

The late-night television talk show landscape is a sadder, less impromptu place without Craig Ferguson. Holding down CBS' 'The Late Late Show' from January 2005 until his departure in December 2014, Ferguson's style as a monologist and interviewer was absurdist and improvisational, sometimes risqué and always wildly funny. Since leaving late-night, the Glasgow, Scotland-born, American citizen has hosted game shows ('The Hustler') and history-based programs ('Join or Die'), but where Ferguson's weird humor best resides is, and has always been, stand-up comedy.

Metro recently spoke with Ferguson ahead of his show at South Philly's Live! Casino & Hotel this weekend.

## **How are you enjoying your car ride through the states?**

I've been out of America on the regular for a long time. Now, I'm here, hitting a Flying J, where I just bought a sleeveless vest and a camouflage mesh-back cap that reads "Stars and Stripes" across the front, and I feel much better.

## **After leaving the talk show universe, you have been missed. What is your take on the nightly talk show landscape?**

You know, to be honest with you, I didn't pay attention to it then, and I don't pay attention to it now. Being a late-night host is a little like being a realtor. It's a decent job. You get your photograph on a bus stop. But I never watched it – especially not while I was doing it, or before or after. I'm probably the worst person in the world to comment on late night television. What I did when I was on was try to be – to do something that was uniquely mine. I don't feel as if I was ever truly part of that landscape. I didn't feel as if I was part of a group of like-minded individuals.

## **Did you feel any more at one with hosting a game show?**

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 07 September 2022 11:33 -

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\*Laughs\* I wish I had thought of the title, 'The Hustler' I liked doing the game show because the format gave me space to improvise, be spontaneous.

Something strict would've been tougher for me. 'The Hustler' was conversation with an agenda. I liked that.

### **Are you someone who follows a written script, despite what seems like spontaneity on stage?**

I give myself a set of bullet points to work with, and over time, I'll improvise. A written script would sink me. I'm also probably not good enough to do that, and I think the audience would see through me. Being spontaneous for me, is actually doing it spontaneously as opposed to planning it out.

### **I know you are not a fan of punching down; not in your monologues and not in your stand up. What can you comfortably make fun of?**

I think the rules of comedy are as they've always been: Be funny but don't be a d\*ck. It's a joke-by-joke basis. There's no manifesto for that. It's a personal thing of which I take my own counsel.

### **What is still surprising about the comedy gig in America?**

I'm in rural Nebraska now, driving through the Midwest, and I'm always thrilled to see and feel the sheer unbelievable size of this country. The diverse nature of all the types of America and Americans that there is – it's an amazing journey. Especially out west and its landscape. How can you stop being amazed?

*Craig Ferguson will perform at Live! Casino & Hotel on Friday, Sept. 9. Doors open at 7 p.m. Showtime is 8 p.m. For information and tickets, visit [philadelphia.livecasinohotel.com](http://philadelphia.livecasinohotel.com)*

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