

The Hamilcast: A Hamilton Podcast

Episode #97: I wanna talk about what I have learned, the hard-won wisdom I have earned // Part One

Host: Gillian Pensavalle

Guest: Chris Jackson, OG George Washington, Hamilton on Broadway

Description: Ladies and gentlemen, Chris Jackson coulda been anywhere in the world tonight, but he's here with me in New York City. Are you ready for Part One of my chat with him?? In this episode, CJack gets real about some of his past bad behavior during the early days of In The Heights, his experience being in the original Broadway company of Hamilton, the moment he thought he chose the wrong career path, and the mutual love, respect, and admiration flowing between the members of the Lin's Cabinet. We go in on those #TequilaThoughts, with a torrential downpour as our soundtrack.

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The Hamilcast's Transcribing Army

Ok, so we are doing this . . .

[Intro: Hi, I'm Stage and Stage's Lin-Manuel Miranda and you're listening to *The Hamilcast*.]

[*Boots/Cut*, laughter]

[Intro music: *Hamilton instrumental*]

G.PEN: Hello everyone, welcome back to *The Hamilcast*. It is me, Gillian. I am joined today by ... Christopher Jackson?

C.JACK: The unicorn.

G.PEN: Is that true? CJack, you know, you could have been anywhere in the world tonight but you're here with me...

C.JACK: We're here...

G.PEN: ... in New York City in the room where the podcast happens.

C.JACK: That's it.

G.PEN: I appreciate that. Thank you so much.

C.JACK: I'm really happy to be here.

G.PEN: Well thanks!

C.JACK: Finally.

G.PEN: Finally, right?

C.JACK: Yeah, it's been a minute. And it's totally my fault, to be completely fair...

G.PEN: It is not your fault...

C.JACK: No, no, I wanted to do this a while ago and then, you know, my life! Jesus!

G.PEN: Right. Well, let's tell the listeners what happened. Jesus. Well, before we get into it, there's a cocktail here and we have to talk about it real quick.

C.JACK: Let's. Let's... let's do that.

G.PEN: So it's a little bit of a story and we'll get back to this, listeners. So we just saw each other at the Carlyle for Mandy Gonzalez...

C.JACK: Who was magnificent by the way but we can get around to that...

G.PEN: Magnificent! You performed with her ...

C.JACK: Yeah, not so magnificently but...

G.PEN: Oh stop.

C.JACK: ...it was great...

G.PEN: Oh, stop it.

C.JACK: ...great to be there.

G.PEN: It was amazing. You did not sing *When You're Home...*

C.JACK: No.

G.PEN: No.

C.JACK: No. No.

G.PEN: It was great. You did *Life is Sweet* which is amazing.

C.JACK: Yeah, how 'bout that?

G.PEN: It was beautiful.

[Music excerpt: *Life is Sweet*

*Ooo but we follow the light
Every best way we find our way home
I don't ask "why me?" (why me)
I just say "why not!"
Taken all that I've been given, (given)
And turn it into livin', (livin')
For somebody else (somebody else)
Cuz i know that i'm loved*

[Excerpt fades out]

G.PEN: So we saw each other and talked. We...talked about this recording, and you told me that you enjoy the tequila.

C.JACK: I do.

G.PEN: So we scheduled this sort of tentatively 'cause you are a busy person, which we will get into, but you said tequila's your thing.

C.JACK: Sure.

G.PEN: I'm like, hey. I want my guests to be as comfortable as possible, I want you to get what you want. So the drink is called, "the pleasing expectation."

C.JACK: Okay.

G.PEN: ...it is tequila...

C.JACK: How apropos

G.PEN: How apropos. It is tequila... There is some fig jam in there that has been boiled and turned into a liquidy deliciousness...

C.JACK: Yeah.

G.PEN: There is some liqueur in there, and there's some lime. You're into it though. You said before there are notes that just keep occurring.

C.JACK: Yeah, well you know, yes.

[laughter]

C.JACK: I can't really expound on that and I'm not as much of a... I'm not a foodie so I have no descriptive talent whatsoever when it comes to describing food and things that I enjoy 'cause I'm too busy enjoying them.

G.PEN: Right, Which is sort of...

C.JACK: And the tequila doesn't help the ...

G.PEN: The articulation...

C.JACK: The articulation, exactly, So, with that being said, what a drink.

G.PEN: Well I'm so glad you like it.

C.JACK: I mean, you boiled down fig jam.

G.PEN: Well yeah, because then it will be real goopy and not cool.

C.JACK: As you do, but I have to tell you all -- get the recipe for this.

C.JACK: Because it's real and it's *the* deal.

G.PEN: Right. Well thank you. I'm so glad. So let's do a cheers. I'm not really a tequila drinker, but when...you know...

C.JACK: It's okay, that's all right...

G.PEN: When you're here...

C.JACK: I can help you. Cheers.

G.PEN: Here, we go. [drink] Oh see, I could get used to that though.

C.JACK: I know you could.

G.PEN: That's pretty good.

C.JACK: Yeah.

G.PEN: If I do say so myself.

C.JACK: Yeah, you did.

G.PEN: Shoutout to who we call Mix Master Mike.

C.JACK: Mix Master Mike, in the clutch. In the clutch.

G.PEN: So yeah, this has been a little bit in the works... there was like a surprise tweet from you to the *Hamilcast* where I was like, "oh shit!" like months ago.

C.JACK: Really?

G.PEN: Yeah...that's what you were saying...

C.JACK: No, I remember tweeting you, but it was a surprise?

G.PEN: Yeah, I was not expecting you to say like, hey!

C.JACK: Well I wasn't expecting to see a podcast that was so ... beyond just enthusiasm... You're just really thoughtful about how you...look at the show and how you interact with folks who are...approaching or involved with the show from different perspectives.

G.PEN: Thank you.

C.JACK: I mean, I've listened to...ten at least. I just really enjoy your insight and what you tend to bring out of folks. And I haven't done a podcast about my involvement in the show in a year.

G.PEN: Okay.

C.JACK: It's been a full year and so...

G.PEN: Oh cool, so that should be a cool perspective

C.JACK: 'Cause we're coming on the full year anniversary of me being done with the show.

G.PEN: Yes. I know, October...When was your last?

C.JACK: November 13th.

G.PEN: November 13th, the last time I saw you in it was October.

C.JACK: Oh, okay. Okay. Yeah.

G.PEN: So I remember... we were sort of messaging about that and then you're a busy person. So whenever messages sort of stop I just chalk it up to 'they're a busy person'...

C.JACK: Oh my god.

G.PEN: ...and if it's gonna happen it's gonna happen, it's totally fine. And then I hear from one Miss Kimmy Mark.

