



"Kids are what you have when you've given up on your hopes and dreams"
-- Ronnie Chieng

How to Write Comedy Like Ronnie Chieng



Background

Third Generation Chinese Malaysian, Ronnie Chieng, became an American Citizen, after graduating from law school in Australia in 2012. Since 2012, he has been active in the entertainment industry of Australia and the United States.



In 2012, Chieng, alongside Matt Okine, won best newcomer at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival for his show The Ron Way.

Chieng performed with Trevor Noah in 2013 at the Just for Laughs comedy festival in Montreal.

In 2015, he was asked to audition for the correspondent role on The Daily Show.

In July 2016, he was named one of 10 Comics to Watch by Variety.

Three months later, he had a segment on The Daily Show in which he criticized a Jesse Watters clip on Fox News deemed by many as racist.

What do you get out of that? A mixture of working the clubs and getting your stuff out there. Social Media clips really helped to make Chieng go viral.

So even though he was a correspondent on the Daily Show, his viral video expanded his reach to others who don't necessarily watch the show.

The 4 Pillars of Deconstructing Any Comedian

1. Material (What They Talk About)

This is the **content lens**.

Ask:

- What topics do they return to over and over?
- Are they observational, personal, political, absurd, intellectual?
- Do they start small and expand (like arguments), or jump idea-to-idea?

**Definition:**

Material is the collection of subjects, premises, and perspectives a comedian consistently explores.

Example:

Ronny Chieng

- Social systems, politics, cultural contradictions
- Everyday observations turned into big-picture arguments

2. Emotional Approach / Persona (How They Feel About It)

This is the **driving force** (emotional throughline).

Ask:

- What emotional state drives the delivery?
- Frustrated? Silly? Confused? Arrogant? Innocent?
- Are they the victim, the authority, the outsider?

Definition:

Persona is the emotional filter through which the material is delivered.

Example:

- Chieng = **controlled frustration + intellectual superiority**
- Bill Burr = explosive frustration
- Brian Regan = childlike bewilderment

Same topic + different persona = completely different joke.

3. Preferred Structures (How They Build the Joke)



This is the **craft layer**—your bread and butter.

Ask:

- Do they use analogy, act-outs, reverses, listing, irony?
- Do they build arguments or quick one-liners?
- Are they storytellers or punchline machines?

Definition:

Structures are the repeatable frameworks a comedian uses to turn ideas into laughs.

Example (Chieng):

- Argument → escalation → logical breakdown
- Compare & contrast
- Irony (exposing flawed thinking)

Think of the 13 Comedy Structures and see where they are plugged in.

4. Comedic Intent (Why They're Doing It)

Ask:

- Are they trying to **prove something** or just **trigger laughs**?
- Is there a thesis behind the bit?
- **What do they want from their material?** applause, agreement, or just reaction?

Definition:

Comedic intent is the underlying goal—whether to persuade, reveal truth, or simply entertain.



Two main modes:

- **Argument-driven comics** (make a point)
 - Chieng, George Carlin, Bill Burr, Dave Chappelle
- **Laugh-driven comics** (pure joke density)
 - Mitch Hedberg, Steven Wright, Jimmy Carr

Most great comics blend both—but lean one way.

Unique Skills (Performance Tools)

- Act-outs
- Impressions
- Dialects
- Musical ability
- Physicality

👉 These don't replace structure—they **enhance it**.

Example:

- Robin Williams
 - = act-outs + voices amplify simple premises
- Shane Gillis
 - = impressions amplify comparison & contrast

Let's Watch some Clips

As you watch the clips remember to also analyze. What is Ronnie Chieng's go-to move?

Asian Identity and Cultural Misunderstanding

https://www.tiktok.com/@standup732/video/7532904902658477326?is_from_we_bapp=1&sender_device=pc



► Ronny Chieng Explains Why Chinese People Love Mon...

► Ronny Chieng Thinks Amazon Prime Is Too Slow | Netflix Is A Joke

Great Example of Escalation

In America, never leave your house. (audience laughs) Land of the free and land of never leaving your house. (audience laughs)

No item too trivial. (audience laughs)

No quantity too small (audience laughs) to be hand delivered into your home like an emperor.

(audience laughs) Anything. Anything in the world that comes to mind. Any fleeting thought you have while drunk.

Anything. (retches) (audience laughs) I want one pen. (audience laughs)

I want one, I don't want a box. I want just one pen. I want it in a box with some plastic. Throw some napkins in there (audience laughs)

in another box in a bigger box. (audience laughs) 50 million boxes flying across America at all times.

