*Rather than provide a copy of my 2016 set, which candidly was an adolescent appropriation of the fact I looked like a sex offender/bass player at the time, here is a recent joke I’ve written, annotated to show my understanding of comedic conventions.*

Hi, so tonight I've written two jokes. The first joke is a sort of absurd re-imagining of a short story by bohemian artist and existentialist[[1]](#footnote-1) Franz Kafka, and the second joke is about a baby masturbating…just jerking off. Which one should I. So by applause[[2]](#footnote-2), who wants to hear the post-modern intellectual joke? Yep, and the wanking baby?

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Yeah, daddy![[3]](#footnote-3)

Look, we’ve got time so I’ll do the other joke, the intellectual one, the shit one. The other day I read, for the first time, A Little Fable by Franz Kafka, he's a Bohemian existentialist. Now I read all the time you see, short stories, essays, I’m quite smart, probably smarter than you[[4]](#footnote-4), but this was the very first time that I read this particular short story. You probably don’t know it, but it goes like this:

“Alas,” said the mouse, “the world gets smaller every day. At first it was so wide that I ran along and was happy to see walls appearing to my right and left, but these high walls converged so quickly that I’m already in the last room, and there in the corner is the trap into which I must run.”  
  
“But you’ve only got to run the other way,” said the cat, and gobbled the mouse up.  
  
Now obviously it has sort of universal themes about predestination and humanity, but I related to it on a much more specific level.  
  
About a year and a bit ago, I was walking down an alley and I found myself cornered…

[ because that was my favourite thing to do at the time. I spent most of 2018 walking up and down alleys. I love alleys. I love alley culture. [name some alleys, some reasons you like alleys] I even love bowling alleys, my favourite suburb of Brisbane is of course is fortitude alley.  
  
That's a small joke, within the larger joke, just to keep you interested... There aren't anymore of those. It gets pretty dry from here-on until the punchline, which, again is shit, it’s a shit punchlines

Anyway about a year and a bit ago I was walking down an alley, and I reached a dead end. Which was very upsetting, because… no more alley to enjoy. And I turned around, which was exciting, because double the alley experience, get to relive all my favourite bits, and I noticed something, I’d been so distracted by this particularly beautiful alley that I didn’t notice I’d be cornered…][[5]](#footnote-5)  
  
by an armed hoodlum. I knew it was a hoodlum, for he was wearing a hoody[[6]](#footnote-6).  
  
And I’m not sure if you guys have done any self-defence, but when I was in highschool they made us do self-defence,[[7]](#footnote-7) and if you’ve done self defence you’ll know that the first thing to do, when cornered by an armed assailant is to "relate to your assailant through the medium of literate, to humanize yourself and frame the assailant as your equal, because through literature we are all brothers" I'm sure you all remember that.  
  
So I said “You know, this really reminds me of Franz Kafka’s Mouse and Cat Fable”  
  
And the hoodlum said, “But at the beginning of this bit you said you had only recently read Kafka’s fable, and you also said this event, that we are in currently, occurred over a year ago. So, how could you know this situation reminds of you something you haven’t heard of yet?”  
  
Yeah, that’s really what he said.  Which was amazingly, which was very insightful.  
  
And I said “Well, how do you know in a years time I’m going to read Kafka’s Fable and tell a story about this very interaction”.  
  
And the man, I’ll never forget what he said[[8]](#footnote-8), “Well, none of this happened”  
  
And before I could say “good point”, I got gobbled[[9]](#footnote-9) up by a cat.  
  
Yeah that's really what happened.[[10]](#footnote-10)

1. It’s important that the first option is insultingly intellectual to juxtapose the crudeness of the baby jacking it. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Everyone loves audience participation! [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. I’ve omitted the set up for this joke. People like it, but they should not. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The “probably smarter than you” is dependent on the crowd. Regardless, most of my jokes do rely on a certain *Verfremdungseffekt (*honestly, I am so smart) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. For my money, the alley bit is the funniest part of the whole joke but depending on time I rarely use it. I think the walking down an alley convention has been getting away with it for too long. Did you know the quintessential New York alley (for muggings, beatings, finding of dumpster babies, character defining assassination of wealthy parents) doesn’t exist – you think somewhere with real estate prices like Manhattan has room for the aesthetic of alleys. Also, yes I know Bruce Wayne’s parents were technically killed in Gotham. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. I used to do a few minutes about the race and ethnicity of the hoodlum/s,but it was pretty much just a long version of the “the taxi driver was a woman” bit that gets done occasionally, which is just a gendered version of the “I was on a bus the whole time bit”. There was an okay line about one of the hoodlums having a yamaka, with his payots appearing from each side of his hoodie though. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. I appreciate I’m pissing in my pocket a bit here, but I like this line because it adds credibility to the story, when the punchline is it’s absolute incredibility. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. “I’ll never forget what he said” is my favourite part. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. “Gobbled” is a very funny word [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. None of this happened. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)