

# Man on the Moon

(Biography) ( 1999)

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## Major Characters

**Andy Kaufman.....Jim Carrey**  
A gentle and strange comedian who becomes famous for the characters he creates, and for the fact he “becomes” those characters even off stage, thus greatly entertaining , angering and confusing his millions of fans.

**George Shapiro.....Danny DeVito**  
A Hollywood talent manager (agent) who sees Andy in a nightclub and agrees to be his representative in the entertainment industry.

**Bob Zmuda.....Paul Giamatti**  
Andy’s best friend who comes with him to Hollywood in order to help him with his crazy career.

**Lynne Marguiles.....Courtney Love**  
A woman that Andy meets while performing as a wrestler who soon becomes his girlfriend and later his wife.

**Jerry Lawler.....Jerry Lawler**  
A professional wrestler who agrees to fight Andy.

## Plot Summary

This movie is a true story, based on the life of the comedian Andy Kaufman. Andy was a shy kid from New Jersey who came to Hollywood in the 1970s to work in night clubs. He was a strange but gifted entertainer, who created a series of characters that were either very charming or extremely annoying.

What was most unique about Kaufman was his fascination with the relationship between the entertainer and the audience, and the fact that he would explore that relationship even after “the show” ended. Andy “became” the characters he created (including the unpleasant ones), and thus even as his TV appearances became hugely successful, his apparent determination to anger his fans soon almost destroyed his career.

### Andy’s two principal characters

Foreign Man/Latka: A loveable and very gentle man with a very strong accent, from a fictional Eastern European country (“Caspiar”).

Tony Clifton: An extremely loud, obnoxious, disagreeable and abusive Las Vegas lounge club singer.

## The TV Shows on which Andy Appeared

Saturday Night Live: A weekly comedy show broadcast live from New York, which began in 1975 and is still on TV (as of 2000), and which is still very popular with college students.

Taxi: A situation comedy show about a taxi stand that aired in the early 1980s, in which Andy appeared as the character Latka, who was a mechanic.

Fridays: A weak imitation of Saturday Night Live that aired in the early 1980s.

## Some Words and Expressions that You May not Know

*Andy Kaufman, natural born entertainer,  
moves to Hollywood and finds his first fans.*

All of the most important things in my life are changed around and **mixed up**...for dramatic purposes.

If something is “mixed up,” it is confused or newly disorganized.

To do something “for dramatic purposes” is to do it in order to make it more entertaining or interesting for an audience.

I decided to **cut out** all of the baloney.

To “cut out” something is to eliminate it, or throw it away.

“Baloney” is type of sandwich meat, but, as in this case, is also a gentler word for bullshit, meaning nonsense, lies, or distortions.

I am not **fooling**.

In this case, “to fool” is to lie, or to threaten without taking action.

I hope you’re not upset; I did that to **get rid of** those **folks** who just wouldn’t understand me.

“To get rid of” a person is to eliminate or do away with them.

“Folks” is an old-fashioned but still used word for people, or parents.

It’s filled with colorful **characters**....like the one I’m doing now.

A “character” is a person in a movie or play, or in the right context, just an interesting or colorful person.

I’m gonna **put my foot down**; No more playing alone.

“To put one’s foot down” is to refuse to accept certain behavior, particularly after it goes beyond a particular line or point.

You want to perform? You have to have an audience.

Here, “to perform” is to act or entertain. An “audience” is usually a group of people watching a show, speech, play or other performance.

That is not an audience; That is plaster.

A type of material used to cover walls.

Tweet tweet.

The sound a little bird makes.

So Mr. Besserman, same spot tomorrow?

In this case, a “spot” is a particular time each night to perform at a club.

I think I have to let you go.

“To let a person go” is another way of saying to fire them.

Your act is like amateur hour.

A particular hour when amateurs, or ordinary people who are not professional entertainers, can perform for an audience.

I’m not like everyone else. :: Everyone else gets this place cooking.

If an entertainer “gets a place cooking,” they get the audience loud, excited or enthused.

He stormed out, and a lot of other people left in the middle of your act.

