

The Jared Pagan Story

Jared Pagan is a friend that you want by your side. He has the power to spread joy wherever he goes through his ability to connect, and through his ability to share his true self. He looks directly at the truth of himself, and the truth of his past; he uses these radical messages to propel him into the confidence of his present and the promise of his future. He understands hardship and the role it plays in person-building. He is generous with his communication and his faith in his loved ones. He seeks out moments of joyful beauty for himself and the people he cares about, and - further - he delivers this gift to all who have the good fortune of coming into contact with him.

- Kate Detrick, SAY Director of Confident Voices

Jared Pagan is a beautiful soul. Luminous, generous and intelligent, his personality bursts forth from him with vibrant intensity, matched by few people on this earth. I have known this extraordinary young man for many years, and I have always found him to be warm, imaginative and kind above all. Reading this book is like sitting down with an old friend, on a New York summer's day, and hearing the story of their life. Jared writes with honesty, humor and creativity - much in the same way that he lives his life. This is a young man who is going places, and this novel is a wonderful exploration of where he started.

- Aidan Sank, SAY Artistic Director of Confident Voices

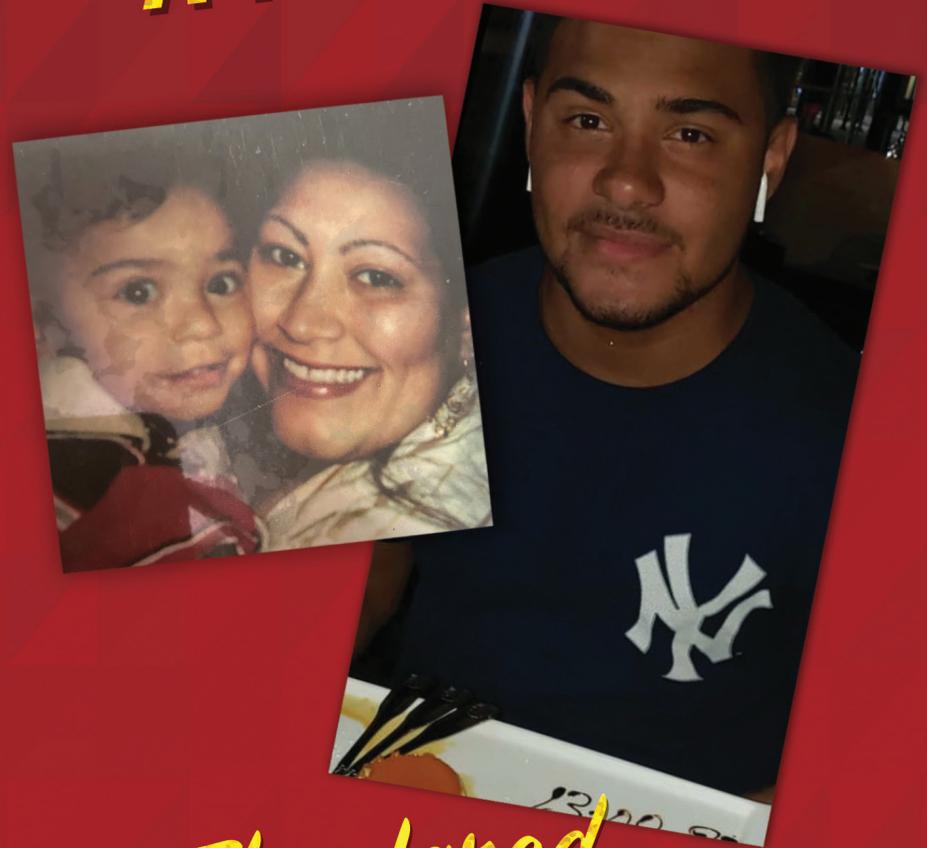
If you're looking for a story with heart, inspiration, and humorous life lessons, look no further than *The Life of A Teenager: The Jared Pagan Story*. Jared's ability to take you on an emotional journey while making you laugh is unmatched. He is an incredible storyteller who encourages you to become a better person, and reading his stories will make you immediately feel at ease. Jared is a natural born leader, and it's clear through his writing that he is going to make the world a better place. An accomplished young man with big dreams, Jared Pagan is just getting started. A future performer, mechanic, criminal justice leader, and all around giver, Jared reminds us that all is possible with grit and perseverance. Jared is a leader in the SAY community and his story will leave you feeling like you can accomplish anything.

- Alison Williams, SAY Teaching Artist

I have had the distinct pleasure of witnessing Jared Pagan's creative voice come into full bloom and it fills my heart with pride to watch him move into this next exciting chapter of life. Jared has a big, beautiful and bold heart. You can feel it in everything he creates. The light that he exudes fills the room and brings an energy to group work that makes the project one that everyone looks forward to. It has been an honor to work with Jared over the years and I am so excited to see what the future holds for this remarkable individual.

- Miranda Di Perno, SAY Teaching Artist

THE LIFE OF A TEENAGER



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The Jared Pagan Story

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Jared Pagan

The Life of A Teenager: The Jared Pagan Story

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The Life of A Teenager: The Jared Pagan Story

JARED PAGAN

DEDICATIONS

This book is dedicated to my mother, my dad, my grandmother, my grandfather, my brother, my SISTER, my family, SAY, my school, also my dog Snowy.

I also dedicate this book to myself because I've never done anything like this. It's very big to come out of my comfort zone.

*“Imma tell you what we need more of in this world: leaders. We’re living in a society where it’s two major words: followers and likes. My mother told me to never be a follower and lemme tell you something and again to the kids I’m sorry but I gotta say it cuz you feel my passion. I never gave a f*ck if you like me or not. If I’m focused on something and I know I’m doing the right thing, trying to help people and you don’t see it well then hey god bless you but we gonna keep it moving, we gonna keep it pushing. Own your life. Own your future. Own your destiny. Be a leader. Lead by example. That’s what the world needs now more than ever.” -Pitbull*

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I wrote this book so that people can understand the meaning of life, the meaning of success and the meaning of happiness. I want the readers to realize that life is going to be hard but it always gets better.



*The Life
of A Teenager:
The Jared
Pagan Story*

JARED PAGAN



August 10, 2002 6 AM

Now of course, I don't remember this because I was just born but I was a premature little baby. I was 2lbs, 7oz, so I was about the size of a small teddy bear. I was so small that my mom basically sneezed and I came out. A lot of people call me a miracle baby. My mom was never supposed to have kids, the doctors supposedly told her. But apparently I just popped out of nowhere. Life said, we're gonna give this kid a life. I am a miracle baby because the fact that I wasn't supposed to be born, but I was. I am so grateful.

All of the sudden a couple of hours go by and my mom starts to have contractions. Everyone was there: my two grandmas, my grandpa, the whole family and everyone was so happy that soon there was gonna be a little boy. My mom was there the whole day. And since I was premature, they weren't

sure when I was gonna come out. Around 6:35pm my mom starts to have bigger contractions and the doctor was, like here we go. And that moment is when life changed for my mom.

I want people to understand that life is amazing. It's crazy how life works because I'm not supposed to be here and I know it's going to hurt people when I say that, but my mom never gave up. At first she wanted a girl, because she was gonna name me Jalyn Ariana Pagan. My dream is to have a little girl when I grow up. My grandmother wanted a boy but she ended up having my mother. So when my mother had me, my grandmother was so happy. I was her first little boy. My family loves me and cares for me. And me being a miracle child. I know I'm not the only miracle who was born like this. The woman who was next to my mom gave birth to a 1lb baby. Life gives you a chance so take it.

Throughout this story, you're going to realize why I'm so grateful to be alive. And I hope that this book makes you realize that life is an amazing thing, even when it's not.



October 24th 2009

I was in second grade in Catholic school. It was a cloudy day. I was wearing a white button down shirt, a burgundy tie, a burgundy vest, gray slacks and black shoes and a light black jacket. I hated it. I know hate is a strong word, but I hated it. I hated having to wake up early, brush my teeth and having to put the uniform on. It was frustrating. I was more the quiet kid but still talkative at the same time. I was one of those kids at the back of the classroom who was always shy, especially to talk or raise my hand. As the school year went on, eventually I realized and my family realized that I had a stutter and I didn't know what was going on or what was happening.

