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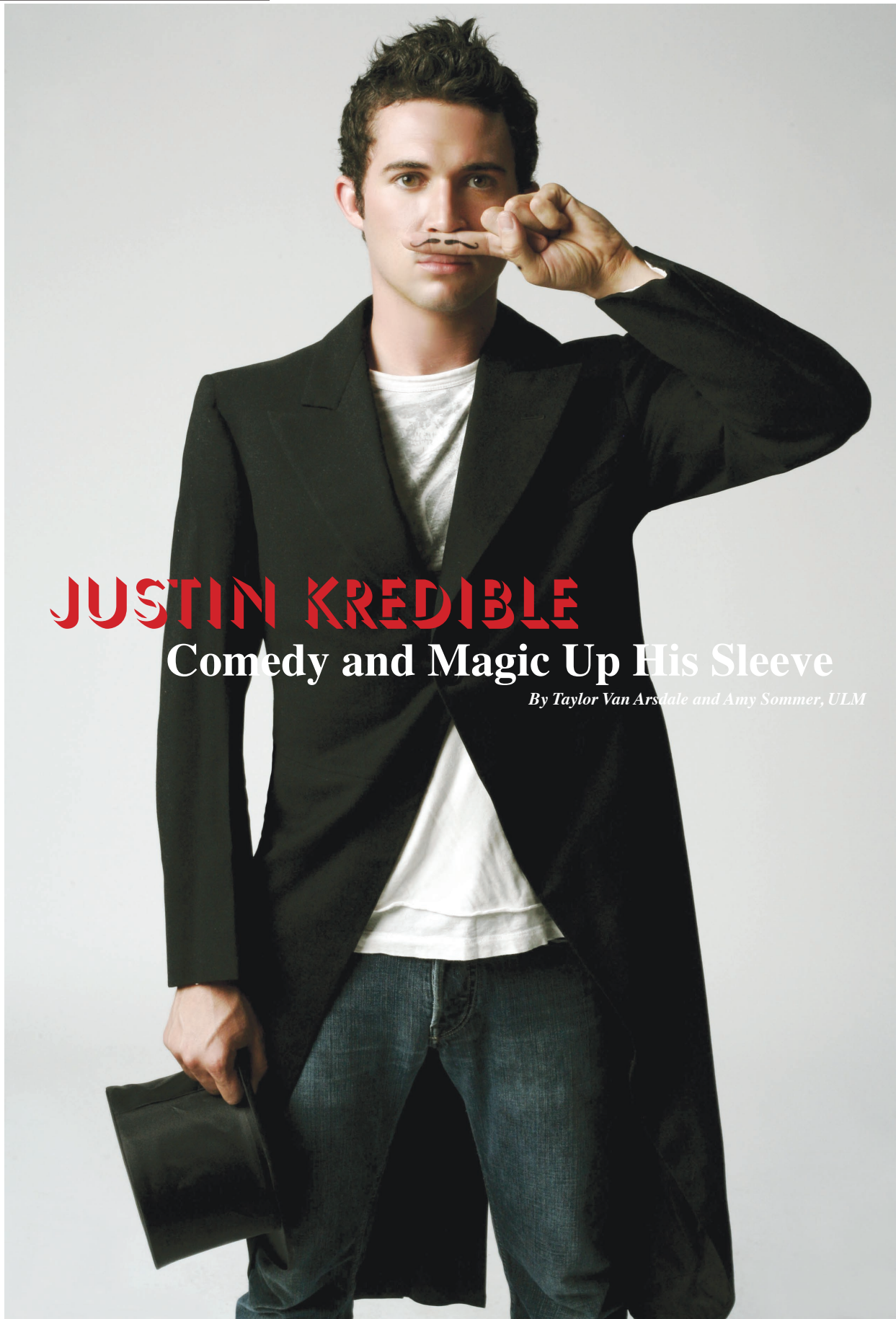
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JUSTIN KREDIBLE

Comedy and Magic Up His Sleeve

By Taylor Van Arsdale and Amy Sommer, ULM



Thanks to Justin Kredible there is more to your average magic show than rabbits coming out of hats and gals getting cut in half. Kredible, winner of America's 2008 *Campus Entertainer of the Year Award*, *Rachael Ray Show* regular, star of his very own "How To" DVD (which teaches you 10 magic tricks), and all around funny magic guy, has transformed the staid magic show into a humorous and mystifying act—and he's on the road with it right now.

