



The Think Inclusive Podcast

Season 6, Episode 4

Noah Jack | Musician on the Autism Spectrum

Tim Villegas (00:00):

In 2012, Carly's akin and Danielle Weisberg founded the skimm from their couch. Now six years later, their morning newsletter, it gives over 7 million subscribers, the news and information they need to start their day. When they started the company, they got a lot of advice from other female entrepreneurs. Now they're sharing those conversations in more on their podcast, skimmed from the couch. Every week you'll hear from women like Arianna Huffington, the founder of the Huffington Post, and thrive on why she puts her phone to bed at night or Melanie Wheeland, ceo of soul cycle on why she has a millennial mentor or how actor Taraji p Henson got over her first rejection and learned how to negotiate for herself. It's a podcast about the real stuff, tips and tricks to launch, grow or change your career. The only rule on the couch, no bs checkout, skimmed from the couch wherever you listen to podcasts.

Noah Jack (00:56):

Hey guys, is this Noah Jack and you're listening to think inclusive podcasts,

Tim Villegas (01:00):

recording from my office and Beautiful Marietta, Georgia. You are listening to the inclusive podcast, episode 19. Today we have no jack a musician. On the autism spectrum, we talked about the release of his new single neighborhood from his upcoming EP the family. After the podcast, please visit [Patron.com backslash inclusive podcast](https://patron.com/backslash/inclusivepodcast) where you can support our goal to bring you in in depth interviews with inclusive education and advocacy thought leaders. Also, you can help other people find us by giving us a five star review on apple podcasts or wherever you listen to the thinking podcast. So without further ado, here is the interview.

Tim Villegas (01:48):

All right. I'd like to welcome Noah Jack to the thing conclusive podcast. Noah is a singer, songwriter from Park Ridge, Illinois, who is studying music at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. His new single neighborhood tells the story of Noah's hometown, calling it a letter to my friends and family who were there for me from start to finish. Being diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. No, wasn't able to talk until he was five years old, but recalls being able to harm at age four. Stating, I always tell people that I learned how to sing before I was able to talk. He plans to release his new evp title all in the family in January, just in time for his birthday. Each track will be dedicated to a member of his family. So thanks for being on the podcast, Noah.

Noah Jack (02:39):

Hey, it's very nice to be here. Thank you so much for having me.

Tim Villegas (02:43):

Of course. So, um, I've listened to you, the single a and we're going to go ahead and play it in a, in a little bit here. Uh, but I wanted to give you an opportunity since this is, this is why you're on, is to, um, I guess, tell us what the message is this a single neighborhood and uh, and then we can talk maybe a little bit more about, you know, how you became a musician and a kind of your, your life in general. So what is the, what's the message behind neighborhood?

Noah Jack (03:15):

The message? Basically it's a letter to my family and my friends back home in Park Ridge, Illinois. Um, I really had a lot of people who, I was very thankful for my life, especially like my friends. And so when I was leaving to go to college, I was very homesick and one thing I wanted to do was write, so I wrote a lot for my family and my friends and then the neighborhood became a thing and I was so happy to record it and release it to my friends, my family. So overall when it finished I was really happy.

Tim Villegas (03:49):

So tell me, um, tell me something about the recording and because, uh, I'm, I'm also a musician so I'm very interested in production and kind of how, you know, how that all came about. So, um, is this something, his name was neighborhood something that you were kind of sitting on as far as a song and then decided to record or did you go out and record it specifically? You know, um, you, you had a, like a, you know, people that you were recording with at the time and you decided you wanted to do this or. So how did it come about?

Noah Jack (04:24):

So I actually thought of recording this quite awhile back. I've had this song for me like two and a half years and I really didn't think of anything that good, um, but my friend wanted to do a demo of a song and it was in a different key. Everything was different about it and overall I was like, oh, this can actually be a really good song. So about three days after my 21st birthday, my family was in town and I decided, hey, why not just go out and record this? So I had my producer friend a track it for me and it wasn't really good. So it was like, all right, let's see if it can get a lot better over the course of a couple of months. It will attract, took about four months to record and masks and everything like that. I started in July and then we were doing the campaigning.