At the time I knew something was wrong, but I didn't know the name of it. My dad was the one

who was like, "Oh my God. You stutter." And I was like "What? What is that?" My dad explained to me it's something you're born with. Maybe I should speak mad all the time because I don't stutter when I'm mad. A lot of people were mentioning it to me. I was so young that I didn't know what it meant. I had no idea what stuttering even was until I grew up and I realized some people call it a speech impediment, some people call it a learning disability, some people call it a problem, some people think it's bad. I don't think it's a bad thing. I don't think it's anything. I think it's something that a lot of people are born with. For example, my father used to stutter when he was younger. When he was about my age from a little baby to teenage years. Around his 20s is when he stopped stuttering, it just stopped. Maybe there's no fixing it, just growing out of it. At that time he had no programs, there wasn't anything like that and he grew up, he became an adult and he just stopped stuttering which I think that's slowly happening with me. Like, I still stutter here and there, I have some problems with some words but that's OK. It doesn't mean I'm stupid. It doesn't mean I'm dumb. And there are a lot of people out there that make you feel like crap, but I tend to make that make me stronger. That stuff makes me stronger, when somebody tells me you stutter, that's a bad thing, it makes me stronger and it makes me more confident in myself instead of making me weaker.

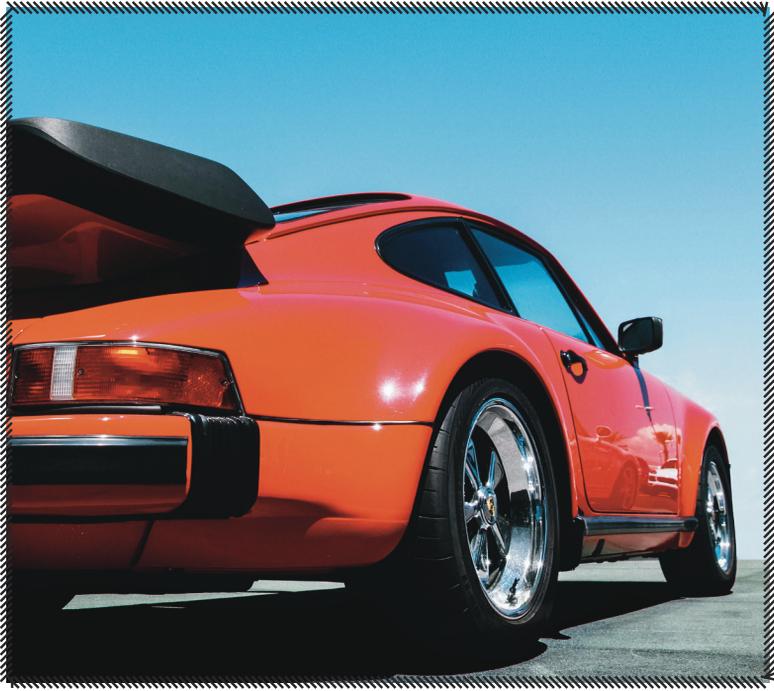
When I was in second grade, I didn't really think anything of it. I didn't know what it was. I didn't feel anything but confused. I felt a little hurt because people were laughing at me at that time. I thought people were just laughing at me for no reason and just wanted to bully me. When I figured out I had a stutter then that's when I realized, OK now I know why people are bullying me like this. There was this one time where I raised my hand and I decided to answer a question

the teacher had asked the class. So then I started to stutter and the classmates started to laugh at me. I felt hurt. I felt confused like I didn't know what was going on or why they were laughing at me. And there was this kid named Johnny and he kept saying, "haha you stutter! haha you stutter!" There were certain students who would bully me one day and the next day be my friend. When I was younger, I was hungry for friends and that's all I had. I felt like crap a lot. I knew something was wrong. Being around people who stutter is what fixed it. It changed the way I talk, changed my confidence. One person Leonore who I had a crush on and she had a crush on me. She would say that she likes the way I talk. I had like 5 friends in the entire school.

The Catholic school didn't really support me the way SAY has, the way the public school system has. At first Johnny was my friend but he wanted to be down so he would hit me, curse at me and make fun of me.

So that day I went home and told my mom people were laughing at me because I guess I have a stutter and my mom realized I did have a stutter and I had a problem with saying different words and I couldn't really say a sentence. So my mom started to cry. She felt bad. I was really confused and again I was young. I was really young so I didn't know what was going on or what happened. So as the school year went on and as life went on, eventually when I was in fourth grade I got left back cuz of my lack of reading. I couldn't read well. I had a bad reading level and that was also mostly because of my stutter. And I had a hard time reading stuff. I wouldn't say I had dyslexia, I just wouldn't process the words quickly in my head. And that's when people found out that I had a learning disability and a stutter. I was one of those, I guess people might say special ed kids. And when people started calling me that I felt really bad.

So after that I hit 5th grade. 5th grade was rough, I was bullied a lot in 5th grade. I was picked on, I was beat up, made fun of for my stutter. Even my own teacher made fun of my stutter. There was one time that she picked on me to read and I couldn't read. I couldn't say one word. I kept stuttering and stuttering and I couldn't talk and she eventually would suck her teeth, roll her eyes, turn her back and pick on someone else to read. She said, "Someone doesn't know how to read today." Knowing that happened I felt horrible and I realized what was going on. I finally realized, like ok this is not good. I don't like feeling this way. She was pregnant at the time, but you're working at a school with kids. Once fourth grade hit I was always having bad days. So I failed 5th grade and I moved on to public school which had better services for me like speech therapy just to try to help me learn about myself and my stutter and learn more and try to do better in school. And it worked.



Accident

Around that time I had recently been in a car accident which was in 2012. At that time I was still in Catholic school but just leaving. It was a really bad accident between me, my grandmother, and a couple of my cousins. And one of my cousins went to make a left turn and there was a speeding car coming towards us and hit us head on. It was my first traumatized moment. My first moment where you think you're gonna, like, die or something like that. Again I was young and I was very scared. My grandmother was in the front. She had broken ribs, she was hurt. I was OK. I only had bruising to the seatbelt but that moment I tried to get out the car and it was locked. There was a two year old baby which was one of my cousins who was sitting next to me. I grabbed the baby. Somebody finally opened the door from the

outside. People came over to help. There were good bystanders there. They took me and the baby out of the car. And I held on to that baby as much as I can. I was still young but I knew that I had to take care of this little kid in that moment. In that moment the adults in the car weren't able to do anything. At that time a woman had asked me if I had a mother or a father, I said I have my mom but she's in the Bronx. My grandmother is in that car. And at that time thank God I actually knew my mom's number by heart. So I told the woman and she called her. It's funny cuz my mom was getting ready to go out and all of the sudden my mom was like what the hell are you talking about? All the woman kept saying is "I have your son, I have your son." And my mom was really confused until she heard my voice and when she heard my voice she told the woman to give the phone to me and I was crying hysterically. I told my mom I needed help, I need you, I need you. And it was a very powerful and emotional moment and my mom didn't hesitate. She got dressed and she asked one of her friends to drive her all the way to Long Island and it was a long drive. And they took me and my grandmother to the hospital in separate ambulances. I hadn't seen my grandmother until later on that day when she was in a gurney and the situation was more calm. The guy that was speeding in the car survived. He survived no injuries.

And it's funny how life works cuz I was supposed to sit behind the driver but the seat belt wasn't working so they switched me to the other side. And I was a young kid. I was maybe 8 or 9. If I had stayed in the same seat I don't think I would be standing here right now. And so it's amazing how life works. That was a huge impact on my life. It definitely changed the way my brain works. It changed my life and ever since then every time I get into a car, every single time I get into a car. I always put my seatbelt on. That's

the first thing I do.

I feel like if I was never in an accident, I wouldn't be as, not smart, but like I wouldn't be so cautious now. Especially now that I'm taking driving lessons, I am very cautious. When I'm on the street, walking across the street, I'm very cautious or when I'm in a car, I'm very cautious. I'm always looking around, looking behind me. If it wasn't for that day I wouldn't be like that. So when I say it changed the way my brain works, it changed the way my brain works.

After a huge situation, eventually I was able to go back to school. But unfortunately 5th grade didn't work out for me so I got left back and kicked out of Catholic school. After that they brought me into a public school. At that time I had a speech teacher. Thank God for her, cuz she's the one who introduced me to SAY. My grandfather had also introduced me to SAY. My grandfather was actually also another person who said you know there's this program called SAY. When I heard there was other people who stuttered like me, it was a jaw dropping moment. Like I couldn't believe it that I had to see it for myself. But we will get back to that in just a bit.



