



BRING YOUR SHOW

**THE ART & BUSINESS OF
HUMOROUS STORYTELLING:
STUDY GUIDE**

By Mark Whitney

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TODAY'S PROGRAM

OPENING BILLBOARD

- The Boys Of Greenwood Recite The Gettysburg Address

PART ONE: CONSIDERING NON-TOASTMASTERS THE ART OF HUMOROUS SPEAKING

- Well Read v. Well Said:
Steve Jobs At Stanford v. Jimmy Tingle At Harvard
- The Craftsmanship Of Comic's Comic, Brian Regan
On David Letterman's Last Show
- The Courage of Monica Lewinsky At TED
- The Authenticity Of Bernie Sanders
At Liberty University
- The Presence Of Donald Trump
At The First GOP Debate
- Joan Rivers' Epic Struggle
With Humorous Storytelling
- The Craftsmanship Of Long-Form, Master Storyteller,
Rick Cleveland

PART TWO: CONSIDERING TOASTMASTERS THE ART OF SHORT-FORM, HUMOROUS STORYTELLING

- The International Speech: Laughter Is Not Required
But It Sure Helps. (Featuring: "I See Something" by
2014 WCPS Dananjaya Hettiarachchi)
- The Humorous Speech: Laughter Mandated
(Live Performance) "Yes" by Mark Whitney

PART THREE: THE BUSINESS

- Applying Today's Learning & Turning Pro
- Caught On Tape: What Confidence Looks Like

STEVE JOBS AS DELIVERED (210 WORDS)

And much of what I stumbled into by following my curiosity and intuition turned out to be priceless later on. Let me give you one example: Reed College at that time offered perhaps the best calligraphy instruction in the country. Throughout the campus every poster, every label on every drawer, was beautifully hand calligraphed. Because I had dropped out and didn't have to take the normal classes, I decided to take a calligraphy class to learn how to do this. I learned about serif and sans serif typefaces, about varying the amount of space between different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can't capture, and I found it fascinating. None of this had even a hope of any practical application in my life. But 10 years later, when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me and we designed it all into the Mac. It was the first computer with beautiful typography. If I had never dropped in on that single course in college, the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces or proportionally spaced fonts. And since Windows just copied the Mac, it's likely that no personal computer would have them.

STEVE JOBS REWRITE OPTIMIZED FOR SPOKEN WORD (ACTIVE PRESENT TENSE / 103 WORDS)

Following my curiosity and intuition turns out to be priceless. Reed has the best calligraphy instruction in the country. Throughout campus, every poster, label and drawer is beautifully, hand-calligraphed. I was free to take calligraphy, but only because I dropped out. Ten years later, we're designing the first Macintosh – it all comes back to me – resulting in the first computer with beautiful typography. Had I never dropped in on that single course in college, the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces or proportionally spaced fonts. And since, as we all know, Windows just copied the Mac [long beat] TAG: No personal computer would have them.

JIMMY TINGLE AS DELIVERED (155 WORDS)

For generations, Harvard has given scholarships to students from Cambridge and students from all over the world who could meet the academic requirements. Starting in the third grade, my dear sweet mother who is here this morning would say to me: “Jimmy, if you study really hard, some day you could go to Harvard.” By the sixth grade, she stopped telling me that. By the eighth grade, our whole neighborhood had their eye set on Harvard, not so much for scholarships but because it was an excellent place to steal bicycles. I can remember running through this very yard, some forty-years ago, being chased by Harvard students, the Harvard faculty and The Harvard Police Department. Other college campuses during the 1960s were bitterly divided between the students and the administration over civil rights and the war in Vietnam. But here at Harvard, my friends and I were able to unite students, faculty and law enforcement.

NO EDITS

BRIAN REGAN AS DELIVERED (156 WORDS)

I just love it when there's a best of seven series because then I get to hear my favorite sports reporter question: "Would you consider this a must win game?" They always feel like they have to say yes: "Yeah we want to win it, it's very important you know, got our uniforms on anyway, might as well try." But it's not always the right answer Man. It's a math question. I wish they would answer that question honestly: "It's the best of seven. You're down one game to nothing. Would you consider this a must win game?" "No. No we could lose tonight. We could lose tomorrow night, too. We don't want to but that wasn't your question. You asked if it was a must win game and if you'd ever take a rudimentary math class, you'd already know the magic number's three. When you're down three, then you must win them or you're out."

