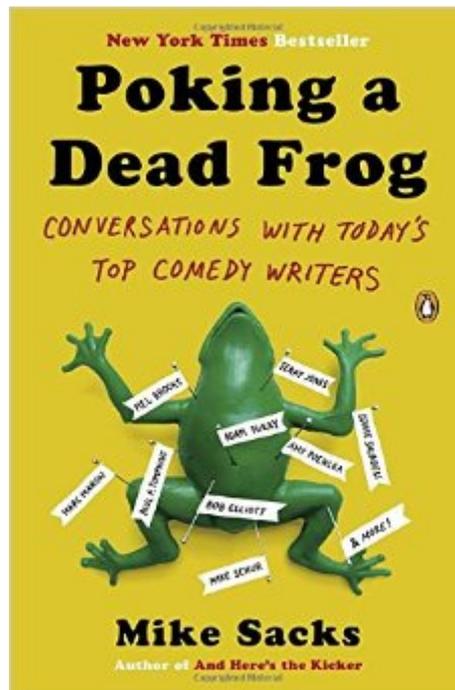


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# Poking A Dead Frog: Conversations With Today's Top Comedy Writers



## Synopsis

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 storiesâ™ from a day in the writersâ™ room at The Onion to why a sketch does or doesnâ™t make it onto Saturday Night Live to how the BBC nearly erased the entire first season of Monty Pythonâ™s Flying Circusâ™ Poking a Dead Frog is a must-read for comedy buffs, writers and pop culture junkies alike.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

i really enjoyed Mike Sacks' Poking a Dead Frog. He not only interviewed some of the top comedy writers, but it's the questions. He knows exactly what to ask, he has put great thought into every interview, and he gets very thorough and real answers. I was very impressed with how he got all these writers to open up. This is an absolute 'must read' for all people interested in comedy (fans, writers, writers-to-be). Kudos Mr. Sacks!

Somehow Mike Sacks manages to extract much more than just the usual facts and reminiscences from the top comedy writers he interviews for his new book. While we learn all the fascinating behind-the-scenes details of some of our favorite comedy shows and movies, he crafts an underlying sense that this profession is no joke. One might assume it's all fun and laughs along the way, but the truth is more complex. Poking a Dead Frog is a fun, addicting read that often

hints at the disappointments and psychological turmoil that go into the serious business of writing comedy.

This is an outstanding book that becomes a reference for repeated reading. An immense variety of comedy writers share what they believe to be the basis of their humor and of humor in general. Along the way, most cite works of popular and classical literature, earlier movies, and prior television shows. These in turn become a source of books that I want to read and videos that I want to view. Some prior reviewers have given this book lower ratings, because they did not find it "funny." They miss the point. Philosophy of humor and not actual jokes is the purpose of this superb work.

I've been a fan of Mike Sacks for years, and have always loved his fiction. But this book is a beast. Seriously, I can't remember ever seeing so many formidable names within just a few paper inches of each other. I absolutely love this book and will be gifting it to anyone I know who is looking to break into the business or is just a fan of good comedy. Buy *Poking a Dead Frog* if you...there's really no "if" to be had here. Just buy this book. You'll be happy.

If comedy is linguistic magic, then *Poking a Dead Frog* is a wonderful peeling back of the curtain. What makes funny funny? Do some people just have the knack? Or, as Monty Python's Terry Jones says, how do you combine three ideas to produce not a fourth idea but a star? There are as many answers as there are interviews in this book. I was interested to find comparisons between the writers, such as: be extremely personal, and bust your ass. Not only will comedy writers love this book, the advice contained within applies to writers of all stripes. A joke is, after all, a super compressed story. And several of the interviewees have a literary slant, my favorites being George Saunders, Bruce Jay Friedman and Mike Schur. You can tell these lucky unfortunates are both intellectual and neurotic. Therein lies the beauty. Mike Sacks has clearly put in his research. His interviews read like something out of the *Paris Review*, only about comedy. I know from Brad Listi's podcast that Mike has at least a twenty hour talk with the comedians, which allows the conversations to delve deeply into craft, hard work, luck and inspiration. Sacks is interested in comedy's history as well. The talks with older writers are gold. It's fun to trace the comic lineage from *The Lonely Guy's Book of Life* to *Seinfeld* to *The Office*. One thread that has changed since Sacks' last book is the widespread use of the Internet as a means to launch a comedy career. The democracy is exciting, but one thing is for sure, being funny is hard

work.

Mike Sacks does it again with his follow up to *And Here's The Kicker*. By does it again, I mean he gives the reader hours of pure entertainment while injecting a thorough dose of educational gold to students of comedy. I'm not going to list all the great comedy writers and entertainers he talks to here, but suffice to say between this and his last book he's covered about every great comedy mind out there, and those he missed I'm sure he reached out to. Their loss. To be a part of this book is to be a part of shaping future generations of comedic minds, and a legacy of laughter. Packed full of both humorous anecdotes and solid information about the process, this book is a no-brainer for those seeking an entertaining and informative glimpse into the complex world of comedy writing.

It's always good to know about the ropes of the legendary screen writers who made some of the most iconic TV series. We all enjoy the final results and later try to figure out how the hell they came up with all these ideas, and instead you get lots of hints about the environment they grew up, influences and styles of working by themselves and within a team. I believe it has a great value as a historic reference and, above all, it's a sensitive homage to all those people cracking their heads out in front of the white paper to create some of the best comedy of the recent years. Julian.

Reading through this impressive collection of interviews with top humor writers (Alan Spencer, Amy Poehler, George Saunders, Mel Brooks, etc.), it becomes clear that Mike Sacks is an accomplished humor writer himself. That's the beauty of this book. Since Sacks so thoroughly understands the profession he's exploring, we readers are given an awesomely in-depth look into this unique world. *Poking A Dead Frog* covers everything from spectacular flops to career highlights and how-to's. It's a fascinating read for anyone who's ever wondered how to write jokes for the Academy Awards, and everyone else too.

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