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Tig Notaro: Grateful Every Day

Elisa Leonelli · Wednesday, October 12th, 2016

Tig Notaro, after performing stand-up comedy for 15 years and building a loyal following, turned the traumatic events of a year of her life into an autobiographical comedy series in 6 episodes, *One Mississippi*, airing on Amazon as of September 3, 2016. Tig stars as herself, with actors playing her mother Caroline (Rya Kihlstedt), her stepfather Bill (John Rothman), her brother Remy (Noah Harpster), her girlfriend Brooke (Casey Wilson), in this fictionalized “traumedy”, with dream-sequences and flashbacks, co-created by Diablo Cody, co-produced by Louis CK, directed by Nicole Holofcener.



In spring of 2012 Tig was debilitated by a bacterial infection of the digestive track (C-diff, *Clostridium difficile*), caused by antibiotics she had taken to fight pneumonia, when she received a phone call that her 65-year-old mother was in a coma, after falling and hitting her head. She flew to Houston, Texas (the fictional Bay Saint Lucille, Mississippi, in the show) and spent the last few hours of her mother’s life at her bedside, stayed with her brother and stepfather to recuperate for a few weeks, while taping her podcast (*Professor Blastoff*) at a local radio station, where (in the TV series fictionalized version) she befriended sound-engineer Kate (Stephanie Allynne), had a fling with news reporter Jessie (Jill Bartlett).

Then Tig broke up with her girlfriend, and she was diagnosed with bilateral breast cancer. On August 3 Notaro performed her stand-up act at club Largo in Los Angeles, greeting the audience with the line: “Hello. I have cancer.” The audio recording of this **LIVE** performance was released by Louis C.K. on his website and went viral.

Notaro underwent a double-mastectomy in fall of 2012, elected not to have reconstructive surgery or chemotherapy.



It was difficult for the veteran comedian to start performing again, to come up with new material, after such an ordeal. So Tig started traveling around the country to take her act to people’s homes, with comedian friend Jon Dore. This 2013-2014 tour is documented in the Showtime special *Knock Knock, It’s Tig Notaro* aired April 17, 2015. You can see how accomplished Notaro had become when HBO taped her live show in Boston (first performed on November 6, 2014 at the New York Comedy Festival), *Boyish Girl Interrupted*, aired on August 22, 2015. She fearlessly takes off her shirt and performs topless, showing the scars from her double-mastectomy.



In another documentary, *TIG*, aired on Netflix on July 17, 2015, you can see the real people in her life, her brother, her stepfather, her girlfriend Stephanie, that she later married (October 24, 2015), and her failed attempt to have a child via IVF treatment. Notaro published her autobiography, *I’m Just A Person*, June 14, 2016. We suggest getting it as an audiobook to hear the author’s own delivery of her life story.



And there is a happy ending to this story. Tig and Stephanie are now parents of twin boys, Max and Finn, born June 26, 2016, via surrogate.

We were curious to find out how Notaro feels today. She graciously agreed to an interview with *Cultural Weekly*.

Show title, *One Mississippi*. “It’s nostalgic, reminiscent of childhood. It also has to do with counting and time. It felt like a cool title that people will be able to interpret however they like.”

Nickname Tig. “My brother made it up when he was 2-years-old, he couldn’t say Mathilde and somehow Tig came out. My mother’s name was Mathilde as well and so was my grandmother’s. Actually no one went by it, oddly enough.”

Growing up with an older brother so close in age. “It was nice being a year apart. I feel like you’re born with a best friend for life. And that’s what I’m hoping for my own boys, that they will have a connection. Right now they can barely recognize or notice each other in the same room, but hopefully that will change.”

Having found love and becoming a mother at 45. “Being married, having these babies and my health, all of it, is something I don’t take for granted. I feel thankful every day. It’s nothing I thought was in my future. I kept hitting brick walls in romantic relationships and in trying to have children. I can’t believe the degree of happiness that I found. As thankful as I am for my career, having the happiness and joy at home gives me a bit of an edge over my concerns about taking things too seriously.”

Eating healthy, after cancer and stomach infection. “Definitely. I’m not 100 percent great about it all the time, but I would say 75 to 80 percent of the time I’m trying to lean towards the vegan diet. And I feel a lot better when I eat like that.”

No longer riding a motorcycle. “After I started dating Stephanie, she said, *that won’t be happening anymore*. So I haven’t ridden my motorcycle in almost 5 years.”

Relating to a wife who’s 15 years younger. “We talk about being surprised that we really feel that we relate and connect like we’re the same age. I can’t believe how mature and wise beyond her years she is. She astounds me.”

The presidential elections. “I’m a full-fledged Hillary supporter. Obviously the country is divided, but I stand in the category of those that are for Hillary or mortified by the idea of Trump.”

Going back on the road. “After we finished filming the TV show, the babies were born a week later. So Stephanie and I are both taking time off from work to stay home and spend time with them. Next week I start going out of town on tour here and there on the weekends. We live in a house in the hills right across the street from Stephanie’s mother (she works during the week and is off on the weekend); that way Stephanie will have her mother to help with the babies. But they’re pretty good—they’re sleeping about 5 to 8 hours a night.”



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Check out [Tig’s website](#) for the tour dates and locations. She will perform at Largo in Los Angeles on November 7 and December 2, 2016.

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