Accident

*Around that time I was 12 turning 13 I was in another car accident. And this time I was in an accident with my mom and my grandmother again. And my grandmother had just healed from the first accident. And her ribs were healing and everything. It happened in Manhattan, we stopped at a red light and we got rear ended by a huge dump truck. It was very scary. I was still traumatized by the accident, obviously. Ever since that accident I have this bad habit. I have my seatbelt but every time I was in the back seat, I would always look behind me just to see who's coming from behind. And that time when we stopped at the red light and when I did that, the only thing I remember was a huge bright set of light coming fast towards me and all you heard is *urrrrrrrrr* and just slam. The truck slammed in*

the back of us. On my side. It was again another scary moment. I was screaming, yelling, I didn't know what to do. I was scared. This time my mother was in the accident, so I was even more frightened. Thank God there weren't any serious injuries. Since we were rear ended he hit us on the right side where the gas tank was so the car could've blown up at any time. But thank God it didn't. It was still drivable. My mom had whiplash. Again nothing happened to me. And like I said before, this is life. Nothing happened to me and I think I've been given so many chances that I'm very grateful. My grandmother, she had chest pains because of the previous accident. She had chest pains, her chest had swelled up cuz her ribs were still healing. So everything from the first accident to the second accident, she was in bad shape. After that about a couple weeks later, I was able to go back to school. I stayed calm. I stayed strong. This time I was a couple years older and just finally graduating 5th grade and moving on from 5th grade. It felt like a huge comeback from everything I've been through.

Definitely wear a seatbelt. That's the easiest thing to remember. How I dealt with it, a lot of people said I was brave. My first accident I was 8. There was a 2 year old baby in the car and I treated that baby as if it was my own brother. I held on to him, his name was Thomas. I held on to him. He was crying a lot. He was still hurt. It was a very hard impact so hard that the seatbelt, not crushed, but like closed my stomach. It was that much of an impact. Cuz you know when you're in an accident the seatbelts lock and hold you in place. And it held me a little bit too tight. Both me and the baby had bruising from the seatbelt and it was scary, but I was brave, I was scared. There was a baby in the car. I didn't hesitate. I took the baby out, went to the curb, sat on the curb with strangers but people who were just trying to help get people out the car. A message I

wanna get out, if you're ever in this situation, just be brave. It's okay to be scared. Just wear your seatbelt and you'll be fine. And a lot of people don't wear them. People don't know that seat belts can save your life no matter how bad the impact is. You can literally be almost crushed in the car and still survive- reason why, because you have your seatbelt on. It's crazy cuz I was supposed to sit behind the driver's side and the seatbelt wasn't working. So it's a matter of a miracle, it's another miracle that had happened.

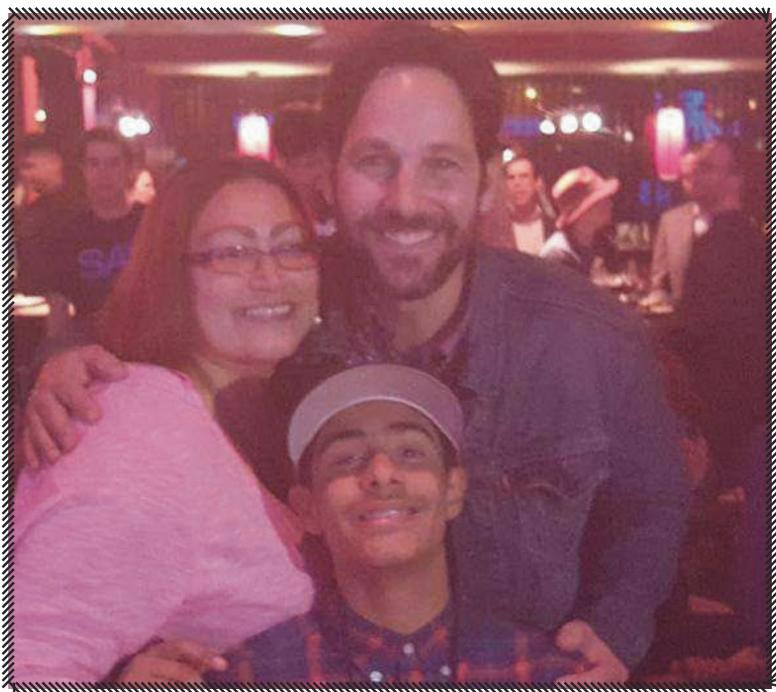
So after that 5th grade went on and I graduated by the skin of my teeth. And it felt good. I felt successful. And after that I was put in middle school. I also passed by the skin of my teeth. 7th grade I did alright in. And once 8th grade came throughout those years things were getting slightly better. And then I wanna say around that time is when I started getting older and brighter and when my brain started to develop more. Once 8th grade came I was doing better and I was starting to slack off for no reason. And then my counselor which I thank that counselor so much cuz if it wasn't for her I don't think I'd be this successful right now. She introduced me to a program for Kids who got left back cuz I was 15 in the 8th grade. Now we're transitioning from when I was 8, when I was 12 and now I'm 15 years old. And I'm in the 8th grade. This was around the time where it was like my second year with S.A.Y. I was more confident, I spoke more. My stutter decreased drastically and I wasn't so scared to raise my hand and talk. I didn't really get bullied, I guess I was more of the popular kid for some reason. My stutter had definitely decreased.

After that she introduced me to a program: Restart. And the name says it for itself. Restart is a program where you get to basically restart your school life, retry. I did the program for one year and I graduated 8th grade and I did perfect. I did amazing. It felt good to put a cap and gown

on. When I was in that program another counselor who I thank very much introduced me to a perfect high school that I'm in right now, that I'm about to currently graduate in 8 days, which is Judith S Kaye high school. So Judith S Kaye high school, she was a judge that loved to help kids, especially teenagers who've been through a lot who have been to jail and stuff like that who haven't had a great life. And it was an opportunity for them to basically fix that. Of course all kids were welcome, all kinds of kids were welcome. It was an amazing space. It's a family. It's a community. It's a school that has helped me grow. Helped me become more confident, helped me learn about life and education at the same time. Judith S Kaye also has a trade school. So it's Judith S Kaye high school and cooperative tech trade school. And that trade school had everything from carpentry to automotive to culinary. So once I finally entered that high school, I applied and I got accepted.

My first year I did culinary as a trade and it was amazing. I learned how to cook so many dishes and meals and cuisines and desserts and I loved it. My first year of high school was a little rocky. You know high school is a huge step and you don't really know what to do, how it's gonna go. I definitely realized it's more serious than I thought. It's not a game. 9th grade was interesting. I passed. I did great. My second year of high school I also did great and now my last year of high school which started last September and I've come a very long way. Now this is around the time where now I'm 18. Now, as I'm talking right now, I'm 18 years old. I have an internship with the high school. I'm currently starting my driving lessons to get my driver's license. I'm doing so much good things now and I've definitely come a long way from when I was 8 years old, when I was young. The school has helped me become such a better person and not only the school, SAY has helped become a better person and a more confident person.

SAY has helped me for over 4-5 years, I think a little more than that. And if it wasn't for them, I don't think I would be the person I am now. I don't think I would be as confident as open to people- I'm still nervous sometimes to talk but that's normal especially when you have a stutter and you still have it within you. Now I'm proud to stutter. I'm proud to speak my mind and I'm proud to speak my words. I don't think I had that same confidence when I was younger. Definitely I would say I've changed. Things have of course changed. The two accidents were a huge impact on my life. And I think those accidents are also what kind of changed me and helped me look at life more clearer.



When I was younger, I felt very alone. I felt like nobody paid any attention to me, nobody listened to me. Nobody wanted to be my friend, because I stuttered. People thought I was weird. When I entered SAY that's when I met so many people who stuttered. I think the first person I met that stuttered was Travis or Taro. And when I realized there's even adults and elderly people out there who stutter. And that made me feel so much more better about myself. A lot of people said you should go to speech therapy, I don't need to go to speech therapy. I don't think speech therapy would fix that. I just feel like climbing out of my bubble becoming more confident in myself would fix that. Like I said it was a jaw dropping experience being around people who are just the same as you who've probably been through the same things like you have been through. It felt amazing. And hearing other people's stories I was so intrigued.

And I was so surprised and I was kinda mad that nobody had told me about this sooner because this program started in 2001, before I was even born. If people had realized I stuttered before, then I feel like I could've been part of SAY way earlier and had more time. I didn't meet anybody else who stuttered until I was 13 and after that I kept meeting new people, new people, new people every single week, every month, every year. New people who stutter.

