for decades. Nowadays he looks back on it with perspective and wisdom; the kind that comes from hundreds of hours of therapy and a truckload of tears.

"Listen, the simple reality was, both our parents were not emotionally able to look after us, and we did the very best we could, to solve a horrible situation and keep moving forward with life," Wall says with eyes tearing up a little. Astonishingly, at age 15, Wall and his little brother (by sixty seconds) went on social assistance, found themselves a tiny apartment in midtown Toronto and pursued their studies at Northern Secondary School.

Wall confides that for the first few weeks of apartment hunting, landlords were not taking him and his twin brother seriously. Being 15 - and looking 12 - made things very difficult. Many superintendents laughed, some snickered and some threatened to call the children's aid.

"It became obvious to me that I needed to do something to make myself look just a little older, to be taken somewhat seriously by prospective landlords," Wall says with a smile ear-to-ear. So just before a late afternoon apartment showing, Wall stopped in to a costume shop on Queen St. West in downtown Toronto. He tried on every fake mustache in the place, until he found one befitting of a 15 year-old Jewish kid with acne.

If necessity is the mother of invention, then Ieden Wall has to be some sort of father figure to chutzpah.

So with his fake mustache in tow, he went to view an

apartment on Roehampton Ave. After the showing, the superintendent handed over an application to lease, something the twins had been coveting for weeks.

"Looking back, I think I bought a break, because I met the elderly superintendent just before cataract surgery made its significant advancements," Wall quips.

Whether it was a little help from the costume store or some old fashioned compassion from the aging super, the twins landed their very own junior one bedroom apartment, just steps away from Northern Secondary.

Now it was back to business: pursuing the dream that Wall had started at seven years-old.

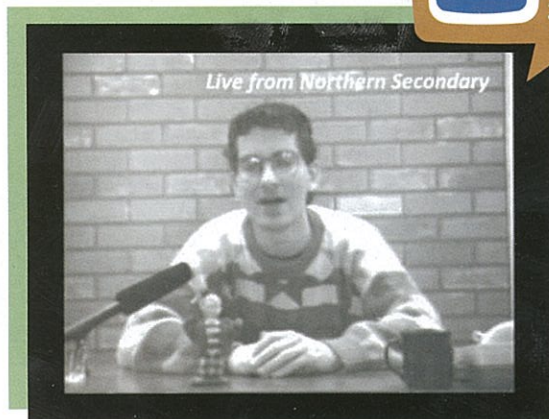
Only months after arriving at Northern, Wall hatched a plan to host the the school's first ever, live after-school talk show.

By no coincidence, Wall found himself chumming around with Joe Carlen, the second cousin of David Letterman's musical sidekick Paul Shaffer. Carlen was a gifted musician, with the piano as his workhorse - just like Shaffer.

Carlen still remembers being approached to be Wall's band leader: "Ieden was great at hiding behind the facade of a clown. But underneath his mask was a young man with incredible focus. He knew what he wanted - at 15 - and he had the talent and the guts to go after it," says Carlen.

During the show's run, Wall interviewed some of the biggest celebrities in Canada. The list included sportscaster Dan Shullman, talk show icon Dini Petty, radio star Tom Rivers, the star of CityTV Marilyn Denis and radio legend Wally Crouter. The show quickly became the talk of the school.

At 15, Wall was already exhibiting signs of a bone-dry ▶



Wall on his talk show, *The Ieden Wall Show*, broadcasting at Northern Secondary School.

"I WAS VERY
DEPRESSED
ABOUT LOSING
MY SHOW. MY
WHOLE LIFE
REVOLVED
AROUND DOING
MY WEEKLY TALK
SHOW. IT WAS
MY ESCAPE FROM
THE PAINFUL
REALITY OF
MY LIFE."

sense of humour; a distinct sensibility that was embraced by scores of students - but not appreciated so much by the faculty.

Looking to promote his 14th installment of *The Ieden Wall Show*, Wall pulled a prank that would cost him dearly. During morning announcements, he lured the Vice Principal to a fake fire scare in a grade 12 science lab and then jumped behind the microphone and finished the morning announcements on his own.

