



"Your girl is only one shot away from the best fuck of your life or yesterday's spaghetti in your dick hair."

-- Big Jay Oakerson

Dirty Crowd Work with Big Jay Oakerson



Overview

We're not just going to learn about crowd work, per se. We're also going to learn how Big Jay Oakerson approaches his crowd work. How he turns spontaneity into what sounds like written material almost instantly.



Experience:

Podcast and Radio Show Host

In addition to stand-up, Big Jay Oakerson has built a significant career in podcasting and radio.

He co-hosts **Legion of Skanks** with comedians Luis J. Gomez and Dave Smith. He also co-hosted **The SDR Show** with Ralph Sutton on the GaS Digital Network until late 2024.

In 2015, Oakerson and comedian Dan Soder launched **The Bonfire**, a live radio show on SiriusXM. The show eventually moved to the Faction Talk channel, and in 2023 comedian Robert Kelly replaced Soder as Oakerson's co-host.

In 2024, Oakerson and Luis J. Gomez also launched **Story Warz**, a comedy game-show podcast that originated as a segment on *Legion of Skanks*.

Oakerson's extensive experience in radio and podcasting is particularly relevant to his crowd-work skills. He's spent thousands of hours in unscripted conversation—listening, reacting, associating, interrupting, riffing and finding comedy in real time. That experience helps explain why his crowd work can feel spontaneous while still having the structure and density of developed material.

So when we've talked about the importance of doing a regular podcast to improve your conversational skills and your spontaneity. Here is another example of how it has helped another comic not only develop his skills but also stoke his popularity and following.

Remember: No Following = No Audience.



Street Corner Humor

In an interview with the Inquirer.com, Oakerson himself has described his strength as what he calls “**street corner humor**”: he says he wasn’t particularly good at being funny in the written-word sense, but was the guy who excelled when a group of people were standing around cracking jokes. He likes crowd work because everybody has something odd or interesting about them that can be uncovered.

Heightened Tension of Crowd Work

One lesson you can learn from this course is that crowd work creates a tension and situation that allows the comedian to get away with simple jokes that a written set doesn’t necessarily get away with. Here’s why:

Crowd work heightens the tension, opens the spontaneity. The crowd knows that this is happening right now and there is no safety net. As a result the expectation for a joke drops nearly to zero.

So almost anything that the comedian says that relates to the topic that is uncovered during the crowd work has an increased potential of getting a laugh.

It’s like a powder keg with a lit fuse.

Lesson 1: Three Descriptors — How Specificity Turns an Observation Into an Image

Introduction: Dirty Isn’t the Technique

When people first watch Big Jay Oakerson, the obvious thing they notice is that he’s dirty.



Really dirty.

But that's not particularly useful to us as comedy writers.

Anybody can say something filthy.

What we're interested in is **why Big Jay's filthy lines get laughs.**

Watch enough of his crowd work and something interesting starts to emerge: underneath the profanity, sexual references and outrageous subject matter is a comedian making remarkably sophisticated choices about **language, imagery, specificity, analogy and point of view.**

Big Jay doesn't simply say something outrageous.

He makes you **see it.**

And one of the techniques he repeatedly uses is surprisingly simple:

When an ordinary person would stop describing something, Big Jay adds one more detail.

That additional detail - The rhythm of the Three Descriptors pops the visual imagery and frequently becomes the laugh.

The Conversation

Big Jay isn't interviewing the audience.

He's listening for comedy opportunities.

Someone gives him a piece of information.

His brain immediately asks:



What's weird about that?

What does that remind me of?

What does this imply?

What's the inappropriate interpretation?

What picture can I create from this?

And:

How specific can I make that picture?

That's why his crowd work can sound remarkably close to written material.

The information may be spontaneous.

The comedy mechanisms aren't.

He's spent decades training those mechanisms.

But when you know what he's doing, you can train your brain to get there faster.

Let's Watch:

 **Big Jay Oakerson | One sip away from chaos**



Transcript:

White Claw drunk. Someone's about to show their titties out of a moon roof. That's pretty chill. Slow down.

Don't get too fucked up. Girl drunk is a very fickle fucked up. For girl drunk to be fun, it's the most exact recipe in all of drinking.

And yet also, every girl's recipe is different. Isn't that weird? And in 45 years almost of being alive, I've yet to meet a woman who knows her own recipe for staying fun drunk.

Not one girl knows a recipe. Like, I stop here and I'm good. Every girl drunk. It always starts off in the daytime when the girl's like, "We're going to get drunk tonight, have fun, and it's going to be great."



