

Episode 10:
The Last Laugh: 81-Year Old Man Tries Stand-Up Comedy
(3/27/2018)

Segment	Who	Copy
Intro	Art Schill	"I like to make people laugh and I really do believe that there are times when I'm taking their minds off of some of their problems and some of their worries and I'm giving them a chance to laugh. And it's fun."
		INTRO MUSIC
Podcast Overview	Andy Levine	<p>Welcome to Second Act Stories, a podcast that looks at people who have made major career changes and are pursuing more rewarding lives in a second act. Amazingly, this is our 10th episode.</p> <p>I first heard about Art Schill in an article in a Long Island newspaper called New York Newsday. Trained as a chemist but working as an executive recruiter, Art decided he wanted to stand-up comedy -- at the age of 81.</p> <p>And it turns out, he's really good at it. This is from a YouTube video of his first performance. The audio isn't great so it's hard to make out the jokes. But he's clearly killing it.</p> <p>Less than a year after taking comedy classes near his home in Long Island, New York, Art has played a range of top comedy clubs including Carolines, Dangerfields, Mohegan Sun and the Broadway Comedy Club. In a way, he's the newest and oldest thing on the East Coast's comedy circuit.</p> <p>Here's Art's Story.</p>

	Art	I was in marketing and sales, chemical business. Then in the '80s, I started getting involved in what I do now which is basically...it's a search firm but it's not the typical headhunter. In other words, the headhunter works for the company finding people for openings they have.
	Andy	And you're still doing that?
	Art	Yup
	Andy	So tell me what got you thinking about stand-up comedy.
	Art	I was watching AGT, America's Got Talent and I said, "Gee, you know what? I'm gonna try out for that." So I called my daughter up, the one who lives here, and I said, "I think I'm gonna start doing some stand-up comedy."
	Lisa (Art's daughter) (0:30)	He called me up and said, "Guess where I'm going on..." I said, "Where?" And he said, Auditions for "America's Got Talent." Very much in my father's personality, -I mean, go big or go home, you know, if you have something in your mind. My father was always "If you don't try or you don't ask, you always know the answer."
	Andy	Art and his daughter Lisa waited on line for four hours and he finally received a 30-second audition. And while he didn't make the cut for "America's Got Talent," it made him even more interested in stand-up comedy. So Lisa signed him up for comedy classes at McGuire's Comedy Club in Bohemia, New York.
	Lisa	So, my husband and I talked about it and we thought this would be great. And so, I reached out to him and said, "We'd love to do this for you as a gift. And he said, you know, "I would love to do it."
	Art	What I learned was how to tighten things up, how to put the punchlines at the very end instead of in the middle of the story. Things like that. And then I got up and did my first show in April.
	Andy	I want you to tell me about your first show. Were you nervous going into that?

	Art	You know, it's funny. I was asked at one of the shows I did at Theater Three and they did an interview with me and they said, "Do you get nervous when you get up there?" I said, "No." They said, "What do you mean? All those people..." I said, "No, no. You have to understand. I always told jokes to my friends. So to me, I'm sitting in the living room with a much larger group of friends, telling them stories. That's it. There's no reason to be nervous."
	Andy	So Art wasn't nervous. But his daughter Lisa was.
	Lisa	I was very nervous because, A, I didn't know if he could do it. You know, all of a sudden you get up there and maybe he would get nervous. Maybe he'd forget his lines. You know, maybe he'd be heckled. I didn't know what to expect. I was a nervous wreck. And my husband and I kept turning to each other and going, "He's really funny." And he, by far, got the best reaction of anybody that performed that night. I mean, people were hysterical and it just lifted a weight.
	Andy	Paul Anthony is a stand-up comic but he also produces comedy shows. And he was producing a show for the American Association of Retired Persons called the 50+ Comedy Tour. And he immediately booked Art as one of seven performers on the tour.
	Andy	So you've worked with a lot of different comedians in your life. What makes Art Schill different?
	Paul Anthony	Art is really, really talented. I think the fact that he didn't start doing comedy until he was in his 80s is what none of us can believe. His whole persona on stage, his whole...he's so comfortable. And I don't stand alone in this opinion. You talk to any of the comedians that we work with. These are people with 20, 30, 40 years in the business, and they can't believe that he's out there performing at the level of comfort people just think that he's been doing this a long time.
	Andy	So, some of his comedy is pretty edgy for an 82-year-old man. Do you think that surprises the audience?