[C.JACK laughs] Yeah.

G.PEN: If you guys that haven't listened to the episode ... go back. Kimmy Mark is the dresser of Washington and Burr on Broadway. She's been there since the beginning. Leslie Odom, Jr. brought her over and it's been awesome. But she is the greatest. And she texted me... "Guess who I saw? I saw Chris Jackson and he said 'I learned more about you in your episode of the *Hamilcast* than I did in all those months working with you.'" I said, "Tell him to check his DMs!"

[laughter]

G.PEN: But I can't believe it...

C.JACK: Get off your ass and call me.

G.PEN: I was like, we've been doing this...

C.JACK: Yeah...

G.PEN: But you know that was my comedic defense mechanism, "CJack said what?"

C.JACK: No. I dig. But I mean that, I really enjoy the podcast.

G.PEN: Well thank you so much! Thank you for being here, and then we connected at Mandy's show...And then a couple days later here you are.

C.JACK: Here I am.

G.PEN: So thanks for that. you were busy today, you were at a shoot today.

C.JACK: I was shooting, oddly enough, an interactive video for the folks at Mount Vernon.

G.PEN: Oh!

C.JACK: Who are working and close to finishing ... my part was, I think, the final missing piece but it's basically a Choose Your Own Adventure around four different scenarios that Washington dealt with and they've gone through the process of hiring actors. It's basically like taking a glimpse at a particular situation and saying, "Okay, these are the four advisors that will tell you what their viewpoint is."

G.PEN: Right. Cool.

C.JACK: But I'm the guy who says, "Choose this." I'm kind of like the red pill/blue pill guy. I then give them the outcome of what Washington actually did so all of those who didn't choose what Washington did, you kind of get to see at least how that stands up against the prevailing minds of the time, i.e. Hamilton, Jefferson, Knox. 'Cause there's a

couple of battles involved, there's a couple of treaty issues, the Genêt affair, the French Revolution, all of that.

G.PEN: Yeah, that is the next chapter in the Chernow book which I'm covering which I promise I'll get back to...

C.JACK: Oh, dig. Chernow paints such a beautiful picture of Gentleman Genêt and how jacked up he was.

[laughter]

G.PEN: Well, Chernow does not mince words...

C.JACK: No, he doesn't.

G.PEN: He loves Hamilton, he hates Jefferson super hard. I told Lin this, one of my favorite quotes in all of Chernow so far, he says that, "You know, well, Jefferson said that so you have to take it with a pound of salt."

C.JACK: Yeah.

G.PEN: Not a grain...

C.JACK: Yeah. A pound...

G.PEN: A pound! He hates Jefferson so much, and it's like, Jefferson... as Daveed said, "He sucks!" He did... they both...

C.JACK: They're all beautiful and messy and crazy, you know. And flat-out inhumane in certain things...

G.PEN: Absolutely.

C.JACK: Look at their political ideology. The broad strokes certainly got covered in *Hamilton* but man does Chernow go in. And in the Washington biography, he goes in even more which is...but from a slightly different perspective. Not just Washington's perspective, but from.... His view is definitely more encompassing because it has to deal with how that particular affair establishes so much. With Washington, it's about how his life established so many of the things that are still pertinent to our attitudes today.

G.PEN: Can you get into that affair a little bit and explain?

C.JACK: Yeah, so we were able to win the war because of the French, and as we're negotiating the peace treaty with Britain, the France goes into their own Revolution.

G.PEN: Right.

C.JACK: And so they send Ambassador Genêt to America to recruit Americans... privateers if you will.

G.PEN: Okay....

C.JACK: ...to maraud goods and ships that are operating in the Atlantic and the Caribbean. And so Genêt, while he was also here, was rounding up American sentiment, was trying to guide and stoke American revolutionary sentiment to be against Great Britain while we still *needed* Great Britain.

G.PEN: [inhales] Messy...

C.JACK: Yeah, and so, throughout it all the French Revolution goes through all of its different ebbs and flows and you end up with an Emperor, Napoleon. Whereas, because America's neutrality was upheld, it did two things: it established the Executive as sort of the keeper of the treaties instead of giving it to Congress... and even then, you give something to Congress it just gets even messier because you add hundreds of people and voices and influences and interests. So it established that, but it also maintained our relationship with the Brits so that we could continue our trade and make money.

G.PEN: And one of those other ways where Lin was like, "I only have two hours and forty-five minutes. I can't do anything..."

C.JACK: Five hours later...

G.PEN: I love the way you jump right in. You guys, if you're hearing... It's a rainy fall day here in New York City. My window is open, so that whooshing is all the cabs...

C.JACK: Just deal with it, okay?

G.PEN: They know.

C.JACK: I'm still soaked.

G.PEN: I know. And when you walked in, Mike was like, "My closet's your closet if you want a clean, fresh..."

C.JACK: You know, that is generosity on a level that I can't really describe nor deserve so it's all good.

G.PEN: Oh please. Come on! So is that only going to be in Mount Vernon? Is that to go visit the...

C.JACK: Good question. They built a theatre. The name of the project is called *Be Washington*.

G.PEN: What!

C.JACK: Right. So it's going to be at...

G.PEN: Happily...

C.JACK: ...at the theater at George Washington's Mount Vernon. It's also going to be online so it's going to be a really cool tool for kids and for history folks but especially for kids who are scratching the surface of constitutional history and that time. It gives you another sort of layer, not as deep as *Hamilton* but certainly along those lines. It's just a study aid, it's just a means by which you can stoke the curiosity.

G.PEN: Probably good for teachers, I'd think.

C.JACK: Very much so. Geared very much for them. So check my Twitter feed as soon as it's out. I'll certainly be putting it out.

G.PEN: And tell me and I'll post all about it too.

C.JACK: Yeah, and if it looks bad then I ain't saying nothing.

G.PEN: Well no, you're going to sound great.

C.JACK: If I sound bad, if I look bad, then I'll probably be a little quieter.

G.PEN: It's going to be fine, it's going to be fine. So you said that it's been your year anniversary since leaving *Hamilton*.

C.JACK: Yes.

G.PEN: I just want to say, just as such a fan of the show and a fan of you and a fan of Lin's Washington, I don't know if one of the episodes that you listened to ... and listeners, I apologize for repeating myself constantly but if you're still listening you know that I do that and you're cool with it, ... when... the first time I saw... 'cause I listened to the album for three months before I started the podcast, I listened to it since it came out on NPR and I hadn't seen it yet... I was like, "I need to start a podcast about this thing."

C.JACK: Dig.

G.PEN: So when I finally saw you, which was the night Lin-Manuel Miranda won the Pulitzer...