BRIAN REGAN EDITS

- I ~~just~~ love it when there's a best of seven series...

RICK CLEVELAND AS DELIVERED (245 WORDS)

Buddy's just lying there on this rug in the Oval Office; the rug with the presidential seal on it and I'm just scratching him behind the ears. And the President comes in curious to meet us and Buddy pees all over the rug. Instinctively I roll Buddy over onto his back and taking the alpha dog position practically on top of him I say: "No! Buddy! Bad dog!" About three weeks later back in L.A., I get a phone call from the President. At first I think this is a joke. Ya' know one of my friends is prank calling me with this is the Whitehouse with the President calling for Rick Cleveland. But the next thing I know the President comes on the line and I realize it's really him. He says: "Hey, Rick! It's me, Bill. I'm coming out to California next week to look at some houses in Malibu and I'm bringing Buddy with me and I'm wondering if you could recommend a dog friendly beach I could take him to." My Dad was an alcoholic bus driver and my mom was a drill press operator at a screw factory , and I flunked out of the 11th grade the first time from smoking too much pot and ditching school. And now here it is twenty-plus years later and I have a date to go for a dog walk on the beach with the f**king President of the United States of America.

RICK CLEVELAND EDITS

- ~~And~~ The President comes in curious to meet us and Buddy pees all over the rug.
- ~~He says:~~ "Hey, Rick! It's me, Bill.
- ~~And now~~ Here it is twenty ~~plus~~ years later...

I SEE SOMETHING

By Dananjaya Hettiarachchi

Original: 880 Words

You and I are not very different from this flower. Just like this flower is unique, you are unique. All of us has something special that makes us as beautiful. Do you know what makes you special?

Now the answer to that can be a little difficult to find because sometimes life has a cruel way of picking out your petals and breaking you in two and throwing you into the trash. Now when you're broken, it's very difficult to feel special.

Mr. Contest Chair, my fellow flowers: I can remember the first time I broke. I was seventeen years old. I had already flunked high school and managed to get myself arrested.

Now I wasn't afraid of the cops. But there was one person I was very afraid of and that was my mama. Raise your hand if you have an emotional mother. Put them all together, you get my mom.

I can hear her scream outside of the police station. Even the cops were afraid. She came up to me, held the iron bars, looked into my eyes and I saw a tear coming down her face.

Rewrite: 683 Words

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I'm not afraid of the cops. I'm afraid of my mama! Raise your hand if you have an emotional mother. Put them all together, you get my mom.

I can hear her scream outside of the police station. Even the cops are afraid. Through the iron bars I see a tear rolling down her face.

Now I've seen my mama cry before. But mothers cry three types of tears: Tears of joy, tears of sorrow and tears of shame.

And when a son sees his mother cry tears of shame, that's a life changing moment. She looked at me and said: "Son, I want you to be a better man."

That night when I drove home, my dad was waiting for me at home. Now my dad is a cool dad. Raise your hand if you have a cool dad. Put them all together and you get my dad.

My dad came up to me and said: "Son, it's okay: You flunked your exams. You already got arrested. That's fine you get that from your mother's side! I want you to start working immediately."

And I said okay. So my dad took me to meet one of his friends called Sam. Now Sam was an accountant who had an accounting firm and had generously decided to make me his personal assistant.

And there he was. He looked like a teddy bear. But this man was special. I looked at him and he looked at me and then he said the most amazing thing. He said: "Son, I see something in you. But, I don't know what it is. If you decide to work with me I can help you find that something."

Mothers cry three types of tears: Tears of joy, tears of sorrow and tears of shame.

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"I want you to be a better man."

I get home. Dad's waiting. My dad is a cool dad. Raise your hand if you have a cool dad. Put them all together and you get my dad.

"You flunked your exams. Got arrested. You get that from your mother's side! I want you to start work immediately."

Dad takes me to meet a friend; an accountant named Sam, who generously decides to make me his personal assistant.

I look at him. He looks at me. Then he says the most amazing thing: "Son, I see something in you. But, I don't know what it is. Work with me and maybe I can help you find that something."

And I was like: "Whoa, that's the first time in my life somebody's told me they see something in me!"

And I started working for Sam. And every day after work, he used to tell me stories about the world, about history, about culture, about philosophy, and it was much more interesting than what I learned in school. And I discovered I can dream. And I started dreaming ladies and gentlemen.

