

Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian



[Show theme music plays].

Daniel Scherl: 0:04

Welcome to the Memories of a Moonbird Podcast where we explore the human life through infinite forms of travel.

Daniel Scherl: 0:15

Hello, friends! Today on the show:

She's a hilariously funny comedian and deaf advocate. Born hard of hearing and having endured a loneliness that she says many don't really understand, she's spent the last few years creating awareness of those kinds of issues in the hopes of bridging the gaps and creating understanding between the deaf and hard of hearing communities, and a world that's mostly designed for hearing people.

Using comedy as her vehicle, her YouTube channel is filled with humorous videos that answer questions you may not realize you have, like: "Can deaf people drive?"

In addition to her advocacy work, she's also an artist, photographer, graphic designer and an awesome human being. Here to talk about everything from cochlear implants to improv comedy, please welcome, calling in from San Francisco, the very funny Jessica Flores!

Jessica, welcome to the show, and how are you doing?!

Jessica Flores: 1:06

I'm doing pretty fabulous. I brushed my teeth. You know, that was good. I feel like I've been forgetting to brush my teeth because we've been on lock down. I'm like, oh, yeah... you know?

Daniel Scherl: 1:16

Well, I'm gonna I'm gonna jump right in here with something that I think a lot of people are going to be thinking about, which is... they're listening to a podcast of me talking to someone who is deaf or hard of hearing and they're gonna ask themselves, "Well, if she's deaf and hard of hearing, how in the world are we actually communicating?"



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocator, Comedian

Jessica Flores: 1:32

That is true. They're gonna be like, "I don't understand how this is working."

Daniel Scherl: 1:37

So why don't you tell them... tell them the secret.

Jessica Flores: 1:38

We have you talking on the microphone, but I can see your lips clearly...

Daniel Scherl: 1:43

Here they are.

Jessica Flores: 1:43

...because I'm pretty good at lip-reading. Yeah, not all deaf people can lip read, but I can lip read pretty well. I'm also using using a hearing device so I can hear you a little bit. So it's a combination of both. But I know other people, other deaf people sometimes have interpreters up on the screen at the same time the person is talking. But right now this seems to be working out pretty good.

Daniel Scherl: 2:05

Great.

Jessica Flores: 2:06

Yeah.

Daniel Scherl: 2:07

You're from San Francisco. So were you were born and raised there?

Jessica Flores: 2:10

Yeah, like I mean, I love it here. I love San Francisco. I'm actually the fourth generation, um, of San Franciscans living here. So my great great grandmother, she was born in San Francisco. And then my grandfather, my mom, my dad and then me, Yeah. I mean, I love it here. It's home. Um, so, yeah. It's got a lot of diversity and like there's just all different kinds of people here. Oh, yeah, I love it. I love it here.

Daniel Scherl: 2:41

Yeah, that's very cool. I want to talk about the statistics of deafness and hard of hearing in America for a reason. And I'm going to read you something that I looked up before this podcast. According to the National Institute of Deafness and



Jessica Flores

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Other Communication Disorders, "2 to 3 out of every 1000 Children born in the United States has a detectable level of hearing loss in one or both ears." And that's about .30% of the population, 0.3% of the population, or, in bigger numbers, about 300,000 people total in the country. But considering that the size of our country is about 350 million people, that's surprisingly not a lot of deaf or hard of hearing people. And I say this because in your videos you talk about feeling alone. And obviously, as the statistics show, simply by virtue of those numbers, I think you would feel alone when you're only, you know... 99.70% of the population can hear. So I'm curious, what is it like to be a member of that group? What's been the hardest part in what's been the easiest part?

Jessica Flores: 3:48

It has been exhausting. I think other people who are a minority would also feel this way. Is that when you have a group that were not, were a lower group, so we don't like, we still have a lot of people. There's, like a million, like over millions of deaf people in the world, but we're still not the majority, right? So often times, what that means is that we have to educate those people who outnumber us. And the interesting part is, I tell a lot of people this, is that, a lot of deaf people feel like we signed up to be these teachers that we never wanted to be, or these educators. For example, like sometimes I go days in a row where I have to explain my hearing loss one by one to like every... a new person every day.

Daniel Scherl: 4:43

That has to be exhausting.

Jessica Flores: 4:44

Yeah, yeah. So I like, I have to explain my deafness and then I have to tell them how I identify and, you know, like sometimes it gets really exhausting.

Daniel Scherl: 4:54

So to clarify, what is the difference? I mean, besides, the obvious of someone who's "deaf" cannot hear at all and then "hard of hearing" is someone who has a certain percentage of hearing loss? To be identified as hard of hearing, is there an actual number that you know, you have to not be able to hear?

Jessica Flores: 5:11

That is such a good question because I think that a lot of people in the deaf community... When I say deaf community,



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

I'm talking about everyone who has a hearing loss. But other people would say the deaf community as something else they would said as like,, you know, signing only. They come from deaf culture, like they grew up with deaf people in their family for generations.

Jessica Flores: 5:36

You know, when I say deaf community, I'm talking about everyone who has a hearing loss so deaf, hard of hearing, whatever they want to identify as. But it's interesting because in that community that I'm talking about, there are a lot of people who, including myself, were like, "Oh, well, I am hard of hearing because I can't hear this certain amount so... but I can hear something with my hearing aids, but I can't hear everything."

Jessica Flores: 6:06

And it's this like, weird, confusing... like, I feel like when I was growing up, a lot of people were terrified to use the word "deaf." Yeah, like my audiologist. They never told me I was deaf. They always used terms like "hearing impaired," "hard of hearing," stuff like that. But to me, it was so weird because I felt like I didn't really connect with that term. "Hard of hearing" to me, felt too much like, Oh, well, I can hear a little bit, but I can't hear a lot. So then where does that leave the person whose hearing when you're talking to that hearing person? They still don't know how much you can or can't hear. You know, they still assume that you have this hearing like you can hear everything, but you're like... wait, no, I can't hear some sound. So it's a... It's really for me now... I'm like, the words "deaf," the words "hard of hearing," it's up to the individual with the hearing loss of what they want to identify as.

Daniel Scherl: 7:13

You have cochlear implants. Correct?

Jessica Flores: 7:15

Yes, uh huh.

Daniel Scherl: 7:16

Do you also use hearing aids in addition to those?

Jessica Flores: 7:19

No, because once you get the cochlear implants, you sacrifice the remaining amount of your hearing that you had left. Um, so I can't put hearing aids back in my ears and then hear that sound that I used to hear with hearing aids. Um, so, yeah, it's



Jessica Flores

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only the cochlear implant processor.

Daniel Scherl: 7:39

And we're going to get into the implants later on. I'm curious, though. Do you like having them better than when you had hearing aids?

Jessica Flores: 7:47

So it's been really interesting. There's some things that I enjoy about them, and there's some things that I don't enjoy about them. Yeah, well, we'll talk more about it, but, um, one of the things, the difference between two hearing aids, they sound very much like microphones. So imagine you're wearing microphones on your ears. They probably sound kind of like this podcast, like very microphone feeling. When you turn up your hearing aids, it just sounds like the microphone is getting louder. When you have a cochlear, this is again, it's my experience because everybody's experience with cochlear has been different. With my experience, it's, it's this different kind of sound because there's an internal part and an outer part. Um, the internal part actually has a little wire that goes through your cochlear. You know, that snail shell looking part? There's a wire that goes through that, and then when it, when there's a sound, the external part will notify the internal part and then send the this little signal to hit a specific part of the cochlea and wake up those nerves.

Daniel Scherl: 9:05

That is incredible technology.

Jessica Flores: 9:07

Yeah, I know it's insane.

Daniel Scherl: 9:10

If you don't mind me asking, I'm actually curious about something... What people don't realize is for every 45 minutes to an hour that they hear on the podcast, I've spent about an hour and 1/2 to 2 hours with the person I'm interviewing because there's stuff we talk about offline and we schmooze a little bit. And so... But after a couple hours of talking to someone like you, I will, you know, make myself a cup of tea, have a snack, rest for a few minutes and then just go back to my regular workday. For you, when you're sitting there and you're listening through an implant and you're reading my lips and you're doing this for now, for the next two hours, when this is done, do you feel like, Oh, no problem, or are you exhausted?



Jessica Flores

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Jessica Flores: 9:48

That's the downside. I feel exhausted. I don't mind. But if I was to do this Monday through Sunday, or Monday through Friday, you know, job work schedules, which I have have done before, it gets exhausting. When hearing people go about their day, you know, they don't... it's... you guys are used to like all the sound. So, you know, you grew up with that and, you know...

Daniel Scherl: 10:13

Yeah, constant stimulation.

Jessica Flores: 10:14

Yeah, you got that. For me, if I have to listen to someone for too long, I get burnt out, and it's because my eyes are doing work and my brain is also doing work now because I haven't had this kind of experience listening to these new sounds. So it's kind of like my brain is starting from scratch.

