



"Being a comedian is just who I am. At every family barbecue, I was the one people came to see, just to laugh and have a good time. That humor followed me through school—lunchtime was like a roast session, and everyone waited for me to show up and start cracking jokes. It didn't matter who you were; if you thought your clothes were fly, or you thought you were hot stuff, I'd humble you. But it was never mean-spirited—it was always just fun and laughter.

One day, when I was working for the City of Florence, I stopped by my aunt's house for lunch, and she was watching a Kevin Hart special. She looked at me and said, 'Rell, you could do this. You could set this whole family off.' I was 22, had just had my first child, and thought, 'Yeah, I could do this. I'm going to try it.' From there, I started meeting comedians who were serious about the craft, learning the game, and traveling with them. Before I knew it, I was doing shows in Germany, Jamaica, and earning my name across South Carolina. My first show in South Carolina was with Carlos Miller from Wild 'N Out, and that took me exactly where I needed to go.

Being a truck driver was never my passion—it was just a way to pay the bills. But fashion? That's been my whole life. I've always loved fashion and always dressed well, even in school. When I started buying my own clothes, and my parents weren't picking them out for me anymore, that's when everything changed. I had a friend from high school who worked at FedEx, and employees could buy damaged or undeliverable items at a discount. Around 2012, I started selling clothes myself and built a name for it.

I've always known I didn't like working for someone else. I never wanted to work for a company where you're making them rich while you're just grinding away. I couldn't see myself working like my grandma, retiring at 60 with only 20 years left to enjoy life. That wasn't the future I wanted for myself.

Being in business with my cousin and seeing our success feels incredible. That portrait of me and my cousin, Kenyatta, on the wall? It was originally supposed to be a picture of five people—friends who were going to be involved—but Kenyatta was the only one who stuck

with me. TK's Clothing was my idea, and Kenyatta believed in me when no one else could see the vision. The building we're in now was about to be torn down, but we brought it back to life, got it up to code, and made it our own. Now, we're looking at other locations in South Carolina and beyond, hoping to turn TK's Clothing into a franchise. It's been a lot of work, but I wouldn't have it any other way—this is what I've always wanted.

Having REO Speedwagon walk into the store was crazy, man. I didn't even know who they were at first. I thought they were just some older guys checking out the store, as Florence is a tourist area. Kenyatta was working the morning shift, and when I came in that afternoon, he pulled me aside and said, 'Bro, I think those guys are somebody.' He thought they were in a band or something. We started talking to them, and the lead singer asked if we'd ever heard of them. I told him I probably had but didn't recognize him. Then he asked for the remote to pull up their music on YouTube. As soon as I heard "Can't Fight This Feeling," I realized I'd been hearing their music since I was a kid—on Snickers commercials, in Deadpool, even in Super Bowl ads.

He shared stories about being on tour with Bob Marley and The Beatles, and it was surreal. By the end of the conversation, we took pictures, and he told us, 'I've been around the country and outside the country, and I have to tell you, this is one of the best stores I've ever been to—both price-wise and quality-wise.' For him to say that just four months after we opened? It was a magic moment. They even invited us to their show, gave us tickets and backstage passes, and wore the clothes they bought from us on stage. They even shouted us out on social media. We couldn't have asked for more.

Owning a business is no joke. It's a cliché to say 'trust the process,' but actually going through it is a whole different thing. There are times you want to give up, times you want to break—but you can't. You have to trust the process and keep going. This didn't happen overnight; it took years of planning, strategy, and a lot of hard work. You'll likely need a job before you even open your business, unless someone gives you a ton of money to start. You've got to use that job as a stepping stone, save your money, and work your way up. You don't have to start big—I didn't. When I opened, I had maybe 350 items in the store. Now, we've got over 5,000.

All in all, man, trust the process, work hard, and if you're a religious person, say your prayers."

Tyrell Waiters

TK's Clothing