After one year I went back into high school, completed my exams and went into college. After successfully completing college I found a great girl, but not a job. I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life. Have you ever had that problem?

And when you're lost, it's difficult to feel special. So I went back to my cool dad and I said: "Dad I feel lost."

He said: "You are like your mother."

So my dad introduced me to this strange club that had a strange name with strange people talking. On the first meeting they told me to do something called a table topic. I aced it. But while I was speaking, I see a strange man seated in the back of the room, humble, simple, the unfailing quality of kindness in his eyes. As soon as I finished, he walked up to me, looked me dead straight in the eye and said: "Son, I see something in you. But, I don't

Whoa! That's the first time in my life somebody's told me they see something in me!

Sam tells stories about the world: History. Culture. Philosophy. I start dreaming ladies and gentlemen.

A year later I go back to high school and onto college. I find a great girl, but no job. I don't know what I want to do with my life. Have you ever had that problem?

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know what it is! If you come here twice a month, maybe we can find that something?"

And ladies and gentlemen, I discovered I could speak and I love speaking, and that led me to become a teacher.

I know what it's like to not have enough money in your bank account. I know what it's like to worry when the bills start coming in. And sometimes in the middle of the night I wake up my beautiful wife and I ask her: "Honey, why did you marry me?"

She says: "I saw something in you. But, I still don't know what it is!"

Ladies and Gentlemen: Today I am a dreamer, I am a speaker, and I learned the unfailing quality of unconditional love from my wife.

I was broken, and I've been broken, lost and broke many times in my life. But, the people in my life were able to reach into the trash can and make me whole again. If it was up to me, I would have never been able to do that.

And this is why if you have great people in your life, no matter how broke, how lost or how broken you become, they can piece you back together.

Ladies and gentleman, when I look at you, I see something in you, but I don't know what it is!

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If you have great people in your life, no matter how broke, how lost or how broken you become, they can piece you back together.

Ladies and gentleman, when I look at you, I see something in you, but I don't know what it is!

"YES!" (Annotated) By Mark Whitney

SUBTEXT

TEXT

ALWAYS BEGIN AT CENTER STAGE

1) INTRODUCTION

Narrator To The Audience → The manager's name is Armando:

In Character As 'Armando' →
(unique body language and voice)

UNIVERSAL TRUTH →
(Everybody has their dirt)

The Convincer = Godlike/Mythology →

Pay attention. I'm gonna' tell ya' sumpin' right now. I can dig up dirt on anybody. I can find doit on yo' muddah! Doit she doesn't even know she has. Dats why day call me da Convincer.

Now our story is officially a TM 'Speech' → Mister Toastmaster, Toastmasters and Guests:

Thesis Stated: We Have A Problem → We all confront situations with no room for compromise.

Narrowly Framed In Black & White → It can only be yes or no.

Universal Primal Example #1: Money (L) →

Universal Primal Example #2: Sex (R) →

Sets Up The Payoff (C) →
Everybody's in the room.
No opportunity to check out.

- How 'bout a raise?
- How 'bout a date?
- How do you get to yes?

SYNTHESIS: DIRT/YES/NO →
'Vacuum cleaners' answers WHY.
The reveal gets a chuckle.

Everything I needed to know about getting to yes, I learned selling vacuum cleaners.

2) BRANCH OFFICE

Thesis Restated: I Have A Problem →
As Armando: This is about what you want.
'You want' repeated three times.
Framed as a narrow choice: A or B? Pick one.

This is about what you want: You want an education or you want the dough-ray-me?

Protagonist Takes The Money →
A clueless, at risk kid going door to door.
Doesn't know this is impossible.

I'm 18. Graduated three days ago. I want money.

Money Machine →
Capitalism: You eat what you kill.

I call it The Money Machine, \$359.95, and you get a toid.

Our Hero Takes The Money →

A third? I don't need algebra to know that's \$120.

Need To Know Family Economic History →

Dad's makin' that much a week teachin' school.

Callback →

Call me convinced!

3) IN THE FIELD

Early Success: Power Of Believing →
\$9 is a lot of money to our hero.
Primal: Subtle & suggestive body language and terminology. This is intentional.

I'll never forget my first door: She needs a Standard Hose for her Model G. Nine dollar commission!

Armando praises our Hero. Armando is no fool.

Callback →

Junior! You did good. Now go gemme \$359.95.