Daniel Scherl: 10:40

How long have you had the cochlear implants?

Jessica Flores: 10:42

I have had one of 'em... for a year and 1/2...

Daniel Scherl: 10:46

Wow.

Jessica Flores: 10:46

...and then the other one I've had for six months.

Daniel Scherl: 10:49

What's one aspect of being hearing impaired that you actually like?

Jessica Flores: 10:52

Oh! That I don't have to hear all of that. I don't have to hear anything I don't want to hear, which is beautiful. Which, it's kind of weird to me when hearing people do give me sympathy about my deafness. For a long time, I was like... that's so confusing because you guys complain about sound a lot. Like "Oh my God, my partner snores! Like I can't, you know, I can't stand it! I can't sleep!" Or like, there's an annoying noise that you like constantly have to hear.

Daniel Scherl: 11:23

Do you think you sleep really well in general?



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Jessica Flores: 11:26

Oh I sleep so good! Yeah, it's the best. It's amazing. Yeah, I love it. And, you know, it's yes, really nice not to be able to hear. Just like... yeah. And meditation? I got that.

Daniel Scherl: 11:41

That's awesome. Were you teased a lot growing up?

Jessica Flores: 11:44

I don't know. [Laughs] Because if they did, I wouldn't be able to hear it because I grew up... [Her cat walks into frame].

Daniel Scherl: 11:53

We have a little visitor..

Jessica Flores: 11:54

...try and, oh, my cat's here, paying a visit.

Daniel Scherl: 11:57

What's your cat's name?

Jessica Flores: 11:59

OK. Oh, my God. My cat's name is Baskin.

Daniel Scherl: 12:00

Baskin? Like Baskin Robbins?

Jessica Flores: 12:02

Did you watch Tiger King?

Daniel Scherl: 12:02

[Laughs]. Yes!

Jessica Flores: 12:05

Okay, but this was, this was before. Okay, this is before she's like, almost two now.

Daniel Scherl: 12:12

Did you know about Carole Baskin before then?

Jessica Flores: 12:14

I did not know about that. No. She's, she's basically named



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

after...

Daniel Scherl: 12:18
Baskin Robbins, yeah.

Jessica Flores: 12:19
The ice cream, Baskin Robbins.

Daniel Scherl: 12:21
That is really, really funny.

Jessica Flores: 12:22
I know. So now I'm like, Oh, stop acting like a Baskin.

Daniel Scherl: 12:26
Did your cat kill its mate?

Jessica Flores: 12:28
We'll never know. [Both laugh hard]. There's a case that recently opened up...

Daniel Scherl: 12:34
So I'm curious, is there prejudice in the deaf and hard of hearing community between the people themselves in the community?

Jessica Flores: 12:40
Yeah, there is... I mean, I think every community has some people in it who try to label other people, especially new people who are trying to get involved in the community or trying to, like, find their way to a community in general.

Daniel Scherl: 13:00
In general, are people in the community, you know, loving and sympathetic towards one another and trying to help each other?

Jessica Flores: 13:05
All the people that I'm friends with, all my deaf friends, they are just like... so amazing. And they've been so welcoming. And I tell people that like, you know, just because there's some people that you might interact with who are not as welcoming doesn't mean that there's gonna be this whole other amazing group that's gonna be super accepting and welcome you in with big arms like...



Jessica Flores

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Daniel Scherl: 13:32

I mean, I think that applies to everything, though not just that community.

Jessica Flores: 13:36

Yeah.

Daniel Scherl: 13:36

I find that in my business to be honest with you, whether it's podcasting or acting or whatever it's... that's pretty normal.

Jessica Flores: 13:41

Yeah, yeah. I think it's interesting. Yeah, because I've... I've definitely been told that I'm not deaf enough. Told that I that I talk too much, that I don't sign enough, that I'm not Latin enough...

Daniel Scherl: 13:59

Not Latin enough? That's hilarious.

Jessica Flores: 14:00

Yeah, I've had that. I'm not Latin enough. I've had I'm not Mexican enough. You know...

Daniel Scherl: 14:05

Well you're talking about sign language in one of your videos. You had mentioned that you didn't.... you did not learn ASL (American Sign Language) from birth.

Jessica Flores: 14:12

Yeah. No, not at all.

Daniel Scherl: 14:13

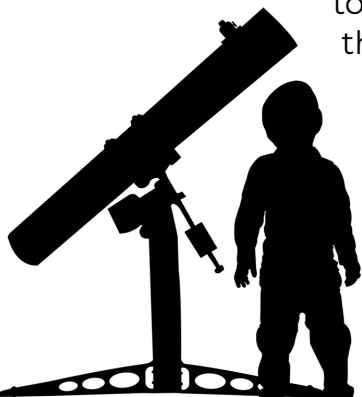
And why? Why not? Why did that not happen?

Jessica Flores: 14:15

Because my parents basically, they weren't handed any resources to like, start taking up ASL and why it might have been a good thing for me to take it up.

Daniel Scherl: 14:30

And what, what... How old were you when that happened?



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Jessica Flores: 14:32

I was in first grade, so I think I was about eight. They were told to, you know, get hearing aids and then have me take up speech therapy. It's... it's interesting, because the hearing aids, like they helped me hear some sound and the speech therapy... I talk now, um, but I was taking up speech therapy from kindergarten to eighth grade.

Daniel Scherl: 14:59

And were you always this communicative? And I mean, you speak quite well, so...

Jessica Flores: 15:02

Yeah, I've had a lot of practice.

Daniel Scherl: 15:05

That's great, though. I mean, well, and it's great because you didn't get to have it naturally from just being able to hear it all around you from birth, you know?

Jessica Flores: 15:12

Yeah.

Daniel Scherl: 15:13

How old were you... what's your first memory of realizing you were different than other people?

Jessica Flores: 15:17

Oh, that's a good question.

Daniel Scherl: 15:19

I only ask good questions. [Both laugh].

Jessica Flores: 15:24

Let me see... It was interesting, cause in second grade I didn't see myself as different at all. I think as I got older, I was going into schools where they've never had any experience with working with someone who is deaf or hard of hearing at all. So the schools I went to, they expected so much of me, they expected me to like keep up with the rest of the class. They expected me to be able to learn just like my hearing peers. And I was constantly getting frustrated with that because I'm like, there's like... I can't do it. Like, why am I always in these after school programs? I'm trying. I'm



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

like... working my butt off. But I still cannot understand.

Daniel Scherl: 16:14

Wasn't there a teacher at some point that that saw this and said, you know, "Hey, this, this woman has a problem."

Jessica Flores: 16:20

[Pbblllt!] No. Not in high school. In high school, it was more... I remember like they told me like, "If you want a pass freshman year, you have to learn a language." And I was like, "What? I can barely hear English." And they were like, "Well, you know, that's the requirement at the time." And I was like, "Okay, well, you know what? Here's my time to learn Spanish. Let's go."

Daniel Scherl: 16:48

No hablo espanol?

Jessica Flores: 16:50

No, no... a poquito. Oh, just... you know. But the, I didn't realize, was that the reason why I can't learn a language is because I took speech therapy for English.

Daniel Scherl: 17:04

No... the reason, the reason you can't learn a language is because you're not Latin enough. [Laughs].

Jessica Flores: 17:08

Yeah... there you... Hey! Hey! What the hell?! [Both laugh hard].

Daniel Scherl: 17:13

So I'm curious... when you dream, do you hear in your dreams?

Jessica Flores: 17:19

People ask me that a lot. So here's my theory about dreams: Dreams are in whatever language that you communicate in. When I had my first dream in sign language, I was mind blown because I was like, holy smokes! I'm actually learning the language and I'm using it...

Daniel Scherl: 17:39

That's cool.

Jessica Flores: 17:40

...in my dream. So I think my theory is, my theory is that it's in



Jessica Flores

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whatever way you communicate.

Daniel Scherl: 17:48

But if, like, you had a dream, and let's say you had a dream and Brad Pitt was in your dream, would he be talking? Would he be talking to you in his natural voice, or would he be signing to you in your dream?

Jessica Flores: 17:59

I don't know. We gotta ask Brad Pitt right now [Daniel laughs] if he knows some ASL. I'm calling him up right now... He could be my producer. I know he produced everything... "Hello, Brad? It's me... Do you know, American Sign Language?" [Both laugh hard, then Jessica's phone actually gets a call!]. Oh, that's my Grandpa calling.

Daniel Scherl: 18:14

That's hilarious. Your phone just rang. Imagine if it were Brad Pitt! [Laughs]. So Jess, you're a very, very funny person.

Jessica Flores: 18:24

Aw shucks, thanks.

Daniel Scherl: 18:24

Did you decide to go into comedy as a coping mechanism or just because you love comedy?

