

Truth In Comedy The Manual For Improvisation Ebook

Tom Shadyac is a storyteller. For over 25 years he was one of the top directors in Hollywood, producing some of its highest grossing comedies. However, after his world was rocked by a health condition, he began to consider his purpose, realising an intense need to live life with greater authenticity. Just about everything today comes with an operating manual - from your computer to your car, from your mobile phone to your iPad. Is it possible that Life comes with an operating manual, as well? That's the simple, but powerful premise of Tom Shadyac's inspiring and provocative first book. Written as a series of essays and dialogues, we are invited into a conversation that is both challenging and empowering. The question now is, can we discern what is written inside of this operating manual and garner the courage to live in accordance with its precepts? A Native American myth tells of two wolves that live inside each of us, two wolves engaged in a fierce battle for control of our lives. One wolf, the fearful wolf, walks in anger, ego, envy, greed, resentment and lies. The other wolf, the truthful wolf, lives in appreciation, kindness, love, joy, compassion, and empathy. Life's Operating Manual is expressed as a series of dialogues between the two wolves of fear and truth, with Tom reflecting on the life experiences that led him to these deep internal meditations. Authentic, direct and profound, Life's Operating Manual is an unexpected gift to any spiritual seeker.

Want to learn the improv techniques that helped Mike Myers, Chris Farley, John Belushi, and many others along the road to TV and film stardom? Then let two esteemed founders of long-form improvisational theatre, Del Close and Charna Halpern, teach you the "Harold." This groundbreaking acting exercise emphasizes pattern recognition and subversion of the audience's expectations, which are important factors for making people laugh without ever telling a joke. It involves six to seven players and many kinds of scenes: games, monologues, songs, skits and more, all of which are bound to keep both actors and audience members guessing. The Harold is non-linear entertainment that remembers everything and wastes nothing -- the key to successful improvising -- and has become a standard in comedy clubs and improv theatres around the globe.

Drama Harold Pinter Characters: 4 male, 2 female Interior Set In a small house at a coastal resort live a man, his mentally wayward wife and their boarder who has been with them for a year. He is a strange chap, unkempt and in flight from we know not what. Enter an even stranger sleek Jewish man and his muscle bound Irish henchman. The mentally immature wife accommodates them with a room and then decides that it is time for the boarder to have a birthday. At the pa

Advice for performing long-form improv from a longtime teacher and performer.

We all want good scenes. But it seems the harder we work, the less likely we are to stumble towards them. Improvising Now offers techniques, tricks, and secrets used by professionals to make the act of improvising easier, more efficient, and more enjoyable onstage. You'll discover easy tools to navigate some of the more stressful parts of scene work, including: • Starting scenes • Discovering the character dynamic • Playing patterns and Game of the Scene • Heightening your own ideas • Mental blocks to discovery • Navigating group scenes • Second beats and structure • Tips for intermediate/expert improvisers This book also provides an insider's look at the business of comedy. From producing your own independent improv shows to getting hired by a paying comedy theatre. Work less, play more. Enjoy whatever Now you're in.

Bizarre military history: In 1979, a crack commando unit was established by the most gifted minds within the U.S. Army. Defying all known laws of physics and accepted military practice, they believed that a soldier could adopt the cloak of invisibility, pass cleanly through walls, and—perhaps most chillingly—kill goats just by staring at them. They were the First Earth Battalion, entrusted with defending America from all known adversaries. And they really weren't joking. What's more, they're back—and they're fighting the War on Terror. An uproarious exploration of American military paranoia: With investigations ranging from the mysterious "Goat Lab," to Uri Geller's covert psychic work with the CIA, to the increasingly bizarre role played by a succession of U.S. presidents, this might just be the funniest, most unsettling book you will ever read—if only because it is all true and is still happening today. If you think you're funny, buy this book! Whether you dream of becoming a star . . . A better public speaker . . . A more effective communicator . . . A funnier, happier human being . . . You can learn to leave 'em laughing! David Letterman learned to do it. Jay Leno learned to do it. Roseanne Barr learned to do it. So can you! Now successful stand-up comic Judy Carter—who went from teaching high school to performing in Las Vegas, Atlantic City, Lake Tahoe, and on over 45 major TV shows—gives you the same hands-on, step-by-step instruction she's taught to students in her comedy workshops. She shows you how to do it: create an act, perform it, make money with it, or apply it to everyday life. Discover: • The formulas for creating comedy material • How to find your own style • The three steps to putting your act together • Rehearsal do's and don'ts • What to do if you bomb • Ways to punch up your everyday life with humor