C.JACK: [lightly] Oh. Oh that.

G.PEN: ...which was awesome, that whole thing. So I loved *Right Hand Man* on the album, but seeing you and now seeing all George Washingtons, I am starstruck about it. I'm like, "Oh my God, that's George Washington!" That entrance is amazing and then your exit in *One Last Time* is amazing. And it's not just your exit, 'cause I know you come back in *Who Lives, Who Dies*, but you are so transcendent and just gorgeous in that role and I thank you for everything that you've given to it because you can tell that you gave your all every minute of every performance and to see you in April of 2016 and then a couple weeks before your last performance, I just want to thank you for all of that.

C.JACK: Thank you

G.PEN: You are incredible.

C.JACK: I'm glad you enjoyed it.

G.PEN: I did! It's an okay show, you know?

[Chuckles]

G.PEN: Everyone's just trying their best. No, it's amazing. But now that you have a year to... a year away from it... 'cause I spoke to Anthony Rapp about this when he was on the show... when he was in the phenomenon of *Rent*, you need a little bit to step away from it to realize what happened. So you were in the phenomenon of *In the Heights*. You were in the phenomenon of *Hamilton*, which I know are two completely different types of fervor...

C.JACK: Fervor yes, experience? Maybe not so far as you would think.

G.PEN: Great, tell me why.

C.JACK: So, for me it's all in the same car. The consistency in both of those experiences is this: When I met Lin and Tommy and Bill...

G.PEN: Bill Sherman.

C.JACK: Yeah. I'd known Lac. Lac played second keyboard - subbed and then played second keyboard at *Lion King*. Lac had actually played my rehearsals when I was doing Simba toward the latter part of my run. So I met them in 2002, and I quite literally had, through the course of certain events, considered for the first and the only time since I moved to New York, I had considered the fact that I may possibly have chosen the wrong thing. Because of outside influence, because of doing *The Lion King* and being injured almost constantly, three knee surgeries through the course of that process including going out on crutches essentially... I had gone through college, I had gone through this - what at the time was the biggest Broadway show in the history of Broadway - and I just was disillusioned. It wasn't what I thought it was gonna be. The next thing wasn't what I thought it was gonna be.

G.PEN: Right.

C.JACK: And while I, for all intents and purposes, had found ...success really beyond Broadway, I left the show in April that summer, I filmed 8 or 9 episodes on *Oz* on HBO. Like "TV work... now I'm here", I'm able to do other things. I've done a lot of recording things. I had essentially touched all of the things that I had set out to do when I came to New York in 1993. It didn't feel like I was making it. It didn't feel like I had accomplished anything.

G.PEN: Why?

C.JACK: I don't know. I think a lot of it was I was in my twenties and I was a little bit adrift...emotionally and just growth-wise. And there was something about meeting Tommy. I meet Tommy Kail, and he looks like -- I mean this as no slight -- he looks like a 19-year-old kid.

G.PEN: That's a compliment I think, right?

C.JACK: Yeah, except we're dudes, and dudes think about things a little bit differently but I kind of played him short.

G.PEN: What do you mean?

C.JACK: 'Cause I looked at him and was like, "What does he know?" Admittedly it was one of the greatest mistakes of my life. But I didn't get it. I didn't regard him. I didn't realize that someone -- although Tommy's only a few years younger than me -- I didn't *get* that someone who came off that young could be as smart and intuitive and caring and compassionate and all of the things that make him just a brilliant man.

G.PEN: It was like, "*Yo, who's this kid, what's he going to do?*" kinda thing?

C.JACK: I didn't get it. Yeah, quite honestly, that's exactly what it was. And as far as Lin was concerned, Lin was like this unicorn. I was like, "Yo, this dude, he can write rhymes." I know rappers.

G.PEN: Right.

C.JACK: You know what I'm saying? I know actors, I know rappers, I know folks that have been trying to do things like this. At the time I knew a couple people who were trying to write hip hop musicals but they didn't have what Lin had and it was that aspect of thing was like pretty obvious.

G.PEN: Right.

C.JACK: But having been through the Disney machine of it all, I just assumed that... something that could eventually be a Broadway thing had to come with 'guys in suits' and had to be one or two people degrees removed from Sondheim himself. It hadn't at the time occurred to me that they were as real... They *were* what was happening. Even before Broadway knew it, they knew that what they were doing was what's happening. And not in a conceited way...

G.PEN: No, you believe it.

C.JACK: ...they were just doing the work. Which was... that sort of signals how I was able to get as far away from where I needed to be as possible, because I was in the machine of it all without looking at the essence of what it is.

G.PEN: Yeah.

C.JACK: And so to go back to my original point, Tommy and Lin and Quiara [Hudes] and Andy later on and Lac and Bill, they reminded me of... the essence of why I do what I do, or why I wanted to do this thing that I do. They reminded me of that. And no matter what was happening in the world... You know I'd never been a guy who gets to go to a lot of theater, just by my life and the fact that I'm in it more than I...

G.PEN: Sure.

C.JACK: I don't see a lot of things. And that's something that I hope to... change, obviously. But these guys were like the essence of the spirit of what I always sort of walked around with, but kind of feeling alone in that. So the moment that I truly connected with them, it was a wrap. Like that was the point where I...

G.PEN: Of course.

C.JACK: Like, "Oh!" You know. Lin's my little brother, and I'll fight somebody over him. Like I'm a civilized person, but I would quite literally fight someone over Lin-Manuel. Like, "Just stop." You know, same with Tommy. Tommy's smarter than everybody that I know. I mean in terms of what we do. He's certainly smarter than me. But I would fight somebody over him.

G.PEN: Right.

C.JACK: And it's one of those things where... that comes out of an innate trust, an innate dependence -- like I depend on him? Because he's one of the few people that I know will always tell me the truth. And he always tells me the truth at my most vulnerable moment, like in my most vulnerable position.

G.PEN: What you need to hear the most.

C.JACK: "Tommy, I don't want to look crazy. I feel like I'm completely disconnected from this, and there are people watching." So he's the guy in that moment... like you

want to know the dynamic in the theater when Tommy comes by? I feel absolutely great -- *if* we get a chance to talk. Not just sorta like “Hey, what's up? Check your blocking on this. What's going on?” But I need to be able to [makes vomiting noise] everything to Tommy... [laughs] “I don't like *this*. I don't like *this*. *This* is not working. I don't know how to *fix* this.” And 99.9% of the time, it's me just having an emotional moment in response to not being able to figure something out.

G.PEN: Sure.

C.JACK: And the most amazing and frustrating and ultimately rewarding thing is when he gives me... he'll touch me on my forehead and ... like, “Try that.”