I think one of my first times at SAY was one of my first Confident Voices. I think they were doing the plays, you can do whatever you want on the stage. And I was with a young kid named Alex and that kid, I love him to death. He was like a younger version of me and I still remember it. It was my first time and I was on stage, yet I was still confident. But he wasn't. He cried and he was scared and I was there and I went up to him and was like "you got this. You can do this. This is my first time too. Yeah I'm scared, yeah I'm nervous but this is a positive space. It's OK. You got this." And eventually he got up there and me and him both did it together. And a lot of people came up to me and were like "Thank you. You're such a mentor." It felt so great to be told that and then his mom came up to me and thanked me, gave me a huge hug. Ever since then my mom and his mom have known each other for a while. I see him probably every performance and sometimes at confidence voices and this is before covid was even around. And I've known him for a while and that was one of my best experiences. That's when I realized this is going to be an amazing program to be a part of. And then I found out there's a camp. And I was like wait a minute, wait a minute, there's a camp too?! Oh God! And that's when I realized there were more people around the country and around the world who stuttered. And my first time at camp I saw other people who stuttered and I was like whoa! And I made a

lot of friends and it was just like a family and I'm grateful. There's a lot of kids there who have had my back, everybody there has had my back, I have their back. Definitely I'm just sad that now that I'm turning 19 this is gonna be my last year at camp say. It's tough. I'm not moving on from SAY, I'm just getting old. I'm still gonna be a part of the family. I'm gonna keep in touch with everybody as much as I can. SAY has changed my life drastically.

After that I started getting into acting. My grandfather likes to do community theater, he got me into acting. He put me in a 2 week theater camp. I did Alice in Wonderland, Cats, and a different play. And around that time is when I started doing plays with say and the mentor project. We started making our own plays, writing our own scripts, all that stuff and I still remember my last performance which was right before covid started and I would say that was one of my best performances. It felt good to get back on stage and you know like, "oh look it's Jared." and I wanna continue doing that. I might consider community theater or something like that. It's something I'm very interested in. If someone wanted to be in a movie I would take it. If someone wanted me to be in a show I would take it. Definitely something I'm interested in.



Without SAY I wouldn't be this confident Kid. Thank you Taro! I can't wait to thank him. He's the #1 guy. I thank him for making this. He's an amazing guy with a great heart and he did a really great thing. If I have Kids and they stutter they have NO CHOICE but to go to SAY. I know they're gonna love it and become like me!



I remember being really nervous cause there were other people who stuttered like me but I didn't know how people would react to the way I talk. And I started stuttering and nobody was even laughing. Nobody. Nobody would laugh at me. All eyes were on me, nobody was talking, nobody was interrupting. It felt like I was in the spotlight and that feeling felt amazing. I'm finally in a space where I can speak what I wanna speak without getting interrupted, without getting bullied. Everybody listened, smiled at me. I eventually made friends and it was just an amazing experience. I felt so good. I felt great. I want people to know that stuttering is not a bad thing. Once you realize you stutter and you get really messed up you think it's a bad thing. But really it's just those kids who are doing bad things. And one you get older you realize this is me, this is who I am. I'm a person who stutters. Stuttering is an amazing thing. There are so many kids and people who stutter and ppl don't pay attention to those ppl.

And with SAY being public and being out there now I feel like people realize and respected people who stutter more. Stuttering is an amazing thing. I love doing it, to be honest I wish I could do it forever. It's my voice, it's who I am, it's what I do. And ppl don't like it, they could fly a Kite or I don't know, let it go. I don't care that people don't like me. I am who I am. Like Pitbull said, I am who I am and if you don't like that then God bless you but I'm gonna move on.

High school has definitely been one of the biggest challenges. A lot of work was put in. Before I joined high school I thought I couldn't do it. Thought I wouldn't make it. I put a lot of work in my high school. One of the biggest challenges was trying to find a high school that I would feel comfortable in. There were a whole bunch of options. There was this one called BOSS Business of Sports School and since I love baseball. Baseball is my sport. That was one of my dreams. I wanted to become a baseball player but it didn't work out. I didn't choose the business of sports school cuz not gonna lie, it felt not like a prison, but everyone was too strict there and I know high school isn't a joke but i felt like the rules there were too strict. You need to let a student breathe. They were taking phones away. You had to wear a uniform and I don't wanna go through that again. I went to catholic school, I had to wear a uniform, I had to be proper. Yes, I have manners. I'm a mature person but when you have to constantly do that everyday all day for almost your whole life, that's just not me. I'm a proper person, I'm very mature, I have my manners, I'm always respectful to everybody and anybody but I didn't feel comfortable going through that again. The other option was the Judith S Kaye. I saw they had a trade school. They had an actual shop where you can work on the cars. And when I applied to that school I started the automotive my second year and I loved it. I fell in love with working

on cars and I learned so much like how to take the brakes off, how to take the tires off. I'm not fully certified but I know what to do if I ever get stranded on the road.

One of my biggest challenges was also covid-19. That's been a huge impact. It affected me drastically. The transition from doing school at the school to doing school online. It was rocky. But then I got used to it. Then eventually, my mom had gotten diagnosed with covid19, she tested positive. Being around her all the time we figured I might be positive too. I went to get tested, wound up being negative. Like I said, it's another miracle. It's another miracle and I'm saying to myself how in the world am I not positive? My mom and I live within the same house, we're always close together and it was also very emotional. Being a woman who has gone through diabetes, breast cancer. She is a cancer survivor, may God bless her soul. She's overcome so much for her to be positive through covid was emotional for her. But thank God another miracle she caught the end of it. She had the antibodies. She got the vaccines. She's feeling a lot better. She's not positive anymore. It's just amazing.

Basically the moral of the story is never think that just because something bad is going on in your life, never think it's going to end there. It's always gonna keep going, you always have to stay positive and if you do eventually good things will come your way. Things will happen that you want to happen, it's just going to take time. Life will never be perfect. It might be good but it will never be perfect. It's not going to be the way you want it to be. Like I said, I have overcome so much to be where I am right now. One day when I have children I can tell them all these stories and they would really appreciate that. That's another goal of mine. When I grow up I do want children. I want a family when I grow up. I love kids. I have a little sister who's 11 and she's an amazing little

sister. I love her with all my heart. It feels good to have a little sister to look up to you as a role model. If she ever needs help with anything I'm always going to be there. She's family. I'm always gonna be there for her.



My mom is a person who is a very strong woman. She's a big overcomer. She gets through it. She finishes the job, she moves on. She's the strongest woman I know. She's a fighter. If someone tries to hit her or talk back to her, she talks back harder. There was one time when we were in the supermarket and this woman tried to cut us in line. My mom gave her a look and told her to "Get behind me. I'm being nice to you right now." She doesn't care if you're a 1000 feet tall or the strongest person in the world, she would try to find that one breaking point. She's brave and strong. She's one of the only people in my life that has kept food on the plate, she does everything for me.

My dad's been there also. My mother has kept food on the plate, kept a roof over my head. Basically she spoils me. I'm a spoiled little brat but I said this before but I don't think she realizes how grateful I am. There's a lot of kids out there who don't have parents, who don't have parents who care as much as my mom and my dad does. I'm an only child. My sister and brother are from my dad's side but I'm an only child on my mom's side. I'm the only thing my mom got and the relationship my mom and I have is great. We do bump heads a lot, and we did used to argue a lot but, again especially with a mom and a son, that's gonna happen.



I don't think she realizes how grateful I am, how much I love her, how thankful I am for her to keep a roof over my head for her to always be there when I need her. She's been the biggest impact on my life. She's made me realize so much. She raised me, and me and her have been through a lot together. We've been through everything together. When I see there's kids out there who don't have parents who don't have food, who don't have a roof, I said to myself once that eventually when I have a good job and have enough money I wanna donate to those charity things that help kids get parents and food. I wanna help out kids who have been through that. I'm a person that wants to help. Seeing these homeless people out in the streets, it's not fair to them and it pains me to see them that way.

