



*“Chemistry can be a good and bad thing. Chemistry is good when you make love with it.
Chemistry is bad when you make crack with it.
— Adam Sandler*

How to Write Comedy Like Adam Sandler



Background

Adam Sandler has had one of the most unusual—and durable—careers in modern comedy.

He started as a stand-up, became a writer and featured performer on *Saturday Night Live*, then turned his offbeat characters, songs, voices and absurdist sensibility into a movie career that has generated more than **\$3 billion at the box office**. He created



Happy Madison Productions, built franchises around his particular style of comedy, became one of Netflix's most important comedy stars, and also surprised audiences with acclaimed dramatic performances in films like *Punch-Drunk Love*, *Uncut Gems* and *Hustle*.

And here's what I think is particularly interesting about Sandler:

After all these years, **he still essentially feels like the same guy.**

He never tried to become overly sophisticated.

He never abandoned the ridiculous voices, stupid songs, bizarre characters or juvenile premises that made people fall in love with him in the first place.

He's almost like **the drunk frat boy who never grew up—but somehow became incredibly successful.**

And because we know who Adam Sandler is, we'll let him take us almost anywhere.

That's important.

Because if you examine a lot of Sandler's comedy, particularly his stand-up, much of it is rooted in **absurdism**.

These are stories that probably didn't happen.

Sometimes they obviously didn't happen.

But Sandler tells them as though he's standing next to you at a party saying:

"So this fucking thing happened to me yesterday..."

He doesn't perform the absurdity like it's absurd.

He plays it straight.

And that makes the absurdity even funnier.

The Sandler Comedy Universe



In this course we're going to look at several elements of Sandler's writing, but one of the biggest is his ability to create a **normal expectation and then casually insert something completely ridiculous into it.**

The story begins in reality.

Something happens.

We recognize the situation.

We understand what the character wants.

And then Sandler drops in a detail that absolutely should not be there.

But instead of stopping to acknowledge the joke, he keeps moving.

That's one of the secrets.

The audience is going:

"Wait... WHAT?"

And Sandler is already three sentences down the road.

That creates a wonderful collision between **reality and absurdity.**

Adam Sandler: *Love You*

We're going to spend some time looking at Sandler's 2024 Netflix special *Adam Sandler: Love You*, directed by Josh Safdie. Netflix itself describes the special as "unpredictable" and categorizes it as absurd comedy, which is a pretty good description of what we're about to examine.

I don't really look at *Love You* as a conventional stand-up special.

To me, it's more like a **creative cavalcade of silliness, imaginative stories, music, characters, tension, chaos and surprise.**

Not a moment is wasted.



Even before Sandler gets onstage, the comedy has already started.

At the beginning of the special, Sandler is simply trying to get to the show.

That's the objective.

Point A to Point B.

But everything gets in the way.

There are people waiting for him.

There's chaos outside.

There's chaos backstage.

There's equipment.

There are people interrupting him.

Things aren't working.

There's a little boy waiting hopefully for Sandler to notice him.

Sandler finally acknowledges him.

The kid has photographs he wants autographed.

That feels completely normal.

Until we see the pictures.

They're creepy paparazzi-style photographs of Sandler apparently taken around his house—including Sandler asleep.

And Sandler essentially accepts this.

That's the world we're entering.

The Comedian Is Just a Person Trying to Accomplish Something



There's a really useful comedy lesson buried inside that opening:

A character wants something simple, but obstacles keep getting in the way.

That's comedy going all the way back through Chaplin, Keaton, Laurel & Hardy and sitcoms.

You want to get somewhere.

You want to accomplish something.

You want something to work.

And the universe says:

Nope.

For Sandler, those obstacles can become increasingly bizarre.

And because he's playing them honestly, we keep following him.

Important Momentum + Stupid Twist

Another thing Sandler does beautifully is introduce stupid ideas during moments that feel important.

That's part of why they're funny.

There's momentum.

The story appears to be going somewhere.

We're emotionally following the situation.

Then Sandler drops something incredibly dumb into it.

That's **incongruity**.

The seriousness of the moment collides with the stupidity of the detail.



And instead of stopping the momentum, the stupid thing becomes part of the momentum.

That's a technique I want you to pay attention to throughout the clips.

Compare and Contrast

Sandler also loves **Compare and Contrast**.

Normal versus abnormal.

Young versus old.

Romantic versus disgusting.

Important versus stupid.

Sweet versus crude.

Serious music versus ridiculous lyrics.

A grown adult behaving like a child.

A heartfelt moment interrupted by something completely inappropriate.

He constantly puts two incompatible ideas next to one another and lets the collision generate the laugh.

I Love You - First 20

Botox Dick



Exercise 1: Regular Story Turns Absurd

The Principle

Start by telling a story that sounds completely ordinary.

The audience should think they understand:

Where you are → What you want → What problem you're dealing with.

Then, while the story has forward momentum, casually introduce **one completely absurd detail**.

The important part:

DON'T CHANGE YOUR DELIVERY.

Don't wink at the audience.

Don't announce the joke.

Don't suddenly become a comedian.

Treat the absurd detail as though it's the most normal part of the story.