The airspace above America is just Amazon Prime. (microphone thuds) (audience laughs)

Packaging just knocking into each other like satellite debris. More, more Prime. Can't get enough Prime here.

(audience laughs) You need it Prime. We need Prime harder, faster, stronger! (audience laughs) Faster Prime. Prime



Now! (audience laughs)

Prime Now. Two hour delivery! (audience laughs) Prime now. Give it to me.

Now. (audience laughs) When I press buy, put the item in my hand. (audience laughs) (audience applauds)

Now. In America, there should be no lag, zero lag, (audience laughs)

between when I press the button and when the item is gently placed into my hand so I can use it.

Now. (audience laughs) Oh, same day delivery? (Ronnie yells) (audience laughs)

Un-American. (audience laughs) Same day? (Ronnie retches) (audience laughs)

Now. (audience laughs) Prime now. Break into my house (audience laughs)

and put the food I ordered in my mouth (audience laughs) and help me chew it.

And then push it down my esophagus with a stick and then pull the feces (audience laughs) out of my anus for me.

Now.

It's like, where do we go from here (audience laughs) as a civilization? How much more convenience can we get?

How much less energy can we use (audience laughs) to get what we want?

Let's get Prime before. (audience laughs) Send it to me before I want it.



(audience laughs)

It's 2019, I have to make a decision before you mail me what I buy?

Use artificial intelligence (audience laughs)

to substitute my own intelligence (audience laughs) so I can live my life.

Send me everything I want before I want it in as many boxes as possible. (audience laughs)

This one didn't Age Well because companies make more on our data than we'll ever know. Data has become the economy. Vizio TV made twice as much money selling the data of their customers than selling flat screen TVs.

📺 iPhone VS Android | Ronny Chieng
Time Stamp:
0:00-1:30)

📺 Ronny Chieng - Exposing Asian Stereotypes

WHAT MAKES CHIENG'S MATERIAL HIT HARDER

Most comedians:

"Here's something funny..."

Chieng:



“Here’s something that makes NO SENSE—and I’m going to prove it.”

That shift turns:

- Jokes → Arguments
- Punchlines → Conclusions
- Laughs → Agreement

Ronny Chieng doesn’t just tell jokes—he prosecutes them. (LAWYER)

His comedy feels like a closing argument from a lawyer who’s tired of your nonsense.

And that’s not an accident. With a law degree from the University of Melbourne, he approaches comedy with logic, structure, and precision.

Where most comedians go for punchlines...
Chieng goes for contradictions, irony, hypocrisy.

Tools: Analogy, Compare & Contrast, Paradox, Comedic Irony, driven through an intensity of controlled, intelligent frustration.

CORE PRINCIPLE: “LOGIC VS REALITY”

Heavily Influenced by Carlin, Trevor Noah, Jon Stewart, Chieng’s comedy lives in **the gap between what should make sense... and what actually happens.**

That gap = IRONY
That irony = LAUGHS

BREAKDOWN OF HIS STYLE

1. The Intelligent Setup



He starts from a place of authority or logic.

“This makes no sense.”

Not emotional. Not silly.

Measured. Observational. Almost academic.

2. The Legal Dissection

He *cross-examines* the premise.

- Who made this rule?
- Why does this exist?
- What’s the logic behind it?

Then he exposes the flaw.

3. Irony Reveal

He highlights contradictions:

- Systems that contradict themselves
- People who don’t follow their own logic
- Cultural behaviors that collapse under scrutiny

4. Escalation Through Frustration

He builds intensity:

- Calm observation → irritation → outrage

But it’s controlled. That’s key.

5. Punchline = Logical Collapse

Instead of a twist...



He lets the logic **implode on itself**

That's the laugh.

STRUCTURES HE RELIES ON

- Comedic Irony
- Analogy
- Simple Truth
- Compare & Contrast
- Reframing
- 3-Way Build-Up (argument escalation)
- Benign Retaliation (attacking flawed ideas)

EXERCISE 3: CONTROLLED FRUSTRATION ESCALATION

Take a minor annoyance:

- Slow Wi-Fi
- Autocorrect
- Parking apps
- AI Being pushed on consumers when nobody asked for it.

Write 3 beats:

1. Calm observation
2. Mild frustration
3. Full rant (but controlled)

Make the final line feel like an *inevitable explosion*



Important Tip:

Ronny Chieng doesn't try to be funny.

He tries to be **right**.

And the audience laughs when they realize:

“Oh... he's right. That *is* stupid.”

That's **Superiority + Recognition + Irony** working together.

Get personal 1 on 1 Coaching with Jerry just follow [this link](#) to learn more!