Like for example, there was this one time my mom had given me a \$50 bill and maybe i

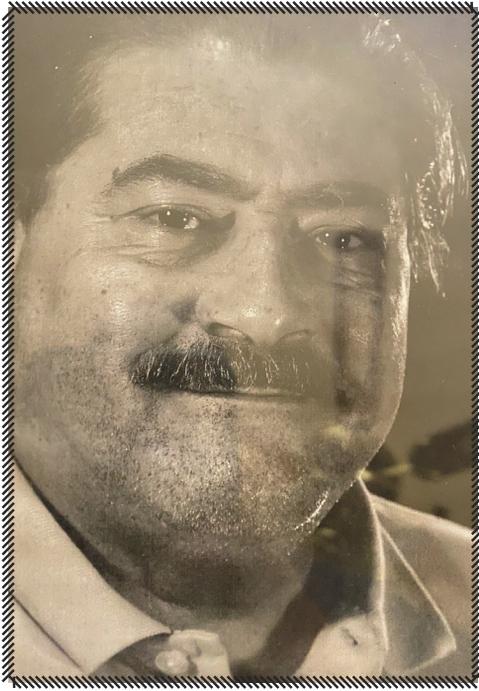
shouldn't have gave the guy a whole \$50 bill but the guy had no legs. I checked cuz people like to fake it but he had no legs. I realized he needed money, he needed food. I gave him a whole \$50 bill. That same day my mom asked me where's the money I gave you. You know I got screamed at but. She actually cried that day because she realized how much I wanna help people. She was proud of me, she was a little angry at first but she was proud that i didn't spend it on nothing stupid, likes games or anything. There's a Youtuber I watch, his name is Omargoshtv. He just posted a recent video of him helping out a homeless person with nowhere to sleep. This Youtuber gave him nothing but clothes and food for his dog. Bought him a hotel room for a full month, soap, clean underwear, clean this, clean that. That's what I wanna do. There's so much I wanna do and becoming a Youtuber is one of them but becoming a Youtuber that wants to help people, I wouldn't mind doing that. I do spend a lot of money on games don't get me wrong. That's another thing. I'm a huge gamer. I like to game. What guy doesn't like to play video games? But I'm not the type of person who's gonna spend money on games. If I see a homeless guy and I have maybe \$10 bill or \$1 bill I'm gonna give it to a homeless person. That person right now needs it more than I do. I have a roof over my head, I have a job. I'm healthy, that person's not and he or she needs more help than I do. And I'm willing to help a person.

My mother has always been a motivation to me the way she goes through rough patches and yet she never goes down. Like she has battled breast cancer and she had cancer for 2 years and she's been a survivor going on two years in June. She's a strong woman and I am so proud to call her my mom. There are also a lot of emotional moments. Like I said my mom is a breast cancer survivor and she did have to get surgery and the day of her surgery my grandma and i went with her. And

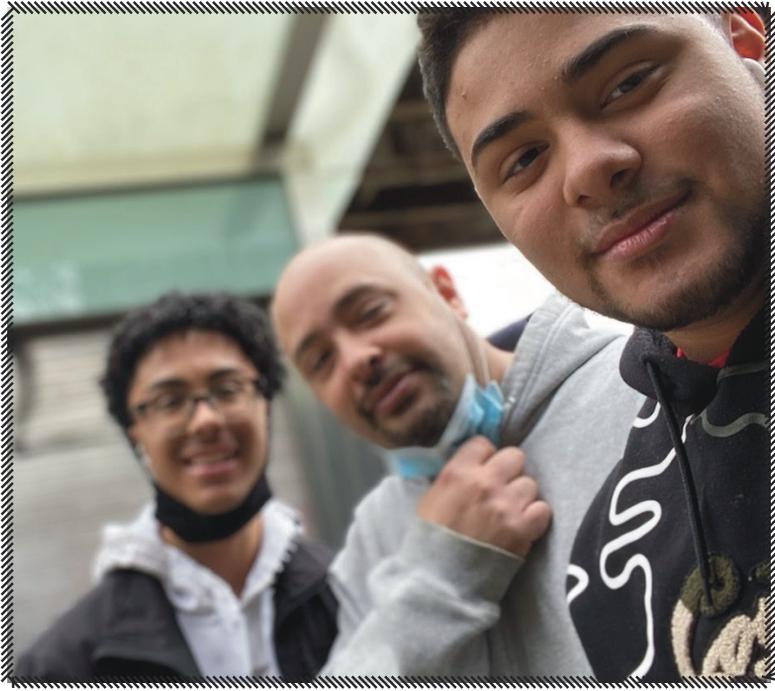
my grandmothers another person who is a breast cancer survivor and I stayed strong until she went through those doors to get surgery and I let loose. I couldn't stop crying. I felt empty and alone. I was on my grandmother's shoulder. I didn't wanna see her go through this even though she said it was gonna be ok, it's just a surgery. You just don't know. Like I said, all I have is my mom. Yeah I have my dad, my grandfather, my grandmother but nobody has been there for me more than anybody else other than my mom.



If there are any mothers out there, any young women who are reading this, don't give up, especially on yourself. There were times where my mom has been through stuff when she thought it was the end. As a son, I was there to tell her you're gonna keep going and she was strong and she was brave. A message to send out is be strong, be brave, never give up on yourself, especially if you're going through breast cancer you're gonna be OK. At least, I know you're gonna be OK just believe in yourself. Believe that you're gonna make it.



Another person who inspires me is my grandfather. When I was at my grandfather's house last summer. It was me and him in the backyard at night time, in the backyard. He told me how much he loved me and he wishes I was down in Connecticut wanting me to stay with him and help him, which I'm gonna do this summer as well. My grandfather is the closest thing I have. I love him very much. That would be my most memorable moment for me. Being around my grandfather and being around family in general especially in the backyard. Let's say we're having a BBQ, that's what I like about family love. That means a lot to me. I like to be around family. I like to help out family. I love my family very much. They love me very much. They take care of me. I take care of them.



When I was around 17, during December 2019, there was one day where I was just looking through Snapchat and some random person texted me and said, "I think my boyfriend knows you. His name is Jesus Pagan." And I was like "I have a brother named Jesus Pagan." He said, "I also have a brother named Jared who I haven't seen in 15 years. At first I didn't want to believe it, because I hadn't seen him in 15 years. I told her to tell him to add me. I sent him a picture of me. He sent me a picture of him. I sent him a picture of me and my dad. He also said he had a picture of him and his dad. And we came to the conclusion that we had the same dad.

I also wanna share the story, I wanna share the message that if you have a sibling and you feel like you're never gonna find them don't give up. Life has its ways on helping you find them when you're not even trying it just happens. And

that day it just happened and I found him like that. My heart was racing. I started to tear up. I was so happy. I definitely felt empty inside, like there was something missing. There were times that I thought I would never find him. Sometimes I would give up and get emotional. I would tell my mother and father I want to find my brother. I needed that brotherly bond. I never had that. Before I had that I felt empty, like I couldn't tell anyone my secrets. But then I found him and now I'm the happiest I could ever be.

Though knowing the situation from the past between my parents and his parents, I put that all to the side because that doesn't really involve me. Whatever happened, happened and I could care less about that. I found my brother. I have 2 sisters, I love both of them very much, but to have a brother was special. I have short memories of when me and my brother were babies and that was the last time we saw each other. And finding him again after so many years was just amazing. And my dad hadn't seen him at all either, which we have the same dad but he hadn't seen him at all either. So during that month of December I decided my Christmas gift to my dad was his son, his other son and both of his sons next to each other at the same time. There were so many questions my brother had but I explained to him that my dad and I had always looked for you and always loved him and he realized that. And ever since then my dad and my brother and I have had this close bond that is so tight now. I still have the video of my dad crying. It was an emotional moment. It was a weight that was on my shoulders for so long that it felt good to finally take it off.

And then when I found my brother, and I got to meet him in person as a teenager, I realized that he has the same stutter that I have. Yes he Stutters! And once I saw that I was like I'm so mad. I was mad cuz I could've grew up with him and me and him could've been right into SAX. It's

amazing my father stutters and I still stutter and my brother stutters. His stutter is a little bit worse than mine again he didn't have S.A.X. I did. It's amazing when I met him I was like "you stutter?" and he was like "y-y-yeah" I was like, Oh my God! I was so mind blown. Knowing that you have your own blood that stutters, you feel way better and I think that's another thing that's helped me feel confident. I have a brother who stutters. And I even explained to him, like listen you stutter, don't be ashamed of it. Let it be known that you stutter. Speak your voice out. It was amazing and I even told my mom and my dad and they were like I'm not surprised because your dad used to stutter.

My dad had told me that I stuttered cuz he also realized I had a stutter and he explained to me his stories and how he dealt with it. He dealt with it fine, yeah he was bullied and stuff like that, but he didn't pay no mind to it. Then I met my brother and found out he stuttered. I see how he talks, and I was like you stutter? And he was like yeah why? And i'm like cuz i have the same thing! And he's like really? And I'm like YES! I'm in a program that you could be part of. It was a very huge moment. Not only finding out that I have a brother who stutters, but finding him was a huge step, especially in my life. And just the other day, me and him were on the phone til 3 o'clock in the morning just talking about how we felt about having each other. Both of us said we would not turn back time no matter what we go through. We're brothers and nobody is gonna change that. Nobody can change that. All siblings are gonna have their differences, and their arguments but that's how it is. That's how life is. At the end of the day I love my brother with all my heart. He's in my life now, I'm accepting that. I'm not mad at that. I'm happy. I'm more happy than I can ever be. I'm on the phone with him almost every single day now. The bond has gotten stronger. We're

getting to know each other. Trying to understand each other more. The thing is he lived a couple of train stations away from me, like blocks and blocks away from me. That was frustrating it was frustrating knowing that I have a brother who lived near me, I probably bumped into him and didn't even realize it. It was frustrating, but I have him now. I'm not complaining. It feels good to have a brother who has a similar life story like you have. He's gone through his stuff as well. He was also bullied and I was also bullied. I can relate to him about a lot of stuff. So it's definitely a mind blowing thing.



