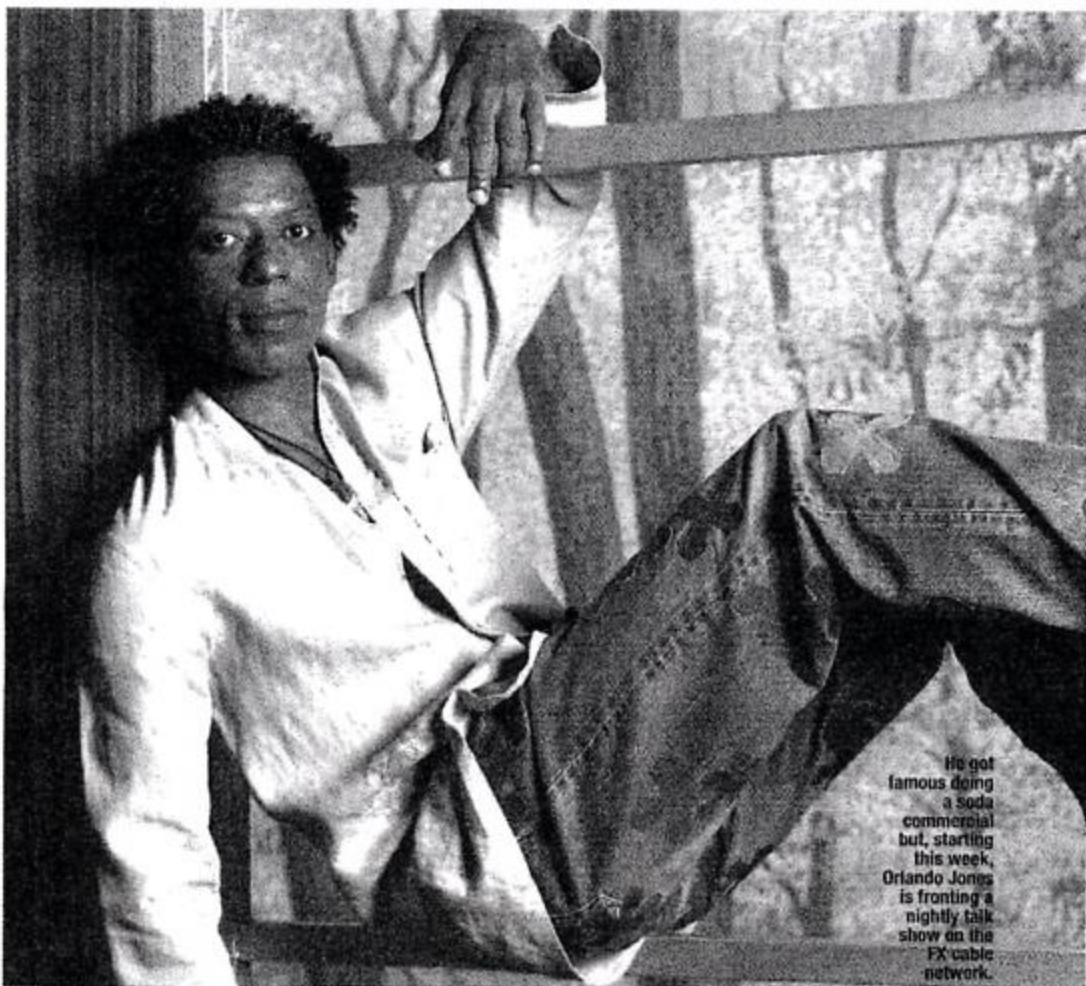


## ● REALLY BIG SHOW

# Orlando Jones

## No desk. No band. This is late night?



He got famous doing a soda commercial but, starting this week, Orlando Jones is fronting a nightly talk show on the FX cable network.

By MICHAEL GILTZ

**O**RLANDO Jones didn't grow up dreaming of being a late-night talk-show host, the way you imagine Leno and Letterman did.

Doing a late-night talk show wasn't even his idea. The cable channel FX approached him saying they didn't know what they wanted but they wanted *him*.

"How many black kids get this opportunity?" he asks.

"Arsenio, Magic Johnson, Keenan ... You're done."

Jones' new nightly show starts Monday at 11 p.m.

After a string of forgettable movies like "The Replacements," "The Time Machine" and the cult classic "Office Space," Jones is best known for the recent hit "Drumline" and a string of refreshingly clever 7-Up ads.

The last thing Jones wants "The Orlando Jones Show" to be is "urban."

"When you're told there's no white guy, no desk and no band, people's first thought is, 'Oh, it's going to be urban,'" says Jones.

Actually, their first thought is Arsenio.

"Yes! Please bring the barking back. We're going to meow this time."

Jones doesn't pretend to be reinventing the wheel but he also insists the show will be different, although it's probably easier to say what the show won't be like.

"A guy walking out in a suit, sitting behind a desk with a cityscape behind him, probably are the first things you need to get rid of," says Jones.

"It's been done and it's been done well. Letterman, Leno — they've all been cool to me. I don't have any beef with those cats. Hey, it's hard as hell to do."

Jones' show will feature elaborate taped skits, but not the cheesy, sketch comedy late-night shows usually include.

Jones says he's been taping bits for more than three months.

For "Ask Al Sharpton," Jones — who must sit for four hours to get into makeup — responds to questions about what the big summer blockbuster will be. Other skits include how dry cleaning works, asking whether Jesus is black and a take-off called "You People's Court."

"Clarence Thomas is trying a case between the Ku Klux Klan and a guy they tried to lynch," says Jones.

"The Klan is suing this guy for breaking

their tree limb, knocking down their fence and running off with 30 feet of good rope. Now Clarence finds in favor of the Klan because the guy in his testimony admits he broke the tree limb."

Jones will be promoting every type of musical act he can, from John Mayer and 50 Cent to standards swinger Michael Buble.

There's even a cartoon about two janitors working at a music studio called "The Adventures of Chico and Guapo" that Jones and two buddies created themselves on four Mac machines.

If he's mum on details — such as how different the set'll be, whether there'll be a slide for guests to enter the studio, and if Jones'll float in the air on a harness to ask questions — at least Jones isn't treating us any different than he treats his parents.

"Until the ads [for the show] started airing, my parents didn't know" he was doing a talk show, says Jones.

"I don't tell anyone anything. As soon as you tell your parents, they've got nine million questions."

**THE ORLANDO JONES SHOW**  
Weeknights, 11 p.m., FX