“As a client, he is a true force of nature with unparalleled work ethic and determination.”
-- Heidi Feigin, UTA

Chaos to Comedy - Write Like Bert Kreischer



From Rolling Stone to Rolling in the Dough

You’ve heard me say it before, when you’re studying comedy you want to really jump into the writing part and learn the science and structure of comedy. But the other crucial thing I would recommend is to read articles, biographies and watch or listen to interviews of some as many comedians as you can. Even the ones you’re not a big fan of.

That's what exposed me (pardon the shirtless pun) to Bert Kreischer. First I had to get used to spelling Bert with an E.

Bert Kreischer, doesn't really make me laugh.

But he's a perfect example of someone building a brand, then selling the shit out of it.

This Article comes from Rolling Stone:

> Kreischer's career ostensibly began in 1997 during his sixth year of college at Florida State when *Rolling Stone* magazine profiled him as the biggest partier at the nation's No. 1 party school. After college, he went to New York to work as a comic and later signed a development deal with Will Smith. Oliver Stone optioned the rights to the *Rolling Stone* story, and eventually it became *National Lampoon's Van Wilder*, Ryan Reynolds's breakout film. Kreischer, though, had nothing to do with the movie.
>
> He started to get TV work, particularly in the burgeoning realm of reality programming. In 2004, he hosted a *Jackass*-style stunt show called *Hurt Bert*, and he competed on *Last Comic Standing* in 2006. He became a frequent presence on the Travel Channel with such shows as *Trip Flip* and *Bert the Conqueror*. The first iteration of *The Machine* special, which debuted on Showtime in October 2016, bombed. Soon after, Kreischer was fired from the Travel Channel, and had all of his comedy tour dates on Oddball Comedy Festival canceled. Oh, and he found out his best friend—and current podcast partner—comedian Tom Segura was making 10 times as much money as he was on the road.

Let's Watch a Clip:

Bert Kreischer: "I Fought a Bear One Time" - This Is Not Hap…

What are You Selling on Stage?

Kreischer discovered what a lot of comedians don't discover for a long time. That comedy is more than just telling dick and fart jokes. Comedy is about packaging dick and fart jokes, putting them into stories and selling the party.

Wherever you see Kreischer appearing, you'll see him in party mode. When he's in public, he doesn't turn it off.

So, ask yourself: What are you selling?

Whenever you take the stage, the audience wants to know one thing: The answer to the Dramatic Question: "Who are you and why should I care?"

Kreischer sells his party self. That's how he was originally discovered when Rolling Stone magazine published their top party schools issue. Florida State is often number one. And when they decided to take that one step further and identify the top partier at the number one party school, they found Bert Kreischer.

Bert took that and went farther with it. He went to New York to do stand-up.

From struggling comedian to arena headliner

How did Bert Kreischer go from struggling to sell tickets to becoming one of the biggest touring comedians in America?

The answer isn't simply better jokes. It's a combination of a clearly defined comedy persona, an understanding of his audience, viral storytelling, relentless marketing, and a willingness to take control of his career.

In a May 2023 *Fast Company* article, journalist Jeff Beer explores how Kreischer and his wife, LeeAnn, transformed his stand-up career into a multimedia entertainment business.

1. From College Party Animal to Comedian

Kreischer first attracted national attention in 1997 when *Rolling Stone* profiled him as a legendary party animal at Florida State University.

The story eventually inspired the movie *National Lampoon's Van Wilder*, starring Ryan Reynolds.

After college, Kreischer moved to New York to pursue stand-up comedy. He eventually landed television opportunities, including *Hurt Bert*, a stunt-based show, and Travel Channel programs such as *Bert the Conqueror* and *Trip Flip*.

But despite his television exposure, Kreischer wasn't yet a major stand-up attraction.

2. The Career Crisis That Changed Everything

By 2016, Kreischer's career was in serious trouble.

His Showtime special *The Machine* had performed poorly. He lost his Travel Channel work, comedy festival dates were canceled, and his podcast wasn't attracting much attention.

Meanwhile, his friend Tom Segura was earning approximately ten times as much money performing stand-up.