This "terrific" novel of alternate history asks: What if Hitler had never been born? (The Washington Post). Michael Young is a graduate student at Cambridge who is completing his dissertation on the early life of Adolf Hitler. Leo Zuckermann is an aging German physicist haunted by the Holocaust. Together, they idealistically embark on an experiment to change the course of history. And with their success is launched a brave new world that is in some ways better than ours—but in most ways even worse. You think I'm overdressed? This is my slip! No, I'm going to tell you the truth about what I'm wearing. I used to work as a lampshade in a whorehouse. I couldn't get one of the good jobs. From housewife to humorist, Phyllis Diller made millions laugh for over five decades with her groundbreaking comedy. Boasting unique material, a raucous laugh, wild hair, the trademark cigarette holder, and garish clothes, this pioneer blazed a trail for comediennes during the fifties and sixties, leading them out of small dives into the kinds of top venues that had previously played host only to their male counterparts. While her routine broke new ground and opened doors to subsequent generations of female standups, it also served as a form of self-therapy amid a life steeped in tragedy and turmoil. Like a Lampshade in a Whorehouse is Phyllis Diller's own story about the struggle and the pain behind the comedy and the success: her Depression-era adolescence; her marriage to the chronically unemployed husband who inspired her most famous comic character, Fang; her desperate attempts to stave off poverty as a professional comic while raising five children; the disastrous club engagements that coincided with homelessness and separation from her young family; and the problems that clouded her stage and screen success when a second marriage unraveled because of her new spouse's alcoholism and inner demons. Over fifty years after Diller's professional debut as a standup comic, Like a Lampshade in a Whorehouse describes her separate careers as an artist and as a piano soloist with symphony orchestras; her failed attempts to become a Playboy centerfold; and her outspoken attitude toward her extensive plastic surgery that earned her a special award from the American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery. It's quite a story.

Executives from The Second City—the world's premier comedy theater and school of improvisation—reveal improvisational techniques that can help any organization develop innovators, encourage adaptable leaders, and build transformational businesses. For more than fifty years, The Second City comedy theater in Chicago has been a training ground for some of the best comic minds in the industry—including John Belushi, Bill Murray, Gilda Radner, Mike Myers, Steve Carell, Stephen Colbert, and Tina Fey. But it also provides one-of-a-kind leadership training to cutting-edge companies, nonprofits, and public sector organizations—all aimed at increasing creativity, collaboration, and teamwork. The rules for leadership and teamwork have changed, and the skills that got professionals ahead a generation ago don't work anymore. Now The Second City provides a new toolkit individuals and organizations can use to thrive in a world increasingly shaped by speed, social communication, and decentralization. Based on eight principles of improvisation, *Yes, And* helps to develop these skills and foster them in high-potential leaders and their teams, including: Mastering the ability to co-create in an ensemble Fostering a “yes, and” approach to work Embracing failure to accelerate high performance Leading by listening and by learning to follow Innovating by making something out of nothing *Yes, And* is a must-read for professionals and organizations, helping to develop the invaluable leadership skills needed to succeed today.

The *Improv Handbook* is the most comprehensive, smart, helpful and inspiring guide to improv available today. Applicable to comedians, actors, public speakers and anyone who needs to think on their toes, it features a range of games, interviews, descriptions and exercises that illuminate and illustrate the exciting world of improvised performance. First published in 2008, this second edition features a new foreword by comedian Mike McShane, as well as new exercises on endings, managing blind offers and master-servant games, plus new and expanded interviews with Keith Johnstone, Neil Mullarkey, Jeffrey Sweet and Paul Rogan. The *Improv Handbook* is a one-stop guide to the exciting world of improvisation. Whether you're a beginner, an expert, or would just love to try it if you weren't too scared, The *Improv Handbook* will guide you every step of the way.

Humorous essays that dissects our cultural obsessions and calls out bad behavior in our increasingly digital, connected lives "Jagodowski and Pasquesi, award-winning master improvisers from Chicago's legendary comedy scene, are internationally known for their acclaimed, two-man longform show, *TJ & Dave*. [This is] their authoritative and entertaining look at techniques, principles, theory, and ideas behind their approach"--Cover.