[laughter]

C.JACK: And then he's giving me, through... direction or misdirection... depending on how you phrase it ... he's giving me something to focus on. Then all of a sudden all of those things don't even matter.

G.PEN: Right. Like when you have the hiccups and somebody tells you to do something crazy.

C.JACK: Yeah and that wasn't...

G.PEN: ... That focus on something else...

C.JACK: Yeah. He's an actor whisperer in that way. His talent is code switching. He knows how to go from one person to the next person to the next person and never lose sight of the map or the movement but he knows how to help you continue on the path that he set you out on in the first place.

G.PEN: Yeah. Well it's funny that you say that because I've heard that from people on this podcast before. But when Lin was on I asked him who would be his second if he was in a duel today, and at first he said “Tommy.” and he said, “Well, Tommy...” or you.

C.JACK: Really?

G.PEN: And he said, “Because Chris is really good at talking people off ledges.”

C.JACK: Yeah.

G.PEN: And really helping people, so it's funny that you...

C.JACK: But I also would take that pistol and beat the hell out of somebody....

G.PEN: Oh sure.

[laughter]

C.JACK: Before it ever got to that part, so...

G.PEN: Of course. I am like that too. I am fiercely loyal, somewhat to a fault, you know. It's very...

C.JACK: I would literally... [laughs] I would do illegal things if it meant help him or saving him.

G.PEN: Of course.

C.JACK: 'Cause here's the other part... I'm gonna just like bookend this: *In the Heights*, we do a thousand readings. I met my *wife* doing that show.

G.PEN: I know.

C.JACK: Right? I had my *first child*... my son is the first *In the Heights* baby.

G.PEN: No way!

C.JACK: Yeah, CJ is ... Veronica was still nursing. The first thing she did after CJ was born, the first thing she did in public was participate in the Manhattan Theatre Club reading that we did of *In the Heights*.

G.PEN: Wow.

C.JACK: And she was -- sorry babe -- she was ... nursing! So she would have to take breaks...

G.PEN: That's not sorry. That's a thing she has to do.

C.JACK: No, no, no. She'd be like, "Why would you say that?" Not that there's any shame but ... there's Mama privacy things... I'm inconsiderate, but I'm blowing those

away. But you know what I'm saying? The first people outside of her parents that were at the hospital were Bill Sherman and Lin Miranda.

G.PEN: Oh come on.

C.JACK: No, that's how deep... So you're asking me about... We're talking about the shows, but it's really so far beyond.

G.PEN: Yeah.

C.JACK: You know what I mean?

G.PEN: It's so much more than that.

C.JACK: It's the same stuff that every person listening to this is going to recognize, as "Oh yeah, that's what I do in my life." You know what I mean?

G.PEN: Yeah, that's what family is.

C.JACK: And it's the inherent value of that...

G.PEN: Yeah...

G.PEN: When you were talking about essence before...

C.JACK: Uh huh...

G.PEN: Can you define that in words, or is it truly just a feeling? Is it really just your gut telling you this is what the essence is?

C.JACK: That's a good question.

G.PEN: And there is no wrong answer.

[off mic noise]

C.JACK: That noise you hear is me putting ice in the second drink.

G.PEN: Or the rain pouring down which I'm loving because I hate summer so much.

C.JACK: Come on!

G.PEN: I'm just waiting for these fall days.

C.JACK: I love the fall but nobody wants the winter. We know what's coming.

G.PEN: That's what my doormat says: *Winter is Coming* because *Game of Thrones*. I am House Stark.

C.JACK: See, missed the whole thing.

G.PEN: I know, 'cause you're so busy.

C.JACK: No, not my *thing*.

G.PEN: Okay, that's fair.

C.JACK: *Harry Potter*, missed it. *Lord of the Rings*? Sorry.

G.PEN: Okay.

C.JACK: Couldn't care less.

[cross talk]

G.PEN: There are things that are super famous that I don't care about, except all those things you just said but...

C.JACK: Isn't it awful? ... 'Cause I have no culture.... Like... I know Bilbo and Gollum, I understand them as literary characters...

G.PEN: Sure..

C.JACK: Have not really ever sat down to comprehensively go through the whole series. Couldn't care.

G.PEN: The thing is, all the things that you mentioned are such a big commitment. There are seven books, seven movies, seven seasons. It's a really big commitment so I understand it.

C.JACK: Right. I mean I know they're good. *Game of Thrones*? Unh. I mean I know they're good, but...

G.PEN: Here's something that I hear all the time... "You do the *Hamilcast*? I haven't seen *Hamilton*, is that okay?" I'm like, "yeah..." Or like, "I don't listen to the album all the time. Is that okay?" I'm like, "It's okay. You're wrong but it's fine."

[CJack bursts into laughter]

G.PEN: It's fine to not listen to it every day. It's okay...

C.JACK: Yeah you did.

G.PEN: But people sort of say that to me.

C.JACK: Yeah.

G.PEN: Mike's heading out?

M.SMITH: [in distance] Game on, boyfriend.

C.JACK: Game on, bruh.

G.PEN: Mike's doing that snip-your-tie

C.JACK: Just West Wing reference down. I'm with ya.

M.SMITH: Bye guys.

G.PEN: Bye, have a great rehearsal.

G.PEN: But no, I get that and I'm not begrudging you any...of that.

C.JACK: Yeah. Missed all that.

G.PEN: And you mentioned your family, your beautiful family, that I definitely want to talk about and we're going to get to them in a little bit.

C.JACK: Sure.

G.PEN: But now that we... like we were saying before ...you are now a year out from being G.Wash. So you were there still, a couple of months after some of the original cast started leaving: Lin and Leslie and Phillipa Soo... and so you got to have that experience with this new cast. So what was that like to still be there as this very real leader of this show? You led the prayer, you were known as sort of the leader of the cast I think, from what I've heard, so what was it like for you to have some of your friends leave and now all of these new friends were coming in?

C.JACK: So what I learned early on with our company, from when we started...Our original Broadway company was like the '92 Dream Team, right? So if you're old enough to have followed the Olympics in '92: Jordan, Bird, Magic. Never in the history of modern sport had there ever been a collection of players that were not only the greatest at their particular position but they somehow turned all of... they were able to submit their talents to a common goal. Right?

C.JACK: When you start talking about the theater, you start talking about people... every single person in the company is of equal importance and of equal value? And has such a specific skill set that creates that level of importance and that level of specialty, if you will. And our company did that, not only in their artistic abilities but it was also a reflection of their spirit and their own personalities.

G.PEN: Um-mm.