	Paul	<p>Yes, I think it comes off as a little bit of...it's unexpected, which is what a lot of successful comedy bits are. The comedian takes you in one direction, and then the punch line is in a completely different direction that you weren't expecting, and therein lies the...that's the joke, and that's why something is perceived as funny, because the comedian was able to throw you off in a different direction. And that's what he's brilliant at.</p> <p>Sometimes he comes to me to say, "Paul, why can't I go on last?" I say, "Art, you're 82. I got to get you on stage as fast as possible. I don't know how much longer we have here."</p>
	Andy	When it's all working and the audience is laughing and the set is going really well...
	Art	Great feeling.
	Andy	I was just gonna ask you how does that make you feel?
	Art	What a great feeling it is. It's just...and then...again the things that you learn was the timing. Wait till the laughter starts to die off and then hit them with the next joke.
	Andy	You end your routine with a line, and I'll read it to you here, "Live, love, laugh because you never know when this crazy ride is gonna be over."
	Art	<p>That's my closing because it's true.</p> <p>We don't know how long we're gonna be on this earth, okay. Unfortunately, my wife passed away very unexpectedly. We never expected it when it happened. And that's why I...that's where it comes from. Live, love and laugh because you never do know when this crazy ride is gonna be over.</p>
	Andy	So what do you think your wife would think if she were with you here today? I'm sure you miss her and how would she react to what you're doing now?
	Art	<p>I think she'd say, "Well, the jokes are finally paying off."</p> <p>She'd roll her eyes and be at all the shows.</p>
	Andy	Is part of what you're doing comedy, I don't know, sort of therapeutic for you in terms of having lost your spouse and that kinda thing. I mean...

	Art	Well, what it did...unfortunately at my age most of my friends are gone. So it's opened up a door to a whole group of new friends.
	Andy	Okay.
	Art	The comedians that I do the shows with, some of them have really become good friends. We kid each other all the time whether it be on Facebook or in person. And it's just great because it gives me something to get involved in beside my work. It gets me socially involved with people again.
	Andy	What advice would you give to someone who's thinking about this kind of a jump like you made here?
	Art	Try it. Why not? Unless you try it you'll never know whether you should've done it a long time ago and I know I should've done what I'm doing a long time ago because I enjoy it that much.
	Andy	One of Art's dreams is to get on The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon.
	Andy	If Jimmy Fallon were here, why would you tell him you should be on his show?
	Art	I'm an 82-year-old comedian, started my career just last year when I was 81 years old. Not gonna be around forever. Been told I'm very funny. Give me a shot to just talk to you. That's what I wanna do. I wanna just sit on his couch and talk to him. That would be my dream.

	Andy	As we've already shared some of Art's material can be a bit edgy. But here's a sample of a clean Art Schill joke for Jimmy Fallon and his producers.
	Art	As you get older you learn certain things that are good and bad. And I went to a party recently and had too much to drink. So I left my car there, which is what you're supposed to do, and I took a bus home, which is pretty surprising since I've never driven a bus before.
	Andy	We're going to let Art closing things out with the signature line that he concludes all of his shows with...
	Art	So in closing let me just say live, love and laugh because you never know when this crazy ride is going to be over.

		OUTGOING MUSIC
Thank-You and Show Credits	Andy	<p>Of course, we want to thank Art Schill, his daughter Lisa and Paul Anthony for being a part of today's podcast.</p> <p>If you want to find out more about upcoming shows that Art has in the Long Island/New York area the best thing to do is friend him on Facebook. He's become a very busy performer.</p> <p>And If you know someone who works at The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon, please let them know about the 82-year old comedian that is ready to be a guest.</p> <p>Got a "Second Act Story" we should profile? Contact me - that's Andy Levine, at SecondActStories@gmail.com. I'd love to hear from you.</p> <p>And if you are thinking of starting your own second act, we hope Art's story and those of the others that we've profiled on Second Act Stories will help you find a new path. As Art says: "Try it...Why not?"</p> <p>We hope you'll keep listening. A new "Second Act Story" is just around the corner.</p>