How Do You Get To Yes →
Universal Struggle: Economic Survival.
The empathy for our Hero increases.

Armando makes it sound easy. But, there's a bit of trickery involved. First trick's getting' in the door.

4) ON THE PORCH

- Our Hero As 'The Beav' → Our Hero presents as a harmless teen. But this is not just any teenager. Our Hero has been trained by The Convincer.
- Sophistication, Intellectualism, Intelligence → Model 1205: Details prove the speaker is a subject matter expert.
- Armando Revealed As A Great Teacher → Armando taught me that!
- Our Hero Is Denied Three Times → Nothing worth working for comes easy. Empathy for our Hero rises higher.
- It's All Part Of The Plan → The audience cheers for our Hero.
- Armando Is A God Now → Armando gets all the good lines. It is unseemly to do your own chest-pounding. Create a character and get away with more. e.g. Jeff Dunham.
- First Beat: Clever Sleight Of Hand → Periodic Sentence: Meaning revealed last word. + the last word ends in a hard consonant.
- Second Beat: Take To The Audience →
- Third Beat →
- 180° Transformation: From Out To In. →
- "Hi, Mrs. Jones! I'm Mark! Electrolux sent me down to show ya' the latest in home care and cleaning! Already have an Electrolux? It's been a good machine for ya' hasn't it?"
- I'm on the porch talkin' bout her Model 1205 in the past tense, like she's already traded it in.
- "Need any bags. No. Brushes? No. Shampoo? No.
- Givin' her a chance to get all the nos out of her system."
- Armando says:
"Doesn't matter what you want in life, you're just some unknown number of nos away from yes!"
- 'Ja realize when you bought that old machine you prepaid for a free tune-up?
[beat]
It's a \$29.95 value!
- She holds open the door and I cross the threshold!

5) TIME OUT

Our Hero Has Really Thought This Through → Now we know why he's pushing Mrs. Jones so hard. As a subject matter expert he knows that someone who already has what he's selling is the best prospect. An amateur would high tail it out of there after apologizing to Mrs. Jones for bothering her. The audience is also thinking about The Convincer's prophetic words. The audience now knows our Hero is going to 'get to yes' and it can't wait to learn how.

What do we know about Mrs. Jones at this juncture? Everything we need to know:

- We know she buys from salesman.
- We know she buys what I'm selling from salesman.
- We know she's willing to pay a lot of money to get all the dirt.

6) IN THE LIVING ROOM

The Shaming Of Mrs. Jones Begins! →

That's why my first question's always the same: "When's the last time you vacuumed?"

The Money Machine has a special cloth bag so I can instantly show Mrs. Jones any dirt her machine leaves behind.

Now Mrs. Jones has a problem! →
Proof: Everyone – even Mrs. Jones – has dirt.

I find five grains of sand.

The absurdity of consumerism and zero →
tolerance for any inconvenience no matter how insignificant.

"You didn't know you're living in these conditions did you?"

180° Transformation: →
From Reverent To Irreverent

Forgiveness is critical. All these years Mrs. Jones fancies herself a clean woman. Turns out she's nothing but a dirty girl!

7) The Bedroom

Primal: Temperature Rises; Pace Quickens → “Lemme show ya’ something else. Where’s the bedroom?”

Armando says:

Armando said it. I didn’t. → “If you can get into the bedroom, you can close the deal 90% of the time.”

Primal: A Little Something For The Men → And right now she's following me.

Beat #1 → I rip the sheets down to the bare mattress,

Beat #2 → fills the bag!

Beat #3 → Dead skin.

Mrs. Jones

A Buying Question → How much?!

Mark

Closing Question → Give it to ya' today \$359.95. Wanna' throw the box out or ya' wanna' keep it?

Mrs. Jones

A Buying Question → Gotta' ask my husband.

Mark

Disarming Honesty → That’s a good man ya’ got there does that vacuuming!

Mrs. Jones

She’s Part Of The Conspiracy Now → Tub-o-lard doesn’t lift a finger ‘round here!

Mark

Primal: A Little Something For The Women → Come on Mrs. Jones. This is 1977! Women are burnin' their

Another Closing Question →

Another Closing Question →

This is unjust! What is justice?
Justice is a vacuum cleaner!

Mrs. Jones Is Now Transformed →

Callback To Title: Our Hero 'get[s] to yes!' →
An Epic Struggle Ends

What did our Hero learn?