January 4 2020

It was at least the first week going back to school. Around this time I was supposed to finish high school but I was slacking off, I was going through a lot so it took my mind off school. My grades were going down. But then I realized that I can't do this. I have to bring myself back up because if I don't I'll end up doing another year of high school and I don't wanna do that. So it was January and my counselor, who was the best counselor in the world, she showed me how many credits I needed and what regents I needed but since of covid my regents would be waived if I were to pass the class. I passed the class with the skin of my teeth. I got my math regents waived, my social studies regents waived, science regents done, all of my regents were waived. Fast forward a little bit to February to mid February I started

to do better. My grades started to go sky high, I had one subject left which is English which is my favorite subject. I had a couple PE classes and Spanish class and French class. And those are just extra classes to put on my sheet for my credits. I was having a hard time with Spanish.

Being a Spanish person and Spanish not being your first language it's kinda hard. I'm full Spanish and I can barely speak it. I can barely understand it and a lot of people are surprised by it. Some people don't like me because of it but I guess I just didn't hang out with a lot of Spanish people. I grew up in the Bronx. I used to go from school to school. Sometimes I would be kicked out, sometimes I would be suspended. When I was younger I was uncontrollable. That's around the time they just started to learn I had a learning disability, I had ADHD. Fast forward to where we're at now, I just had one class left and I said you know what I'm just gonna do it, I'm just gonna finish it. And that's what I did. I passed my English class with a 95 average. I passed my Spanish and English thanks to my counselor. My counselor knows French and she helped me with it. And she knows a little bit of Spanish so she helped me with that too.

I passed all my classes and before you know it, as of last week, I was a high school graduate of Judith S Kaye high school. And lemme tell you it was the best freaking feeling in the world. The feeling of you being done with work and school work. Obviously you think you're done but you know you have college. A lot of people are gonna tell you go to college, get a degree, trust me you're gonna wanna get a degree" and you know some people are good for college some people don't want to go to college. It's not mandatory, you don't have to go to college. My family does want me to go to college cuz they want me to major in something whether it's 2 years or 4 years in college. I explained to them that the high school I'm in has

a lot of options for me. So the high school I was in was in a trade school and in that trade school I was taking automotive but that was before Covid19 hit and when Covid19 hit, they moved everything virtual. And you couldn't really work on a car from home. So I decided to be taken out from that trade and focus on my school work and me, and to better myself and to better my school work and that's what I did. And here I am as a high school graduate. I am now an intern. I'm still on the roster so I'm able to work til June and I'm also about to get my license. Like I said, things happen to you bad, but there's always gonna be some good that comes out of it. You go through a lot, you get through it, focus on yourself and boom you're there. And that's what I did. I graduated, got a job and I'm getting my license.

My next goal is to get a car get another good job. After that, before I go to college I wanna work. I'm a work buff. I don't like just sitting on a chair all day playing video games. I'm sure a lot of kids would love to do that cuz, hey it's video games. And I get it. I'm a huge gamer myself but when you're just home all day every day sitting there playing video games you're not really doing anything. You wanna make money for yourself and provide for your family and that's what I wanna do. It's been a long road and I'm just happy that I'm here as a graduate. I'm happy I have this job. I'm happy that I'm here, I'm happy that I'm doing things that I never thought I would ever be able to do in the past, but I'm doing them. That was the story of my graduation.

It feels like you just took off a 250 million pound weight off your back. I know that's a lot of weight, but it's true. High school is not easy and hopefully kids that are younger than me can hear this, but I'm here to tell them high school is not a joke. Schools is there to help them succeed. You can't just cut class, you can't just sit there and do nothing. Nowadays high schools, they wanna

help you graduate. They want to help go far, want to help you succeed. When I started high school I was that type of kid that wanted to show off I wanted to be all oh yeah wassup wassup and I realize that's not really me and I'm just pretending to be someone I'm really not. I was being a follower and my mom always taught me never be a follower, be a leader. Being a leader is gonna make you succeed so much more than being a follower. And that's what I did. I became a leader. I led myself. I even led other people. People that were younger than me. I love giving people advice. I love helping people. If I see someone in need of help.

Basically I would love to work in an ambulance, I would love to work EMT. They save lives almost every single day. Like a firefighter or a cop, maybe a cop. When I was younger I was in love with cops. I wanted to be a cop. Like I said, I love helping people. Definitely loved being a leader. Being a leader is better than being a follower cuz when you're a follower you don't really go down the path you want to. You go down the path they want you to go down, not yourself. Definitely middle school to the first year of high school, I was being a follower. I was young and trying to be down with all the other kids, which is normal. Me as a person who stutters, I was very alone, I felt very lonely. I felt like I didn't have any friends. I thought to make friends I could be a follower. I can follow that person do what he's doing, maybe become popular. But then I figured out what I was doing was bad. And so there were a couple of times when I got in trouble and they called my mom and I'm like ok now I know this is not something I should be doing. You live and you learn. You make mistakes that you thought weren't going to be mistakes and you learn your lesson and you move on from it and that's what I did. I tried to become a better person and that's what I did. I became my own leader and I decided to lead myself and now I'm a graduate. It's just a

matter of thinking to yourself, do I really wanna be a follower? Do I really just want to be popular or do I want to be successful and be a leader? That's the thing that I always think about. Do I wanna be successful or do I wanna end up in jail?

Graduating and leaving the school, that last day, I had to turn back one more time. I turned around, looked at the school, looked at the yard and just thought of the memories I had there. I was there for almost 3 years. And it's crazy cuz usually you go to 4 years of high school, I graduated in 2 & years. 2 & years. Name another school that can do that. You can't exactly. My school helped me so much. If I can recommend this school, if people will listen go to JSK, go to coop tech high school 96th and 2nd. The best hs you could ever go to. They will help you learn they will help you succeed. Yes it will be hard, yes there will be challenges but you're gonna make it. It's the best school I've ever stepped foot in. It's not over. Now I have so many successful things I have to do, basically buying a car, buying a house, now I've become a young adult and now I have to do things on my own. And that's how it works. Usually after high school you go on your own, or after college you go on your own and I'm just happy I get to do that and there's a lot of things I wanna do there's so many options I have. I can do so many things at once. I can have 3 jobs at once. That's how I feel about graduating.



In conclusion, this has been my life. There are going to be many more stories, many more good things and probably bad things that happen to me, but that's okay. Because I'm going to strive, I'm going to fight back. I'm never going to give up on myself, on my friends, on my family and on life. I want to thank everyone who has been part of my life. This has been my greatest journey.



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ALSO BY THIS AUTHOR

The Mysterious Mystery of Sauce & Co. Sauce

A Goose Chase in the Subway

THE MYSTERIOUS MYSTERY OF SAUCE & CO. SAUCE

by Jared Pagan, Sam C., & Kenny
TAs: Ryan Pater & Alison Williams
Winter Short Play Project 2020

List of Characters:

Joe Sauce: Sam

Ronald Carlos Papushka: Jared

Christopher Sauce, CEO: Kenny

Scene 1

Place: The conference room

At Rise: Joe Sauce is giving his orientation spiel.

Joe

Welcome to Sauce and Co. My name is Joe Sauce and I'll be your supervisor.

Sauce and Co is the biggest producer of all things sauce in Northern America. My great grandfather William Sauce established this company on the condition that all sauce must be created equal and because of that if your last name is not sauce you might as well be dead because we only hire people with the name of sauce. You may ask why? Well I couldn't tell you because my great grandfather buried that secret along with himself. Speaking of employment, you have to be passionate about the idea of sauce if you wanna be a part of our establishment, not

just as a condiment but as a lifestyle. You need to sauce, sleep in sauce, and breathe sauce. If you make it past our meticulous interview process you can work in several positions and areas, such as packaging, tasting, delivering and sales. Now is your first step in joining the Sauce and Co. family today. For further questions please come up to me during the tour.

Scene 2

Place: Joe Sauce's office

At Rise: Joe is sitting at his desk, Ronald Papushka is sitting across from him.