Jessica Flores: 18:28

I think the coping for sure. Because actually, speaking of my grandfather, who just called, he, I remember growing up with him. And even now he's... and my whole family, they have had this saying where they're like, you know, "don't lose your sense of humor."

Daniel Scherl: 18:48

Yeah, absolutely.

Jessica Flores: 18:49

You know, when times get tough, don't lose your sense of humor. My, like my grandfather, yeah. He says that every time I see him and it just helped me cope. It helped me, like, find the funny things of the ugly things.

Daniel Scherl: 19:06

Yeah. I'm curious. Are you religious?



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Jessica Flores: 19:07

Me? No. I'm really into nature. I like nature and I feel like you know, there's something out there, but I don't know what it is.

Daniel Scherl: 19:17

For people that don't know, I used to date a deaf woman, so I'm a little familiar with some of these things, but how do you hear music?

Jessica Flores: 19:24

Now that I have cochlear implants? Um, I can actually stream it.

Daniel Scherl: 19:29

Directly to your implant?!

Jessica Flores: 19:30

Yes, to my head.

Daniel Scherl: 19:32

I'm sorry, but that is fucking cool!

Jessica Flores: 19:35

I know! There's no, okay, again, again, this is... this is my experience because with the cochlear implants, I have a newer version. So, like the old versions, you couldn't really do that yet. I mean, you you can still hook them up, like with some headphone kind of thing.

Daniel Scherl: 19:50

But you've got Bluetooth, right?

Jessica Flores: 19:52

Yes, I have Bluetooth.

Daniel Scherl: 19:53

Bluetooth in your brain.

Jessica Flores: 19:55

Yeah, pretty much.

Daniel Scherl: 19:57

That's cool!



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Jessica Flores: 19:58

It's nice. I can hear music that way, but I also, if I don't have my cochlear's in... it's ALL ABOUT THE BASS. Let the bass drop! Boom! I love, like music.

Daniel Scherl: 20:10

Do you hear music of all different kinds? Or is it better if it has a beat and it thumps and it has bass?

Jessica Flores: 20:15

I tend to like music of all different kinds. I grew up listening to a lot of Bay Area music, and that had a lot of bass in it. Um, it's called, uh, hyphy music.

Daniel Scherl: 20:29

Hyphy, yeah

Jessica Flores: 20:29

Hyphy music. Um, there is a loooooooot of bass.

Daniel Scherl: 20:34

Very cool. Let's talk about your artwork for a second.

Jessica Flores: 20:36

Okay!

Daniel Scherl: 20:36

You're a fantastic artist. Uh, you went to school for art?

Jessica Flores: 20:40

Went to school for animation and visual effects.

Daniel Scherl: 20:43

Yes, on your resume it says the "Bachelors of Applied Science and Animation and visual effects from the Expression College for Digital Arts."

Jessica Flores: 20:51

Yes.

Daniel Scherl: 20:51

Aren't you impressed I can read?.

Jessica Flores: 20:53

[Laughs]. I'm so impressed! I'm impressed you have my



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

resume. Keep talking about my resume. Tell everyone what's on it.

Daniel Scherl: 21:01

You were a Barista at some point.

Jessica Flores: 21:02

I was. That... thaaaaaat was challenging.

Daniel Scherl: 21:05

Yeah, that's a big, that's a lot of people to be dealing with.

Jessica Flores: 21:08

Yeah, it's a lot of lip-reading.

Daniel Scherl: 21:11

But free coffee!

Jessica Flores: 21:12

Free coffee, yeah. I was like, okay, well, you know what? I'm tired after work, but at least I get, you know, unlimited coffee!

Daniel Scherl: 21:19

So go back to your, go back to your art. So you've been, how would you define your artistry? A sketch artist? A cartoonist? What do you, how do you define yourself?

Jessica Flores: 21:27

I usually just tend to say artist. Um, just because I have been drawing for a very long time. Um, I remember my grandmother got me into drawings. She would just make us, you know, sit there and draw whatever. She would critique my tree drawings when I was, like, nine. And I'm like... why does it even matter if the shading's wrong? [Daniel laughs.] You know? I'm nine. She was an artist herself, but she didn't really, um, you know, pursue that in any way. I also think that was a little bit of a way that I learned how to cope with my hearing loss. Ah, fun fact. in my teen years, and sometimes today, I did do a lot of graffiti, so I got into the graffiti scene. Same thing, a way to like...

Daniel Scherl: 22:19

Is this legal graffiti, or is this illegal graffiti?



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocator, Comedian

Jessica Flores: 22:22

It's legal, "wink, wink," graffiti.

Daniel Scherl: 22:25

So now, instead of graffitiing illegally, you take to artwork and I wanna give you props because last year you animated a book called "Harriet versus the Galaxy" by Samantha Baines, which is available on Amazon. I have not read it, but it looks awesome, actually.

Jessica Flores: 22:41

It is.

Daniel Scherl: 22:41

So people on the podcast go to Amazon and look up "Harriet versus the Galaxy" by Samantha Baines [spells out the name]. Animated, illustrated, I should say, by the lovely Jess Flores.

Jessica Flores: 22:56

Yes!

Daniel Scherl: 22:57

So congratulations on that. That's a great thing.

Jessica Flores: 22:59

Thank you. Thank you. Yeah, it was a fun project to work on it. It was is really nice having because she's also deaf a comedian. Uh, so it was just really nice to be able to collaborate with someone and to, like, just know that there's people trying to find other, like they were actually searching for deaf artists to work on this project.

Daniel Scherl: 23:25

That's cool.

Jessica Flores: 23:26

And yes. Oh, my God. I love that so much because it helps, like, support our ecosystem. I also had a similar project working with Google making ASL stickers. Have you? Do you have a Google? Do you have Android?

Daniel Scherl: 23:42

I have, ah, I have an iPhone.



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Jessica Flores: 23:44

[Teasing] Sad. No...

Daniel Scherl: 23:45

[Teasing back] I think you're the one who's sad! We do have stickers in our, in our iPhones.

Jessica Flores: 23:50

If you have a Google board, which is a Gboard, I got the opportunity to help them create stickers using ASL as a way to, like, teach people like a little or like, just spread a little more awareness, which is super cool.

Daniel Scherl: 24:04

That's very cool. And if people want to find those, Jess, where do they go?

Jessica Flores: 24:08

So you have to have a Gboard (Google Keyboard) and you can find that in the Apple store app. I don't even know what it's called.

Daniel Scherl: 24:14

The App Store.

Jessica Flores: 24:14

The Apple app store. And then the Google play store has it too.

Daniel Scherl: 24:21

What's the sticker set called?

Jessica Flores: 24:23

It's called Kiss Fist ASL.

Daniel Scherl: 24:26

Kiss Fist ASL on Gboard. All right!

Jessica Flores: 24:29

Yes. Kiss Fist. Yes.

Daniel Scherl: 24:32

Let's talk about your career a little more. You have this really awesome YouTube channel and you're an artist and you're a fantastic comedian. What are you hoping to do career-wise for yourself and for the deaf and hard of hearing community?



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Jessica Flores: 24:43

That is an awesome question. I have a lot of goals, but I do have one bigger goal. The bigger picture that I'm trying to work towards. I want to make sketch comedy, that includes a lot of deaf talent to spread deaf awareness. Like just to, like start creating it more as like a norm instead of something that we just see once in a while that pops in on TV shows. Like I want, I want a show that has, like, a bunch of deaf talent in it, you know? So we can be constantly seeing it over and over so people get used to us because we're out there.

Daniel Scherl: 25:22

Do you want to also have deaf or hard of hearing people working on crew and part of the whole production?

Jessica Flores: 25:28

Yes, exactly like I want to give the people that, like, I know talented deaf people who work in production now and, you know, like we're fighting for it still, where we're trying to get people to know that, you know, like you need to start hiring those with disabilities, like in learning how to work with us instead of just being like, "Oh my God, that person has a disability. That's gonna make the production on set a whole lot longer, like we don't know how to hire interpreters on and start working out." No, it's like if you really want to be about diversity and inclusion, like you gotta start including us too.

Daniel Scherl: 26:10

I agree.

Jessica Flores: 26:10

Yeah, there's been like, recent like shows and, you know, movies that I see and they're using our language, they're using sign language. And it's like a person who has never even used the language before. It hurts to like, see that because there's not a lot of opportunities for deaf actors and filmmakers.

Daniel Scherl: 26:34

Yeah, I I get you. There's not enough opportunities as it is, so why are they giving that opportunity to someone who's not deaf or hard of hearing, you know, or for any disability? Like, why would you have someone who has whatever disability not play that role when there are plenty of actors that could you know? I get it totally.



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Jessica Flores: 26:50

Yeah.

Daniel Scherl: 26:50

If I just magically said, "Hey, I've got five million dollars to make a production or whatever, and I'm going to give it to you to produce, what would you do with it?"

