

Award-Winning Author David Benjamin Says Writing Comedy Is One of Literature's Most Difficult—and Most Undervalued—Arts

Belleville Book Festival keynote highlights the unique power of humor to connect writers and readers

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, June 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "Dying is easy. Comedy is hard."

The famous theatrical adage provided the starting point for award-winning author [David Benjamin](#)'s featured presentation at the inaugural Belleville Book Festival, where he argued that humorous writing remains one of literature's most challenging and least appreciated forms.

"There's little respect for writers with a humorous streak," Benjamin told attendees. "If the mood of the story is not serious, it's often assumed not to be serious writing. But works infused with humor have a unique power to stay with readers."

Hosted by Belleville Books, the independent bookstore that has become a centerpiece of downtown Belleville's revitalization, the two-day festival drew readers and writers from across the region. Benjamin's opening-night talk helped make the weekend the bookstore's most successful event to date.

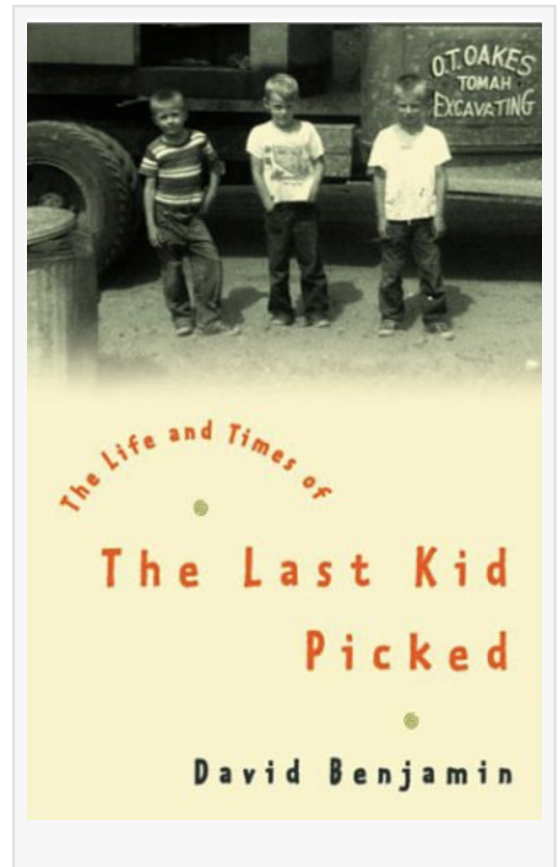


LAST KID BOOKS

"Comedic writing is a unique form of literary expression," Benjamin explains. "To write comedy, a writer must be original and authentic. Comedy requires style. Above all, writers must resist the temptation to take themselves too seriously."

During his presentation, Benjamin read the popular "tadpole episode" from his fictional memoir *The Life and Times of the Last Kid Picked*. Hartford Courant Book Editor Carole Goldberg praised the book's "wonderfully written set pieces" and "blue-collar lyricism," highlighting the episode as one of Benjamin's most vivid creations.

Benjamin's career has been defined by blending wit with observations about family, memory, and modern American life. Reviewers have compared his work to H.L. Mencken, Dave Barry, and George Carlin, while Benjamin cites Mark Twain and Kurt Vonnegut Jr. among his literary influences.



"Humor is a powerful tool of engagement between writer and reader," Benjamin notes. "A writer who can use it, and not many can, has a kinship with a certain sort of reader that's beyond the reach of 'serious' writers."

According to Benjamin, humor succeeds best when it operates almost invisibly.

"In humorous prose, the author is backstage," he explains. "Humor, punchlines, asides, and tone punctuate the story without interrupting its flow. The story is marbled with humor, like the veins of fat in a good steak."

Since founding [Last Kid Books](#) in 2019, Benjamin has earned more than sixty literary awards, including a Silver Medal in the IBPA Benjamin Franklin Awards for *Fat Vinny's Forbidden Love* and the top humor prize at the 2025 NYC Big Book Awards for Benjamin's *Mess: Sketches, Tirades and Spoofs* by David Benjamin.

Reviewers have praised Benjamin's ability to pair laughter with deeper truths. K.C. Finn of *Reader's Favorite* awarded Benjamin's *Mess* five stars, writing that she found herself "underlining lines for their humor, then stopping to reflect on the deeper truths beneath the jokes."

Still, Benjamin believes comedy remains one of literature's most misunderstood forms.

"Humor has staying power," he says. "People remember how a story made them feel. If laughter

helps them remember, then perhaps funny writers deserve to be taken a little more seriously."

For Benjamin, making readers laugh is not a distraction from serious literature. It is one of its highest callings, proving that comedy, though often overlooked, can reveal truths and forge connections in ways few other forms of writing can.

About the Author

David Benjamin is an award-winning author, journalist, and founder of Last Kid Books. The author of numerous works of fiction and non-fiction, he has earned more than sixty literary awards across multiple genres. His books include [The Life and Times of the Last Kid Picked](#), *Fat Vinny's Forbidden Love* (<https://bit.ly/4fT5cDB>), *They Shot Kennedy* (<https://bit.ly/4exTThR>), and *Benjamin's Mess* (<https://bit.ly/4xH1vHy/>). His essays and commentary have appeared in publications including The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune, Philadelphia Inquirer, and San Francisco Examiner.

To learn more, click here: <https://lastkidbooks.com/>

David Benjamin is available for interviews.

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