

Proposed Will Ferrell comedy as Reagan controversy: Is mental illness ever a laughing matter?

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Can a devastating disease ever be funny?

The fierce backlash last week against [a proposed comedy](#) about President Ronald Reagan suffering from Alzheimer's disease while in the White House — which had star Will Ferrell briefly attached — shows how difficult that is to pull off.

But others find comedy alongside the challenges of illness. Jeremie Saunders, a twentysomething Canadian podcaster with a show all about illness and humor, speaks from experience when considering the comedic potential of Alzheimer's.

His grandparents struggle with dementia. On the one hand, when his grandmother forgets her own sister, “there's nothing funny about that at all. That's so sad,” he said.

But on the other hand, when his grandfather posts a picture on Facebook showing some bruises on his hip after a fall and accidentally exposes, well, a whole lot more of his anatomy ...

“If that is an aspect of the dementia, that's really funny,” Saunders said. “There's something to be said [for] communally all together appreciat[ing] the humor that comes with that.”

Saunders himself lives with cystic fibrosis, which is, oddly enough, the foundation of his comedy. Along with friends Brian Stever and Taylor MacGillivray, he has launched a podcast dedicated to the concept called “[Sickboy](#).”

Given the subject matter, the conversations can still be quite serious (a recent episode featured somebody with post-traumatic stress disorder), but the trick, according to the trio, is in taking aim at the right target.

Read full, original post: [Reagan Alzheimer's comedy raises the question: Can illness be funny?](#)