Noah Jack (05:13):

And overall I just love the song, feels it's much more different than everything like I've written before, especially has established that kind of feel. Usually I write more about the future of what this one I wrote more with the past. Um, I wrote, I recorded a lot of it in Nashville and I recorded some of it at Belmont and some of it, a RCA studios and music row and I had a lot of people on that with especially like my best friends here in Nashville really helped me along with it. So I'm very thankful for the single and the success of it right now. It's been really amazing.

Tim Villegas (05:52):

Yeah. I noticed you were talking just recently on your facebook page about how many listens you were getting on spotify and that's quite, that's quite something. How many, about how many listens are you at right now?

Noah Jack (06:07):

Um, overall I think I'm at 23. I'm hoping to get to the 25 mark and that I literally did not think again even 15, which is incredible. I told my mom that I was even going to be shocked if I got like a thousand. So when I got back and I saw that there was like 23, I was so shocked and just beyond thankful for the people who are listening and just everything with a song.

Tim Villegas (06:35):

Yeah, it's fantastic. Uh, and uh, I know, I know our listeners haven't heard the song yet and we will, we will hear it in a little bit, uh, but I really liked the field of the laid back feel and um, I, I know musicians hate to be compared to stuff, so if you do not like this comparison, I apologize and you can say that you don't agree but, but, uh, but, uh, very uh, Jack Johnson, he, Jason Mraz type of feel. It's very nice and uh, and I really liked that. I really liked the um, that kind of spooky. Not Spooky, but um, I guess in theory you'll guitar, it's the lead. I'm the, those little lead notes. I think they were really nice. So just as far as, you know, appreciating the music. I really enjoyed the track. Um, so are the people that you played with or these are people that you go to school with at Belmont or were they musicians you connected with? In a, in, in Nashville, apart from Belmont.

Noah Jack (07:36):

So I met all of them through Belmont and they're like all my best friends in the world. I'm very thankful to have them and I asked them to be a part of the track and they said, of course, but we were doing a bunch of shows like my friends not, we were doing like the small band thing, we were doing shows in Memphis and a little bit in Nashville and we were recording a bunch of songs at the time and that's when I said, hey, we should record neighborhoods and then they want it to be part of it and it just turns. What really amazing project.

Tim Villegas (08:07):

Um, yes. So, so when you, when you decided to record neighborhood, was that when you decided to go ahead and go forward with the album or did you have the idea of the album before the single.

Noah Jack (08:20):

So I've had the idea of the concept of the EPA. I've had it for quite a while now. Mostly from neighborhood being like a thank you letter to my parents, my friends. But I do have a lot of other songs that are generally towards like us in person, especially like my brother's, uh, but I do have one for my mom and my dad. I'm trying to write one for my dogs, just anything really because I want it to be more of like a concept kind of eep more than just like a spree of songs. So just having it be a story would be much more interesting to the audience. Then having it just be, oh, this is a song, then here's another song. So I want them to be engaged throughout the whole 15 slash 20 minutes.

Tim Villegas (09:04):

Okay. And Are you, um, are you currently playing these songs in, in, um, uh, when you play out in venues or are you kind of waiting until the, uh, the pee comes out?

Noah Jack (09:17):

Yes, I have been doing a lot of writers rounds in Nashville so far and I have one coming up in a couple of weeks, uh, in music bro. So I've been sampling them out. A lot of them have been getting a lot of good responses, a lot of good messages towards them and just testing to see if it's a good single or if I should just put it on the APP and that it. So overall they've been very happy with the songs. They're just always

like, oh, what does this mean and what does this mean? So we want to hear it again. That's the best part.

Tim Villegas (09:49):

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Okay, well let's get to it. Uh, I'm going to go ahead and let's hear neighborhood by Noah, Jack and uh, it's available now on soundcloud and spotify. Is there another place where they can, uh, they can get the single.

Noah Jack (10:10):

You can get it also on apple music, spotify, soundcloud. I think you can get an upgraded door right now. Uh, maybe youtube title, everything that you can get a streaming service. Is that, is there.

Tim Villegas (10:24):

Okay. So, uh, here is neighborhood.

