

Jules Rules #6

My first interview

Tougher than I thought when I volunteered to do it.

Mostly, it's me asking the questions. Well, frankly, always. However, [Ricky Johnson, Jr.](#), has been candid about his difficulties and I felt the responsibility to answer honestly to those who asked me. It's not fun. I know how much bravery it takes for people to talk about their troubles and find now how hard it is for me to be truthful and accurate. But, here goes.

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1) Kevin we often talk about good food. If God forbid you were tasked with choosing one last meal, what would it be?

Ricky, not many know of the real struggles I've encountered with food the past year. If not for the generosity of friends and an EBT card I likely would be dead. And, for all the fancy stuff and excellent cuisine I've enjoyed in my 56 years my favorite and final meal would be a Hamburger. I'd gladly pay you Tuesday for a Hamburger today, said my friend Wimpy often.

2) As a journalist you are either loved or hated. How do you maintain your passion to write and report, knowing your words are going to create enemies?

Writing is all I know. It comes naturally. And, I thank God for that. Yes, God. I still get chill bumps when I hear or learn of something meaningful or consequential to me. When that stops, I will stop writing. It's not a way to get rich but the cherished memories I have for writing about people and events far outweighs the treasures I can't take with me when I die. And, I always abide by the ole saying: I'm not responsible for how you comprehend what I write; I'm only responsible for what I say. And, enemies are part of the trade. If you can't take it. Find a new line of work.

3) Describe some of your strengths that become flaws.

I have always thought I'm smarter than I am. Becoming homeless; broke and desperate for freedom taught me I'm not near as smart as I thought I was. Foolish pride continues to be something I'm working on.

4) What has been the highlight of your journalism career while covering sports?

Honestly, the sports coverage has been a blessing in so many towns and schools. From Benton, Ill; to Fulton, Ky; Madisonville; Ky; Newport, Ark; Terre Haute, IN., Tallulah, La; Rolla, Mo., Lake County, TN., Charleston hoops; East Prairie and so many memorable ones it's hard to boil that one down. I was there for the 75 Ep team as a sophomore; the 94 Eagles state semifinal squad as the announcer for the team; those were fun times. I really value my time in Tallulah where Yvonne Lewis and I stood up to the Man; crooked system and saved a hospital from closure and shut down a number of dog breeding/fighting operations. The saddest story I ever covered was helping in the prosecution of my former Scout Leader and Ep Jr. High Principal, Mike Euer. I hope to never stop doing what's right for the right reasons. It's why I treasure our #7Q's format you and I came up with.

5) What is one of your long term goals related to your craft?

To write until the day I die. I always felt I had to be 50; to have enough Life experiences to really be taken serious. I have a number of drafts of things I've not completed and want to do that before it's all said and done. I hope the words I write give some bit of solace and comfort at times.

6) There has been talk of an East Prairie sports hall of fame being erected. I have already seen some disagreements as to who should be elected to be put on the wall. What do you feel should be the guidelines and requirements of the athletes chosen?

Tough one, Rick. There will be one in the future of that I am sure. It should be all inclusive and my feelings are that it doesn't need to be some highfalutin requirements. A Hall of Fame with not many people in it don't make it necessarily a good one. And, what does it matter if it's full of lots of people. The more the merrier in my book. And, when I read and see and hear of some of the racial nonsense associated with it; just the idea of it angers me. Folks, we all have an inherent bias because of who and what we are. A Hall of Fame should not have color; name or social status as a requirement. Just a simple appreciation for efforts on

the field(s) or court(s) for the #EpEagles.

7) What motivates you to keep pushing forward when the odds are not in your favor?

My kids.

Bonus- I had never heard too much of your sports journey as a high school athlete. Come to find out you were quite accomplished. What achievement or game highlight are you most proud of?

Ha. The Glory Days, bruh. :) Most know nothing of this. lol. I was an all-conference; all district player in football and baseball my senior year - 1978. The only player in our class to achieve that. Had multiple offers to play college ball at small schools like SEMO and Murray State; and a few others. However, I took up smoking pot about that time and the athletic endeavors became secondary. I relive every game I ever played each time I watch an Eagle contest. It was that impactful to me. It's why I encourage all students to play and participate in as much as they can because when it's over. It's over. I did have the privilege of talking to my HS quarterback "Cornbread" - aka Terry Wheatley at Tuesday's parent's night as my daughter cheered on the field I played on as a youth. That, my friend, over shadows any catch or tackle I ever had on that field.

Ricky Johnson, Jr., is living the life at the Lake of the Ozarks with his wife, Julie, and Mutt Mick.

Kp is surviving. Thanks to family and friends to whom I owe it all and you know who you are. I Love You.

ALLRIGHTSRESERVED:KpKronicleLLC - Kevin Pritchett