When Kredible was five years old he received a magic kit. Soon after, his parents took him to see David Copperfield, and says Kredible, "Something about that 'coolness' of making a motorcycle appear, leather jackets, lovely assistants, is pretty appealing when you're a kid." But the tipping point for Kredible came when he was twelve, "I was trying to impress some girls, riding my bike and wearing roller blades *at the same time*, and I fell and broke both of my arms. I had compound fractures and casts for six months." As part of his recovery his doctor prescribed learning card tricks instead. Definitely a safer alternative.

And, in case you're wondering... "Kredible" is not his given name; it's Willman. "I would do these shows at kids' birthday parties and my mother said, 'You need a stage name' and she came up with Justin Kredible. And of course, I didn't really get the play on words at first. But people started calling me Justin Kredible and it stuck," Kredible says.

Whereas magicians such as Criss Angel and David Blaine have created very dark personas, Kredible's got an upbeat, quirky, laugh-at-himself brand of comedy that he effortlessly blends with magic. The result is... well, just incredible. *Ba dum bum...* "I've been performing since I was 14 years old and finally feel as though I've figured out my niche." Slightly sarcastic, quick-witted and revelatory, Kredible's easy-going style brings the audience with him on a magical comedic journey. On rare occasions he'll give us a sneak peak at how he does "it". One such example "How to Light a Match in Mid-Air!" is available on YouTube (for those of you who want to impress your date).

However, the rampant exposure by pervasive reality television going behind the curtain revealing how tricks are performed has left Kredible with mixed feelings. "A lot of magicians are really angry about it because they don't want their tricks to be exposed. But the funny thing is, I met a lot of young magicians who were inspired to become magicians from watching these shows. From a magician's standpoint it's a cheap way to make a buck for whoever's spilling the beans, but if it's good for magic in the end, then it's good for all of us."

When you think of magicians you think of a 'specialized club' e.g. the Magic Castle. Justin jokes, "Like a magician's union, where we have to be sworn in?" It's not quite that way. Kredible grew up in St. Louis where a multitude of magic organizations held sway. "There was *The Society of Young Magicians*, *The Society of American Magicians*, *The International Brotherhood of Magicians*, basically just big groups of 'magic geeks' where we would get together, meet and show each other card tricks. And that for me, when I was a kid and bit by the magic bug and just obsessed with it, was fabulous."

His latest gig is a cush, regular spot on the *Rachael Ray Show* as in-house magic dude. "I'm kind of like her go-to magic guy,"

Kredible says smiling. But Kredible's moves in the kitchen are anything but magical and he freely admits, "If it wasn't for Trader Joe's frozen entrées I would be eating out all the time."

Reflecting on his own collegiate experience (which wasn't all that long ago) Kredible says, "Instead of being Justin Kredible while I was in college I was more like Justin Toxicated." During freshman year he mastered the "Vanishing Beer Trick," but then adds, "Emerson was a cool, artsy college, so there was plenty of room for me to do my own thing. Gradually, once I got the hang of the whole college swing, I started doing private events—bar and bat mitzvahs,



birthday parties—and by junior year I had a full-fledged side business going, where I would do seven or eight shows a weekend. I was making a pretty great living and being a good student at the same time." Kredible graduated from Emerson College in Boston with a degree in Journalism as well as a magic fan base.

In addition to his own tricks, he's done some acting, on *Gilmore Girls* and *Room 401* and wants to do more, but laments, "I'm always on the road, so it's hard for me to be around and audition much."

Lucky for audiences Kredible continues to work on his first love, magic. "In my show I close with a paintball gun trick, it's like



Editor, Taylor Van Arsdale and Magician, Justin Kredible

the old 'bullet catch trick' made popular in *The Prestige*, where I have someone fire a paintball gun at my face and I catch it in my teeth," Kredible says. Good thing for us the pediatrician who prescribed card tricks wasn't a dentist.

He continues to take everyday items transforming them into humorous magical props.

In one of his better-known tricks "The Vanishing Bandana," Kredible steps onto stage holding a Fed-Ex package telling the audience it's from an "elite mail order magic company," which he then proceeds to share with the audience. Look, I'm not about to spoil the trick by explaining the rest of it, but if you haven't seen it, you should check it out, either on YouTube or catch him at one of his live shows. And yes... you'll have an in-Kredible time.

For more info:

www.justinkredible.com