C.JACK: Leslie Odom and I are not the same person. Leslie does things that I can't possibly do. He hears notes that I can't...There are tones of notes that I can't hear because his instrument is so different and his personality is so different. And we spent two years figuring out how to... feeling each other out. You know what I mean?

G.PEN: Yeah.

C.JACK: Not always in agreement with each other...

G.PEN: Of course.

C.JACK: ...but always in respect, and there was never a moment... Literally every single show, I would watch him -- because of my particular track, I could watch him craft that thing and shade it subtly every single night. That to me was... that's not something... that's not someone that needs to be led, do you know what I mean? Daveed Diggs doesn't need someone to lead him. Renee Goldsberry?

G.PEN: She's got this.

C.JACK: She don't need nobody to lead her.

[Laughter]

C.JACK: Pippa Soo's talent is a force that's even greater than herself and she's five years old.

[Laughter]

C.JACK: You know what I mean?

G.PEN: Happy birthday, Philippa. You just turned five.

C.JACK: I'm old enough to look at Pippa and just be astonished ...

G.PEN: Sure...

C.JACK: ... and a little envious that I wish I was that talented at that age.

G.PEN: Uh huh, and Jasmine is the same! Jasmine is also five.

C.JACK: And Anthony, whose head I would sometimes want to like smush. But I keep it 100. Like, Anthony and I butted heads...

G.PEN: Sure.

C.JACK: ...but big brothers and little brothers often do that.

G.PEN: That's what happens with family, you guys, it's not all puppies and rainbows.

C.JACK: *Jesus*. It is. And he'll be the first one to tell you too, because I annoyed the you-know-what out of him.

[Laughter]

C.JACK: Tryin to like... trying to give him advice at a time when he was not trying to have that advice.

G.PEN: Sure.

C.JACK: What I learned about that whole process with the original company is that you can't lead somebody that don't want to be led or doesn't need to be led. Because we're all sort of figuring ourselves out. Wasn't always the case, that's not always the case in every company, but what I learned about leadership... Tommy and I always talk in those terms because we're both equally fascinated by managers, coaches, great players, who played under great managers and coaches, or players that make their managers better or vice versa. There's something to be learned and gleaned from knowing when to just shut the hell up and watch it all. Watch the play unfold, you know? I found that they weren't looking to me for leadership. Yes, I led our prayer. Yes, it was important to connect. Yes, it was important to have a ritual in the midst of all of this ritual, right? That's something that I come from, so I understood that.

G.PEN: Right.

C.JACK: But I think that it would... I guess in reflection that it's almost a disservice to insinuate that our original company needed leadership. We all...

G.PEN: Oh yeah, that's not what I was saying...

C.JACK: Because a lot is made of the fact that I led a prayer. Listen. What we're doing is church.

G.PEN: A hundred percent.

C.JACK: You know what I'm saying?

G.PEN: As someone who has cried over things that people would not... like "why are you crying over that?" Like "Because the Schuyler sisters are coming out because there are three badass women on that stage, that's why I'm crying."

C.JACK: Sure. They speak to you, you know what I mean?

G.PEN: It's not a sad song, but it's like... to see these women just like, werk!

C.JACK: Exactly. You're moved.

G.PEN: Yes.

C.JACK: You're moved.

G.PEN: A hundred percent.

C.JACK: The moment that you are sitting in the audience, you are engaging in the same ... type of thing.

G.PEN: Absolutely.

C.JACK: It was always important to honor that and it was something the company felt compelled to honor and I was happy to facilitate that. But you know, in my mind the idea of leadership changes and the context of it changes on a daily basis.

G.PEN: Right.

C.JACK: Especially when you're talking about a group of people that are coming to a place 8, 9, 10 times a week to do a thing, right?

G.PEN: Yeah

C.JACK: And so the transition from the old, the original company, to a new company is really on an individual basis. I guess the one thing that was really important to me was... is that... my hope was to maintain the things that we were able to hold on to in a ritual sense. It's great to hold hands and touch and agree that for the next two hours and forty-five minutes, that we're gonna make this the most important thing that we've ever done... because this moment will never exist again...because whoever is sitting out there has waited god-knows-how-long to be there, and what their expectation is, is almost immaterial. It's really about... when we get on stage, it's about having the attitude that there's absolutely nothing that you're saving it for.

G.PEN: Yes!

C.JACK: You know what I'm saying?

G.PEN: Yes. Nothing that you're saving it for.

C.JACK: There's nothing left to save. I prefer Broadway over any other form of entertainment occupation. I prefer it, but it also hurts me more than anything else. I feel like if I only did Broadway, I'd be dead by 55.

G.PEN: Why? Because you're giving so much?

C.JACK: Because I only know how to go hard.

G.PEN: Yeah.

C.JACK: You know what I mean? Even when it looks like it's easy, ... I only know I'm doing it the right way when I'm feeling a moment and generally the only metric I have is to push my body in ways that are imperceptible to the audience but I can work against gravity.

G.PEN: Um-hmm.

C.JACK: You know, I create my own tension so that I have some sort of release from it. You know?

G.PEN: Yeah.

C.JACK: But that takes a toll.

G.PEN: I'm sure.

C.JACK: That requires more than two weeks a year ...

[laughter]

C.JACK: ... of recuperation...and it's relentless but it's the only way that I know how to do it.

G.PEN: Um-hmm.

C.JACK: You know what I mean? And it's the only way that makes me feel good about the work that I'm doing.

G.PEN: Yeah.

C.JACK: You know like... I don't get that in television. Because television isn't that medium. There's not a spiritual exchange that happens. I think it's... more than anything it's the overall expectation and requirement. It just doesn't... my experience in television hasn't required that much of me -- yet.

G.PEN: Right.

C.JACK: And so in a year and a half, and 40 some episodes in, that's just where I am right now. Now that may change, but as of right now, it doesn't present the same sort of... I don't feel the gravity as much.

G.PEN: Yeah.

C.JACK: And maybe therein lies the rub, maybe that's the challenge. Maybe I have to figure out how to create the gravity for myself in that medium.

G.PEN: Yeah.

C.JACK: And I've never really thought about it that way. So I'm having maybe a moment of epiphany and sharing it with you guys.

G.PEN: #TequilaThoughts Is that gonna be a thing?

C.JACK: Woohoo! It's real!

[laughter]

G.PEN: I really want to talk to you about many things, but one is ...Freestyle Love Supreme ... is awesome.

C.JACK: Thank you.

G.PEN: and so... You know I've spoken to Lin you guys have met... Shockwave and JMI, James Monroe Iglehart, and several people... There are other people that are...maybe I'm talking to... [conspiratorially] I don't know, you guys, I'm not gonna tell ... So I loved when JMI was on... if you didn't listen to his episode, which is just totally fine. I'm not saying that...

