THE COMEDIAN'S PLAYBOOK

Everything You Learned (And Need to Remember).

A curated refresher on finding your voice, writing killer jokes, and owning the stage.



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THE CORE PHILOSOPHY

THE GOLDEN RULE

TIME + TRAGEDY = COMEDY!

SHOW, DON'T TELL

Bring the audience with you. Don't just narrate the story—show us the emotion. Animate yourself.

Crucial!

FAKE IT 'TILL YOU MAKE IT



Confidence sells the joke. Even if you're terrified, own it. Be an exaggerated version of you.

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THE STAND-UP FEEDBACK LOOP



1. GENERATE

People watch. Rant about what you love or hate. Write down observations with as much detail as possible.

2. PERFORM

Try it on stage. Embrace the nerves. Talk to the audience like a good friend.

3. RECORD

Audio or video record everything. This is mandatory.

4. EXTRACT & EDIT

Listen back. Put whatever got laughs (even giggles) into your ‘Stand-Up Ideas” document. Discard the fluff. Repeat.

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Mindset Matrix: Navigating the Internal Game

Nerves

Reality
Completely normal.

Action
Ride the wave. Use the adrenaline to energize your set. Don't let it hold you back.

Bombing

Reality
It's going to happen. It's how you get good.

Action
Finish strong. Have a backup plan. Analyze what didn't work and tweak it. Take risks.

Vulnerability

Reality
Talking about personal things is hard.

Action
The things that make us most uncomfortable often get the best laughs. Believe in what you're saying.

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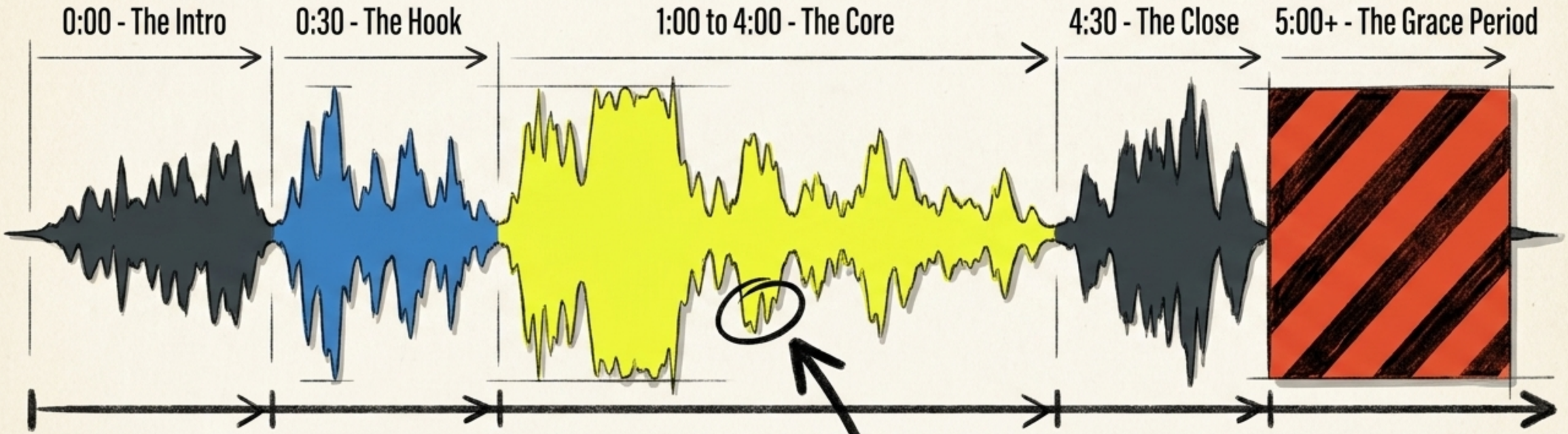
Anatomy of a 5-Minute Set



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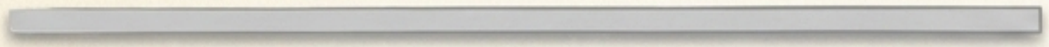
Storytelling Architecture

Momentum is everything!