Jessica Flores: 26:58

So I'm working on a movie right now, and I want to make that happen.

Daniel Scherl: 27:01

Is it a story about a deaf / hard of hearing girl that meets a really cool podcaster and they travel in time?

Jessica Flores: 27:12

Close! Very close. Very close. Um, it's ah, it's about my... kind of like, it's from me. It's my own personal story within the story, and I'm writing it right now, keeping in mind all of the deaf talent that I know. And if I was able to make the film, I would be able to hire all those people. So you know, deaf directors, you know DP's, you know, deaf personal assistants... like I want to see them in the industry more because, you know, a lot of people think that deaf people are quiet, but they're really quite loud. We have a voice in all this.

Daniel Scherl: 27:55

What made you decide to do improv in the first place?

Jessica Flores: 27:58

I always wanted to do it, and I was letting this idea that, you know, deaf people can't do improv, deaf people can't do this, deaf people can't do that... I was letting those... I call it "hearing minded." So because I grew up being the only deaf person I knew I grew up with also the hearing beliefs of like, "Oh, like deaf people can't do that because they can't hear stuff." So I fed into that, and I started, like, thinking, kind of like hearing minded. I was like, "Oh, I guess I can't do it because everyone that I see on TV, everyone that I see, you know, on stage they all can hear and talk, and I can't do that. And I just reached a point where I was like, "No, look, I love goofing around with people. I love just making up stories and playing pretend, so I'm gonna give it a try and we'll see how it works out."



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Daniel Scherl: 28:53

That's an amazing accomplishment and something I think you should be very proud of.

Jessica Flores: 28:56

Thanks. Yeah, it was terrifying at first, especially Ah, when I took up my first class at Endgames, no interpreters. Yeah, it was challenging because I'm learning the basics and I'm just like like... when people turn around then I can't understand what's going on. So I, like in my first class, I tended to fake it a lot, like, "Yeah, I totally know what's going on!" Because that's what I've been doing my entire life. You know, like with hearing people I would fake it and be like... "Oh yeah! I can totally, I can totally hear what you're saying." And then if they like, if they ask you a question and then you can see in their face like, oh, they asked you something like you need to respond with, like, an answer, like you can tell, but...

Daniel Scherl: 29:45

So like, "Excuse me, ma'am. What toppings do you want on your pizza?"

Jessica Flores: 29:48

Yeah!

Daniel Scherl: 29:49

Do you like pizza?

Jessica Flores: 29:52

Um, I do, but I can't really do the cheese anymore. It hurts my stomach.

Daniel Scherl: 29:58

I'm sorry.

Jessica Flores: 29:58

Yeah, I know, it's kinda sad, but, um, but I do like it. You know, if there's, like, no cheese on it, I don't even like the vegan cheese. It's kind of gross.

Jessica Flores: 30:09

Wait, are you vegan?

Jessica Flores: 30:11

I'm not vegan but I love, I love vegetables.



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Jessica Flores: 30:15

Are you vegetarian?

Jessica Flores: 30:15

And occasionally I eat pork?

Daniel Scherl: 30:17

Okay, so... [laughs], so you're not vegetarian...

Jessica Flores: 30:18

Okay! Occasionally! I'm like, I'm like, a bad vegan. I mean, I have my dairy milk, you know, like, I love oat milk. And, like, I love vegetables. But occasionally, like, you know, there's some bacon cooking, and I'm like, "Hey, hook your girl up, you know?"

Daniel Scherl: 30:35

Hey, Jess?

Daniel Scherl: 30:36

Yeah?

Daniel Scherl: 30:37

If you eat bacon... you're not vegan [chuckles].

Jessica Flores: 30:42

At all?

Daniel Scherl: 0:00

AT ALL! [Laughs].

Jessica Flores: 30:43

Shhh. Don't tell people.

Daniel Scherl: 30:44

Okay. Our secret. So let's talk about your cochlear implants. Why did you choose to get them in the first place? And what was the procedure like?

Jessica Flores: 30:51

Not every deaf person is for cochlear implants. And I totally understand why. Because, you know, there's been problems with it, issues with it... It's a SURGERY. You never know what



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

you're going to get. But this is my story:

Jessica Flores: 31:05

Five years ago, six years ago, I went to my audiologist. She's like, "Okay, you're hearing aids don't help you. But because you're such a good lip-reader and you've been lip-reading for your entire life, that is what's helping you. It's not the hearing aids. It's your lip-reading."

Daniel Scherl: 31:26

interesting.

Jessica Flores: 31:27

Yeah, I had no idea, but what happened was like, if I closed my eyes and I heard someone talking it sounded like this... [garbled sounds].

Daniel Scherl: 31:38

Interesting.

Jessica Flores: 31:39

Yeah. Then I was like... "Okay, so what do I do?" And she's like, "Well, you know, you could get new hearing aids or..." She was like, "I don't know if I recommend this, but, you know, you could look into getting cochlear implants, but the thing is, is that there's a 50% chance you might like it."

Daniel Scherl: 32:02

There's a 50% chance you MIGHT like it?

Jessica Flores: 32:04

Yep, 50% chance you'll like it, 50% chance you won't like it.

Daniel Scherl: 32:10

Okay...

Jessica Flores: 32:11

So hearing that I was like, "Uh, yeah... no, I don't think so." Um, three, I think three years later, after like figuring out that I was qualified for a cochlear implant, I started learning sign language because I was working at a coffee shop. I just remember at the end of every day I was crashing. I was like... I am spending so much energy trying to focus, and so by the end of the day, I would be burnt out. And I was like, you know, I don't want to spend my entire life not being able to communicate with people. So I started



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

taking up sign language, just kept going with it, became more fluent, more comfortable with learning sign language. I am three years in now...As that was going on, my hearing was also declining, and it got to a point where almost every few weeks something that I did hear before I couldn't hear it anymore. So I got so upset that I was like, I just... I don't want my hearing anymore. I do not want to hear the drop anymore. It drove me so crazy. I was like, just get rid of it. And I was like... but how do I get rid of it? And then that's when I was like, Ah! I remember if you get a cochlear implant, that means you sacrifice the remainder of your hearing. I was like... you know what? I think it's time. And if I like it, cool. If I don't like it, cool. Cause I'm still deaf. Like, I can take them off. And I think what a lot of people don't realize is that it comes off. So it's not, it's not permanent. Like I'm not hearing things 24/7.

Daniel Scherl: 33:57

Yeah.

Jessica Flores: 33:57

Thank God! Um, I can like, I can remove it If I don't want to hear something.

Daniel Scherl: 34:02

Is it comfortable?

Jessica Flores: 34:03

Sometimes? You know, um, it's... a lot more comfortable than a hearing aid. But I have to say, if you have short hair, you love it. Daniel, you would love 'em because it's easy to put on. If you have long hair like I do, it's a pain in the ass, because if I want to put my hair up, it gets tangled, you know, going up. [Both laugh]. And sometimes like the... my right one actually falls off because the the magnet is the strongest magnet I can have on this side. So I can't go any higher. Unfortunately, um, so it falls off like, sometimes I'm doing jumping jacks or I'm skating and doing, like, some skate tricks and it's falling off and I'm like... "Oh, my God, you drive me insane."

Daniel Scherl: 34:53

How long was the actual surgery?

Jessica Flores: 34:55

Uh, it was... I can't remember exactly, I think was like two hours? Two or three hours.



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Daniel Scherl: 35:02

And was it painful afterwards? The recovery period?

Jessica Flores: 35:04

Yeeeeeeeeessssssss. Well, the left side I healed pretty well. But after you get it, you know you're all drugged out, so you can't really feel anything until next day. You wake up and you're like, "Oh, crap. I need someone to help me to the bathroom." So it kind of throws off your balance. And then on the right side, oddly enough, the right side took a long time for me to heal. It was like painful and I couldn't stand up that much, so yeah. And then my tongue was actually numb, half of my tongue was numb.

Daniel Scherl: 35:41

That's crazy!

Jessica Flores: 35:41

Yeah, some people, some people, they, when they get that surgery, they say that you might, you might taste metal for a long time.

Daniel Scherl: 35:50

Wow, that's... that's crazy. Do you, do you think that the technology will evolve that eventually we will have a way for deaf people to be able to hear fully?

Jessica Flores: 35:58

Honestly, I hope not. Because, like, I enjoy being deaf. Like, I don't want to permanently hear stuff. Um, I think they might find something. But if you ask most people in the deaf community, they're gonna be like... "Nah, I don't want that."

Daniel Scherl: 36:16

[Surprised] Really?

Jessica Flores: 36:17

Yeah, yeah. A lot of people, like, if you asked them like, "Hey, if you could be hearing would you want to be hearing?" Um, a lot of my friends are like, "No, uh, I'm cool." But that's because, you know, they have sign language to fall back on. They have a community to fall back on. But there's people who, you know, have recently lost their hearing like overnight. Yes. Those people would probably be like, "Yes, please give it to me now."