That's a huge part of the Sandler charm:

The world is insane. Sandler isn't.

Your Topic: Grocery Store — Japanese Sweet Potatoes

Start with something truthful and mundane:

"I went to the grocery store because my wife wanted Japanese sweet potatoes. I couldn't find them anywhere, so I finally asked the produce guy..."

Now invent an absurd answer.

Maybe:



“...and he whispered, ‘Not here.’ Then he told me to meet him behind the Ralphs at midnight.”

Now **don't abandon the story.**

Accept that reality.

If Japanese sweet potatoes are apparently being sold like drugs...

What else is true?

Who supplies them?

Why are they so hard to get?

What's the password?

How much do they cost?

What happens if the manager catches you?

Your Goal

Write a **60–90 second story** that begins completely plausibly and gradually becomes ridiculous.

Exercise 2: If This Is True, What Else Is True?

This is the engine underneath **Botox Dick**.

Sandler introduces one ridiculous proposition.

Then instead of immediately changing subjects, he asks:

If this ridiculous thing were actually true... what else would logically have to be true?

That's what allows the absurdity to **escalate while remaining internally logical**.



Your Topic: Pulled Over for Taking a FaceTime Call

Begin realistically.

You're driving.

Your phone rings.

It's somebody you feel obligated to answer.

You answer FaceTime.

Then:

Lights in the rearview mirror.

You get pulled over.

Now introduce ONE absurd element.

Maybe the cop isn't angry that you're FaceTiming while driving.

He's angry because he doesn't have an iPhone?

What's he going to charge you with? Is there a Vehicle Code for Facetime?

IF THAT'S TRUE, WHAT ELSE IS TRUE?

Does the officer lean into frame?

Does he introduce himself to your mother?

Does your mother start interrogating him?

Does he take your phone back to the patrol car?

Does another cop join the FaceTime?

Does your family like the cop better than they like you?



Eventually, you might discover:

You're sitting handcuffed on the curb while the officer is still FaceTiming your mother.

The Sandler Rule

Each escalation should follow:

Absurd Premise → Logical Consequence → Bigger Consequence → Awkward Situation → Surprise

You're not randomly adding weird things.

You're **following the logic of something that shouldn't have been logical in the first place.**

Exercise 3: The Innocent Story That Goes Completely Off the Rails

Now let's put everything together.

Your Topic: Your First Kiss

This one is perfect for Sandler because the audience already brings enormous expectations to the story.

"My first kiss" automatically suggests:

Romance.

Nervousness.

Adolescence.

Awkwardness.



Trying to be cool.
Not knowing what you're doing.

Use those expectations against them.

Step 1 — Make Us Believe You

Give us specific details.

Where were you?

How old were you?

Who was the person?

Why were you nervous?

What were you wearing?

What stupid thing were you worried about?

The more authentic the beginning feels, the more freedom you have later.

Step 2 — Introduce the Absurdity

Somewhere in the story, introduce one detail that doesn't belong.

But say it casually.

"I walked her home. She had this long driveway. She said she wanted to kiss me. She took me to a bush at the side of her house. Like she'd done this before. She said it 'had to be a long kiss'. I leaned in and we kissed. Well, we pressed our faces together for 10 seconds. Then we separated and she said "Bye!" and ran off. Then I realized I now had to go down that long driveway by myself. That was my first walk of shame." That night I couldn't sleep. I just kept thinking about the kids at school and that Georgie Peorgie kid.

Don't explain. Just say it. Write it. Get it on the page.



The other thing that came to my mind was:

“I leaned in to kiss her and her dad handed me a mouthguard.”

Don't explain why yet.

Keep going.

Step 3 — Justify the Absurdity

Now ask:

Why would that actually make sense?

Maybe her father considers first kisses a contact sport.

Okay.

If that's true, what else is true?

There's protective equipment.

There's a referee.

There's instant replay.

Her mother is selling concessions.

Her previous boyfriend is sitting nearby recovering from a concussion.

Now your innocent coming-of-age story has transformed into a bizarre Sandler universe.

Step 4 — Find the Final Surprise

Don't simply make the story increasingly crazy.

After the audience accepts the crazy reality, create **one final expectation** and break it.

That's the Sandler button.



The Adam Sandler Story Throughline

I'd actually put this formula on the board:

REALITY → OBSTACLE → ABSURD REVEAL → ACCEPT IT → “IF THIS IS TRUE...” → ESCALATE → AWKWARD CONSEQUENCE → SURPRISE ENDING

And underneath it:

PLAY THE STORY STRAIGHT.

That's what separates this from simply writing “random” comedy.

The audience knows Sandler is making this shit up.

But Sandler doesn't.

He's the drunk frat boy who never grew up, telling you the craziest story you've ever heard with the energy of:

“So anyway, this happened...”

And because we've spent decades accepting **Adam Sandler's comic persona**, we'll follow him almost anywhere.

Important Note:

It's important to practice this writing techniques. At first it's going to be uncomfortable. But the more you do it, the more you start to see the twists of coincidence and surprise. So keep working on it. And as always...

Have Fun!



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