A handbook of essential comedy skills, useful for all performers!

Improv for Storytellers is the follow-up to Keith Johnstone's classic *Improv*, one of the best-selling books ever published on improvisation. *Improv for Storytellers* aims to take jealous and self-obsessed beginners and teach them to play games with good nature and to fail gracefully.

"This book is a message from autistic people to their parents, friends, teachers, coworkers and doctors showing what life is like on the spectrum. It's also my love letter to autistic people. For too long, we have been forced to navigate a world where all the road signs are written in another language." With a reporter's eye and an insider's perspective, Eric Garcia shows what it's like to be autistic across America. Garcia began writing about autism because he was frustrated by the media's coverage of it; the myths that the disorder is caused by vaccines, the narrow portrayals of autistic people as white men working in Silicon Valley. His own life as an autistic person didn't look anything like that. He is Latino, a graduate of the University of North Carolina, and works as a journalist covering politics in Washington D.C. Garcia realized he needed to put into writing what so many autistic people have been saying for years; autism is a part of their identity, they don't need to be fixed. In *We're Not Broken*, Garcia uses his own life as a springboard to discuss the social and policy gaps that exist in supporting those on the spectrum. From education to healthcare, he explores how autistic people wrestle with systems that were not built with them in mind. At the same time, he shares the experiences of all types of autistic people, from those with higher support needs, to autistic people of color, to those in the LGBTQ community. In doing so, Garcia gives his community a platform to articulate their own needs, rather than having others speak for them, which has been the standard for far too long.

Far more than simply an overview of improv comedy, this book helps actors, writers and comedians learn the basics as taught in all the major comedy schools. First, the do's and don'ts of the Comedy Improv Commandments. The concepts that, when understood, hit the student like falling anvils: Anvil 1: Collaboration -- Working with the 'Group Mind', Anvil 2: Agreement -- 'Just say Yes', Anvil 3: Foundation -- 'Who, What and Where', Anvil 4: Exploring -- 'Finding the Game'. Successful improv requires the skill of the actor, the talent of the comedian and the ideas of the writer rolled into one. This book tells how it can all be done for performers or teachers.

Furnishes a comprehensive guide to improvisational techniques as used in stand-up comedy

A brief description of the history and goals of two improvisational comedy groups, the Compass and Second City, accompanies interviews with past members from Mike Nichols to Gilda Radner

Improvising Better is an easy to read self-help book created with the new generation of improviser in mind. It's written for today's performers, looking for a quick fix to their performance problems. This book is a fast read with long-lasting results. Jimmy Carrane and Liz Allen have improvised, taught, and directed in Chicago for over thirty years combined, and have either seen or experienced the most common problems facing improvisers today. *Improvising Better* will give you simple tools for repairing your improvisation through original and enhanced exercises. This book addresses the improviser as a whole, including how offstage issues affect onstage performance. Speaking candidly about this very personal art form, Carrane and Allen offer common-sense solutions, some tough love, and a little inspiration along the way. Whether you are a beginner or a veteran, *Improvising Better* will catapult you to the next level in your career as a working improviser. A sweeping yet intimate--and often hilarious--history of a uniquely American art form that has never been more popular This new guidebook for the best in improvisation performance is a sequel to the best-selling book, "Truth in Comedy." It tells how to empower improvisation using the "yes" concept with improv performers.

Judy Carter, guru to aspiring comedy writers and stand-up comics, tells all about the biz of being funny and writing funny in this bright, entertaining, and totally practical guide on how to draw humor from your life and turn it into a career. Do you think you're funny? Do you want to turn your sense of humor into a career? If the answer is yes, then Judy Carter's *The Comedy Bible* is for you. The guru to aspiring stand-up comics provides the complete scoop on being—and writing—funny for money. If you've got a sense of humor, you can learn to make a career out of comedy, says Judy Carter. Whether

it's creating a killer stand-up act, writing a spec sitcom, or providing jokes for radio or one-liners for greeting cards, Carter provides step-by-step instructions in *The Comedy Bible*. She helps readers first determine which genre of comedy writing or performing suits them best and then directs them in developing, refining, and selling their work. Using the hands-on workbook format that was so effective in her bestselling first book, *Stand-Up Comedy: The Book*, Carter offers a series of day-by-day exercises that draw on her many years as a successful stand-up comic and the head of a nationally known comedy school. Also included are practical tips and advice from today's top comedy professionals—from Bernie Brillstein to Christopher Titus to Richard Lewis. She presents the pros and cons of the various comedy fields—stand-up, script, speech and joke writing, one-person shows, humor essays—and shows how to tailor your material for each. She teaches how to find your “authentic” voice—the true source of comedy. And, perhaps most important, Carter explains how to take a finished product to the next level—making money—by pitching it to a buyer and negotiating a contract. Written in Carter's unique, take-no-prisoners voice, *The Comedy Bible* is practical, inspirational, and funny.