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Daniel Scherl: 36:43

Well yeah. If you've had it your whole life, and then you lose it. That sucks, you know?

Jessica Flores: 36:45

Yeah, because it's a different experience. Yeah, all deaf people are different, but, you know, a lot of them are like "Nah, I'm cool. I'm good." The ones that sign are like, "Yeah."

Daniel Scherl: 36:56

Would you recommend cochlear implants for people?

Jessica Flores: 36:59

That is a good question again, Daniel. Thank you.

Daniel Scherl: 37:02

[Chuckles].

Jessica Flores: 37:02

It's really up to the individual. I can't say, "Yeah! Go get 'em!" I can't say, "No. Don't get 'em." Because, you know, I struggled with that myself. I was like, "Should I get 'em?" I was like... "Well, if I get them, like, I might not be 'deaf enough' again, you know? Like, or if I don't get 'em I might deal with this hearing loss dropping forever, you know?" And it was kind of interesting. I feel like there was one point where I was like, "I don't want to get 'em at all" because I felt like I was almost letting other people make the decision for me.

Daniel Scherl: 37:36

Well, now that you have them, are you glad you got them?

Jessica Flores: 37:39

Yeah, I really enjoy being fully deaf. I do. I mean, I also enjoy the streaming part of it. And I mean, I can. The cool part is I can stream the TV straight to the processors and shut off everyone in the background, which means, like, they can all eat their chips and I can be chilling, watching whatever Netflix movies I want.

Daniel Scherl: 38:01

Do you like to travel?

Jessica Flores: 38:02

I do. I do. I don't travel enough. But I do.



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Daniel Scherl: 38:05

Where's your favorite place you've gone so far in your life?

Jessica Flores: 38:08

Probably the Philippines.

Daniel Scherl: 38:10

Why so?.

Jessica Flores: 38:10

My boyfriend has family there and we went to go visit, I think two years ago? I just... I love it cause it's like, it's just good people and it's cheap Hawaii.

Daniel Scherl: 38:25

[Laughs].

Jessica Flores: 38:25

You know, like you can make your money last for a very long time there, Um, but yeah, it's a beautiful place. The water's amazing. I actually, I used to travel to Hawaii a lot because I have a grandmother and aunt who lived there so I would go there all the time and visit and I was like, I want to move to Hawaii, like, I love it so much. Like, I just love the people, the place, like the nature... I'm all about tropical places. I love that stuff.

Daniel Scherl: 38:55

You ever been to, have you been overseas to Europe or anything?

Jessica Flores: 38:58

No, Never. I definitely want to. It's something... I have a list of places I want to go. And I'm hoping to go there one day. Yeah.

Daniel Scherl: 39:06

Do you think traveling is more difficult for someone deaf or hard of hearing?

Jessica Flores: 39:10

Sometimes it can be like when flights...

Daniel Scherl: 39:14

Wait, let me guess is this when they're giving the safety demonstration in the plane?

Jessica Flores: 39:18



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Okay, so check it out... So there was a time where I put on my plane ticket that I was deaf. So just to give them the heads up, because sometimes if I don't put that, they'll sit me in the emergency exit row. And I didn't know that no deaf or hard of hearing people or any person with hearing loss could sit in the exit row.

Daniel Scherl: 39:42

Makes sense.

Jessica Flores: 39:42

I was like, would you rather have the person who's listening to all the screaming happening...

Daniel Scherl: 39:49

[Starts laughing hard].

Jessica Flores: 39:49

...or the person who doesn't have to listen to this screaming happening? So I think I'd rather have deaf people in an exit row. [Both laugh].

Daniel Scherl: 39:57

Has the evolution of technology and all the new mobile phones and apps, has that really helped the deaf and hard of hearing communities?

Jessica Flores: 40:04

Yes. FaceTime.

Daniel Scherl: 40:07

Yeah. And great apps I'm sure.

Jessica Flores: 40:09

Oh my God, yes. FaceTime. Duo. We don't have to, I mean, we still do relay calls, which is like when you call a hearing person...

Daniel Scherl: 40:18

I used to do that with the girl I dated, yeah.

Jessica Flores: 40:20

So you're familiar with that. Like so for people who don't sign, we tend to use that, those services. But for those who do sign, like our deaf friends and family members, we can just call them through FaceTime and Duo. And it's so nice because we can



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

actually see them, you know. But also check it out. There's, so I have a Google pixel phone, right? And they're doing something pretty awesome. But there's this little accessibility button at the bottom of my screen. This little person. If I hit that, it's going to transcribe most of what I'm saying.

Daniel Scherl: 41:02

I have the exact same app. I use Google Translate when we're traveling in Europe and, or other countries and it's been wonderful because you can not only transcribe, but you can actually, there's other apps that let's say, for instance, when we were in Germany, you can hold the phone between the two people and it will actually translate the entire conversation if you do it slowly. You know, technology is amazing. Eventually, we're all gonna be able to understand each other, which is great.

Jessica Flores: 41:31

Yeah, yeah.

Daniel Scherl: 41:33

Well Jess I'm curious, are you hopeful for the future? I mean, are you scared about the future? Are you hopeful? How do you feel about it?

Jessica Flores: 41:38

Do you remember how I said I'm, I'm kind of like just going with the flow?

Daniel Scherl: 41:42

Uh huh.

Jessica Flores: 41:43

That's kind of what I do. Like I I don't know. Nobody can ever know what the future is going to be like, right. But we have the present. Well, I feel like we always have the present, we have now. So for me right now, I'm just kind of focusing on what I can do now. Yeah, I'm just kind of staying flexible. I don't know what's gonna happen.

Daniel Scherl: 42:05

Do you believe in love?

Jessica Flores: 42:07

Love? Yeah! Heck, yeah, I do. I do. I've got a lot of love for a lot of people. Yeah.



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Daniel Scherl: 42:12

Do you want children of your own?

Jessica Flores: 42:13

You know, I do. Not right now. I love kids. I love kids because they... It's interesting. Um, before I had sign language and before I found other people to connect with, I could always connect with kids. Like at family parties and stuff because, like, you know how like if I'm at a family party, I'm zoning out because it's way too many people talking. There's way too many things going on. So I'm in my own world. Like I was in my own world a lot.

Daniel Scherl: 42:42

Yeah.

Jessica Flores: 42:42

Same thing with kids. They're also in their own world.

Daniel Scherl: 42:45

Yeah, I actually feel like a lot of my childhood I spent in my own imagination just ignoring the rest of the world and doing what I wanted to do, you know, creatively.

Jessica Flores: 42:53

Yeah. So...

Daniel Scherl: 42:54

Is there, is there any hereditary risk of hearing loss being passed to your kids?

Jessica Flores: 42:58

No, it's random. I'm the first one in my family. Me and my partner were actually like talking about adoption. Like we want to adopt some deaf kids. So, um, yeah. Hopefully we can make that happen.

Daniel Scherl: 43:12

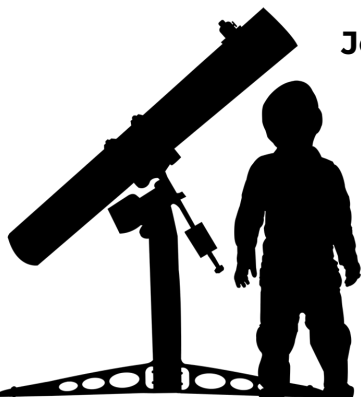
Well, I have some more questions, so I hope you're not exhausted.

Jessica Flores: 43:16

No, no! Let's go!

Daniel Scherl: 43:17

Let's talk about reading. What books do you like? What are you most drawn to?



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Jessica Flores: 43:19

So I have different kinds of books that I like. I do love reading, especially young kid books kind of just because, like I love the imagination that goes into, like, young adult books. This one: [She shows Daniel a book]. This one.

Daniel Scherl: 43:38

"A Barrel of Laughs, A Vale of Tears." I don't know that one.

Jessica Flores: 43:39

This... [she taps the book]. It's the book. Daniel, you need to, you know, you guys need to read this. Read this to DoubleStuf your guinea pig, okay?

Daniel Scherl: 43:49

[Laughs].

Jessica Flores: 43:49

And it's just got this really... like a great story. But it really lets your imagination run wild and it kind of makes you think outside the box.

Daniel Scherl: 43:58

I love reading Young Adult Fiction, actually, because I feel like the creativity and the imagination in it is so great.

Jessica Flores: 44:06

Yes!

Daniel Scherl: 44:06

And a lot of times adult fiction gets so wrapped up in trying to be controversial or trying to be, you know, shock value, that it loses the heart of story.