G.PEN: No, it's fine. He was saying how you guys met in California in like 2004...

["rewind" clip of JMI interview:

I met Chris Jackson in California around 2004 and we were doing a show in the Bay area in Marin, and we were both laughing about the fact... sadly laughing about the fact that we really were hoping these two shows we were about to do

would go to Broadway. He had been working on Heights and I had been working on different versions of Memphis and we were hoping they were gonna go to Broadway but at the time we were doing this show in the Bay area and he was like, "I just ...also I'm part of this group called Freestyle Love Supreme" and I was like, "Well that sounds cool, what is it?" and he explained to me and I was like "oh, I freestyle" and me and Chris were laughing about the fact. "Nah, man, you don't understand. My boy, Lin, is like dope!" And I was like, "Well I feel I'm dope," and he said, "No, you don't understand, Lin is like DOPE!" and we were laughing about it and so... one day we're ... doing something and I start freestyling and he was like, "Oh, you got skills." "Look, I told you I got skills," and he was like, "You should come and audition," and I said, "Cool, no problem."]

C.JACK: Full disclaimer: James was my best man at my wedding. So we know each other and the first time that we met was actually *not* in Northern California. He actually was a friend of a former roommate of mine that was from the Bay Area. When James was on the *Show Boat* tour, James actually stayed at my house. And so the first day of rehearsal [laughs] in the Marin County theater, when James was like, "Yo, what's up, man?" I was like "Yeah, hey yeah, what's good man? What's up?" Did *not* remember meeting him.

G.PEN: How do you forget James Monroe Iglehart?

C.JACK: No you don't understand, When I was in *Lion King* I was so up my own... booty hole.

G.PEN: Okay.

C.JACK: It was awful. I was awful. And he stayed at my house for like three days. [laughs] But I wasn't home 'cause I was doing a show and you know...

G.PEN: Oh okay. You didn't host him. That's different ... you didn't host him...

C.JACK: He and my roommate Jessie. He was crashing at my crib and it was fine. It wasn't that big of a place but I should have remembered who he was.

G.PEN: I mean a little bit, yes.

C.JACK: And so the second day comes, and we're sitting at lunch and he was like, "So you don't remember me do you?"

G.PEN: [Gasp]

C.JACK: And I was like "What?"

G.PEN: "What are you talking about, I totally do!"

C.JACK: "No, I don't remember you." So let's just speed up to the part where I feel embarrassed and you tell me how the hell... "Cuz I recognize you but I don't remember." And he was like, "I stayed at your house, fool!"

[Laughter]

C.JACK: In classic James Monroe Iglehart fashion.

G.PEN: I was going to say, I can hear... That's a very good JMI impression. I can hear it.

C.JACK: "Jackson. Jackson Listen. Listen to you, Jackson." That was for you J.

G.PEN: Oh my god, it's so good.

C.JACK: He was like, "I stayed at your house fool, you don't remember?" I was like... "Actually no," I said. He said, "I'm Jessie's friend." I was like, "Oh yeah, okay." So basically I'm not going to be able to live this down like...

G.PEN: Ever...

C.JACK: Ever.

G.PEN: ...but to be fair, he didn't mention that story when he was on the show so...

C.JACK: 'Cause he was trying the funny angle... I already know that... No, but so listen: James is one of the...

[Laughter]

C.JACK: He's one of the best people that I've ever known.

G.PEN: He is...

C.JACK: And he's great in the show, but of course, he would come after I left!

G.PEN: Of course, yeah, yeah, yeah.

C.JACK: I did have the chance to work with him in *Memphis* which was a thrill.

G.PEN: Yes, right.

C.JACK: At this rate, we'll have worked with each other once a decade.

G.PEN: Well, just keep it going and maybe it'll be every five years, then every...

C.JACK: That's kind of how we roll... exactly... exactly.

G.PEN: But Freestyle Love Supreme.

C.JACK: So Freestyle Love Supreme. I was telling him about this... I was out in Marin in 20... 2005 and so... no, 2004, and he was sort of hemming and hawing. James didn't want to come to New York. He wanted to, he wanted the Broadway thing, but he was too scared to come out. And then *Memphis* started getting developed out there.

G.PEN: Right.

C.JACK: And he knew that would bring him out and so it was a thing and so he finally got out here but I told him, I said, you know, "When you come, you need to make sure that you... I want to bring you into this...I want you to be part of my people..."

G.PEN: The Fam.

C.JACK: Yeah. As with everything with James, he was like...he was enthusiastic and then he wasn't and then he was and then of course as soon as... I just wanted Tommy and Lin to meet him because...

G.PEN: When you meet him...

C.JACK: I mean, because look at him...

G.PEN: When you meet him it's like I want to be around this energy all the time.

C.JACK: ... but again he has a very specific skill set...

G.PEN: Yeah....

C.JACK: ...that lends itself very well to the kinds of stuff that we do together, that Lin and Tommy...

G.PEN: ...which is like being awesome and talented and a really amazing freestyler...

C.JACK: Yeah, but just ... being game for a lot of different stuff...

G.PEN: Yeah...

C.JACK: ...and so it actually worked out that James and I now split the track in Freestyle Love Supreme that we do, and it gives us both opportunities to...flex our muscles and stretch a little bit.

G.PEN: Right.

C.JACK: ...and experience that thing while the other is working or...it just makes our Freestyle Love Supreme bench deeper.

G.PEN: Yeah.

C.JACK: But it was always about... "You got to know Tommy. You got to know Lin. You got to know these people that I care..."

G.PEN: Come on, yeah...

C.JACK: "...care about and love so much because you are capable of receiving what they have to offer and to give back..."

G.PEN: I was gonna say, and also give it back...

C.JACK: Yeah.

G.PEN: Because I feel like that's so important because there are a lot of times where people I think... don't know the importance of giving it right back.

C.JACK: Oh god.

G.PEN: You have to give it back.

C.JACK: There's nothing like going to a rehearsal....being in a rehearsal process and knowing that every day that you gonna see somebody... You have disagreements but you ain't gonna fight nobody, you know what I mean? Like you have each other's backs.

G.PEN: Unless they say something shitty about one of your fam and then you're like, "Well now it's on."

C.JACK: Yeah, but your fam ain't gonna say something about the fam, you know what I mean? Like we have ways of dealing with each other.

G.PEN: Yeah and if they do it's like, "We'll talk about it."

C.JACK: Yeah, exactly.

