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Tiffany Haddish's new Netflix comedy series features Chicago native Flame Monroe

By TRACY SWARTZ
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Comedian Flame Monroe is one of the comedians on Netflix's "Tiffany Haddish Presents: They Ready," who was personally chosen by Haddish. (Myung J. Chun / Los Angeles Times)

Tiffany Haddish's new Netflix comedy series is called **[“Tiffany Haddish Presents: They Ready,”](#)** but Chicago native Flame Monroe has been doing stand-up for several years.

“I would say it’s a great launching pad, but I’ve been launched a long time ago. And it’s just a new way to reintroduce myself to the world, to 190 countries, because I was out before it was very apparent that (transgender people) were all over TV and in the movies,” Monroe told the Tribune by phone. “I would have got chased out years ago by comics had I not had a thick skin. I worked for maybe 10 years in the game, and comics didn’t even speak to me or address me or acknowledge me. Even

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Monroe, [who also goes by Marcus Parker](#) and has roots on the West and South sides, performs on the second episode of “They Ready,” a collection of six half-hour comedy specials set to premiere Tuesday. “Flame is one of my favorite comedians. I think that Flame is brave, funny, fiery, inspiring, joyous,” Haddish says in her intro of Monroe.

Monroe jokes about airport screenings, Amazon Chief Executive Jeff Bezos’ intimate pictures and President Donald Trump’s female staffers and touches on what it’s like to be a single father of three. She kicks off her set — taped in March at the Nate Holden Performing Arts Center in Los Angeles — with a joke about [African-American and gay actor Jussie Smollett](#), who is accused of, but has denied, faking a hate crime against himself in Chicago in January. “I never believed the story that he told. I feel sad for whatever he’s going through, but it really cast a shadow of doubt over the (LGBTQ) community,” said Monroe, who has lived in the Los Angeles area for more than 12 years.

She counts Diana Ross and “All in the Family” creator Norman Lear among her influences. She recalls a 1975 episode of the sitcom in which [Archie Bunker saves the life of Beverly LaSalle](#), not knowing she’s a female impersonator. Monroe said she was a kid at the time and cried in the bathroom because she felt seen. She hopes her Netflix special has the same effect.

“I’m hoping that my story, my 30 minutes, my special touches some kid somewhere,” she said.

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