Kreischer realized that the traditional entertainment-industry path wasn't working for him.

Instead of waiting for networks, producers, or agents to create opportunities, he decided to build his own audience.

3. One Story Changed His Career

Kreischer had developed a 14-minute story about an outrageous experience involving the Russian mafia during a college trip.

He called it **"The Machine."**

Joe Rogan had encouraged him to tell the story onstage after hearing it on his podcast. Kreischer spent nearly three years refining it in comedy clubs.

In late 2016, he uploaded the recorded performance to Facebook and YouTube.

The video went viral.

Suddenly, audiences were buying tickets specifically to hear the story. What had been a disappointing television special became the foundation of a dramatically more successful touring career.

Comedy lesson: A strong, memorable story can become more than a routine. It can become a comedian's signature, helping audiences remember, recommend, and identify with the performer.

4. He Learned to Go Where His Fans Were

Rather than relying entirely on agents and traditional booking practices, Kreischer began studying his podcast audience data.

He discovered that he had significant followings in places other comedians might overlook, including smaller markets throughout the Midwest.

He used those numbers to decide where to perform.

Instead of trying to convince everyone to become a fan, he concentrated on reaching the people who already enjoyed his comedy.

Comedy lesson: You don't need everyone to love your comedy. You need enough people who love it to buy tickets, share your content, and come back.

5. He Turned His Personality Into a Brand

Kreischer's public persona is remarkably consistent.

He's the shirtless, beer-drinking, overgrown fraternity brother who loves telling outrageous stories, embarrassing himself, and sharing the ridiculous details of family life.

His audience knows what they're getting.

That familiarity is part of the attraction. Fans aren't necessarily attending his shows to hear sophisticated wordplay or complex observations. They're buying an experience with a performer whose personality they enjoy.

And his persona extends beyond the stage into his podcasts, promotional videos, interviews, and social media.

Comedy lesson: Your persona helps audiences develop a relationship with you. The more clearly they understand who you are, the easier it becomes for them to recognize and remember your comedy.

6. He Built a Business Around the Comedy

Kreischer and his wife, LeeAnn, eventually established Berty Boy Productions as a professionally managed entertainment company, with LeeAnn serving as CEO.

By 2023, the business included stand-up tours, Netflix specials, podcasts, a YouTube cooking show, the Fully Loaded Comedy Festival, merchandise and brand partnerships.

Each part of the business helped promote the others.

A podcast appearance could sell tickets. A stand-up clip could attract podcast listeners. A comedy tour could generate new videos and promotional opportunities.

Even during the pandemic, Kreischer found ways to continue performing by organizing drive-in comedy shows.

He wasn't simply waiting for the next opportunity. He was creating opportunities.

7. The Machine Became a Movie

The same comedy story that initially failed to attract much attention eventually became a feature film.

After years of unsuccessful pitches, Kreischer connected with producer Cale Boyter, who helped develop *The Machine* into a movie starring Kreischer and Mark Hamill.

It was released in 2023.

The story had traveled from a podcast conversation to a stand-up routine, then to a viral video, and finally to a Hollywood movie.

One piece of material had become an entertainment property.

What Stand-Up Comedians Can Learn From Bert Kreischer

Whether Kreischer's particular style of comedy appeals to you or not, his career demonstrates several important principles:

1. **Develop a recognizable persona.** Give audiences a clear sense of who you are and how you see the world.



2. **Find your signature material.** A memorable routine can introduce thousands of new people to your comedy.
3. **Use repetition to refine your stories.** Kreischer developed "The Machine" onstage for years before recording it.
4. **Understand your audience.** Know who enjoys your comedy and where to find them.
5. **Use multiple platforms.** Stand-up, podcasts, social media, and video can work together to grow your audience.
6. **Take ownership of your career.** Don't depend entirely on gatekeepers to create opportunities.

The Big Takeaway

Bert Kreischer's success raises an interesting question for every aspiring comedian:

Is it enough to write great jokes, or do you also need to create a personality that people want to spend time with?

The strongest comedians often do both.

