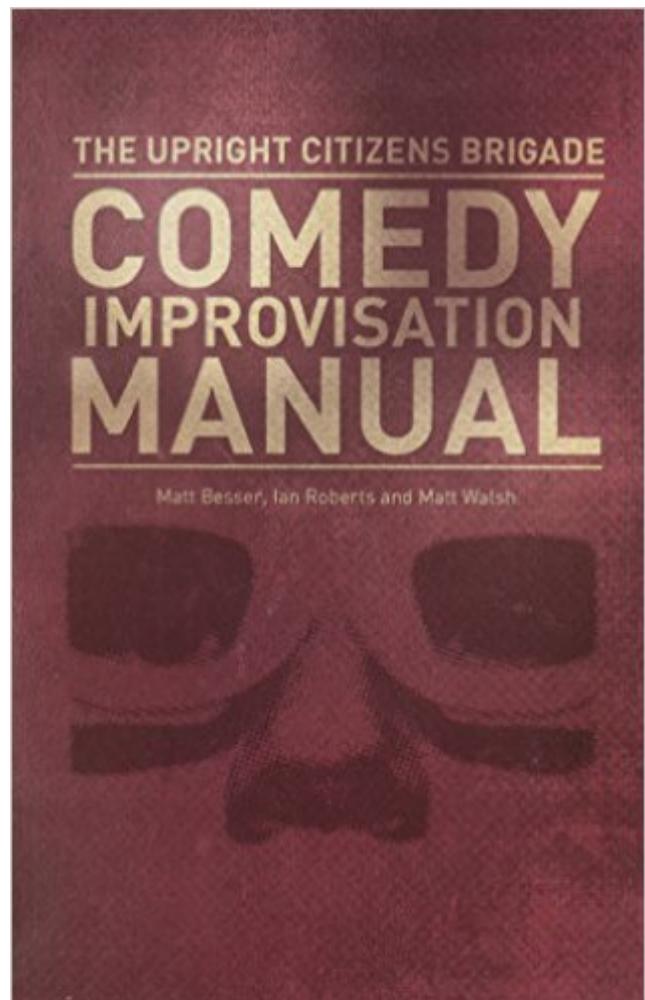


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# Upright Citizens Brigade Comedy Improvisation Manual



## **Synopsis**

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.

## **Book Information**

Paperback: 384 pages

Publisher: Comedy Council of Nicea (2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0989387801

ISBN-13: 978-0989387804

Product Dimensions: 9 x 6 x 0.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (148 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #8,427 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #8 inÂ  Books > Arts & Photography > Performing Arts > Theater > Acting & Auditioning #20 inÂ  Books > Humor & Entertainment > Humor > Comedy

## **Customer Reviews**

My improv group got off the ground because of this book. I live in a small midwest town of about 18,000 people. There are no training centers, theaters, or even really any comedy around me for several hundred miles. After expressing my interest in improv to the Upright Citizens Brigade, I was fortunate enough to receive a few copies of this book before it was released. I assembled a group of friends who had an interest in comedy (but no idea what long form improv was), and we started training using only this book to guide us. I should reiterate that for emphasis: no one else in my group had ever seen long form improv before we read this book. The UCB Comedy Improvisation Manual is absolutely amazing. We went from never having done improv before to performing a Harold (one of the most universally taught long form structures) at UCB Chelsea in 2.5 months. All

from this book. I've read a lot of instructional books for various things in my life, but none of them have even come close to being as easy to use as this book. It lays out the fundamentals well, provides exercises for every step (so that you learn by application), and guides you through learning all the way to the end. If you're interested in learning improv, or even if you're a grizzled veteran of the improv stage, I can't recommend this book enough. It should be a staple in every improv library.

Improv is something I've always been in awe of but have been too afraid to try because it seemed like you had to be a naturally hilarious super-genius to do it. I had read "Truth in Comedy" years ago (UCB's book is a billion times better) and knew the basic concept of "yes, and..." but it still seemed like there would be so much pressure to keep coming up with one original, funny thing after another on the spot. I didn't realize how many underlying rules existed to make things work. The idea of finding and then playing "The Game" of a scene makes so much sense. I guess I realized that there were patterns before, but now when I watch improv, I can see that everything really does have a structure and focus. Now that I've read this book and know basic terminology and concepts, it makes watching improv or sketch comedy even better because I can identify all these things. Because of the book, I have more of an appreciation for improv as an artform (does that sound lame?), and I'm finally ready to try it for myself. I start my first improv class next month in DC (god.. I wish I lived in NYC or LA), and even though I'm a generally anxious person when it comes to new things, I'm not all that nervous because I feel like this book has me very well prepared. I'm just ready to have fun now, and if I end up not completely sucking at it, I have a feeling that I will be returning to this book a lot. Besser, Ian, and Walsh-- THANK YOU!

This book is awesome. If you're new to improv, start here. Even if you're a bit along, this is a great clarifier. Everything is distilled into clear language with straightforward examples. The book deals first with initiating the scene. This means Yes Anding to build the base reality of the scene. You know, answer Who What Where, don't deny your partner, try to add information. It then deals with Game. Once you know what the reality of the scene is, you find the funny thing--the Game. What is the game? How do you spot the game? How do you play the game and heighten? Also in this section is using character, walk ons, and useful hints as well as things to watch out for. Finally, there's coverage of openings and, more importantly, the long forms. Monologues, straight up suggestion, living room, etc. These are just different ways you start off a long form, generate ideas to draw from. The Harold is covered in detail and other forms are explained in another chapter. It ends with advice on performance and rehearsal. Get this book. Get *Improvise* by Mick Napier. Get

Truth in Comedy. Get Johnstone's Impro. That's a real good start. And then practice, rehearse, have fun, make your partners look good, and improvise!

I live in the midwest now but lived in the Los Angeles area for a while and was able to take the UCB classes there. Once I ended up back in the midwest I wanted to share the great, new style of improv I learned out west. Luckily for me, Matt Besser, Ian Roberts and Matt Walsh wrote this excellent manual to let others in on the fun and help keep me learning! I've shared this book with many other improvisers and performers and they all love it. It is very well written and has great examples, tips and exercises for exploring and learning long-form improv comedy. This book continues to keep me excited about improv. I've been involved with improv comedy for over twelve years and this book, along with the Assscat DVD (great commentary track) and the Improv4Humans podcast helps me feel fresh, aware and educated about the improv world.

First things first: Buy this book. If you perform / write sketch or improv, then this book is for you. I have read at least a dozen improv books. Prior to this the best book I had read on improv was Scene: From the Inside Out by Mich Napier. I love that book. This book is easily as good if not better. They teach slightly different methods and approaches. This may sound silly, but the actual physical weight of the book was fantastic. The book is heavy and feels so good like it is packed with knowledge. The contents of the book are rock solid. There are exercises to practice. Reasons and explanations about what to do and why and HOW. The structure is clearly explained. SUCH a good book. I have read so many improv books I was skeptical that they would have much to add. They have much to add and do so in a clear and concise way. If I was starting improv and looking to buy a book, this would be my first.

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