Noah Jack's Song (11:02):

Singing

Tim Villegas (14:13):

All right. That was neighborhood by Noah Jack. I'm fantastic track. A really excited. This is my first interview with the musician on the podcast. So this is kind of a special treat for me, the because I get to ask different kinds of questions. So, um, so as a, as a person diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, um, I wanted to know, I guess your unique, unique experience in growing up in Park Ridge and um, you say that it, you know, the, the single and the, I really a, you know, a thank you letter to your friends and family. How did they really support you? Um, growing up, uh, being someone on spectrum

Noah Jack (15:04):

of course. So I am from Park Ridge, Illinois, which is a very small town in Chicago, Illinois. Um, it's more of a suburb and the thing about my hometown is everyone is a community and I am home with my four older brothers and they were very well known in Park Ridge, so everyone knew about my spectrum disorder and I had a lot of support from people outside of the community and Park Ridge. When I got the chance to share my song with people, I was so happy to just be like, thank you so much for being a part of my life and that's pretty much what I wanted to do. Um, I would say I lost train of thought.

Tim Villegas (15:50):

Okay.

Noah Jack (15:54):

Oh, um, what was I gonna say? Oh, I'm being with a, like my high school and everything. Everyone knew also about my diagnosis and they're like, you are a musician, which was perfectly fine with me. I told them all the time about my diagnosis and when I would be doing things, especially in the community, they would be very understanding. So I was just in a great community in Park Ridge. So we're all, I didn't have that many problems with telling people that I had a diagnosis.

Tim Villegas (16:26):

Right. So you, uh, so it sounds like you, number one, I'm, uh, were you were able to talk about it being on the spectrum to your friends and your neighbors and the people in your community. That wasn't something that was out of the ordinary. It sounded like that was just something that was, that happened and that was perfectly fine and acceptable. Um, and uh, the, that you were accepted in your, like in your school and um, uh, with the people that you're around, is that correct? So you felt, you felt that acceptance and inclusion, um, where you lived and where you went to school?

Noah Jack (17:13):

Yeah, of course I felt at home and if I were to tell someone that I did have a diagnosis, they'll be like, oh, that's very strange. I did get that a lot, especially in my high school times. They'd be like, oh, that's really strange. Do you have a diagnosis? And I'd be like, of course this is who I am. And they would be very understanding of it.

Tim Villegas (17:33):

So what do you think, if at all did you feel like, um, maybe autism is, if there is any sort of misconceptions, maybe not necessarily about, you know, you know, uh, but uh, like in when we talk about autism spectrum disorder in general, do you feel like there is like a big, a big misconception that or attitudes that people have toward autism?

Noah Jack (18:06):

I think that a lot of people aren't aware and I think that there should be more acceptance towards people and we hear about kids being bullied for having autism spectrum disorder, which is absurd. And that's the one thing I've been trying to do with my music. I've been trying to tell people that it is okay to have autism spectrum disorder because I want people to be a part of this message that I'm who I am and I'm, nothing's going to change. I just have a disability. And for someone who is lower on the spectrum, it's much harder but thing people need to be aware because even like younger kids, I remember one kids would get bullied who do have a autism spectrum disorder and it always made me upset because I'm higher on the spectrum and I got less, but someone who's low or, and doesn't understand the difference would just be getting bullied and harassed. And that was very tough for me.

Tim Villegas (19:08):

Now you said about you being able to sing before you were able to talk. So I'm wondering if you have, um, do you have those memories of not being able to communicate through words or like how was that experience? Uh, uh, as you remember being able to, to sing before you were able to talk?

Noah Jack (19:37):

So I had a wristband that had my name and a bunch of other information that I do not remember at this time, but um, my mom would take care of me and she would always hold my head to make sure that I was okay, but I would gradually get better. And I remember when I was four, I would always go on a car ride to my speech therapy and my mom would always play the same song on the radio. So I would hum. And the biggest story that I remember was the song a picture by Kid Rock and Sheryl Crow. My mom would be sheryl crow and Ivy kid rock. In the beginning I would just be humming the song and nothing would really change. But then as the years went by and I got better, especially when I was like five, I learned a lot about talking and interacting with people. I just started doing wrestling and football. So we would go to speech therapy and I would start in the lyrics to it and my mom would start singing the sheryl crow part. I would be kid rock. And that's where I learned to loves singing.