“To storm out” is to leave in a great hurry, often due to great anger.

It’s just about booze. It’s not about comedy.

A common slang word for liquor.

**Show biz.**

A short term for “show business,” which refers to any type of entertainment, from the movies to music to comedy.

“Take my wife, please.”

A classic joke based on double meaning; “Take my wife” is a way of saying “My wife is an example of...,” but when the “please” is added, the person is actually asking the listener to physically take her away.

Why did the Siamese twins go to England? So the other one could drive.

Twins that are born physically attached to each other. A silly joke, based on the fact that cars in the US and UK are driven on opposite sides.

***George becomes Andy’s agent, and soon Andy and his characters are all over national TV.***

What's the story with this guy? :: I think he's from Lithuania.

A colloquial way of asking about a person's general background.

I enjoyed your set. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to startle you.

In this context, a "set" is the performance or show of an entertainer.

"To startle" a person is to suddenly scare them.

I am from Caspiar. It's a small island. It sunk.

"Caspiar" is not a real place, although there is a Caspian Sea in Russia. Note the past tense of the verb to sink!

I'm probably out of my mind, but if you need representation, we should talk.

If a person is "out of their mind," they are crazy. In this case, "representation" refers to the business relationship between an artist or entertainer and their agent, who brings them business.

I'm not a comedian. I'm a song-and-dance man.

An old Hollywood expression for a singer-dancer.

You show a lot of promise. My concern is I don't know where to book you.

"To show a lot of promise" is to show great talent and potential success, but the success has not arrived yet. "To book" an entertainer at a particular place is to arrange for them to perform there. A common verb in places like Hollywood.

You're not a stand-up, and you don't translate to film.

A "stand-up comic" is one who tells jokes and stories live on stage.

This is George's way of saying his act has no potential for the movies.

Carnegie Hall.

A famous, large and prestigious (honored) theatre in New York City.

I don't want to go for cheap laughs; I want real gut reactions.

A "cheap laugh" is a reaction caused by a silly joke or physical humor.

A "gut reaction" is an immediate emotional response to something ("guts" are the intestines found in your stomach).

You're insane. But you might also be brilliant.

A person who is "insane" is crazy, and a "brilliant" person is extremely intelligent or creative. This second word is more common in England.

Big freaking deal.

"Big fucking deal" is a crude and sarcastic way to refer to something that the speaker actually doesn't think is very important. "Freaking" is a less vulgar alternative to "fucking," but it is not very common.

Tell me something I don't know, toadstool.

"Tell me something I don't know" is what a person says when they are tired of being told what they already know! A "toadstool" is a type of inedible mushroom, but it's never used as an insult noun, as it is here.

Kaufman is a lying bastard. He is a psychopath.

A "bastard" is a vulgar but common insult word for a mean or obnoxious male person (as opposed to a bitch, who is a female). A "psychopath" is an official word for a person with great emotional problems, often who is extremely antisocial or aggressive.

My heart is radiating pure energy.

"To radiate" energy is to send it out in great quantities.

Welcome back to Saturday Night Live, and a special treat.

"Saturday Night Live" is the name of a very famous comedy show that is shown live, as it is filmed in a studio in New York. It began in 1975, and has always been very popular with college students. A "special treat" is a small, unexpected gift that gives pleasure.

Headphones.

Tiny speakers that you put in your ear so that you can hear a broadcast without disturbing people right next to you.

You're getting a once in a lifetime very lucrative opportunity to star on a primetime network sitcom.

A "once in a lifetime opportunity" is the chance to do something that you will probably not have a chance to do again. If it is "lucrative," it is very profitable. A "primetime network sitcom" is a situation comedy show, which is usually shown between 8 and 10PM.

This is a class act; It all takes place in a taxi stand.

"A class act" is a show that is classy or truly excellent.

You're going to be the Fonzie. The crazy breakout character who all the kids imitate.

"The Fonzie" was a very popular character from the 1970s TV show "Happy Days." A "breakout character" from a show is the character that becomes the most popular and talked about, and perhaps imitated.

Lunchboxes.