And then 5 hours later, they come over to you with like a wonky eye and they're like, "You want shot?" And you're like, "No, you're all right. Come on. You're doing it. You're having fun. You're drunk."

And you think they'd be like, "Yeah, I did it." No, they're always like, "What are you, my dad? What am I doing? Fucking up? Fuck you."

Here's why I say your friends are hot.

[Laughter]

My girl just stopped drinking altogether. She had to quit. That sucks.

I mean, good healthwise, I guess. But man, her good times drunk were great.

Those fun hours were great, but never got through a full night without the bad coming around the corner.

I never knew her recipe, but I could tell you around three shots of tequila, she ruled.

She'd be at the bar trying to get pussy for both of us.

And then one more sip of alcohol. I got to stop her from fighting a cop or something. You fucking pig. You're all pigs.

What am I going to She's uh... Every guy knows how to bet his girl.

Your chick is one sip of alcohol between the best fuck of your life or yesterday's spaghetti in your dick hair.

And then you got to be cool. You're like, "No, it's fine."



You're trying not to puke. It's totally No.

You got to pull it out. You're like, "No, I don't care. We're all adults here."

Sorry guys, that's a very graphic pantomime.

You could almost see those noodles reverse plinkoing through my beaver. That was so descriptive.

It's cool. We're all adults.

I try to stop saying the term I'm an adult. I've never meant it once when I've said it. It's an overused term. I'm an adult.

I've only used it to get our way. That's all any guy does, right? If you want to do something nobody else wants to do, you're I don't give a fuck. I'm doing it anyway. I'm an adult.

And if you don't want to do it, you're like, I don't have to do it. I'm a fucking adult.

And that's how I use it. Opposite sides is the same argument. I'll bet you any guy will. If you're early dating with somebody and the dude wants to fuck and the girl goes, "Ah, I would, but I'm on my period."

So, the guy would be like, "I don't give a fuck about that. Little blood on my dick. I'll fuck right through that period. I'll put a towel down. I don't give a fuck I'm an adult."

And then be living together for like 5 years. Then she gets horny on her period one day. She's like, "Babe, I'm on my period, but I'm so horny."

You're going to be like, "Ah, I don't know, babe. It's like I got to put a towel down. There's going to be blood all over my



dick. It's like I got to wait a few days. I'm an adult. What am I going to fuck every day? Am I going to fuck every day now? Now I'm the fuck every day guy."

Come on, grow up. Be an adult. Fuck. Getting hammered.

What are you drinking?

You don't even know you're a black woman. You just let a white bald guy buy you a drink and not tell you what it was. You're just taking his word for it. Wow, that's progress.

Pretty chill.

You're a couple, I assume. Nice. First black woman for you? I didn't think so.

First white dude for you? Not a chance in hell. Is it really? He was the first. What kind of pressure was that, dude?

When you were going to show her her first white dick ever, dude?

Damn, man. You were fucking fighting for a whole race of people in that moment.

You don't even know that's her forever thought of white dicks.

I wouldn't disgrace white men by being the first white dick a black woman saw. No way in hell. No way in hell.

He's got a biggie, huh? Thick? Yeah.

She got tired of those black longies, right?

Coming out of her asshole like a goddamn nose piercing.

[Applause]



I'm sorry. I'm very descriptive. It's colorful language.

First white dude, what happened?

You started wanting to sit at work again.

Can't take those black poundings and have a sit down job. It's going to take you 25 minutes to get in your chair.

You're going to be like, "Oh, it still stings." Ooh.

Like, you want to go get lunch? You're like, "No, no, no, no. Bring me back a hot dog."

You were just ready. Has your family met him yet? Yeah. Does he go to the barbecues and they all laugh while he dances?

Yo, Tommy, do that dance you said. Watch this, motherfucker. Do you dance? Do you do?

Does his family do awkward uh like black shit when you're around?

They made color greens for you? Nuh-uh. They tried.

Really? They presented this like the food of your people? Damn.

I hope your old white mom came out in a dashiki and shit We're down. We're players.

You know, I blew a security guard to go to a Parliament concert once. Flashlight.

Crowd's too white to get those sick black references. Maybe I should look into a black woman.

Thicky. Impressive. Impressive.



Were you nervous to go on a date with a white guy for the first time? It was time for a change. It was time for a change. Yeah.

Somebody needed a co-signer for a Kia Sportage.

Hell yeah, dude. Hey, boo.

You might throw your John Hancock down.

Is Big Jay's Crowd Work Really Improvised?

