

# BIOGRAPHY

## FRANKLYN AJAYE

It's difficult to get a funny man to be serious. He sits across the table, and although he doesn't smoke, he insists on chewing a cigarette to calm his nerves. Suddenly, a wave of seriousness sweeps over his brow as he tries to recall childhood incidents, the thought of which force his face to break out in yet another enormous smile.

*"It was at school, in the third grade; I was really smart and able to finish all the class assignments before anyone else, even the Japanese kids. Then I would just sit there and say crazy things to make the other kids laugh. Finally, one day after class, my third-grade teacher came up to me and said, "Franklyn, you know you ought to be a comedian." I didn't know what that meant, so I just said, "Same to you," and left . . .*

Throughout his elementary, junior high and high school career, Franklyn found that he could not only amuse the students but the teachers too. "Franklyn, you're the craziest student I've ever had," was a phrase Franklyn would often hear, particularly when he was pretending to parachute from his seat on to the classroom floor. However, even the teachers who refused to tolerate his antics, never reprimanded him because he was such a fine student.

So Franklyn managed to laugh his way through college, where he majored in History. After graduating from U.C.L.A. Franklyn attended Columbia Law School in New York City. He found law school a particularly alienating experience and decided to work seriously at becoming a comedian. He made the rounds of the Greenwich Village clubs and coffee bars trying to get his act together. Franklyn listened to Richard Pryor's albums whenever he was confronted with a comedic problem.

*"Richard Pryor influenced me 'cause he showed that you could rap about the black experience and still make it."*