

**Dear Rick 7 - Joke Writing**

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**Scott: How do you write a joke?**

Rick: In my opinion, and the opinion of George Saunders, laughter is an expression of joy at information received at a discount. As humans, our model for dealing with reality is to accumulate information. We're generalists or omnivores of information compared to other animals that are looking for specific information in the environment.

We don't have to spend as much getting the information and also cheaply acquire it if the information fits compactly into our brains if it doesn't use all of our mental resources in dealing with the information. To capture the delight of a joke, you set up a complicated situation and resolve it quickly.

People laugh, "Hahaha, that whole complicated situation that took up a big chunk of my simulation space has been exposed as bullshit. I don't have to worry about it at all. Hahaha!"

Practical jokes work like that even more directly. It's April Fools. Somebody forgets it's April Fools.

Somebody that's bad at practical jokes says that Chicago has been hit by a dirty bomb. They are evacuating. Suddenly, this occupies your entire awareness except positional awareness. Now,

you're worried. An American city has been hit by a terrorist attack of the type never been perpetrated before.

You don't know what it means for you or your loved ones or Chicago. You're completely focused on this and the asshole says, "Hahaha, April Fools!" "Fucker!" You don't laugh. You're pissed at the guy. (Laughs) They may laugh about the situation being resolved. A complicated situation requiring lots of thought has been solved cheaply.

It turns out to be BS. You don't worry about it. I've chosen a horrible subject because it's not a laughing matter. That's how I think jokes work. You set up a complicated situation and resolve it with a simple punchline and people laugh at cheaply gained information.

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