Jessica Flores: 44:16

Yes! Okay, one more! One more kid book. This is another one. Same, same guy. [She shows Daniel another book].

Daniel Scherl: 44:22

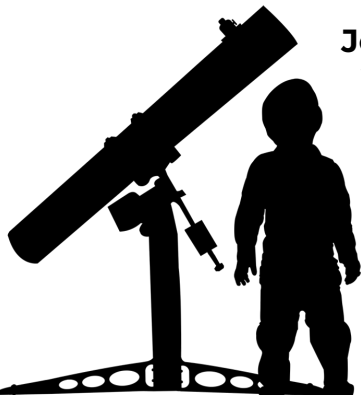
"The Man in the Ceiling" by Jules Feiffer.

Jessica Flores: 44:25

Yeah, it's really good.

Daniel Scherl: 44:25

Well, what about, what about movies? What's one of your favorite all-time movies you could watch over and over again?



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Jessica Flores: 44:30

Okay, first one that pops in my mind, favorite movie, is called "The Way Way Back." Have you seen it?

Daniel Scherl: 44:37

I have not.

Jessica Flores: 44:38

Oh, it's so good! Yeah, I watched it and I was like I could watch it over and over again. It's just...

Daniel Scherl: 44:44

"The Way Way Back."

Jessica Flores: 44:45

"The Way Way Back." It's, it's a good film. I like it a lot.

Daniel Scherl: 44:50

What about another? Give me another one.

Jessica Flores: 44:51

Um, my other top favorite movie is called "Blindspotting." Have you seen that?

Daniel Scherl: 44:58

Uh uh.

Jessica Flores: 44:58

Daveed Diggs and Rafael... I don't know his last name. They're both from the Bay Area, and they made a film based in the Bay Area, and it's just like... I can connect with it on so many levels. It's a really good film. I recommend checking it out, and the music for it is... it's just as amazing.

Daniel Scherl: 45:20

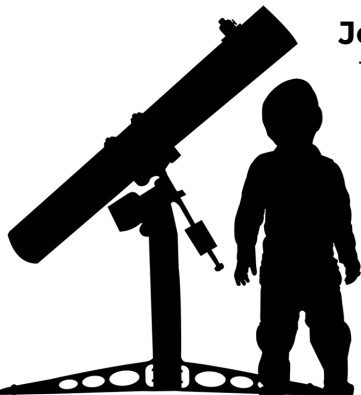
In one of your videos, you talk about hating dolls, and I want you to know that I also find them incredibly creepy, but!

Jessica Flores: 45:28

Thank you! I thought you were gonna pop one out of the screen.

Daniel Scherl: 45:30

No! But I want you to know that if I were a multimillionaire, I would have already had a Jess Flores doll made with little



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

cochlear implants. And I would have it have all kinds of expressions and say really creepy stuff, and I would have sent it to you as a gift for doing the podcast. [Laughs hard].

Jessica Flores: 45:46

No! No! Please don't ever become a millionaire. Please tell me...

Daniel Scherl: 45:51

How about I become a millionaire, but I won't send you a doll?

Jessica Flores: 45:53

Okay, that works.

Daniel Scherl: 45:54

What would you do if you found out that every time I do a podcast interview I have, I secretly have a doll made of that person in a little room in my house? [Laughs hard].

Jessica Flores: 46:04

I... I would...

Daniel Scherl: 46:10

Oh my God, that's so fucked up! [Laughs more].

Jessica Flores: 46:10

That'd be so creepy! I just... You know, I just don't like them. I don't trust them.

Daniel Scherl: 46:15

I don't either.

Jessica Flores: 46:16

I actually, there's a experience that comes with why I don't like a doll.

Daniel Scherl: 46:21

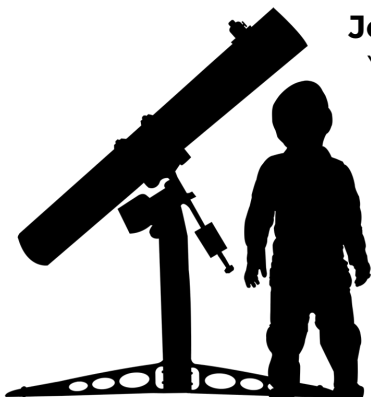
I don't know if I want to hear about this.

Jessica Flores: 46:23

You do, you do.... We're going to talk about it, Daniel... [Both laugh].

Jessica Flores: 46:26

I was around nine and my grandmother was like, "Hey, what



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

do you want for your birthday?" She would take us to this salvation Army all the time to go play with stuff, you know? And I was in that fancy part of the Salvation Army [laughs]... You know... with the luxuries... And I saw this doll and I was like, wow... "Well, you know, I never had a doll. I kind of want that doll." And she was like, "Well, I don't know. Maybe, maybe we'll get it for." And I was like "Okay, whatever." I was like.. eh. I was over it. Like it's been a couple of days. Then I got a birthday present and I opened it and it was that doll. And it was a porcelain doll.

Daniel Scherl: 47:09
Ohhhh! They're the WORST!

Jessica Flores: 47:10
Yeah! I know! Why did I do that to myself?! And it had, like, this red, like little velvet dress and this little lacy collar, curly hair... And I was like, "Oh, okay, cool." And I just like, I didn't really know what to do with it because you can't really play with those kind of dolls, so I just sat it like, up on my dresser, and then a few days were going by and I'm like, looking at it, and I'm like, "Oh, there's something off about it. I don't trust it."

Daniel Scherl: 47:40
[Laughs hard].

Jessica Flores: 47:40
I kept looking at it like... "I don't trust this doll. It's not... it's face isn't moving." It was like... I don't get it!

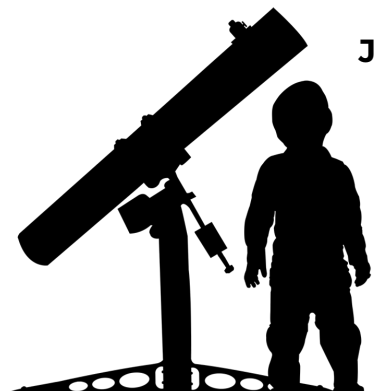
Daniel Scherl: 47:50
Fuck dolls.

Jessica Flores: 47:50
Yes, I know, I know. "Fuck dolls." That sounds like a really cool punk rock band.

Daniel Scherl: 47:55
Yeah. [In announcer voice] "Tonight! Fuck Dolls live at 8:00 p.m.!"

Jessica Flores: 47:58
[Singing in a punk band voice] "Fuck the dolllllllls! They're creepy as shiiiiit!" [Both laugh hard].

Jessica Flores: 48:06
Um, but anyways, at nine years old, I decided the best thing to



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

do would be to take this doll and smash, smash its face with a hammer. [Daniel laughs hard]. So I took the doll when nobody was around and I smashed it with a hammer. Smashed its face.

Daniel Scherl: 48:25

That's awesome.

Daniel Scherl: 48:26

The face was gone, but then I was like... it looks even more terrifying... [Daniel almost spits his water out laughing hard]. So I decided, I remember, this is the weirdest part, I decided, I was like, you know what? To make this look better, I gotta add some glitter.

Daniel Scherl: 48:40

Oh, shit. Really?

Jessica Flores: 48:42

So I took glitter and I dumped it in the face and I had this doll with no face and glitter filled inside, and I was like, I don't know what to do with it now.

Daniel Scherl: 48:52

You created...

Jessica Flores: 48:53

If my parents see this...

Daniel Scherl: 48:55

You created nightmare fuel is what you did.

Jessica Flores: 48:57

I did! I traumatized myself. Yeah, I didn't want my parents to see it... So I opened up the window. Uh, this, it was like this window that there was a roof to the next door neighbor's... I put it outside in there, so you couldn't see it unless you opened the window and peaked outside and left it there.

Daniel Scherl: 49:15

For how long?

Jessica Flores: 49:16

Maybe two years... or three years?



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Daniel Scherl: 49:17

Oh, my God, so that doll was out there in the rain and everything for years?

Jessica Flores: 49:21

It could be out there...

Daniel Scherl: 49:21

Glitter pouring out of its smashed in face...

Jessica Flores: 49:24

I'm just waiting for it to come back.

Daniel Scherl: 49:26

Yeah. One day, one day Jess... it's gonna come back and be like, [In creepy witch voice] "Youuuuuu killlllled meeeeeeeee!"

Jessica Flores: 49:31

You know what? Since it's got the glitter it might not be that creepy.

Daniel Scherl: 49:35

[Still in creepy witch voice] "You killlllled meeeeeee! I mean, I look fabulous, but youuuuuu killlllled meeeeeeeee!"

Jessica Flores: 49:43

[Laughs and then does her own crazy voice]. "Youuuu bitch!" Throw glitter at me... "How do you like me now?!" [They both laugh hard]. It could happen! It could happen!

Daniel Scherl: 49:50

Oh, holy shit.

