

Michael Eure Show Transcript

Special Guest Johnny Ray Moore

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EURE: Hello this is Michael Eure, and I'd like to invite you to The Michael Eure Show featuring student hosts and very special guests talking about a variety of interesting topics. You can find us on the Eagle Stream YouTube Channel.

EURE: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen and welcome to today's session with Micheal Eure Show. And we have a very special guest, Mr. Johnny Ray Moore. He's a children's author, a poet, a songwriter and he's a retired US Army. Not retired, but he's a veteran of the US Army. Tell us a little bit about yourself.

MOORE: Okay, first, I'd like to say good morning. I thank the Lord for this opportunity. I thank Michael Eure and Wake Tech for having me. I am a poet, a children's author. I write greetings cards. I also write songs. I am originally from down by the Pamlico Sound, way east by La Washington. Down that way by what, Greenville? That's where I am from. I wrote my first poem when I was in the third grade. I had a teacher who she introduced us to poetry and we'd get a poem on Monday and by Friday we had to have that poem memorized. So that's how I got interested in poetry. I've always loved reading, and even as a child, I was very creative, and I had my imaginative friends and all this good stuff. And for the most part, that's how I got interested in writing. I first started writing poems, and then from that I started writing prose. When I got into the higher grades, fifth grade, sixth grade, I took advanced composition and creative writing. And I just went from there and to where I am now.

EURE: Okay, well the thing about your upcoming book, Silence Please, you worked on that or wrote it while you were in the military. And I'm just wanting you to describe that experience and share how that book is being published after all these years after so many other books have been published.

MOORE: Okay, I like to do this before. I wanna flash my books that I have written, my first book to where I am right now. My first book, Howie Has a Stomachache. Howie Has a Stomachache about a little kid. It's only 100 words. My specialty is writing for very young kids. I'm talking about the kindergarten age and first graders, second graders even though I write for adults. So my first book was Howie has a Stomachache, and it did well and was translated into Spanish by the publisher. So the Spanish version. And then from there, the Story of Martin Luther King, Jr. This is a 200 word board book. And I'm letting you all see this cuz most people will recognize this book because it has sold well over 100,000 copies as of December 2015 and it's still selling very well, okay. From that book, the publisher wanted me to write a picture book for third and fourth graders, so I wrote Meet Martin Luther King, Jr., and this is a picture book. So before I got to all of this though, when I got out of high school, I joined the US Army. Make a long story short, I spent my last 27

months and a few days in West Germany. While I was in West Germany, I was still writing. I had not had any books published, but still I would write. So I got to thinking. On my way to my job each day, I walked by a daycare. And in the daycare, my interest was writing for kids anyway, so I would see the children over there playing. I just got to thinking; it would be so nice if someday I could write a book of poetry for kids of that age. Now I was not married and I did not have any kids. So I really had to kind of like to pay attention to them without stopping there and staring at other people's children because I know how people are about their children. So that's how the idea for Silence Please came about. I wrote something in this book, Silence Please. The book will be released on the 10th of April 2018. You can go online now from Amazon.com or just Google the title of the book, Silence Please, by Johnny Ray Moore. The book is published by Clear Fork Publishing out of Texas, and I must mention the illustrator of this book also. Her name is Tatiana Escallon Bee, Tatiana. When you see the title of the book on Amazon.com, by all means, go to this illustrator's website and look at her awesome work, okay? So this is Silence Please. Back to Mike's question. I started writing it in, the early part of 1979. Now, I was in the military. And I went straight to business because I had another job to do, which was the Army. But whenever I got the opportunity, I made my little notes for Silence Please. I just want to write about many experiences that children all around the world should be able to relate to somewhat, and for the most part, that's how it came about. So it took me from 1979 to all the way to 2018 to be fortunate enough to find a publisher, Clear Fork Publishing, who took a chance and published this book. So if you kind of add it up, I've waited 39 years for this book to be published. Okay?

EURE: All right, now today and when the viewers see it later they may not realize today is the anniversary of the Martin Luther King mountaintop speech in Tennessee. And you've written two books about Martin Luther King, and I know they've been good. Tell us about the picture book and the difference between that and the other book based on Martin Luther King.