A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER NAMED A BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR BY NPR Amy Poehler, Mel Brooks, Adam McKay, George Saunders, Bill Hader, Patton Oswalt, and many more take us deep inside the mysterious world of comedy in this fascinating, laugh-out-loud-funny book. Packed with behind-the-scenes stories—from a day in the writers' room at *The Onion* to why a sketch does or doesn't make it onto *Saturday Night Live* to how the BBC nearly erased the entire first season of *Monty Python's Flying Circus*—*Poking a Dead Frog* is a must-read for comedy buffs, writers and pop culture junkies alike.

This comprehensive joke writing masterclass has been devised for beginners and experienced joke writers alike. The techniques you will learn can be used again and again to write funny and original material. You hold in your hands the key to unlocking your inner comedy genius.

Keith Johnstone's involvement with the theatre began when George Devine and Tony Richardson, artistic directors of the Royal Court Theatre, commissioned a play from him. This was in 1956. A few years later he was himself Associate Artistic Director, working as a play-reader and director, in particular helping to run the Writers' Group. The improvisatory techniques and exercises evolved there to foster spontaneity and narrative skills were developed further in the actors' studio then in demonstrations to schools and colleges and ultimately in the founding of a company of performers, called *The Theatre Machine*. Divided into four sections, 'Status', 'Spontaneity', 'Narrative Skills', and 'Masks and Trance', arranged more or less in the order a group might approach them, the book sets out the specific techniques and exercises which Johnstone has himself found most useful and most stimulating. The result is both an ideas book and a fascinating exploration of the nature of spontaneous creativity.

The Anarchist Cookbook will shock, it will disturb, it will provoke. It places in historical perspective an era when "Turn on, Burn down, Blow up" are revolutionary slogans of the day. Says the author "This book... is not written for the members of fringe political groups, such as the Weatherman, or The Minutemen. Those radical groups don't need this book. They already know everything that's in here. If the real people of America, the silent majority, are going to survive, they must educate themselves. That is the purpose of this book." In what the author considers a survival guide, there is explicit information on the uses and effects of drugs, ranging from pot to heroin to peanuts. There is detailed advice concerning electronics, sabotage, and surveillance, with data on everything from bugs to scramblers. There is a comprehensive chapter on natural, non-lethal, and lethal weapons, running the gamut from cattle prods to sub-machine guns to bows and arrows.

The #1 New York Times bestseller by Senator Al Franken, author of *Giant of the Senate* Senator Al Franken's landmark bestseller, *Lies (And the Lying Liars Who Tell Them): A Fair and Balanced Look at the Right*, was praised as a “bitterly funny assault” (*The New York Times*) that rang “with the moral clarity of an angel's trumpet” (*The Associated Press*). Now, this master of political humor strikes again with a powerful and provocative message for all of us. In these pages, Senator Franken reveals the alarming story of how: • Bush (barely) beat Kerry with his campaign of “fear, smear, and queers,” and then claimed a nonexistent mandate. • “Casino Jack” Abramoff, the Republicans' nearest and dearest friend, made millions of dollars off of the unspeakable misery of the poor and the powerless. And, also, Native Americans. • The administration successfully implemented its strategy to destroy America's credibility and goodwill around the world. Complete with new material for this paperback edition, *The Truth (with jokes)* is more than just entertaining, intelligent, and insightful. It is at once prescient in its analysis of right-wing mendacity and incompetence, and inspiring in its vision of a better tomorrow for all Americans (except Jack Abramoff). Trapped in an airplane seated next to a chatterbox? Are you hosting a dinner party with people who just won't leave? Katie Vaz has the key to your escape. *The Escape Manual for Introverts* guides readers through different scenarios with themed chapters ("Friends," "Relatives," "Strangers," etc.). Each chapter covers a range of situations, from an invitation to karaoke night to group lunchtime. And she offers a number of escapes for each scenario: bringing odoriferous foods to lunch for a while, having a pet (real or imagined) that "requires" frequent check-ins, and even investing in a jet pack. This book features Vaz's full-page illustrated spreads, hand-lettering, and spot illustrations. From the silly to the sincere, Vaz's clever, hilarious escape plans and bizarre excuses speak to the introvert in all of us.