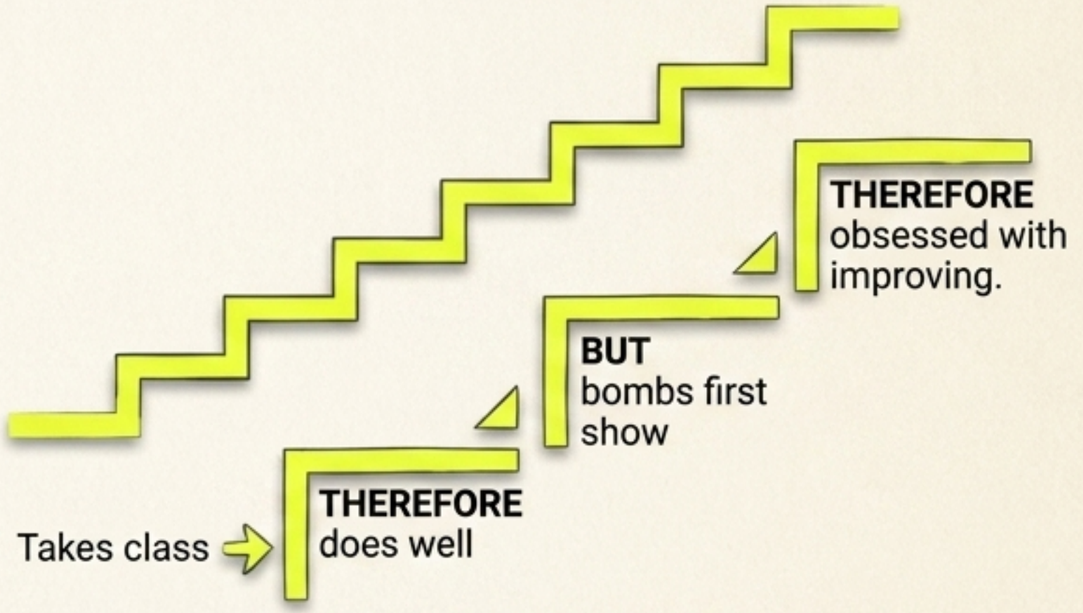
The “And Then” Flatline



Creates a list of events.
No causality, no momentum.
Boring.

Takes class → And then performs → And then gets heckled → And then goes home.

The “But / Therefore” Staircase



Therefore = Consequence/Progress.
But = Conflict/Complication.
Escalation = Comedy.

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The Misdirect Menu: Flipping Reality

Expectation vs. Reality

Setup leads the audience one way, the punch flips it.

I saw this guy with a hammer and thought he was a construction worker... turns out he just hates vending machines.

Assumption

The audience fills in the blank—then you subvert it.

My girlfriend and I tried roleplay... I was a plumber, and she was my landlord wondering why I haven't paid rent in three months.

Perspective Shift

Tell the story from one angle, then change the camera angle.

I'm yelling at this kid to get off my lawn... then I remember I don't have a lawn. I'm just in a Starbucks drive-thru line.

Ambiguity

Use words with double meanings.

Took a girl home, she was so into roleplaying. She pretended to be asleep the whole time.

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The Misdirect Menu: Breaking Logic

List Misdirect (Rule of 3)

Build a pattern with two items, break it on the third.

I love Italian food, French wine, and punching myself in the face while crying.

Childlike Logic

Play dumb. Setup something basic, then aggressively misunderstand it.

I thought 'Netflix and chill' meant relaxing. Now I have three kids and no idea what happened in Stranger Things.

Escalation into Absurdity

Starts completely normal, ends utterly ridiculous.

I went to therapy for my anger. Now I just scream into a baguette because carbs absorb rage.

False Analogy

Compare two unlike things as if identical, then turn.

Dating is like ordering from Amazon. Takes forever, you forget you wanted it, and it's not what you pictured.