"Students and faculty, Ieden Wall here, covering for Mrs. Galloway," Wall said over the entire school PA system. "There have been awful rumours floating around the school that Principal Maclaren's wife Louise and I have been having a torrid affair; with most trysts taking place in the third floor copy room, during my afternoon spare. This is absolutely false!... I made love to Louise in the boiler room. For more details, please come to The Ieden Wall Show, after school today in the basement library," Wall said, before being yanked away from the microphone.

This prank earned Wall the reputation of being Northern's version of Ferris Bueller. It also landed him a two-week suspension from school and the cancellation of his after-school talk show.

"I was very depressed about losing my show. My whole life revolved around doing my weekly talk show. It was my escape from the painful reality of my life," admits Wall.

Sitting at home alone in his tiny apartment, while his brother attended school without him, forced Wall to confront the emotional anguish of being on his own, without the supervision, nurturing and guidance of parents. Wall's talk show was not just any creative project. It was a lifeline; a much needed supply of oxygen to a young boy who was emotionally drowning.

"As I was sitting on the floor in my shabbily furnished apartment, I thought about my childhood Hebrew teacher," says Wall. "I started to recollect his teaching on the story of Joseph. The rabbi spoke about how Joseph was sent away from home, and locked up but Joseph never lost his faith. I drew strength from this story," says Wall.

In his final year of high school Wall sent out a demo tape to Rogers TV, hoping to land a spot on "WORD," Toronto's new youth magazine. Wall's demo tape was a compilation of some of his best bits, from his

cancelled high school talk show. The tape landed on the desk of Steven Kerzner, the legendary "hand and voice" of Ed the Sock, who was at the time, Toronto's newest late night sensation. Kerzner was producing a handful of shows for Rogers and was looking to hire a field reporter for WORD.

"I was impressed with Ieden's ability to disarm people on the street with his quick ad-libs, which made the exchanges hilarious and memorable," says Kerzner.

Wall's segment on WORD called OFF THE WALL quickly became the most popular part of the show. The Rogers TV response line always rang off-the-hook after Wall appeared on TV. Nothing had really changed since high school. He was still the master provocateur - offending some - and dazzling others with a unique brand of wit and irreverence.

"To me, Ieden's appeal was that he was out there doing all the things most people would like to do or say, but few ever do," adds Kerzner.

After Cable TV, Wall did a stint at Second City, hosting a live variety show at The Tim Sims Playhouse. He then hosted a web TV series called The Dream Chaser. His online series was very well received and caught the attention of international journalists and media critics. After that, he took a break from the spotlight and worked behind the camera in development and branding capacities for several production companies. That pushed him into writing and producing commercials and real estate videos, which he did for four years.

Recently Wall was acknowledged by the Czar of Canadian comedy Mark Breslin, for his deeply personal one-man show called "48 Hours in Loony Bin." The low-budget production was built around Wall's emotional crises from 2014. It was aired on JLTv.

"There are precious few comics working today who can interweave humour with humanity in such a warm and poignant way," says Breslin.

Rumours continue to swirl about Wall being picked up by a national TV network, which would be the brass ring he has been chasing since he was a young boy. Wall's full body of work is currently on display at www.edentv.ca. ■



RODNEY DANGERFIELD

BREAKOUT AGE: 46

Stand-up Comedian - Actor - Screenwriter - Producer

BEST KNOWN FOR: Catchphrase & monologues of "I don't get no respect!"

Photo by Steve Granitz



RICKY GERVAIS

BREAKOUT AGE: 40

Comedian - Actor - Director - Producer - Writer - Former Pop Singer

BEST KNOWN FOR: Co-creator/writer/actor of the tv series The Office

Photo by Thomas Atilla Lewis



PHYLLIS DILLER

BREAKOUT AGE: 40

Stand-up Comedian - Actor - Voice Artist

BEST KNOWN FOR: Starring in The Pruitts of Southampton

Photo by Brian Hamilton



LARRY DAVID

BREAKOUT AGE: 42

Comedian - Writer - Actor - Playwright - TV Producer

BEST KNOWN FOR: Creator of Curb Your Enthusiasm and Co-creator of Seinfeld

Photo by David Shankbone

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE: COMEDY LATE BLOOMERS