Bill Cooper, former United States Naval Intelligence Briefing Team member, reveals information that remains hidden from the public eye. This information has been kept in Top Secret government files since the 1940s. His audiences hear the truth unfold as he writes about the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the war on drugs, the Secret Government and UFOs. Bill is a lucid, rational and powerful speaker who intent is to inform and to empower his audience. Standing room only is normal. His presentation and information transcend partisan affiliations as he clearly addresses issues in a way that has a striking impact on listeners of all backgrounds and interests. He has spoken to many groups throughout the United States and has appeared regularly on many radio talk shows and on television. In 1988 Bill decided to "talk" due to events then taking place worldwide, events which he had seen plans for back in the early '70s. Since Bill has been "talking," he has correctly predicted the lowering of the Iron Curtain, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the invasion of Panama. All Bill's predictions were on record well before the events occurred. Bill is not a psychic. His information comes from Top Secret documents that he read while with the Intelligence Briefing Team and from over 17 years of thorough research. "Bill Cooper is the world's leading expert on UFOs." -- Billy Goodman, KVEG, Las Vegas. "The onlt man in America who has all the pieces to the puzzle that has troubled so many for so long." -- Anthony Hilder, Radio Free America "William Cooper may be one of America's greatest heros, and this story may be the biggest story in the history of the world." -- Mills Crenshaw, KTALK, Salt Lake City. "Like it or not, everything is changing. The result will be the most wonderful experience in the history of man or the most horrible enslavement that you can imagine. Be active or abdicate, the future is in your hands." -- William Cooper, October 24, 1989.

A new book from #1 New York Times bestselling author Jenny Lawson, destined to be a classic—part therapy, part best friend, part humor, part coloring book. When Jenny Lawson is anxious, one of the things she does is to draw. Elaborate doodles, beautiful illustrations, often with captions that she posts online. At her signings, fans show up with printouts of these drawings for Jenny to autograph. And inevitably they ask

her when will she publish a whole book of them. That moment has arrived. You Are Here is something only Jenny could create. A combination of inspiration, therapy, coloring, humor, and advice, this book is filled with Jenny's amazingly intricate illustrations, all on perforated pages that can be easily torn out, hung up, and shared. Drawing on the tenets of art therapy—which you can do while hiding in the pillow fort under your bed—You Are Here is ready to be made entirely your own. Some of the material is dark, some is light; some is silly and profane and irreverent. Gathered together, this is life, happening right now, all around, in its messy glory, as only Jenny Lawson could show us.

In *The Triangle of the Scene*, veteran improv teacher and performer Paul Vaillancourt lays out a simple set of tools that enable improvisors old and new to use the three basic elements of a scene to super-charge their work and take it to the next level. In this book, Paul shows you how to better connect with your partner, how to use the 'where', and how to find the ever elusive game of the scene. *The Triangle of the Scene* is also the first improv book to use embedded videos to allow readers to see the book's exercises and techniques in action. With 30 years of experience performing and teaching improv Paul (the Co-founder of the iO West and member of the legendary improv group Beer, Shark, Mice) shares with you the techniques that he has used to help thousands of students become more fearless, confident, and powerful improvisors.

Nominated for the Man Booker Prize "A charming comedy of eros... A ride that, despite the bumps and curves in the road, never feels anything less than jaunty." — Los Angeles Times With this wise, tender, and deeply funny novel, Marina Lewycka takes her place alongside Zadie Smith and Monica Ali as a writer who can capture the unchanging verities of family. When an elderly and newly widowed Ukrainian immigrant announces his intention to remarry, his daughters must set aside their longtime feud to thwart him. For their father's intended is a voluptuous old-country gold digger with a proclivity for green satin underwear and an appetite for the good life of the West. As the hostilities mount and family secrets spill out, *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian* combines sex, bitchiness, wit, and genuine warmth in its celebration of the pleasure of growing old disgracefully.