MOORE: Okay, the first book again, The Story of Martin Luther King, Jr., which is a board book. It's a 200 word board book. The illustrator is Amy Weimar. Wendy, my agent at the time, approached me about writing a book for little kids about Dr. King. And they wanted it in about 200 words. And well, I kind of shook my head because a lot of books had been written about Dr. King. So I had to figure out a way, with the help of the publishers, to write about something in 200 words that very young kids could relate to. So I focused on, for the most part, three areas in this book that kids could relate to. The main message being that even as a child, Dr. King, he noticed a lot of things that were not right in this society when it came to race, when it came to black and white, when it came to minorities being treated equally. So for the most part, that is what this book is about. It introduces little kids to the important work that Dr. King did, that Martin Luther King, Jr. did in this book of 200 words. The difference in a board book and a picture book is for sure. Now this is a board book, and the pages are like cardboard, like cardboard, okay? And a picture book, it is not. This is a hardcover copy, but it's also in paperback. But it's written for older kids. A

picture book, it is meant to be read to children who they can read a bit, but they may not be able to read the entire book. So a parent or guardian, teacher, whoever, can share it with a kid beginning to read. And then, of course, when they learn to read better, they can read the book themselves. They can grow into reading the book. So for the most part, that's the biggest difference.

EURE: Okay, all right. Tell us a little bit about what's gonna be coming up with the launching, the book signing. Where is that gonna be, when, what time?

MOORE: Okay.

EURE: And the audience, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask about anything. Go ahead.

MOORE: Okay, again for the book, *Silence, Please*, it's gonna be released the 10th of April, The launch party will be the 21st of April on a Saturday at 2PM at Quail Ridge Books and Music. Now, if you live in the Raleigh area, Quail Ridge Books and Music is located off of Lassiter Mill Road in North Hills. So if you need directions, just Google Quail Ridge Books and Music. It's a well-known independent bookstore in North Hills.

EURE: Okay, so if people, because you do workshops, and I know that you participated at the Museum of History's African-American culture celebration, you were a featured author. But your books are also integrated into some literacy type memorials and other programs like at the DuSable Museum in Chicago. Tell us how that came about.

MOORE: Yes, currently, now to date, I have written for four different publishers. And as far as the book, *Howie Has a Stomachache*, and *A Leaf*, I forgot *A Leaf*. *A Leaf* is published by the same publisher. These two books are part of a literacy program that when they first came out around 1996 and 1998, that they just went out to the schools to introduce kids to the books, you see? As far as a lot of other things that have them because my books are out there, I'm not self-published. The publisher, with all their good marketing resources, people will pretty much go into a bookstore and see the book. And kinda like back to his question, they would contact me and I don't know. I've done other webinars, at least one other, a couple of sessions. And from that, people just contact me. And if I couldn't get there to do a presentation or something, then they'd get permission to use the book and whatever, in relation to whatever program that they were putting. But yes, if I am contacted, and I pretty much have to have about my schedule, if I can get to wherever, I will do a presentation, a reading and a signing and this kinda thing.

EURE: Okay, so tell people how do they get in contact with you?

MOORE: Right now, if you're on Facebook, you could Facebook me. My name is Johnny Ray Moore, last name M-O-O-R-E. Try to reach me on Facebook, but also I'm

gonna give you my email address, and about another week, my website will be up. But for now, I'm gonna give you my email address, and it is jmoore92591@gmail.com. Again, that's the letter J moore92591@gmail.com. Send me an email and, or try to reach me on Facebook, Johnny Ray Moore and I will give you some correspondence. I will send you information.

EURE: Okay, so tell us about something interesting when you work with students and kids. I'm assuming you go out and you read to them. And I know that you're into health, and you have a book about a pig that kinda pushes them?

MOORE: Right, what he's speaking about is a, this is how I come up with ideas, actually. I was in Walmart one night and I saw this book. It was very short and the pages were very colorful. Paperback, so I knew that the book was meant for very young kids. So I picked up the book, it was by a publishing company called Speciality, Specialty Publishing, I think it was. And so I looked at the book, I stood there in Walmart and I read the book. So I said, wow, I'm gonna contact them as soon as I get home or at least look at their website. I did that. Well, the next day, I end up contacting one of the editors for Speciality Publishing and I didn't tell her much about me. So she was interested in whether or not I had written anything that I wanted to submit to her. And I had not, but it was an opportunity. So I had to come up with something in 125 words, because that was the length and the word count in the book that I read. So I wrote this manuscript entitled Meet Polly Pork Chops Fitness Trainer. Polly Pork Chops is not a book yet. I have an offer pretty much pending for it, but the book just teaches kids how to, first, just kinda relax. When I get around very young kids, they have the jitters, they're excited and this kinda stuff. Polly Porkchops is a PE who was standing in front of her. A PP the mud hole was seen in the back. All that good stuff. She has on a pink headband, pink leg warmers, and she is teaching the kids how to do very simple exercises. The exercises are designed to just help them get rid of the jitters. But at the same time, it teaches them some very, very cool stuff about poetry.