Jessica Flores: 49:50

Well if I disappear... You'll know where I went

Daniel Scherl: 49:54

Well, that's I mean, that's the horror movie you should write for Hollywood. There you go.

Jessica Flores: 49:58

Actually, that is a good idea. I'm gonna write it down later.



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocator, Comedian

Daniel Scherl: 50:01

Well, I want to ask you about a few of your favorites, actually. What are your, uh, least and favorite sounds?

Jessica Flores: 50:07

When I got the cochlear implant, one of my favorite sounds... I have a couple now, one of them though, the first one I remember, was the sound of hummingbirds.

Daniel Scherl: 50:18

Oh, they're great, aren't they?

Jessica Flores: 50:19

Yeah, I did not know that they made that little "cheee ch-ch-ch-ch."

Daniel Scherl: 50:24

Yeah.

Jessica Flores: 50:24

It's like they're talking! It's crazy! They're like little fairies or something. Fairies of Mother Nature.

Daniel Scherl: 50:31

We have about ten of them outside of our apartment in this big tree, and they're constantly flying around, yeah, they're great.

Jessica Flores: 50:36

They are. They're SO amazing. Yeah. So I love that sound. Also the sound of, um, bubbles of carbonated drinks. I did not know...

Daniel Scherl: 50:49

Like the "keeeesssh?" [sound of a can of soda being cracked open].

Jessica Flores: 50:49

Like, no. Like the "Tssssssssss." [Sound of carbonated bubbles].

Daniel Scherl: 0:00

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Jessica Flores: 51:11

I didn't know that made a sound. Like the after I got the cochlear, I was like... are you kidding me? Like everything



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

makes a sound. That's just too much. Why does everything make a sound? That's annoying. I was like... "Shut everything off!" Um, least favorite sound. I don't like chalk board.

Daniel Scherl: 51:11

Yeah, no one likes that.

Jessica Flores: 51:13

Ohhhhh... like, like we don't even hear it, but we're cringing.

Daniel Scherl: 51:17

That's funny. Jess, if you don't mind me asking, it's very personal, but...

Jessica Flores: 51:20

Okay, okay.

Daniel Scherl: 51:21

Did you, I mean, this is probably... I feel stupid asking this question, but...

Jessica Flores: 51:25

It's okay, it's okay.

Daniel Scherl: 51:26

No, no, but...

Jessica Flores: 51:27

No question is stupid. Go.

Daniel Scherl: 51:28

Did you know that things like, you know, farting and biological stuff made noises your whole life or no? Was it like, "Oh, shit. I didn't realize farts were that loud."

Jessica Flores: 51:35

Farts? Yes, because when people sit next to me I can feel vibration.

[Daniel laughs hard].

Jessica Flores: 51:40

My sister actually really loves to do this thing... My sister Monica, she loves to do this thing where she'll fart kind of far away from me and then she'll look, she'll give me this look. She goes...

[Jess shows the facial expression] and she'll wait for me to



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

smell it.

Daniel Scherl: 51:56

Oh...

Jessica Flores: 51:57

And then I'll be like, mother fu... how could you?! [Both laugh]. Um but yes, I knew they made noise mostly because, like, you know, people caption it all the time on TV, "Fart noise.",

Daniel Scherl: 52:12

Ahh. Okay.

Jessica Flores: 52:12

But yeah, I was aware. But there were, there were some things that I had no idea made a noise.

Daniel Scherl: 52:18

Like what?

Jessica Flores: 52:19

Concrete. Like bicycles on the concrete. Like they have like this crunchy noise?

Daniel Scherl: 52:25

Yeah, the tire. The rubber tire on the... yeah.

Jessica Flores: 52:27

I had no idea that that happened. [Laughs].

Daniel Scherl: 52:31

What about walking on grass?

Jessica Flores: 52:33

Yeah, stuff like that. No idea. I was like, what? This: [She rubs her hands together].

Daniel Scherl: 52:38

Oh.

Jessica Flores: 52:39

Rubbing your hands together? Every sound that, like could be qualified as those, like you know those YouTube



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

videos, what are they called?

Daniel Scherl: 52:53

ASMR.

Jessica Flores: 52:53

ASMR. Yeah. [In whispering ASMR voice]. "Welcome to our podcast... we have Daniel here today..." [Laughs].

Daniel Scherl: 52:54

What's your, what's your favorite animal?

Jessica Flores: 52:57

Probably the hummingbird. It's the first thing that comes to mind. They're amazing. And bumble bees.

Daniel Scherl: 53:01

If you had to choose, dogs or cats?

Jessica Flores: 53:03

I'm gonna say cat cause of Baskin here, my cat Baskin. [To the cat] I don't want to get you mad.

Daniel Scherl: 53:09

If Baskin wasn't in the room would you choose differently?

Jessica Flores: 53:12

I'd choose both, but since you're not giving me a choice, I'm gonna go with cats.

Daniel Scherl: 53:17

Jess, what do you think you have most to learn right now?

Jessica Flores: 53:20

Mmmmm. That's such a good question. You know, I'm... I'm always learning stuff. I mean, I don't really know right now. I think I'm still learning, like I'm pretty confident in myself, but I do feel like I could be more confident. You know? Or I could just, like, give myself a pat on the back more often. You know, like I know I'm good, but sometimes you know, I forget that. So I could learn to, like, maybe just trust myself more, like trust that I'm good enough.



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Daniel Scherl: 53:54

Absolutely. Well, that's what I was telling you offline about when you get in your forties. I think you especially just start to realize that you don't really care anymore what people think. Because yeah, I think for most of us, we go "Oh, man, I don't know how many days I have left on Earth, and I really want to enjoy them and just all that stupid shit from the past... forget it. I just want to live my life." And if people don't like who I am, fuck 'em. You know?

Jessica Flores: 54:20

Yeah, exactly. Man, I can't wait to be forty. [Both laugh].

Daniel Scherl: 54:23

Well, take your time! Enjoy your thirties, because I will tell you, there is a downside, which is you become emotionally, really awesome.

Jessica Flores: 54:34

Shhhh! Oh, that's the downside?

Daniel Scherl: 54:34

No, that no... the upside is you become emotionally, really awesome. The downside is that your body does start to betray you...

Jessica Flores: 54:44

SHHHH!

Daniel Scherl: 54:44

...and all kinds of minor aches and pains and little health problems.

Jessica Flores: 54:49

Don't tell me that!

Daniel Scherl: 54:49

Ahh, it's coming, it comes for everybody. What makes you feel the most connected in a world that is a speaking world?

Jessica Flores: 54:57

Sign language. And, like if I have interpreters. Like I mean, if you're talking about, like, communication wise, like I always feel more connected with the hearing world in general if I have interpreters available to help me figure out what's going on. And when I'm signing with my deaf friends, it's like, it's just this amazing experience. Like, I'm so grateful that I started



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

learning sign language because it's so... Like I said, before I didn't have sign language, I was able to speak whatever's on my mind, but when somebody spoke back to me, like, I had to, like, put this whole puzzle together. All the time. And with sign language, it's so fluid. Like how you feel right now about communication. You can hear me. You can tell me what's on your mind. When I'm signing with someone, I can understand them and I can tell them what's on my mind, so I get both two ways of the communication instead of just one way. Yeah, so that makes me feel more connected in the world.

Daniel Scherl: 56:01

Where in the world do you feel most connected emotionally when you go out in the world?

Jessica Flores: 56:06

Two places, one when I'm like just outside and I'm taking my time to observe like flowers and just watch animals, you know, around me? And just like, I really like nature. I really like it. Like it's just... there's just something beautiful about it, especially spring. Spring is my favorite season because that's when everything flowers and the nature, they've been working so hard. They spent years to like, just boom, you know? And like, there's something magical about that in the colors and everything. Um, so I feel really connected there. And also now ah, skating. Like skate boarding.

Daniel Scherl: 56:48

Cool.

Jessica Flores: 56:49

Yeah, just just something where I can have... that I can just be focused. I can be so focused on the moment. You know, the present. And whenever I'm focused in the present it's like, yeah, that's when I feel the most emotionally connected in the world.

Daniel Scherl: 57:06

What do you hope to change about yourself and the world as you get older?

Jessica Flores: 57:10

I hope to just, you know, keep paving, paving a way for other deaf talent. Like I just hope to put a footprint in the world and just make a little bit of difference.



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Daniel Scherl: 57:24

If my listeners could get one thing from this podcast, what would you want them to walk away with?

Jessica Flores: 57:29

I want them to walk away with just having more of an open mind. Like, especially when it comes to like diversity and inclusion. Like don't forget about us, like those with disabilities, they, like we also have a voice. I just hope to kind of just bring a little new perspective, maybe? Like make them curious about sign language, you know? And I hope they learn more stuff about deaf and hard hearing people.