G.PEN: It's a totally different situation. Like what was your origins? I love hearing origin stories from people. Not just origin of, like, how they got to New York or how they got into the 'thing' but what is your origin story about being in...not just the Cabinet but the family... of this?

C.JACK: When I met... the show *In the Heights*, when I met Lin and got to know the show...

G.PEN: Yeah...

C.JACK: ...part of the reason why it's such a foundational type thing is ... what was on Broadway at the time. Like the only thing that I... I don't know what I would have been hired to do on Broadway... you know what I mean?

G.PEN: Right, right, of course.

C.JACK: I made a decision early in my school career that I did not want to sing -- and this is no slight to anybody, truly -- that I didn't have the kind of voice that lent itself to singing the *Les Miz* score or the *Phantom* score. You have to think about it...at that time you couldn't get a job on Broadway unless you were a legit Broadway singer.

G.PEN: Uh-huh.

C.JACK: And so halfway through -- I understand the value of operatic instruction, but that's not what gets me up in the morning...

G.PEN: Sure.

C.JACK: ...I can fully appreciate the beauty of that...

G.PEN: Oh, of course...

C.JACK: You know, *Rigoletto* is my favorite opera and I listen to it often. But I'm not gonna get hired to sing that. That's not my... as Josh Henry is fond of saying, "That ain't my ministry."

G.PEN: Right, yeah.

[laughter]

C.JACK: So when I met Lin's work, it represented, to me, the possibility of having a career.

G.PEN: And how did you meet that work?

C.JACK: I was introduced to Tommy through a friend that I graduated college with...

G.PEN: It all comes back to Tommy doesn't it? Always.

C.JACK: Yeah, yeah it does. I had done a show in Chicago in the fall of 2002 and we closed early... and the night that I was there packing my bags to come back to New York and my apartment in Brooklyn, I got a call from my friend Janae who said, "I just met these guys. I've been working with them for you know a couple months, but you need to meet them. *You* definitely need to meet them. You need to like.... It has to happen." I said, "Okay."

G.PEN: That's like Guardian Angel status...

C.JACK: Very much.

G.PEN: ...to be like, "I want you two to meet..." Yeah.

C.JACK: Very much. And so, I packed my bags, I flew back. The day after I got back, Janae called me in the morning and she's like, "I'm having tea with Tommy this afternoon near Times Square. Why don't you just come and..."

G.PEN: Hang...

C.JACK: "...just say what's up?" Now the thing that's crazy is that I... walked into that... I got on to the train that day with a dollar fifty in my pocket. Like, I had nothing. And so I got to the city and the thing that I was focused on most was seeing if I could borrow another dollar fifty to get back home. Which is crazy.

G.PEN: I know.

C.JACK: But I took that dollar fifty that I did have and I said, "Okay, I got to come in and meet..."

G.PEN: You took that leap, you know?

C.JACK: Yeah. When I met Janae -- and this is why it's always so funny -- when I met Janae at this coffee shop, Tommy actually introduced himself first and I was like "Hey, what's up, man?" I didn't realize that that was the Tommy that she was trying to introduce me to.

G.PEN: Oh shit.

C.JACK: So I played him short. I didn't know him. You know what I'm saying?

G.PEN: Of course.

C.JACK: I thought it was just one of her friends and whatever, and I needed to borrow \$5 from my friend. And she of course gave it to me and.... but I didn't realize, I didn't put it together...

G.PEN: Of course...

C.JACK: Fast forward two or three days later, that's when I went in to see Tommy and Lin in the basement of the Drama Book Shop and so...

[laughs]

C.JACK: ...I walk down there and as soon as I saw them I was like, "Oh! Uhhhhh!"
[groans]

[Laughter]

C.JACK: Yeah, and that was what happened. Though we were cool with each other, it took a long time for us to trust each other. And I'll even go this far...I'm sure that he gave me more credit than I certainly deserved at that moment because of where I was at that time. I was late all the time. And when I tell you I was disillusioned about whether or not I was doing the right thing, when -- and people can relate to this -- when you're in a relationship that's really sort of, it's done? But you are not ready to end it, but then you end up because you're not -- your heart is not into it -- you end up not calling back, or not sending a text when you say you're going to, or hanging out with friends that you don't want to tell your other about. Like you end up doing stuff like that because...

G.PEN: In your head it's done.

C.JACK: It turns you into a punk though, if you don't act on what you already know, right? And so when it came to like reading rehearsals and like... I'd oversleep and be late or...

G.PEN: For *Heights* stuff...

C.JACK: Early early *Heights* stuff.

G.PEN: [scolding] Chris!

C.JACK: And it wasn't like I was trying to sabotage myself, but it was sort of the natural...

G.PEN: It wasn't a little self-sabotage? A little?

C.JACK: Oh, no, no no. I mis-state. it was totally self-sabotage.

G.PEN: Ok. [laughs]

C.JACK: ... but I was trying to be genuine about the fact that I did want to be a part... Because I *did* want to be involved but because I wasn't clear about...

G.PEN: Sure. Yeah...

C.JACK: ...where I stood with things it just was like...But this past...this spans a long period of time. Fast forward, we're at the O'Neill, right? There were things that were being developed... because I've never been part of a developing musical...

G.PEN: Sure.

C.JACK: ...so we're up at the O'Neill Center. For those of you who don't know, you're there for 3, 4, 5 weeks. The writers are in residence... you are there, you're staying in hot dorms at night, and like... drinking beers before you go back to the dorms...And then you sit in this barn rehearsal space and work the piece, and then present it, or part of it. And then you go and work some more and present more, but there was a moment at that time where I was really frustrated because, you know, this is my first like -- Mind you I played Simba on Broadway for 2 years -- but this is how disconnected things were. I was frustrated because I didn't have a big enough part. But I hadn't been able to... I've never been in a position where I had to look at the actual show. I was still so completely self-interested because I was still trying to find my way and how I fit into all of this construct.

G.PEN: What is the thing that was like, " I'm not gonna be late anymore..." ?

C.JACK: Alex Lacamoire...

[Laughter]

C.JACK: ...Pulled me aside one afternoon before rehearsal and at that point I was married and had CJ. CJ was a baby.

G.PEN: Um hum.

C.JACK: 2005. And he said, "Dude, what's the problem?" Quite literally "What's your problem?" I said "I'm frustrated. I feel like I was told one thing and it's now it's this." And he was like, "This thing's being written. They have so many things to deal with right now. Do you think for a second that if... if they didn't want you here that you would be here?" Like, "You're good, but nobody's that good."

[Laughter]

C.JACK: "Fix your attitude." Now for anybody that doesn't know, Lac is about eight inches shorter than me...legally deaf. If he didn't ...know exactly what the deal was...

because we had known each other just a little bit longer than I had known Lin and Tommy, because again we still weren't like that close. We were still feeling... [rethinks] Me and Lin were, because Lin can get along with a tree stump...