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The Misdirect Menu: Turning Inward

Director's notes from
Stage Blueprint Blue

Self-Deprecating Reveal

Lead the audience to think you're ruthlessly judging someone else, then reveal you are talking about yourself.

You know the type—awkward, socially weird, no idea how to talk to women… anyway, my mom says I'm doing great.

Invisible Punchline (Anti-Joke)

Build up a premise so the audience expects a traditional punchline, but go completely, brutally dry.

I don't have a drinking problem. I just really like drinking and it's ruining my life.

Director's notes v...!

Director's note (with black lines)

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Stagecraft & Mic Mechanics

Cardinal Rule:
NEVER mention the bright lights or 's loud mic. We already know.

The Stand

If you take the mic out, move the stand physically behind you. Adjust it to your height first.

The Distance

Whispering? Bring it closer.
Yelling? Hold it further away.
Normal? Just under your mouth.



The Check

Speak directly into it.
If you can hear yourself in the monitors, it's working.

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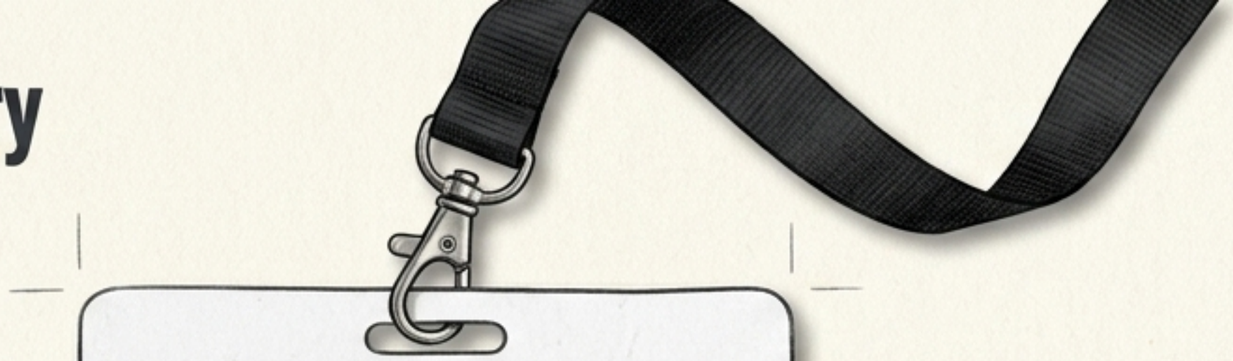
Performance & Delivery



ALL ACCESS: OWNING THE ROOM

- **Focal Point:** Pick a specific spot in the back of the room to return your gaze to when you need to ground yourself.
- **Pacing:** Let your jokes breathe. Adrenaline makes you talk fast—actively slow down.
- **Know the Material:** Flow is impossible if you are reading notes. Knowing your set cold allows you to stay in the moment.
- **The Flub Plan:** Have a backup plan. If you mess up, use your personality to make fun of yourself, then immediately get back on track.

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The Ecosystem

The Hustle

Getting Booked

- **Earn Your Place:** Sharpen your teeth at open mics first.
- **Ask For Spots:** No one will come running to you. You have to ask for stage time.
- **Produce Your Own:** Don't wait for gatekeepers. Produce your own shows and book your friends and comics you look up to.

The Community

Etiquette

- **Listen & Support:** Don't talk when others are performing. Don't talk when the producer is talking.
- **Be Positive:** Don't judge. Support your fellow comics. Stand-up is hard enough without bullying. You are a team.

You can't have one without the other.

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The Final Checklist

Before Your Next Set

- [x] Did I replace my ‘Ands’ with ‘Buts’ and ‘Therefores’?
- [x] Do my bits transition smoothly into one another?
- [x] Did I time my set? (Going under is fine; going over is a sin).
- [x] Am I showing the emotion, or just reading a script?
- [x] Is my recorder ready? (Because I am recording everything).

Have fun. Be you. — Dan G.

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