Daniel Scherl: 57:55

Twenty years from now, you're in your fifties and let's say you decide to listen back to this podcast here in 2020 when we're all stuck in a quarantine. What do you hope you've accomplished by the time you're in your fifties, re-listening to this podcast?

Jessica Flores: 58:08

I really hope I paved a way. Yeah. I hope I got to my big goal and knocking down those doors and the barriers for other deaf and hard of hearing people and to get us more involved in the entertainment industry. I hope I did it by then. But by then, you know, I won't care as much, right, Daniel? Because we all, we all give zero fucks when we get to our forties! [They both laugh hard].

Daniel Scherl: 58:35

No! You give, you give a lot of fucks about what you want to do with your life. You just give zero fucks about what other people think of it!

Jessica Flores: 58:43

That's true. Yeah! So oh, my God. I'm gonna be so awesome at 50. Now I can't wait for 50.

Daniel Scherl: 58:48

Yeah, I'm telling you. Rock star is what you're gonna be. Jess, what's your spirit, animal?

Jessica Flores: 58:54

Hmmmm. Hummingbirds. Yeah, hummingbirds. Especially when they fly super close. Have you ever had one fly like right up to you?



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Daniel Scherl: 59:02

Oh yeah, right up to you, yeah.

Jessica Flores: 59:02

Yeah, they like look at you. Did you know that hummingbirds can memorize people's faces?

Daniel Scherl: 59:07

I did not.

Jessica Flores: 59:08

Yeah, so they know who's like... filling the nectar. If you like, fill it, or they know who's in that area. So I remember there's like times where I forgot to fill the nectar and then they would just fly straight up to me and be like, "Hey, ah, yeah. So, uh, just fluttering in the air..."

Daniel Scherl: 59:26

"It's nectar time."

Jessica Flores: 59:26

They're like, "Yeah, you know, I'm getting kind of hungry."

Daniel Scherl: 59:28

What do you think is the meaning of life?

Jessica Flores: 59:31

That's such a big question. Part of me doesn't know. And I... it took me a very long time to be comfortable with not knowing the answer to that. Another part of me at the moment, right now, is to take care of the Earth and to take care of each other. That's what I think it's all about. I think it's helping one another just, you know, taking care of each other. Taking care of the earth.

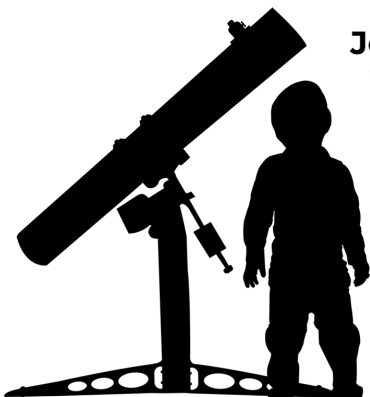
Daniel Scherl: 1:0:00

If people who are deaf or hard of hearing, listen to the podcast or read the transcript, what is it you would like to say to them specifically?

Jessica Flores: 1:0:08

You're not alone. I say, yeah... I say this lot because it was really lonely, like you don't have anyone to connect with.

You're like, you're like, "Oh, well I guess there's only me. You know, like I'm the only one having to deal with all this." But you're not alone at all. There's people out there that have the



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

same communication barriers as you, that have the same experiences as you. Um, so I just want you to know that like, you're not alone, you have me. I'm out there, too, and we're all fighting in this together. Yeah, I think that's really important for people to keep in the back of their mind.

Daniel Scherl: 1:0:44

That's great. The last thing I like to do with all of my guests is play a little game I have called "299 Philosophical and Life Questions with Moonbird." And I've collected 299 questions that I think are really cool from friends and family and the internet, and you get to pick two numbers.

Jessica Flores: 1:1:02

Two numbers? Oh.

Daniel Scherl: 1:1:03

So pick two numbers between...

Jessica Flores: 1:1:04

I can't, I can't pick...

Daniel Scherl: 1:1:05

...between 1 and 299 and I'll read you those questions.

Jessica Flores: 1:1:08

I thought I would have to do all 200. I was kind of looking forward to that. [Both laugh].

Daniel Scherl: 1:1:12

That would be my next podcast.

Jessica Flores: 1:1:13

ALL TWO HUNDRED!

Daniel Scherl: 1:1:16

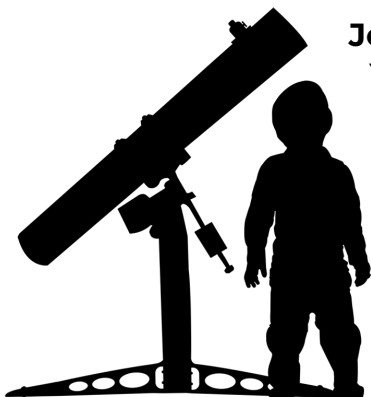
All three hundred! 299... That's a lot of questions.

Jessica Flores: 1:1:17

Yes, let's do it. Why not add a 300, make it even? [Laughs].
Um okay, hold on. I'm gonna pick... 88...

Daniel Scherl: 1:1:26

Okay, and?



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Jessica Flores: 1:1:27

49.

Daniel Scherl: 1:1:28

Okay, 88 and 49. Do you want them in that order or in numerical order?

Jessica Flores: 1:1:33

Let's be rebels? I want them in the...

Daniel Scherl: 1:1:35

Order you selected. Okay.

Jessica Flores: 1:1:36

88, then 49.

Daniel Scherl: 1:1:38

All right, so 88. "What's one thing you wish you knew how to do?"

Jessica Flores: 1:1:42

Ooooooh.

Daniel Scherl: 1:1:43

Besides manufacture dolls?

Jessica Flores: 1:1:49

[Whispers] Mother fucker... no! [Both laugh].

Jessica Flores: 1:1:49

One thing I wish I knew how to do? Probably read and speak Spanish. Like I, I'm actually trying to learn Spanish right now, um, through an app. But I'd like to... Yeah, I wish I could do that right now.

Daniel Scherl: 1:2:07

49. What's your biggest regret in life so far?

Jessica Flores: 1:2:12

Mmmm. See, I know some people are gonna be like, oh, yeah, you know, like, you have to have one regret, but...

Daniel Scherl: 1:2:20

You don't have to!



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Jessica Flores: 1:2:21

Then you know, I don't have, normally have any regret. I mean, like, my life is what it was. It's... You know, I'm still alive today. I'm still doing things, so they're... I don't, I don't like looking back at the past and being like, "Oh, if I just changed this, this, and that, my life would have been completely better." No, I think, I like to think I had those experiences for a reason. So yeah, no regret, You know, just going with the flow.

Daniel Scherl: 1:2:52

That's awesome. Jess, I can't thank enough for being here and for reading my lips and for...

Jessica Flores: 1:2:58

Thank you! Oh, my God... I never had anyone say "Thank you for taking the time to read my lips." Holy shit! Yeah... no problem.

Daniel Scherl: 1:3:09

No, I mean...

Jessica Flores: 1:3:09

Thank you for saying that.

Daniel Scherl: 1:3:09

I... I have no idea the effort it would even take and just having, I... I... when I knew we were going to be interviewing you, I tried to read Jolene's lips for a little while and just see if I could make sense of it, and I'm like... Oh, my God, this is very difficult, you know?

Jessica Flores: 1:3:24

It. it is. I mean, it's definitely the speech therapy, you know? That's like taking it for, like, eight years. Eight plus years, I think it was nine because I stayed back in second grade, don't tell anyone... Or tell everyone. Everyone? I stayed back in second grade. Um, I think that really trained me to do it. And I mean I've been lip-reading for uh, what? For thirty plus years.

Daniel Scherl: 1:3:49

Well it is really impressive being able to communicate with you, honestly, so thank you.

Jessica Flores: 1:3:54

Yeah, thank you. You did a good job.



Jessica Flores

Deaf Advocate, Comedian

Daniel Scherl: 1:3:56

And I wish you the best of luck, and I can't wait to see more from you, and sincerely have a great day!

Jessica Flores: 1:4:01

Thank you. Ahh, you're awesome! Stay awesome!

Daniel Scherl: 1:4:04

You're awesome. You stay awesome.

Jessica Flores: 1:4:06

Yeah! You stay awesome! [Smiles].

Daniel Scherl: 1:4:10

I want to thank my amazing guest, Jess Flores. You can check out her YouTube channel by searching Jessica Marie Flores [spells out Flores].

We've got more amazing women for you to hear from, so join me next time when I interview Michelle Maxwell, a Master Electrician who not only climbs rigs, puts down thousands of feet of cable and kicks major ass, but has done it fully pregnant... twice. It's a fun look at what life is like for a working mom in the entertainment business, so until then...

If you'd like more Moonbird in your life, and, hey, who wouldn't? Head on over to memoriesofamoonbird.com or visit me on social media... @memoriesofamoonbird.

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