G.PEN: Sure...

C.JACK: ...but Tommy and I were still trying to figure each other out. And this is a lesson for all of you young performers out there: If you ever feel like you're in a situation where you're not being given -- I'm going to be very careful with my words -- If you're not being given the attention that you think you deserve -- you *don't* deserve it and you're thinking about it the wrong way.

G.PEN: Um-hmm.

C.JACK: You know, you really are. It only took that word from Lac to turn things around for me.

G.PEN: Yeah.

C.JACK: Very soon thereafter it was not a question of whether or not ... I felt that Tommy trusted me and needed me.

G.PEN: Right.

C.JACK: It was never a question, very soon after that point whether or not ...it was intended that I be a part of the show because they put up with my attitude about things and still held me in the place that they ultimately put me in the construct of *In the Heights* ... but I was *going* through some things.

G.PEN: Right.

C.JACK: Right?

G.PEN: Yeah.

C.JACK: I was going through some things. And it may have looked like ego on the outside... it was really nothing but insecurity on the inside. You know what I mean?

G.PEN: Oh, of course. And you guys ...every time you meet someone who like...they're such an asshole, they're so full of themselves, this ego... It's all insecurity.

C.JACK: It's never ego.

G.PEN: It's always insecurities. It's never about you, it's always about them.

C.JACK: It's never about ego, it's always about...

G.PEN: A hundred percent.

C.JACK: "If I don't get more attention, I'll be forgotten."

G.PEN: Yeah.

C.JACK: Quite literally that's what it was.

G.PEN: And I love that you're saying this to people who want to be performers, because I don't want them to think, "Well Chris Jackson did it." No no no, don't do that, you guys.

C.JACK: No,no, no, no, I made all the mistakes. Not just some of them. I went through a checklist and just made all of them.

[Laughter]

[Music excerpt: *History Has Its Eyes on You:*
I made every mistake. I felt the shame rise in me.
And even now I lie awake, knowing history has its eyes on me...
History has its eyes on me.]

C.JACK: There's something about the struggle to find the right perspective at the right time.

G.PEN: Right.

C.JACK: You know what I mean?

G.PEN: It's hard when you're in it though. Isn't it so much easier to say that looking back?

C.JACK: Hell yeah. It's easier to say that about yesterday.

G.PEN: Of course. Ten minutes ago...

C.JACK: Exactly. Just ... allow yourself to be yourself and allow yourself to be vulnerable and -- especially you dudes out there. Like, just be sensitive to the fact that you can be sensitive about stuff, and you can be *wrong*. Be comfortable with being wrong. [Laughs] Because if you're putting yourself out there, you're going to be wrong a lot, you know. But if you surround yourself with people who are smarter than you and are in touch with the idea of what they're learning as they go as well...

G.PEN: Right...

C.JACK: ...then you figure a lot of stuff out

G.PEN: Yeah, I love that, and thanks for the little, subtle *West Wing* thing about surrounding yourself with people who are smarter than you because that is how you learn. And you have to have disagreements and you have to be able to say, "Well how about this? How about that? or How about this?" And when there are people who know things... like Alex Lacamoire knows music better than anyone in that room...

C.JACK: Jesus.

G.PEN: So for him to say like, "What's your problem?"

C.JACK: Yeah, cuz that wasn't about music,

[Crosstalk]

G.PEN: ...and of course Alex Lacamoire to a place to say, come on...

C.JACK: ... and it wasn't about directing... and it wasn't about writing, And I'm always happy to ...bring that up not because it's like my most proud moment and not because anybody else paid attention to it but there's an element of acknowledgement every time that I see him.

G.PEN: Yeah.

C.JACK: Do you know what I mean?

G.PEN: Of course...

C.JACK: I'm able to walk into the rooms that I walk into, quite literally because of that one moment...

G.PEN: Right.

C.JACK: You know I keep a picture of -- framed -- from that day, that we had taken earlier.

G.PEN: The day Alex said *what's your problem?*

C.JACK: ...that Lac and I... It's right outside of the barn there...

G.PEN: No way!

C.JACK: ... at the O'Neill Center. I keep it there because he quite literally saved my life and he doesn't even know it. Because that's the construct of how all of these things work, right? I could turn to Lac and say, "You know what, you're full of it, man, I don't gotta listen to you..."

G.PEN: Right.

C.JACK: And I could have been on some other shit...

G.PEN: Yeah.

C.JACK: And know this: Tommy and Lin are loyal. Tommy and Lin are intuitive. But the thing to know about them is it's not about the talent. The level that we're operating on is not about talent, it's not about notes, it's not about instinct. If you can't be in a room and you can't be a human being, you can be Daniel Day-Lewis, but if you don't know how to act, they'll just pick somebody else. They'd rather be around somebody else, consequently we'd *all* rather be around other people. Because being in the room and being open and being respectful and being all the things that you need to create great art...

G.PEN: Yeah.

C.JACK: ...have nothing to do with behavior that would separate who you are with your talent. So if you can't be a human being, if you can't be respectful, if you can't be honest and open and like not on some other shit...

G.PEN: Yeah...

C.JACK: Well then, you can still be great, but you'll just do it in a different room.

[Instrumental Music excerpt : *One Last Time*]

G.PEN: CJack, I think this is a good time to pause. Do you want to hang out with me for another episode?

C.JACK: Yes.

G.PEN: All right.

C.JACK: Let's do that.

G.PEN: All right. So we'll get some refills...

C.JACK: [laughs] Okay, sure.

G.PEN: Like Javi and Shock did. You'll live with me for a week. We'll have pancakes every morning ... that's what...

C.JACK: You mean Javi and Shock together?

G.PEN: Not together but every... 'Cause they were a split episode too. So then Javi was like...

C.JACK: I didn't hear Shock... Okay, I have to hear Shock's because I didn't even hear it.

G.PEN: Oh, he taught me how to beatbox.

C.JACK: Well of course he did.

G.PEN: When I say 'taught me' it's in quotes. I know "*boots/cuts*."

C.JACK: [of course he did] Well yeah.

G.PEN: All right. So you guys, I'll talk to you next week and so will CJack. I am G dot Pen.

C.JACK: C dot Jack.

G.PEN: Sweet.

[Yorktown exit music]

Find more information about Hispanic Federation.Org on the Hamilcast website:
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[Music: Hamilton – The World turned upside down – Instrumentals play]

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G.PEN: Thank you again for listening to the Hamilcast, I will I will talk to you in five seconds on Twitter.