“Wanda Sykes is one of the most underrated comedians of our time, she can take almost anything and find a way to make it funny”

How to Write Comedy Like Wanda Sykes



Fundamentally Sound Comedian

Wanda Sykes reminds me of a female tennis player. Their form is always concise. When I played tennis, I always studied the female players because their fundamentals are sound.

If comedians want to learn to discuss a topic in our society and fundamentally put it into a form that is effective in stand-up, they should study Wanda Sykes.

Wanda doesn't just have attitude or angle or persona. Wanda also uses the comedy structures that help her make the point she's trying to make while getting laughs.

Wanda Sykes Hates The Bachelor | Netflix Is A Joke - LPM = 4

We are gonna be all right. We gonna be all right. We're just in a fight right now. We just in a fight. And when you're in a fight, big thing you gotta stay consistent. We gotta stay consistent ladies, especially us. That's right. So, you know, you can't be out there at the Women's March. Harvey. Yeah. Equal pay. Yeah. We gotta get equal pay and it be like, "Ooh girl, I gotta get home and watch the Bachelor"

<laugh>.

Now the Bachelor cannot coexist with Times Up. Me too. Can't have it. No, the only time you hear "Me Too" on the Bachelor is if somebody says, "I have chlamydia."

Gotta let the Bachelor go. I know some of you are like, well, Wanda, it's just, it's just entertainment. It's a TV show. Yeah, I know. But it promotes bad behavior and it makes women look stupid. It's gotta go got all these women, you know, all these women gathering, trying to all vie for this one shitty, little dude

<laugh>.

And he's actively dating all of them right in front of your face. And you know, he's sleeping with all of them. And the women are just standing around like, ah, "When is he gonna fuck me?"

"When do I get my one-on-one?" I have more respect for strippers than I do for women who go on The Bachelor. I do. What the hell? And then they try to make it like it's some fairytale, you know, with the Rose ceremony. Oh, if he wants you to stay, he'll give you a rose.




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<laugh>

Say. I want them to show it for what it is instead of
the rose ceremony. I want them to line all the women
up. And if he wants you to stay, he will tap you on
your forehead with his dick.

ACT-OUT: Sits on a chair waiting as she hangs the
microphone over her head waiting for it to tap her
forehead.
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Basic Formula: Premise + Act-Out.

Find what's stupid, ridiculous, hypocritical. Find the disconnect between morals and behavior, then act it out. Locate the irony. Use creative license to heighten the irony. Sometimes a callback can heighten the irony.

Let's look at the formula behind this joke:

This is an example of an **Incongruity/Recognition** Joke
Subject: The Bachelor Makes Women Look Stupid
Joke #1:
Hook: Women, we have to stay consistent in our protest.
Setup: We can't be at the women's march saying (ACT-OUT: Marching with a protest sign) "Fuck Harvey! Equal Pay for equal work!" And then be like,
Punchline: "Girl! I gotta get home to watch The Bachelor!"
Topper: No - extends the laugh with attitude
Tag: The Bachelor cannot exist with #TimesUp #MeToo
Then #MeToo leads to another joke
Tag: The only time you hear "Me too" on The Bachelor is when someone says, "I have Chlamydia!"

Possible ways Wanda came up with this Joke?



1. She's active in the women's movement. She's on Twitter talking a lot about women's issues. She's been an activist for a long time so these issues are important to her.

For as long as humankind has been around, there has been a disconnect between our morals and our actions.

What are they saying?
What are they actually doing?

When you find this situation in any socio-political, socio-cultural situation, anywhere you have interactions with humans you will see this disconnect. That's when you have the potential for humor, because there is hypocrisy. And with hypocrisy there is always…

Irony

Remember Andrew Schulz and his Baskin Robbins bit? The employee scooping ice cream wearing a MAGA hat? A Couple in Vikings costumes come in and yell about "Grabbin her pussy." And they are wearing Vikings costumes? Vikings are all about rape and pillage.

The Irony: That's not the costume to be wearing when you're complaining about womanizing.

If you watch George Carlin. That trope is everywhere!

Plus there is **superiority**, because we get to poke fun at the flaws in humanity.

We have to be able to relate to this situation so it has to be recognizable.
Which makes The Bachelor the perfect choice because it is highly recognizable.

During the women's movement she looked for the disconnects between what women were fighting for and what they were doing.

And by pointing out the flaws in the women--the very people she's trying to defend, it makes her more palatable and relatable.

When Wanda puts the march into an act-out it crystallizes the momentum, behavior and expectation that the protest is serious and going to continue in that pattern. Then suddenly it changes in:

Words
Behaviors
Emotion

It's not just words, it's emotion and attitude that gets turned on its head.

It doesn't need to be big or overly exaggerated to be effective. It just has to be sincere, organic and authentic.

This is **very important**.

If it's on the money, if the point your making is true, relatable and on the money, the bit doesn't need to be way over the top.

2. But since the #MeToo #TimesUp are only a small part of the Bachelor piece, I feel that the March part came later as a part of the bit. The Bachelor show was the main concept. She broke it down to its simplest parts and spelled it out for the audience Jim Gaffigan style. Sort of an attitude of what's really going on here and why do we watch this stuff?

Want to write like this?

1. Study pop-culture, especially the popular shows, movements, songs, movies, etc.
2. Really break them down to their basic concepts.
3. Look for the human behavior disconnects between morals and behaviors. (Find the hypocrisy). And point it out using act-outs, compare & contrast, superiority, benign retaliation.

Wanda can take almost anything and make it funny. Watch this bit about "Playing." Watch for the authenticity of her act-outs.

Wanda Sykes Needs to Learn How to Play | Netflix Is A Joke

Wanda is an excellent stand-up comedy writer. Watch how she delivers this waxing piece. This is one of those pieces that was better because she didn't use an act-out as the punchline. She stated it. Usually when you're talking about physical violence. (Punch, slap, kick,) It's best to state it first or state it while acting it out. Just the action is usually too aggressive--you can often follow it with an action.

Also watch this piece for Wanda's ability to take a subject and use the punchline to build an "If-this-is-true-what-else-is-true" bit.

Wanda Sykes - Waxed

Younger Wanda Sykes

Wanda Sykes - Sex Is Important

When you're at home and feel uninspired or feeling like you have writer's block. Watch a bit of Wanda Sykes.

1. Stop when she gets laughs
2. Ask yourself "What did she do there?"
3. Try to implement that into your own writing.

Notice when the two ideas come together for an incongruity listing technique or a compare and contrast.

Try to fit a topic into a compare and contrast.

EX. This is what happened to me. My dad was a tough man. If this happened with my dad it would be like… (If this happened to my MOM, it would be like)
If this happened when I was drunk it would be like, (age, place, setting, etc.)