EURE: Alright, quickly, part of our audience students. Can you give us like a 30 second, a minute, kinda tip you to give them if they were interested in becoming published.

MOORE: Yes, let me see. Yeah.

EURE: A minute is okay. [LAUGH]

MOORE: I write for traditional publishers. I'm not self-published. Which means, how I got into the business is, I looked at what was already there. Which was, I contacted a publishing company, either going into the library looking at their books. Or there's a book that you can google entitled Children's Writer and Illustrator's Market book. In that book, you just look at the book, I will give you the names of publishers, magazines that guidelines, that catalog information. And you can just pull this stuff up online and look at that catalog or request the catalog. In there also, you will find

the guideline for writer or guideline for illustrators and then you study that. That's how I got into the business because I didn't have money to self-publish. If you gonna self-publish, that is a lot of people go into detail. I just know people who have done that. But that's another way. Those are the two ways that you can get into the business. But, what I wanna leave with you, however you wanna go about doing it, you've got to read, you've got to study. You have to write, and then you have to rewrite. But I cannot say this enough now. I said you have to read, read, read. You've got to study, study, study. You have to write, write, write. And then you have to rewrite, rewrite, rewrite, and this is for the rest of your writing career if you wanna get into it. It does not mean anything in the world because I have what? I'm about to have before the year is out, I will have a total of what, seven books in print. And I have another book probably that's going to come out late into the year. But when I sit down to write, even a 12 line poem or anything, it's the same process, I read or I study. I contemplate what it is I'm going to write, I study it, I write it, and then I turn around and I rewrite it. I'm always looking to make it better, and that's the best advice that I can give you.

EURE: Right. Do authors network? Do they have organizations in this area or anywhere in the United States?

MOORE: Yes, the one that I'm the most familiar with is the Society of Children Book Writers and Illustrators. That's the society of children book writers and illustrator. This is a national and international organization. You can pull it up online and you can join, but you can learn a world of information from the Society of Children Book Writers and Illustrators. There are others too. It's just that I'm not familiar with them because I have always for the most part dealt with the Society of Children Book Writers and Illustrators.

EURE: Okay. Now how do tours get set up? Is that done through the publisher or individuals do it?

MOORE: Probably both but for the most part there are about, you can learn about various tours. I don't set them up. A lot of times people will contact me to be a part of something that has been planned are this and that.

EURE: And we know that you're gonna do some port to for us in the end. Tell us you're a songwriter too. Is that process very similar to just the author of children's books?

MOORE: It's writing, I can say that. I listed that I write for children. I write poetry for children. I write poetry for adults. And then greeting cards, and then a songwriting, the lyrics and all this good stuff. I play the bass guitar too. So, it's all similar and it's important if you want to keep your self relevant and marketable. I tell people that are really serious getting into the writing, getting into writing. If possible write in more than just one genre. If you're writing poetry, I'm sure you can write a poem for a child, then you can write a poem for adults. But also bear in mind, if you're writing

poetry anyway, you probably could write greeting cards. So, and there are courses that you can take online. But also you can google, I don't know, how to write greeting cards and you will get books that will come up writing. So the very same thing when it comes to writing lyrics for a song, it helps if you have a rhythm at least. But also you're still writing for, there's a difference. So you'd have to learn the difference in a poem versus a lyric because you can write and recite a poem, you can't necessarily recite lyrics. A poem cannot necessarily be sung, and lyrics are not really written to be recited, they're part of a song. So there are similarities, but there are differences also.

EURE: Mm-hm, right, well we're getting ready to wind down in about a minute. So are there any questions from the audience at all at this point? None, okay, well, maybe you can do a poem as they think of one and we'll come back and let you doing a closing poem.

MOORE: Okay.

EURE: Okay, all right, all right

MOORE: The poem that I'm gonna do, one of them, cause I'm only gonna do two.

EURE: Okay.

MOORE: The first one is entitled That Village. Let's all become that village just like we used to be. That village made of kings and queens, a place of dignity. Back then we raised our children. We taught them right from wrong. When problems came and shook their faith, we urged them to hold on. We even credit our elders; they paved the way for us. And if they need anything, we gave without a fuss. That really was a place of strength for men, made peace with men. And women stood beside their mates right to the very end. The church also had power; they gave more hope to men. It taught salvation was for all, and did not cost a penny. And furthermore, that village was designed to keep us grounded, and still in precious harmony, the best thing ever founded. So as we sometimes toil with doubt, stand tall and persevere. Because that village way of life is still so very dear.

