The internet is a great tool for those looking to keep in touch with friends, sell a used barbecue, buy concert tickets without standing in line and partake in naughty adventures. It’s also a legitimate base for creative types to get their work to the public without jumping through corporate red tape. Just ask Superego, a four-man comedy group from Long Beach.

For three years, the quartet – Mark McConville, Matt Gourley, Jeremy Carter and Jeff Crocker – has been creating a podcast from the comforts of Gourley’s East Long Beach home. Each episode runs approximately 20 minutes and features skits, songs, television commercial parodies and anything else that makes the members laugh. Other than the music portions, all comedy routines are strictly improvisational, which means no script, no well-thought out plans and no idea where fellow actors are going.

Creating material on the spot is not an easy task, but the foursome has been friends for years and each member lists the improv group ComedySportz on his resume.

This combination of knowing each other and their craft led to the formation of Superego, which incorporates the world of psychiatry as a foundation to funnel its bits.

How did Superego begin?

Matt: Jeremy and I were at a Seal Beach pub and we started writing stuff on cocktail napkins. Podcasting was new and I thought it was the perfect thing for two guys who don’t like to leave their houses.

Jeremy: I like being at home with my son. I enjoy going to friends’ houses, but so far, Matt’s is the only house that is close enough to mine, so I don’t have to go very far. I also feel like the freeway is a slaughterhouse. The sooner I get off of it, the safer I am.

Matt: When we first started, it was just me and Jeremy. Our original idea was to do a monthly fake preacher sermon called the Godcast, but we thought that would be too limited. We thought of the Superego idea because it’s a loose format.

Jeff: There’s a lot of latitude in the world of psychosis.

Matt: For the first one, I had a pre-recorded bit that Mark was on. After that, we made it a rule that he would be on every episode.

Mark: There’s one where I left Matt a voicemail that said, “Hey, did you forget about me?”

How does the creative process take place?

Jeremy: Ideas pop into our heads during the week, and I will record those ideas into
my phone. When we all gather to record we present our scraps of paper or recordings in our phones and see if anything sounds interesting.

Matt: It’s all improvised and we edit it down to make it sound not improvised.

Jeff: Often it starts with an idea and we know where we want it to lead. And that never happens.

Mark: If we were more disciplined, we might write it down.

Matt: Jeremy is the wildcard.

Jeff: He’s the person who you have no idea where the things that come out of his mouth come from.

Jeremy: That’s a nice way of saying I’m unstable.

Do any of you have a science background?

Matt: There’s no research involved. I like science, but in no way am I a scientist. Psychology is perfect because in improv the main character is never going to be a normal person. I found a website that lists 10 clinical personality disorders. Any character can be wrangled into one of the 10.

Jeremy: There’s something about scientific academia that is the perfect straight man for a gathering of strange individuals.

Mark: To tip our hat to show how not scientific we are, we spelled science with a ‘p’.

Is there a difference in preparation between the audio and video skits?

Jeremy: Yes. With the exception of the animated shorts and Jeff’s expertise, video generally needs much more planning and a script. And that requires a trip outside of the house.

Jeff: The first was pretty simple.

Matt: I was driving on the 101 toward Santa Barbara and saw a sign that said “Bunnin Chevrolet”. It sounded like something people do, like, “We’re going bunnin”. I wanted to do a video because I’d say that to people and no one knew what it was.

Mark: Someone thought it was pulling girls’ hair buns.

Matt: We’ve evolved, but that was the one that got video started.

Jeff: The video ideas are shorted and sight gag-related. They’re on a smaller scale.

Matt: Videos get more response.

Jeff: This is an age of internet video.

Does a podcast cost anything?

Matt: It never really costs anything.

Jeff: We bought labcoats and a Spiderman costume. And pay for web hosting.

Mark: We invested in some microphones.

Is there a goal in mind for Superego?

Jeremy: I love doing Superego and I want it to always be fun, but it’s mostly about the people I get to work with. These guys are fun and funny and it’s always easy to do whatever we want. If someone wants to give us a million dollars each to continue to do this for a few years, I welcome that. Or if we land acting or writing gigs out of it, that’s cool too. I just take pleasure in the fact that I’m involved in something that my son can’t listen to for at least fifteen years.

Matt: We all agree that if it goes to something else, that’s a bonus.

Mark: I’ve been making dumb videos since high school and I know I’ll always have a bug to do this stuff.

Jeff: Same with me. I’ve been doing videos since high school. If we were getting paid to do this, that would be great. But we’re going to do it anyway. ■

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