

Jeff Around Town – September 13th, 2024

Otis: Jeff Around Town. All we need is Jeff now.

Jeff: And here I am. Good morning, Otis.

Otis: Hey, good morning, Jeff.

Jeff: So, Otis, you've done a lot of things in your career, from radio to TV to writing books to playing music. Well, I was going to get to the acting, but I just found out that you once worked at a hospital as well. So, you are a renaissance man.

Otis: Yes, I am.

Jeff: And what about your acting?

Otis: Oh, well, yeah, I've done some stuff with some theaters way back when. It's been a long time since I did stage work, but yeah, I've been an actor.

Jeff: And you've met your share of actors.

Otis: Yeah, oh, more than my share.

Jeff: Okay.

Otis: Some famous, some not, some local, some good, some bad. I know actors.

Jeff: Well, there are some actors in town. They may not be famous.

Otis: Thespians.

Jeff: Thespians, yes, but there are several wonderful actors in the Omaha area that have never been seen on stage or on film. And sometimes they deliberately look disheveled or apply makeup in a specific way, but all for a very important and life-saving reason. A while back, I met someone at the Mill on Leavenworth, the coffee shop, who it turns out is one of those people. She's also a big fan of KVNO. So, Otis, just a side note, I love randomly meeting people who listen to us.

Otis: Right, right.

Jeff: Anyway, her name is Sarah May. We got to talking and she was telling me that sometimes she plays the role of, say, a dying wife or maybe a grandmother whose grandchild is sick. Or perhaps she herself, you know, isn't feeling so great, even though she actually feels fine. So, 25 years ago, while she was living in Cincinnati, she was dating a doctor who suggested to her that she would make a great standardized patient.

Otis: I have heard about this role playing, this educational acting, really, and the actors who do it and do it well are amazingly effective.

Jeff: And so helpful.

Otis: Yeah.

Jeff: Yeah. Well, Sarah would eventually return to Omaha and applied to UNMC's standardized patient human simulation program. And that's where the non-medical person plays the role of a patient, as you just mentioned, or the relative of a patient. So, you've watched Seinfeld.

Otis: Right.

Jeff: Yeah. So, do you remember that episode where Kramer plays a standardized patient? Did you ever see?

Otis: No. You know, I'm not one... I've not seen all.

Jeff: Not a huge Seinfeld...

Otis: I've seen a few...

Jeff: I've watched everyone like 20 times. So anyway, he take it kind of to an extreme level. But people will think of that that Kramer episode when they hear a standardized patient. So, the UNMC program has been in place for over 10 years. And I believe Creighton University also has a similar program. So recently I met back up with Sarah May and another Sarah, Sarah Chris. They like to call themselves Sarah Squared. Sarah Chris is the manager of the advanced human simulation program at UNMC. And this is where they train those actors to portray patients and family members. And they mostly work with medical providers, but also sometimes work with first responders, clergy, and police. So, you get a script. You do these pre-briefings and debriefings. And, you know, to state the obvious, medical providers are essential. And I might argue that these actors, although they've never been seen on stage or on screen, are a vital link to helping to teach future doctors and nurses and others. They also sometimes, Otis, use mannequins in virtual and augmented reality. But it's the real people, the actors, who are essential.

Otis: You're going to be real good at it. It's improv, but educational improv.

Jeff: Educational improv. Oh, I like that. I like that so much. So how about you? Have you always dreamed of playing the role of a lifetime, a role that could help save a life? So, if you're between the age of 18 to 90, maybe it's something you should consider.

Otis: I tend to overact, so I'd probably be better.

Jeff: Maybe not you. So, they may be hiring again. I'm not sure on that exactly. They weren't sure exactly. But possibly in December. So, if you Google standardized patient and UNMC, it'll pop right up. It's super easy to find. To future, any future standardized patient actors, I'd like to say break a leg or at least act like you've broken your leg.

Otis: I get it. It's really a valuable little skill.

Jeff: It is.

Otis: Sure, there are some people who are very, very good at it.

Jeff: I believe Sarah is excellent. All right.

Otis: You're just hanging out at coffee shops, huh?

Jeff: Talking to people who listen to KVNO.

Otis: All right.