Ronald

My name is Ronald Papushka. I love sauce. I eat, drink, and sleep in it. I'm a sauce person. It's been my dream to work in a sauce place. I just really really love sauce. I actually put it on everything. I put it on macaroni and cheese, chicken, gravy, everything! Don't ask about gravy. I actually invented my own sauce. Papushka sauce. Creamy but delicious.

(While Ronald is speaking, Joe is simultaneously listening and reading Ronald's resume.)

Joe

Wow! Well that's a pretty big achievement if I do say so myself. I'm very pleased to hear about your intense commitment to sauce as most of your lifestyle; however, I regret to inform you that we cannot hire you.

Ronald

What? I told you everything about my undying love for sauce, so why not hire me?

Joe

Well Mr. Papushka, you simply lack the natural given name of Sauce and it's strict company policy that we only hire people who are born with Sauce lineage. I didn't make the rules Ronald, I'm sorry.

(Ronald begins to respond, but the CEO walks in. Joe is surprised to see him, stands up and shakes his hand.)

CEO

Morning Joe, what are you up to?

Joe

Well, sir, I was just in the middle of an interview.

(CEO draws his attention to Ronald and shakes his hand.)

CEO

Christopher Sauce, and you?

Ronald

Ronald Carlos Papushka.

CEO

Papushka? You mean like the legendary tomato mutation?

(Ronald looks surprised that someone actually knows it.)

Ronald

In fact, you're very correct, sir. My family has always been a supporter of sauce.

CEO

Well, would you look at that, I bet Joe was about to hire you if all is logical.

Joe

Well actually I was just about to send him off because of the Sauce Company policy, the one that states we must only hire people with the natural birth name of Sauce.

CEO

I understand that's company policy but we can always make exceptions, right? We don't even know why my grandfather enforced that rule.

Joe

But sir, the company policy is sacred. It's been around since the inception of our brand.

CEO

Oh, you don't always have to follow the rules verbatim, Joe. You can always loosen up and make a couple of exceptions. (to Ronald) You're hired.

Ronald

Oh my god, thank you sir. I won't let you two down!

(Ronald grabs the resume and walks out. Joe looks kind of annoyed.)

Joe

Are you sure that this is a good idea, dad?

CEO

Anything's a good idea if you make it work, son.

(CEO walks out. Joe sits at his desk, defeated.)

Scene 3

Place: Main sauce production area

At rise: Joe is showing Ronald around

CEO

(Over the loud speaker) This is the CEO telling all employees to welcome Ronald Papushka to Sauce and Co. A very saucy welcome!

Ronald

Wow! This is amazing! I get a special welcome? Man I love this job.

Joe

Don't get too excited. It's hard. Over here. This is the packaging area. This is where we package all the tomato sauces. We pack them in a jar, then into the boxes, ready to go into the truck.

Ronald

Whoa this is so cool! WHOA! Is that my Papushka Sauce?!?

(Ronald runs off to grab a sauce bottle.)

Joe

Wait! This sauce doesn't belong here! Every sauce that comes through has to be approved by me. What the heck?

CEO (offstage)

It's a good sauce! It will probably make the company way better!

Joe

Make the company better? You got sauce on your brain?

CEO (offstage)

Joey try it out.

Ronald

Yeah try it out! Man it's amazing. I made it with my own love!

Joe

I don't want to get sick from your love. It probably tastes like Ragu, aka Trash.

CEO (offstage)

Do you talk to your mom with that saucy mouth of yours?! (enters) Joe, son, just try it out for your old pops.

(Joe carefully inspects the sauce box carefully and looks at Ronald suspiciously.)

Joe

Ronald, let me ask you something, besides your "famous" tomato mutation, what's in this sauce, hm?

Ronald

I'm glad you asked: broccoli, ragu, cream sauce, eye drops, baby oil, olive oil, castro oil, oil, a tiny bit of gasoline, candle wax, shredded cashews, american cheese, italian cheese-

(Joe drops the box and looks shocked and confused.)

Joe

Cashews?!? I'm allergic! This could've given me an allergic reaction dude! (looks annoyed, then takes a moment to compose himself) Ronald, Mister CEO and I are going to have a little talk okay? Go out and find the other employees.

Ronald

Aye sir!

(Ronald exits.)

Joe

Everything's been so weird since you hired that Babooshka guy and violated the code!

CEO

I have no idea what you're talking about, son. These are simply unfortunate coincidences.

Joe

You knew the Papushka sauce had cashews right? Why didn't you tell me?

CEO

Son, I didn't know it had cashews!

Joe

You said you tried it! You're the CEO!

CEO

You know what son, you're right I apologize. I'm not gonna be in tomorrow. You're in charge.

Joe

Wait, what?

(Ronald looks baffled and confused, Ronald runs in.)

Ronald

Hey guys there's something wrong with the sauce machine.

Joe

It's probably just another unfortunate coincidence, right?

(Joe annoyingly looks at the CEO and runs off.)

Ronald

Ok it's time, I've prepared the machine.

CEO

Did you press the wrong button?

Ronald

Yes I did. Ok let's get him. See you on the other side.

CEO

See you on the other side.

Scene 4

Place: Main sauce production area (downstairs)

At rise: Joe, Ronald and the CEO are trying to figure out what happened to the sauce machine.

CEO

What happened?

Ronald

I don't know what happened, I just pressed the button and it started malfunctioning.

CEO

Son, go fix it.

Joe

Dude, you pulled and broke off the shutdown button!
How do you even do that?

Ronald

I don't know! I'm just trying to learn from the best...

(Ronald looks down sadly as the CEO pats his back comforting.)

CEO

Joe this is embarrassing, how can you not fix this small problem?

Joe

It's not small dad! He broke a part of the machine!

CEO

Well I guess it's impossible to fix now.

(Joe looks at the CEO confused.)

Joe

Dad, you forgot the secret sauce repair technique?

(Joe breaks glass and grabs the secret repair sauce and pours it onto the machine. Then he beats the machine with his fists and feet until it turns on.)

CEO

Oh um...

Joe

A dedicated Sauce employee never forgets the secret repair sauce technique.

CEO

You're absolutely correct, my son. In fact, throughout this whole day, I've been implementing a series of tests on you in order to see how dedicated you are to Sauce and Co. and our family.

Ronald

We wanted to see if you could really handle being the only sensible one at Sauce and Co. You have proven to be worthy.

Joe

Ronald? I knew there was something up with you but what exactly is your deal being apart of this? What are you then? My long lost brother?

(The CEO and Ronald look at each other nervously and then look back at Joe. Eventually he crumbles to the floor.)

Joe

OH MY GOD WHY IS EVERYTHING SO
CONFUSING?? IT'S JUST A SAUCE FACTORY!

Ronald

Well it's true Joe. I'm not Ronald Papushka, my name is Jack Sauce, your brother separated at birth. Dad's been preparing me to replace him and run the company once he retires.

(Joe looks at the CEO baffled.)

Joe

I thought you said I was going to replace you?

CEO

You both are gonna run it.

Joe

Holy sauce! Thank you so much dad, does this mean that you're retiring.

CEO

Yes soon you're both gonna be in charge.

(Joe looks at Ronald and smiles.)

Joe

Well whatever the case, we're gonna make this the sauciest place ever!

(Joe and Ronald high five while the CEO watches. A random guy walks in.)

Guy

Hi I'm here for a job.

Ronald

Great, what's your name?

Guy

Johnny Casserole

(There's a pause after he says his name.)

Joe, Ronald, CEO

(shouting) GET OUT!

A GOOSE CHASE IN THE SUBWAY

PARTICIPANTS: Jared Pagan, Josiah, Erick, & Jaden

TA: Laura Bozzone

Winter Short Play Project 2019

SCENE 1

AT RISE: 7:30am school day rush hour on Friday. A subway train, the U train, approaches the station where Fleance, Victor and Tay are standing on the subway platform. They each have a backpack.

Mr. JACKSON

The next U train to 250th Street is now arriving on the uptown local track. Please stand away from the platform edge. This is Parkside Avenue.

(boys enter train)

Stand clear of the Closing doors please. (ding)

Wait a second! Those are the three boys who got me fired from LEpic High School because I was teaching too much about trains. I tested the LTA 27 times - twice a day for two weeks - and then on the 28th time, I got it. I'm happy because I finally got the job, but I'm still mad that they got me fired because LEpic High School paid a penny more than the LTA and I wanted to save up money so I could get an LED train sign in my bedroom! Those things cost like a 100k!

(Subway ambient car sounds)

TAY

I have to make it on time today. If I don't, I'll flunk my big test.

VICTOR

I need to be on time too because my poetry contest is today, and if I'm late, I can't perform.