Oakerson has performed conventional stand-up containing developed material, stories and jokes. He has also created shows specifically designed around completely improvised crowd work.

His show *What's Your Fucking Deal?* had a simple rule:

No prepared material.

His two-part *Them/They* special was likewise presented as two hours of unscripted crowd work.

So there are absolutely performances where the conversation itself generates the material.

But that doesn't mean he's walking onto the stage empty-handed.

He's bringing something much more valuable than a notebook full of jokes:

He's bringing thousands of previously developed comedy associations.



Music.

Sex.

Relationships.

Race.

Jobs.

Cars.

Movies.

Television.

Advertising.

Brands.

Neighborhoods.

Fashion.

Pop culture.

Human behavior.

And decades of comedy-club conversations.

So when an audience member gives him information, he has an enormous mental database from which to pull associations.

That's why a conversation can suddenly jump from an interracial couple...
to family barbecues...



to a dashiki...

to Parliament...

to "Flash Light"...

to financing a Kia Sportage.

It feels spontaneous because it is.

But the **associative vocabulary** behind it has taken a lifetime to build. The short cut is to write every day using the listing technique and two dissimilar ideas.

Need to improve your knowledge of women's basketball? Assign yourself the task of writing 3 minutes on the subject.

List the stars, the conflict, the names of the teams, what's being said on the networks and what's being said in social media groups like Reddit.

Cultural Fluency Is Part of Crowd Work

Consider this sequence:

"I hope your old white mom came out in a dashiki and shit."

Then:

"You know, I blew a security guard to go to a Parliament concert once."

Then:

"Flashlight."

There are multiple layers of cultural knowledge packed into a few seconds.



Dashiki.

Parliament.

“Flash Light.”

Black American music and fashion references.

Interracial dating.

The stereotype he's playing with.

And the awareness that part of the audience might not even understand the references — which itself becomes material.

He immediately comments:

“Crowd's too white to get those sick black references.”

That's sophisticated crowd work.

The reference doesn't work completely?

The failure of the reference becomes the next joke.

That's an important principle:

A knowledgeable comedian has more places to go.

The larger your mental library, the greater the number of associations available when someone gives you unexpected information.

Crowd work isn't merely about being fast.

It's about having somewhere interesting for your brain to go.



The Third Descriptor

Now let's look at one of Oakerson's most useful writing habits.

Imagine an audience member tells you something and you respond:

“Somebody needed a co-signer for a Kia.”

That's already an image.

Most comedians might stop there.

Big Jay doesn't.

He says:

“Somebody needed a co-signer for a Kia Sportage.”

Why is **Sportage** better?

Because suddenly it's not a generic car.

It's *that car*.

You can see the dealership.

You can see the financing paperwork.

You can see the couple.

You can practically see the salesman waiting for the credit check.

The extra specificity gives the audience more information without requiring another sentence.



Don't Stop at the Obvious Image

Consider:

“Someone's about to show their titties out of a moon roof.”

The basic idea might have been:

Someone's about to show their tits.

That's merely an action.

Add:

out of a car

Now we have a location.

But:

out of a moon roof

gives us a movie.

We can see the person standing through the roof of the vehicle.

The image becomes dimensional.

Action → Location → Specific Location

showing tits

→ **showing tits out of a car**

→ **showing tits out of a moon roof**



That last detail finishes the image and now it's not just an image, it's a scene in a movie.

The Comedy Rule

Here's the mechanism we're going to practice:

DESCRIPTION + DETAIL + ONE MORE DETAIL

Or:

IMAGE → SPECIFIC IMAGE → RIDICULOUSLY SPECIFIC IMAGE

Most people communicate until the listener understands.

Comedians frequently keep going until the listener sees.

And they do it in a very economical way.

Look at this line:

“Your chick is one sip of alcohol between the best fuck of your life or yesterday's spaghetti in your dick hair.”

There are several stages this could have stopped at.

Version 1

“She might puke.”

We understand the information.

No meaningful image.



Version 2

“She might puke spaghetti.”

Better.

Now there's an image.

Version 3

“Yesterday's spaghetti in your lap.”

More specific.

Oakerson's destination:

“Yesterday's spaghetti in your dick hair.”

Now the image becomes almost involuntary.

You don't merely understand what happened.

Your brain illustrates it.

And that's precisely why the detail is powerful.

“Dick hair” isn't simply dirtier than “lap.”

It's **more visually precise**.

The dirtiness is almost secondary to the specificity.