Tim Villegas (20:41):

Wow. That's awesome. So did you, did you feel like you were able to communicate what you needed or wanted, um, with your, with your family before you were able to, you know, put words together? Uh, did they just kind of understand like, oh no, you know, once this or noah feels this way, like how, how, how was that or do you, do you remember how you were able to communicate with them?

Noah Jack (21:11):

I remember a few things about when I was younger. I don't remember that much. That's the thing. I don't remember that much about my childhood. All I remember really it was when I was five and I learned how to talk. I would always hear stories about how I would do this and this. I was a big crier when I was a kid. Um, I would be also silent. And the thing is, when I was diagnosed, I was one of the youngest in 1998. Like we, it wasn't that accepting to be diagnosed when you're two years old. So when my mom first diagnosed me in 1998, it was, it was incredible and my mom saw, saw it clear as day that I had, that something was wrong with me because I would look up in the sky, I will be looking at nothing and I wouldn't interact with my brothers when I was two.

Noah Jack (22:01):

So when, uh, when my mom was concerned, she went to a doctor and it said that the test that they were going to take on me would take two hours and I remember the story very well because my mom wants to get coffee and she got a phone call. She said, Oh, you need to come back. We got the results and it was 30 minutes. And they said, yeah, you do have autism. Uh, this is what you need to do. And these are the people who you who you need to call. I think what we're doing right now is the best that we possibly can do. Just saying that we're aware of what is here and that everyone knows there should be an acceptance toward everyone. I'm having classes being taught about it. If you have a kid in your class being like, okay, this kid has to be understanding, but it's all about the kid.

Noah Jack (22:51):

It's not about the other people around them. You the like the kid needs to be more understanding. And also with, um, special ed classes, it'd be more involved with that because when I first started special ed classes I was, I'd never got to see like see my friends, I never got to hang out with them. I would be in my group and everyone was labeled me as the kid who was in special needs classes. So that was very hard for me because I was getting better and they were still billing me as some kid who doesn't know how to draw or UK or like hand write cursive. So for me, I think it's being more aware and being more together as a group.

Tim Villegas (23:38):

So last question before I let you go. Um, so we've talked about, you know, neighborhood and I know that I'm on the family is coming out on your birthday in January of 2018.

Tim Villegas (23:55):

what is your hope for, um, I guess your career as a musician because I see that you are studying music at Belmont, so look going forward, is this something that you want to be doing full time, you know, as no eject them musician performing recording songs. Was there something else that, that you have in mind?

Noah Jack (24:21):

So, my main goal is to be a musician. I want to be touring wherever I can, but um, I also want to be a person of charity and that was the big part of my, my thing. I am very thankful for everything that I've gotten in my life and it's all because of well amazing people like my family, doctors and everything like that. And I remember when I was a kid I was in this afterschool program and one thing that was very strange about it was that we never got to do anything with music related. So hopefully when my career starts to take off hopefully, um, I can start a charity program where we only do music for music therapy people and just have worked with kids on the spectrum or anything like Down's syndrome. So anything with the mental awareness have them be around music and I know Zac Brown band does a summer school or a summer camp for kids with special needs and it's incredible, but I wanted to take a step further and I wanted to do an afterschool afterschool programs, but it gets to meet kids who love music and stuff and I know there's like different theater programs who do that.

Noah Jack (25:31):

So what? One of my big goals with being a musician is having people be aware that I'm a musician who is autistic, but I'm also Noah, Jack and I'm going to be like, I'm going to help the people who have helped me.

Tim Villegas (25:51):

Awesome. Noah Jack is promoting his new single neighborhood, which is a thank you letter to his community of Park Ridge, Illinois. Uh, thank you for being on the conclusive podcast.

Noah Jack (26:06):

Thank you so much for having me.

Tim Villegas (26:09):

That is our show. We would like to thank musician, no attack. Make sure to check out his music and follow him on facebook, soundcloud and instagram. Follow thinking inclusive on the web and thinking about us as well as twitter, facebook, Google plus. And instagram, today's show was produced by myself talking into USB headphones, a zoom h, one handy recorder, Mac book pro, Garageband, and a skype account. You can also subscribe to the podcast via apple podcast, Google play, stitcher, or podomatic, the largest community of independent podcasters on the planet from Marietta, Georgia. Please join us again on the podcast. Thanks for your time and attention.

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