Kreischer demonstrates the commercial power of a distinctive persona, a memorable story, and an audience that feels personally connected to the performer.

His career also illustrates an important distinction: being a successful comedian and being an exceptional joke writer aren't necessarily the same thing.

Our goal in studying Kreischer is not to imitate his personality or material. It's to understand the techniques behind his storytelling, performance, and audience connection—and determine how we can apply those principles to our own comedy.

Read this Article:
https://news.pollstar.com/2020/01/13/bert-kreischer-the-schlubby-inspiration-for-van-wilder-becomes-a-touring-machine/

Comedy Persona Workout: Who Am I?

What Bert Kreischer Can Teach Us About Building a Recognizable Comedy Identity

This video changed Bert Kreischer's momentum after he felt he bottomed out. It's the story about when he found himself working for the Russian Mafia.

Why I Am Famous

Bert Kreischer's success demonstrates an important principle: **Audiences don't just connect with jokes. They connect with the person telling them.**

Kreischer has developed a clearly defined comedy persona: the shirtless, beer-drinking, uninhibited, overgrown fraternity boy who somehow became a husband and father without entirely growing up.

His persona influences everything—his stories, his subject matter, his delivery, his reactions, and even his appearance.

If you think about it, a joke is two ideas converging. So your persona or point of view could be one of the ideas or give depth to the story ***because of the strong persona*.**

You don't have to enjoy his particular style of comedy to recognize how effectively he's built an identity that audiences remember.

Now let's look at yours.



✍️ Exercise: Who Am I?

Answer the following four questions. Be specific, candid, and don't worry about making your answers funny yet. We're looking for the raw material that can help define your unique comedic voice.

1. Who am I?

How would you describe yourself to someone who has never met you?

Consider your personality, background, temperament, habits, contradictions, and how you move through the world.

Are you an overthinker? A cynic? An optimist? A people-pleaser? A control freak? A perpetual victim? A know-it-all? A lovable loser?

Your answer:

2. How do I see the world?

What is your prevailing attitude toward life, people, relationships, society, and everyday situations?

What annoys you? What excites you? What confuses you? What do you find ridiculous that other people seem to accept without question?

Your point of view is the filter through which you interpret everything that happens.

Your answer:

3. What makes me different, flawed, or contradictory?

Comedy frequently emerges from the gap between who we think we are and how we actually behave.



Are you a health fanatic who secretly loves junk food? A self-proclaimed intellectual who makes terrible decisions? A responsible parent who still behaves like a teenager?

Identify at least three personal flaws, inconsistencies, or contradictions that could become recurring sources of comedy.

Your answer:

4. What should audiences expect from me?

Imagine someone has seen your stand-up and is recommending you to a friend.

They say, "You've got to see this comedian. They're the one who always _____."

How would they finish that sentence?

What subjects, attitudes, behaviors, or reactions could become recognizable characteristics of your comedy?

Your answer:

Putting It Together: Your Comedy Persona Statement

Using your answers, complete the following:

I'm a _____ who sees the world as _____. I'm constantly frustrated, fascinated, or confused by _____. What makes me funny is that _____.

Example: Bert Kreischer (Bert Said this in an interview)

"I'm an overgrown fraternity boy who sees the world as one giant party. I'm constantly getting myself into ridiculous situations because I have no filter and terrible impulse control. What makes me funny is that I'm supposed to be a responsible adult, but I still behave like a college freshman."

The Lesson

Your comedy persona isn't necessarily a character you invent. It's often an exaggerated, concentrated version of who you already are.

You might be more cynical onstage, more anxious, more opinionated, more innocent, or more confrontational than you are in everyday life.

The key is consistency.

When audiences understand your personality and point of view, they begin anticipating how you'll react to situations.

And that anticipation creates opportunities for laughter.

Remember: Your persona is the filter. Your point of view is the attitude. Your jokes are how you express them.

Writing with Structure

Let’s look at this clip:



Bert Kreischer's Comfortably Dumb: My Body

Women see me like _____.
Men see me like _____.