Our Hero Holds Wad Of Bills Aloft →
Arm Fully Extended. He Got The Money!

Step and Toss →

Our Hero's 180° Transformation →
With the benefit of hindsight,
'money or education' was a false choice.
He got the money & a priceless education!

'No' Defined Door #1 (L) →
Not rejection.

'No' Defined Door #2 (C) →
Not defeat.

'No' Defined Door #3 (R) →
Neither success or failure.
Callback To Porch Scene
(same language and staging)

bras, takin' to the streets,
fightin' for freedom!
You gotta' ask your man to buy
the vacuum?
You make him beg for that John
Deere out in the garage?

Turns out Mrs. Jones has a secret!

[Reveal Coffee Can; Remove Money]

“YES!”

Thirty seven years ago I chose money
over education.

So I [TOSS] thought.

Turns out the education I received that
year has been opening doors and
getting me to yes ever since.

- I'm Mark.
Not interested.
No is not rejection.
- I'm Mark.
We shoot every third salesman!
Second one just left!!!
No is not defeat.
- I'm Mark.
You already have an Electrolux.
No is a milestone on the road to
yes.

No & Yes Are Imposters → No concept of failure!
The only thing that matters is action.
Action? Good. Inaction? Bad.

Armando Truly Is A God! → My unlikely mentor taught me that.
'Mentor' is a subtle nod to Toastmasters
Great teachers are everywhere.

Callback To The Myth, The Legend → The Convincer doesn't just say:

A Huge Universal Truth → "None of us exists in a vacuum!"

He spells it out:

YIELD

Writing 'Y' On The Pad → People can be resistant to change.
Great insight into the human condition. Give 'em a chance to get all the nos
out of their system.

EMPATHIZE

Writing 'E' On The Pad → We all have our dirt.
Callback to 'forgiving' Mrs. Jones. Forgiveness is critical.

STRIVE

Writing 'S' On The Pad → Doesn't matter what you want outta'
Callback to 'forgiving' Mrs. Jones. life,

The PERFECT Universal Metaphor → KEEP KNOCKING,

Hope in the struggle! → You're just some unknown number of
nos away from:

THE AUDIENCE

The Audience Is Fully Transformed →
The proof is the audience parroting the title
when prompted, thereby answering the
question: 'How do you get to yes?'

YES!!!

As Armando: You Did Good → "You did good!"

Mister Toastmaster!

FROM MARK'S BOOKSHELF

- How To Succeed In Business Without Really Crying by Carol Leifer
- Norman Lear: Even This I Get To Experience by Norman Lear
- Poking A Dead Frog by Mike Sacks
- The Wit & Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln by Alex Ayres
- Poetics by Aristotle
- Sick In The Head by Jud Apatow
- Creativity Inc. by Ed Catmull
- Little Bets by Peter Sims
- Tell To Win by Peter Guber
- Save The Cat! by Blake Snyder
- Save The Cat! Strikes Back by Blake Snyder
- Save The Cat! Goes To The Movies by Blake Snyder
- Cracking Up by Paul Lewis
- Satire & Dissent by Amber Lewis
- The Humor Code by Peter McGraw and Joel Warner
- Writing Down The Bones: Freeing The Writer Within by Natalie Goldberg
- American On Purpose by Craig Ferguson
- Talk Show by Dick Cavett
- Between The Bridge and The River by Craig Ferguson
- Last Words by George Carlin
- 7 Dirty Words: The Life and Crimes of George Carlin by James Sullivan
- Rickles' Book by Don Rickles
- Why You Crying? by George Lopez
- I'm Dreaming Of A Black Christmas by Lewis Black
- Born Standing Up by Steve Martin
- Schulz and Peanuts by David Michaelis
- Rickles' Letters by Don Rickles
- When Will Jesus Bring The Pork Chops by George Carlin
- Here's Johnny! By Ed McMahon
- I Know I Am, But What Are You? By Samantha Bee
- It's Not Easy Bein' Me by Rodney Dangerfield
- I Shouldn't Even Be Doing This by Bob Newhart
- On Bullshit by Dr. Harry G. Frankfurt
- Story by Robert McKee
- Comedy Writing Step By Step by Gene Perret
- Comedy At The Edge by Richard Zoglin
- Satiristas: Comedians, Contrarians, Raconteurs & Vulgarians by Paul Provenza & Don Dion