Metal boxes that school kids use to carry their lunches to school.

They want to turn your foreign man character into a loveable goofy mechanic named Latka.

"Foreign man" is the name of the cute foreigner that Andy imitates which first makes him famous. "Goofy" is an excellent adjective to describe a person who is strange, silly or perhaps a bit crazy.

I'm not a comedian and sitcoms are the lowest form of entertainment.

Andy's way of saying that situation comedies are popular but horrible.

It's just stupid jokes and canned laughter.

Taped laughter that is added to a show in order to give the impression that an audience thinks a show is funny, even if they don't.

This is classy.

A good word meaning stylish, excellent or of a high rank or level.

I want to generate my own material.

"To generate" is to produce or create, in this case material for his show.

If you pass up this opportunity, you will never see another one like it again.

"To pass up" an opportunity is to *not* use or take advantage of it.

I have some terms. :: That's what negotiations are all about.

In this case, "terms" are the conditions that a person demands before signing an agreement. "Negotiations" are the conversations between two or more people that determine the final details of an agreement.

Four guaranteed guest spots for Tony Clifton.

A "guest spot" on a TV show is the chance to appear on a particular episode, even though the person isn't a regular performer on the show.

He's a Vegas lounge singer.

A "lounge" is a small club or theatre, and "Vegas lounge singers" are often bad singers that play in unpleasant, smoky Las Vegas lounges.

He's a loon! He hates you!

A funny word for a crazy person (A lunatic is also a crazy person).

He just talks tough, but I owe him.

Andy's way of saying that Tony appears mean, but in fact he's OK, and he needs to pay him back for a favor.

ABC is going to have to give him what I want.

The American Broadcasting Company (one of the big TV networks).

Mr. Kaufman requires an undisturbed

90 minutes of meditation prior to filming.

"Meditation" is the act of sitting quietly while thinking deeply about religious matters, or perhaps concentrating on a single word or idea. "Prior to" is another way of saying before.

Mr. Kaufman gets his own network special.

A one-time TV show that one entertainer gets to star in and create.

Who the hell is Tony Clifton?

Added to “WH questions” in order to show emotion such as anger or frustration.

***Tony Clifton and Andy Kaufman enjoy their great success,  
but soon Andy’s bizarre behavior starts to cost him his fans.***

He asks that you please extinguish your smoking material.

“To extinguish” a fire is to put it out, or stop it. “Smoking Material” refers to cigarettes and cigars, but this is never used.

Goddamn it, I paid 10 bucks for that cigar.

“Goddamn it” is a common and vulgar way of showing anger. A “buck” is a very common colloquial word for a dollar.

I need this place like I need a shotgun blast to the face.

A “shotgun” is a small gun, and in this case, a “blast” is the sudden explosion of air that occurs when you shoot it. This is Tony’s way of saying he does not need to perform at that particular place.

Must be that time of the month, huh?

An expression that refers to the time of the month when women have their menstrual period. Often used when a person is in a bad mood.

I do not appreciate racial slurs; I think the dumb polacks have been ridiculed enough.

“Racial slurs” are ugly and racist words that refer to particular ethnic groups. “Polack” is such a word for Polish people, that was actually widely used in “polack jokes” until as late as the 1970s. “To ridicule” a person is to make fun of them, often in a very negative way.

I’ll see you back stage, baldy.

“Back stage” refers to the area where fans often meet performers, behind the stage at a theatre. “Baldy” is a ridiculous way to refer to a bald person.

It’s good old fashioned entertainment; Everyone loves a villain.

A “villain” is a good word for a very bad or evil person, and especially one that is a main character in a play or movie.

I am the brains behind this operation. :: Yeah, dream on.

“To be the brains behind an operation” is to be the person who created or planned it (In this case, an operation is a particular plot or plan).

“Dream on” is a funny way of expressing disbelief or cynicism (i.e.,... “I don’t believe you have the intelligence to be the brains behind this).

We got 40 actors and they're tearing through the zoo.  
 "To tear through" a place is to pass through it very quickly.

