



# Her dark materials

BY JENNAH BOOTH

**It's a common misconception that all people handle grief the same way.**

Laurie Kilmartin dealt with losing her father to cancer with humor, but in a unique and very public way. She live-tweeted it.

"Guys, I'm just trying to grieve in advance, so I can relax and have fun at the funeral," she tweeted on Feb. 24, 2014.

Kilmartin used comedy to process her father's death; it also served as source material for her video special *45 Jokes About My Dead Dad*, and her 2018 book, *Dead People Suck: A Guide for Survivors of the Newly Departed*.

Since then, Kilmartin has moved on to other material, but she's still bringing her dark humor to Sacramento as she headlines the Punch Line comedy club Feb. 14-16. The show, which will be hosted by Sacramento-based comedian Ray Molina, also features Los Angeles-based comic Tony Camin.

Kilmartin, who grew up in the Bay Area, says she has always done comedy. For the last 10 years, she's worked as a co-writer on *Conan*, regularly taking a hand in writing Conan's O'Brien's nightly monologue.

"He'll give notes like 'Less impeachment,'" she said. "Or 'More impeachment.'"

As a stand-up, Kilmartin has performed on *Conan*, *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* and Comedy Central. In 2010, she was a finalist on *Last Comic Standing* and in 2011 was nominated for an Emmy for her writing on *Conan*.

Kilmartin co-wrote her first book, *Sh\*tty Mom: The Parenting Guide for the Rest of Us* in 2012, with journalist Karen Molin and producers Alicia Ybarbo and Mary Ann Zoellner. In the book, Kilmartin uses

humor and her experience as a single mother to explore and advise on modern parenting.

Kilmartin says her comedy style toes the line with jokes that relate to her life as a mother and a woman.

"I do dark material about parenting and men and living in this world," she said. "I tell jokes that get laughs, as opposed to making statements that get attention."

Kilmartin's comedy took a morbid turn in 2014 when her father, Ronald Francis Kilmartin, was diagnosed with terminal cancer. During this period, Kilmartin essentially live-tweeted her father's declining health and death.

The loss of her father also inspired her 2016 Seeso comedy special *45 Jokes About My Dead Dad*, which went down with the streaming service when Seeso shut down in 2017. Kilmartin says she's been trying to get back her rights to the show ever since.

The loss of rights to the special prompted Kilmartin to write her second book *Dead People Suck: A Guide for Survivors of the Newly Departed*. Published in 2018, the book guides readers through her personal experiences, as well as the trials, emotional turmoil and rationale of those who are losing, or have lost loved ones.

"Comedy is tragedy plus x, with x being an amount of time defined by the person experiencing the tragedy. Some people need less time than others," Kilmartin writes. "I joked about Dad's death as it was happening."

Since writing it, Kilmartin says she's moved on to other jokes. She's also struggled to put together a comedy album, although the comedian says the process has made her restless. She prefers to focus on moving forward.

"I would always rather be working on new material," she said.

Catch Laurie Kilmartin at the Punch Line Sacramento, 7:30 p.m. and 9:45 p.m. Feb. 14-15 and 7:30 p.m. Feb. 16. 2100 Arden Way. 18 and over. \$25-\$35. [kilmartin.com](http://kilmartin.com).



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2/15 • 10:30 PM **THE LOST BOYS**

2/18 • 7:30 PM **THE WARRIORS**

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3/5 • 6:30 PM **PINK FLAMINGOS**

3/10 • 7:30 PM **FLIGHT OF THE NAVIGATOR**

3/14 • 4 PM & 7:30 PM **THE PRINCESS BRIDE**

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