EURE: Right, that was very good.

MOORE: Thank you, thank you.

EURE: You were getting ready to read another one, before you do that, how long did it take? Does it usually take, a day or a week, to come up with a poem?

MOORE: Because I started writing poetry from the very beginning, sometimes I can write five poems in one day, probably more than that. I don't necessarily sit down at a desk to write. I'm on the move, doing something around the house, shopping or whatever.

EURE: Question?

Q&A: Yeah, Josie had a comment. She said she loved the poem and it reminded her of her childhood and how everyone participated in your upbringing. What prompted you to write that poem, is it because you think we've lost something, or was that just the way that all childhoods are? What was your reason for wanting to write that poem?

MOORE: That's a very good question. Josie is a name?

EURE: Yes.

MOORE: Josie?

EURE: Josie, thanks for that question.

MOORE: Yes, Josie. I'm 63 years old, right? Well, I'm of a different generation, but back then, what you kinda notice in that poem, that's what we did. We were together. We were of the mindset that it really does take a village to raise a child when I was coming, if I did anything wrong, the neighbors saw me. A neighbor would tell another neighbor. It'd get back to my parents. If it was bad enough, I'd get a whipping or whatever from my mom and then from my dad, from pretty much everybody. But that was a good thing, because everybody was concerned about the well-being of everybody in the community. So that's what that village is all about.

EURE: Now, I know you have a grandson.

MOORE: Yes.

EURE: I kinda worked with him a little bit.

MOORE: Yes.

EURE: Now tell us a little bit about him. And he's not old enough to quite understand or is he? Just go answer that really quickly.

MOORE: Okay, yeah. I have pleasure of babysitting my grandson. My wife and I have three daughters, they're grown, the oldest one is married. So because I'm retire, I retired February of 2017, I babysit my grandson, his name is Ethan. Ethan will be 16 months in about another month. So, it's just a joy to just watch him, read to him, and he begin to talk a little bit. He can say some words but it just opened me up to a new thing, a whole lot of good things. Apparently Robin is a writer as well and she wants to confirm that you mention that children writers and illustrators market book.

EURE: Yes.

Q&A: As a resource. And the society of children writers. She knows about the writers market but she did not know they had a children's version. A version of that for children's books writers.

MOORE: Yes.

Q&A: Thank you.

MOORE: If you write for children, even if you write for adults, yes, by all means. You might not wanna buy the book but when you're in Barnes and Noble somewhere, or just pull it up online, the Children's Writer An illustrator's market book, okay. And that is the Society of Children Book Writers and Illustrators. They have, yes, they have all over in all 50 states, so the society of children book writers is in Foreign countries even. Branches all over everywhere, yes.

EURE: All right, so are we kinda through with our questions? Because if we are, now I'm gonna ask you to give your contact information if people want you to come and do a workshop or a book signing.

MOORE: Okay. Right now, again, all I'm gonna give is my email address and about another week I'm gonna post my website information on Facebook. But my email again is, jmoore92591@gmail.com. That's the letter jmoore92591@gmail.com.

EURE: All right, well I thank you so much for coming. And I know we're gonna close it out with your poem. And I wanna thank the audience for your questions and on April the 11th, we will have Clarence Williams who's a retired producer for WRAL Capital Broadcasting. And he's also a veteran. He does a lot of philanthropic things in the community and I want you at the same time, same station. Go ahead, Jay and thanks again for coming.

MOORE: Thank you. I just wanna end with this poem with the anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination coming up, title of this poem is Honoring a Legacy of Blackness. When Dr. King was here with us and said, I have a dream. So many stood and trusted him, they were a chosen team. Side by side, they prayed and marched, their goals are very plain, they fought for pure equality, they ushered in a change. Some before and after them, made strides for Civil Rights. Now, we must do our very best to stay the course and fight. Our black ancestors gave up hope, they set a grueling pace. They worked and prayed and sacrificed, and vowed to win this race.. They paved the way for us to be whatever we desire. Their blood was shed throughout the world, therefore, we must aspire. Then one day, we unified our courage, somewhat spent. Our precious votes made sure we got our first black President. We are a world of tender souls, let's work to help each other. And though in times we disagree, we must not kill our brothers. Instead, let's prove to all the world and to our children, too. With prayer and faith and Godly grace, there's nothing that we can't do. Thank you very much.

EURE: Thank you so much for coming and thank you for joining us audience and we'll see you again on the next show. Thanks.

MOORE: Thank you.