Exercise 1: Add The Third Detail



Start with a generic sentence.

Someone pulled up in a car.

Add specificity:

Someone pulled up in a Kia.

Add the third detail:

Someone pulled up in a Kia Sportage.

Now continue beyond that if another useful detail presents itself:

Someone pulled up in a 2019 Kia Sportage with a missing passenger-side mirror.

Notice the goal isn't simply adding adjectives.

Every detail should make the picture clearer or create an implication.

Your turn:

Start with:

He was wearing a suit.

Write:

1. The basic image.
2. A more specific version.
3. The third-detail version.
4. One version that goes deliberately too far.

Then do the same with:



She ordered a drink.

He drives an old car.

They met at a restaurant.

She has a little dog.

He works in an office.

The question each time is:

What detail makes me SEE this?

Exercise 2: Don't Say The Category — Name The Thing

Comedy frequently gets stronger when we replace categories with specific nouns.

Instead of:

car

try:

Kia Sportage

Instead of:



drink

try:

Blackberry White Claw

Instead of:

old band

try:

Parliament

Instead of:

African clothing

try:

dashiki

Instead of:

game-show thing

try:

Plinko

Create two columns.

COLUMN A — CATEGORY

car

restaurant



beer
hotel
dating app
airline
shoe
department store
medication
fast-food restaurant

COLUMN B — SPECIFIC THING

Replace every category with the most vivid specific example you can think of.

Then ask:

What does choosing THAT particular thing imply?

That's where the joke often lives.

A Rolls-Royce and a Kia Sportage are both cars.

But they tell completely different stories about the person driving them.



Exercise 3: Build The Movie

Take a simple event:

Someone got too drunk at a party.

Now answer:

WHO exactly?



WHAT exactly were they drinking?

WHERE exactly are they?

WHAT are they wearing?

WHAT physical thing happens?

WHAT object becomes involved?

WHAT happens next?

Instead of:

“This woman got wasted at a party.”

we want enough selected information that the audience can mentally photograph the scene.

But here's the restriction:

You only get three details.

Choose the **three most visually productive details.**

That's the discipline.

The goal isn't maximal description.

It's **maximum imagery per word.**

The Big Jay Crowd Work Loop

This gives us a repeatable process:



1. OBSERVE

What do you notice?



2. ASK

Ask a question connected to what you actually noticed.



3. LISTEN

Don't listen merely for information.

Listen for **possibilities**.



4. IDENTIFY THE PREMISE

What is unusual, contradictory, recognizable, uncomfortable or incongruous about the answer?



5. STOP ASKING QUESTIONS

This is crucial.

You've found something.



Stay there.



6. ASSOCIATE

What does this remind you of?

What stereotypes surround it?

What cultural references connect to it?

What experiences do we recognize?



7. IMPLY

If this is true...

what else must be true?



8. ESCALATE

Make the consequence bigger.

Your boyfriend isn't merely your first white boyfriend.

He's now:

representing an entire race.



↓

9. SPECIFY

Don't leave the association generic.

Not:

car.

Not even:

Kia.

Kia Sportage.

↓

10. PERSONALIZE

Can you connect yourself to the premise?

Can you self-deprecate?

Can you tell a related story?

Can you make yourself part of the ridiculousness?

↓

11. TAP OUT

Eventually you'll feel it.



You've stopped seeing new doors.

NOW ASK ANOTHER QUESTION.

And begin the loop again.

The Golden Rule

This may be one of the most important rules in this entire course:

DON'T ASK ANOTHER QUESTION UNTIL YOU TAP OUT OF THE ANSWER YOU ALREADY HAVE.

Questions aren't crowd work.

Questions are how you acquire premises.

The comedy happens in what you do **between the questions.**



Exercise: Don't Ask Another Question

Pair up.

One person is the comedian.

One person is the audience member.

The comedian may ask **ONE QUESTION.**



For example:

“What do you do?”

“Who are you here with?”

“How long have you been together?”

“Where are you from?”

“What are you drinking?”

“What's that tattoo?”

The audience member answers.

Now the comedian is **not allowed to ask another question.**

Instead, the comedian must generate at least **three comedic moves** from that single answer.

You can:

Make an assumption.

Follow an implication.

Find an incongruity.

Use a stereotype.

Create an analogy.

Make a comparison.

Create a specific visual.



Exaggerate the consequence.

Act something out.

Connect it to yourself.

Use self-deprecation.

Find a cultural reference.

Only after you've generated three possible comedic moves—or genuinely tapped out—may you ask another question.

Then repeat.



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