Renowned improvisation instructor and award-winning director Mick Napier has been at the heart of the professional improvisation community for over 25 years. The first edition of *Improvise* quickly earned its position as necessary reading for improvisation students across the country and around the world and gave birth to a new generation of performers who questioned "The Rules" of improvisation. This expanded and revised edition provides additional advice and tips for success, as well as a full reproduction of Napier's web journal from his time directing the famous show *Paradigm Lost* for *The Second City* that included Tina Fey, Rachel Dratch, and Kevin Dorff. In this entertaining and incredibly informative book, Napier will teach you the essentials of: Why "The Rules" don't matter; How to take care of yourself in a scene; Using context to your advantage; Effective two-person scenes; Balanced large-cast scenes; Successful auditioning; Solo exercises you can practice at home.

Most people know *The Second City* as an innovative school for improvisation that has turned out leading talents such as Alan Arkin, Bill Murray, Stephen Colbert, and Tina Fey. This groundbreaking company has also trained thousands of educators and students through its *Improvisation for Creative Pedagogy* program, which uses improv exercises to teach a wide variety of content areas, and boost skills that are crucial for student learning: listening, teamwork, communication, idea-generation, vocabulary, and more.

The Upright Citizens Brigade Comedy Improvisation Manual is a comprehensive guide to the UCB style of long form comedy improvisation. Written by UCB founding members Matt Besser, Ian Roberts, and Matt Walsh, the manual covers everything from the basics of two person scene work (with a heavy emphasis on finding "the game" of the scene), to the complexities of working within an ensemble to perform long form structures, such as "The Harold" and "The Movie". A practical "how to" book, the guide provides exercises throughout to help the reader master each new concept and technique introduced. While the manual is written to be understood by beginners with no previous exposure to improvisational comedy, experienced improvisors will find it to be an excellent resource for honing their skills, clarifying concepts, and generally taking their work to a higher level.

An illustrated, comprehensive guide to surviving an attack by hordes of the predatory undead explains zombie physiology and behavior, the most effective weaponry and defense strategies, how to outfit one's home for a long siege, and how to survive in any territory or terrain. Original. 35,000 first printing.

INSTANT NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER From the New York Times bestselling author of *I'm Judging You*, a hilarious and transformational book about how to tackle fear--that everlasting hater--and audaciously step into lives, careers, and legacies that go beyond even our wildest dreams Luvvie Ajayi Jones is known for her trademark wit, warmth, and perpetual truth-telling. But even she's been challenged by the enemy of progress known as fear. She was once afraid to call herself a writer, and nearly skipped out on doing a TED talk that changed her life because of imposter syndrome. As she shares in *Professional Troublemaker*, she's not alone. We're all afraid. We're afraid of asking for what we want because we're afraid of hearing "no." We're afraid of being different, of being too much or not enough. We're afraid of leaving behind the known for the unknown. But in order to do the things that will truly, meaningfully change our lives, we have to become professional troublemakers: people who are committed to not letting fear talk them out of the things they need to do or say to live free. With humor and honesty, and guided by the influence of her professional troublemaking Nigerian grandmother, Funmilayo Faloyin, Luvvie walks us through what we must get right within ourselves before we can do the things that scare us; how to use our voice for a greater good; and how to put movement to the voice we've been silencing--because truth-telling is a muscle. The point is not to be fearless, but to know we are afraid and charge forward regardless. It is to recognize that the things we must do are more significant than our fears. This book is about how to live boldly in spite of all the reasons we have to cower. Let's go!

Containing recollections from more than 80 of the comedic giant's closest friends and colleagues, this absorbing biography explores Del Close's old haunts, his sensational past, and the reality behind the tales he told so often. From traveling with a carnival and hanging out with a pre-Scientology L. Ron Hubbard to riding with the Merry Pranksters and using a coven of witches to help him kick a lifelong cocaine habit, Close led an incredibly rich life--one whose absurdity

proved great fodder for improv theater. Astute and compassionate, Close influenced improvisational theater's greatest comedic talents of the last 50 years--Nichols and May, Lenny Bruce, Bill Murray, Chris Farley, Tina Fey--and coached the witty masterminds behind such comedic institutions as Second City, "Saturday Night Live," Groundlings, and the Upright Citizen's Brigade.

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