FLEANCE

Oh man I hope everyone in the science fair likes my invention. Because if I don't win the contest, I won't achieve the grand prize to go to college once I graduate.

TAY

Oh so you're going to a science fair today?

FLEANCE

Yeah it's basically a competitive contest for a single student making their projects and they have to choose the best one that can help the environment.

TAY

Oh wow very interesting! Are you gonna get there in time?

FLEANCE

Don't worry, this is the train I usually take to go to LEpic High School. It's just across the Rutson River to Wanpattan.

MR. JACKSON (spotlight on him)

Hee hee hee ...time to mess with them now. I know today is their biggest day and I'm going to reroute them all over the place so I can make them be very very late...mwhaaaa (bell and sit and press microphone on)
Ladies and gentelman,this U train is now being rerouted to Rattan Island.

BOYS

UGHHH

FLEANCE

Rattan Island?! Why are we going to Rattan Island!?!?

MR. JACKSON

If you want to go towards Wanpattan, please transfer to the 7 line.

VICTOR

I don't want to walk all the way to the 7 line!

TAY (angry)

Man!! I really have to take that test!! I guess we're gonna have to get on that 7 train

FLEANCE

It's either that or I'll miss my science fair, you'll (gestures to Victor) miss your show and you (gestures to Tay) will flunk!

MR. JACKSON

Last chance to get off this train. Stand clear of the closing doors, please.

FLEANCE

We have to get off NOW!

TAY

Yeah, let's go!

VICTOR

Agreed!

(All four run out/ DING /BLACKOUT)

SCENE 2

AT RISE: Mr. Jackson sneaks into the driver's seat before the boys arrive in the 7 train

MR JACKSON (to audience in spotlight)

He he he... they will never know my plan to destroy their whole career in life.

(Mr. Jackson sees the boys running on)

OH they are coming!!

(He sits and puts mic on)

(They enter running on nervous and out of breath)

FLEANCE

(looks at watch)

I'm a half an hour late!!! The science fair just started!!

VICTOR

Calm down, this 7 train is gonna leave us right in front of LEpic High School, so we're good.

TAY

Ughhhhhh!!! I hate the LTA!!!

VICTOR

Don't we all

MR. JACKSON

Ladies and Gentlemen, this train's next stop will be in Broke-lyn. If you are going to Wanpattan, please take the G train. If you are going to the Wonks, please take the 2 train.

BOYS

What???

FLEANCE

Wait we just got off the last train which was rerouted to another line and this train is rerouting too????!!!

VICTOR

You know what, I don't have time- I'm just gonna walk!

FLEANCE

No, no, no don't walk out!!

TAY

My life is really ruined now!!

MR. JACKSON

He he he he

(The train stops and we hear a SCREECH. The boys fall. He puts the microphone back on)

Do not walk to school or else I'll put you back on my train where you belong!! You guys heard me loud and clear?!!

ALL (jump up)

Wait did he just hear us??

MR. JACKSON

Yes. I did. I can hear everything that you say!

FLEANCE

Hold on, I think I heard his voice before!!

TAY

Wait me too!

VICTOR

No, it can't be...

FLEANCE

It must be....

(dub dub dub)

(MR. JACKSON enters the car where the boys are in the front and the boys freak out)

ALL

Mr. JACKSON!!!!?????

FLEANCE

Our old science teacher??

TAY

What the heck??

(Fleance faints on Tay, Tay briefly holds him up)

MR. JACKSON

Yes its me, Mr. Jackson. I have come back for revenge on you three because you got me fired from LEpic High School one month ago and I want to get revenge (claps, and Fleance wakes up).

VICTOR

What do you mean! How is this revenge- this more like torture to us???

MR. JACKSON

Because I knew that today would be your big special day and I wanted to ruin it for you by screwing up your schedule to get there.

FLEANCE

I was the one who was responsible for getting you fired in the first place because you weren't teaching science related topics! You only taught the LTA to us.

MR. JACKSON

Ok so then tell me, how did they make the tunnels eh eh??

TAY

We don't care about the tunnels!! You are the reason I am failing 9th grade!!

MR. JACKSON

How dare you say that to me? I was the best science teacher ever. You were very lucky because most kids don't get the opportunity to learn about the LTA.

FLEANCE

I do remember that. If I can recall we were sitting in the science room..... (flashback music)

SCENE 3: FLASHBACK

One Month Ago in the classroom at L'Epic school
The boys are in class looking bored and annoyed as Mr. Jackson is teaching

MR. JACKSON

Waaaaah wahhh waaaaah the 4 train wahhh wahhh
wahhhh the U train wahhh wahh wahhhh

FLEANCE

Is it me or this guy is not teaching proper lessons??

TAY

Yeah he's a really bad teacher. We should get out of here!

VICTOR

I think we should report him to the principal and get him fired.

TAY

Come on!!! Lets go

Mr. JACKSON

Hey! *(The boys freeze while walking out)*

What are you guys trying to do -trying to report me to the principal eh!????

(They hurry out)

This won't be the last of me you little kids!!!

FLASHFORWARD MUSIC

SCENE 4: Present Day back on the train

FLEANCE

Maybe he's better off working here because it seems like he has more knowledge about the LTA than teaching science.

VICTOR

Why did you want to be a teacher in the first place?

MR. JACKSON

Because the school would have paid me one penny more per month than the LTA so I could get a LED train sign board so I can watch the trains arriving at my stop in my bedroom.

FLEANCE

I have a deal, if you can take us to school than I'll ask your boss to increase your daily payment by not just one penny a month, but by a hundred dollars a month.

MR. JACKSON

Oh my god, thank you so much! Okay fine I am sorry for being a "bad teacher" ...lets compromise because I DO want to see how you guys have evolved without me. If you let me come with you guys, I'll stop screwing up your schedule and get you to school on time.

TAY

Ok. That's fair- but we will have to rush to school to make it.

FLEANCE

Well leave it to Mr. Jackson to rush us to school.

VICTOR

So do we have a deal?

ALL

(they all put their hands in the middle) DEAL!!!!

MR. JACKSON

This train is NOW going express to L'Epic High School Station. If you are not going there, get off this train!!

TAY

It's good to know the train conductor.

MR. JACKSON

Full Speed!

(they speed away)

LIGHTS DOWN

SCENE 5

AT RISE: Tay is taking his test. Fleance is presenting his science experiment. Victor is waiting to do spoken word.
(Spotlight up on Tay)

TAY

Annnnd done! You know what Mr. Jackson, I think I passed!

MR. JACKSON

You're lucky that I got you here just in the nick of time!

(Spotlight up on Fleance)

FLEANCE

This invention will use water to generate power for traffic lights, wires, even your own electronics at home and it will keep the environment lasting longer. Thank You

TEACHER (voiceover)

And the winner for the college prep science fair is Fleance
Stewarts!!

(applause)

FLEANCE

Thank you to Melody, my lovely girlfriend. (he blushes)
Thank you for telling me that I need to believe in myself,
keep my hopes up, and not give up on my science project.
Thank you for Mr. Jackson for getting me here on time!!

MR. JACKSON

No problemo!

FLEANCE

Thank you all for supporting me for the project! I'm
definitely going to college!

(Spotlight up on Victor)

VICTOR

Hi my name is Victor, and this is my piece.

Love is sacred
Unbreakable
Cherishable
Well it was that way, now
Love is in ruin
Got shattered
Became demoralized

By the ones that we love
Love has no value now
It's in ruins
Taken as a joke
Its sad
But it's the action so common it's mad
The action of crushing love.

Then there are people like us
Who say no to deferred love
Love is not supposed to be dried and shriveled
Like a raisin in the sun
Love is not suppose to be a heavy load filled with regret
from expression
Love is suppose to be a blossom in the spring that will
never expire
Cause love has been on top of the mental empire
(Applause/Victor bows)

VICTOR

Wow! I really just did that!! I'm definitely going to the
poetry contest finals! I'm really glad I got here on time!

(LIGHTS UP ON EVERYONE)

MR JACKSON

Wow, I realized that there is so much more to these humans than I knew and I should've talked less about the LTA and started doing more to push them to their full potential and I can finally get that sign that I've been wanting! These kids have humongous dreams! He wants to go to college,(FLEANCE Steps DS) he wants to work as an LTA operator (TAY steps DS). He wants to be a poet (VICTOR steps DS).....and the moral of the story is if you hear anything about subway delays....

ALL

Please just take an uber or a bus.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Something about me you should know is that I am a stutterer. I am a person who stutters and I am very confident in myself. I am very bright and I never give up and I am on the road to success.