You can flip this depending on where you see the joke.
Bert Kreischer saying ***"He'll never leave me…"*** became the stronger line, so he chose that one to be second in the comparison.

*** In a 2021 interview, Kreischer recalled that approximately 12 years earlier, at the Columbus Funny Bone in Ohio, he took his shirt off and forgot to put it back on. A woman in the audience yelled, "Keep it off!" The reaction helped turn it into a permanent part of his act.

In an interview he said, He originally did it to remind himself to have fun onstage.

10 Universal Everyday Experiences for Comedy Writing



These are subjects nearly everyone can relate to, making them excellent starting points for stand-up material.

1. Relationships — Spouses, dating, arguments, jealousy, communication, breakups, intimacy.
2. Family — Parents, children, siblings, in-laws, family obligations, embarrassing relatives.
3. Money — Bills, debt, spending, saving, being broke, unexpected expenses.
4. Work — Bosses, coworkers, meetings, deadlines, incompetence, job frustrations.
5. Food & Eating — Cravings, dieting, overeating, restaurants, cooking, digestive problems.
6. Sleep & Fatigue — Insomnia, snoring, waking up, exhaustion, getting older.
7. Health & Our Bodies — Aging, weight, appearance, bodily functions, aches, medical appointments.
8. Technology — Phones, texting, social media, passwords, apps, customer service.
9. Social Interactions — Awkward conversations, strangers, manners, embarrassment, misunderstandings.
10. Transportation & Errands — Driving, traffic, parking, shopping, waiting in lines, everyday inconveniences.

Quick Comedy Persona Exercise

Choose three subjects from the list and answer these questions for each:

- What's my attitude? How do I genuinely feel about this subject?
- What's my flaw? How do I personally make this situation worse?
- What's my typical reaction? How would someone who knows me predict I'd respond?



The goal: Take a universal experience and filter it through your unique personality.

Everybody deals with traffic. But Bill Burr, Jerry Seinfeld, Larry David, and Bert Kreischer would each respond to the same traffic jam differently.

The situation is universal. The reaction is personal. That's where your comedy persona begins to emerge.

✍️ Exercise: Deeper into Your Personal Flaws

Put Your Flaw Into a Statement

Turn a Personal Insecurity Into a Comedy Setup

Now that you've identified three of your personal flaws or insecurities, it's time to turn them into statements that can become the starting points for jokes.

There are two ways to approach this:

1. Make a statement about yourself.

State your flaw as a simple fact, observation, or confession.

2. Have someone else make a statement about you.

Imagine what your spouse, doctor, therapist, parent, friend, coworker, or even a complete stranger might say about your flaw.

Their observation can reveal how your behavior looks to the outside world.



Examples

Personal flaw	Statement	2nd Idea	Puncline
Laziness	I'm so lazy.	Sex	I'm a lazy lover. My favorite position is a nap.
Insecurity	My therapist says I need to stop worrying about what people think of me.	Having Children	*Like I had kids just so **someone** would look up to me.*
Cheapness	My wife says I'm cheap.	Marriage	Just because I used a Groupon to buy her wedding ring.
Intelligence	My doctor told me I have the mental capacity of a 12-year-old.	Response	Your mom does!
Cowardice	My wife says I avoid confrontation.	Response	I was like, "Mmm Hmm."
Vanity	My daughter says I'm obsessed with looking young.	Response	I think that's what she said. I was too busy booking my Botox appointment.
Jealousy	My therapist said, "Do you think you compare yourself to other people too much?"	Response	Do *you* think your other patients are better than me?

Your Turn

Choose three flaws from your list.

For each flaw, write:

- One statement **you would make** about yourself.
- One statement **someone else would make** about you.

You should now have six statements.

Don't worry about making every statement funny yet. A simple, truthful observation can be a terrific setup.

Next, look for opportunities to apply a comedy structure: exaggeration, reversal, double entendre, analogy, irony, or a surprising interpretation.

Remember: Your flaw gives you the subject. Your attitude gives you the point of view. The comedy structure helps you turn it into a joke.

You can really have a creative time digging into your flaws, like Bert Kreischer does. It’s one of those traits that audiences love.

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