They'll deny it up and down, but believe me, it true.  
 This is George's way of saying that they'll never admit it, but this wording is rarely if ever used (Of course to deny is a key verb).

Party time for Latka. :: Not until you take off those overalls.  
 A type of loose clothes, attached over the shoulders, and often worn over other clothes.

40,000,000 people are watching your ass every week.  
 George's way of telling Andy millions of people see him every week on TV (Your ass, of course, is your rear end, behind, derriere, etc...).

It's credibility...you make them love you now, and later on your special, you can fuck with their heads.  
 "Credibility" is an important word that refers to whether a person can be believed or trusted. "To fuck with a person's head" is a vulgar but interesting way of saying to try and confuse or disorient them.

The sky is the limit, man.  
 "The sky is the limit" is an expression that means the possible opportunities are almost endless. Note the use of "man" at the end of the sentence, which is a meaningless filler word, but very common.

It's my special. I have creative control, now roll it.  
 "Creative control" is the actual power to decide the content of a given show. This is a key legal phrase in Hollywood. "Roll it" is a way of telling a camera man to start filming. Again, common in Hollywood.

Only positive energy allowed beyond this point.  
 Note that energy, which in this case refers to the way people relate and act around others, can be considered either positive or negative.

Did we hit a little speed bump?  
 Literally a bump or slightly raised part of a road to slow down cars, but also used, as here, to refer to an unexpected problem.

Kid genius told me to mess with the vertical hold.  
 "To mess with" something is to use it, often in such a way that it may cause damage or harm. The "vertical hold" keeps a TV picture stable.

They'll walk over to the TV, twist the knobs, and call the TV store.  
 "To twist" something is to turn it, and "knobs" are the buttons that are found on machines like TVs and radios.

They'll bang on the television, but they won't be able to fix it.  
 "To bang" on something is to hit it forcefully.

But it's funny. It's a practical joke.

A joke that fools or tricks people into doing something they wouldn't normally do.

Five. :: Twenty. :: Ten. :: Deal.

The one word to use when a contract or proposal is finally agreed upon (Another way of saying I agree to those conditions).

This is artsy-fartsy shit.

"Artsy-fartsy" is a crude but funny adjective that refers to various things from buildings to plates that appear to be artistically expressive or elegant, or at least trying to be so.

It's hysterical. It gets very funny.

A good way of saying extremely funny.

For Christ's sake, were the #1 network. Can't we afford a decent TV?

"For Christ's sake" is a common way of expressing anger or frustration.

"Decent" is a useful adjective that means relatively good or acceptable.

Tell Kaufman this network will never air this program.

In Hollywood, "to air" a program is to broadcast or show it.

Are you Andy Kaufman? :: I get that all the time.

A funny way of saying "I hear that line (or question) all the time."

There is no telling what people are going to like or dislike.

A way of saying that one cannot know something for sure.

We'll have a garage sale. :: No, I'm over and out.

A "garage sale" is a great American institution in which people sell their personal belongings, often lots of junk, from their garage. In this case, to be "over and out," means to be completely finished.

How much longer is left on my contract?

Note that contracts last for a set amount of time, such as two years.

Can I squeeze your nuts? They're asking for it!

"To squeeze" something is to press or crush it between your fingers.

In this case, "nuts" are a colloquial word for a man's testicles (or 'balls').

"They're asking for it" is a way of saying that they are doing something very bad, and they shouldn't complain or be surprised when they get caught and punished for doing it.

I'm going to reveal for the very first time ever, the real me.

"To reveal" something is to allow it to be seen or known for the first time.

Although I dabble in clowning, I do find it so boorish.

“To dabble” in something is to practice it a bit, but not seriously.

“To clown,” in this case, is to be a professional clown in a circus, though to “clown around” is to do something in a silly or not serious way. If something is “boorish,” it is vulgar, rude or ill-mannered.

Henceforth, today, I’m going to grace you with a reading of one of the greatest novels ever written.

“Henceforth” is a very formal and old-fashioned way of saying ‘from now on.’ “To grace” a person with something is a poetic way of saying to give them something.

The Great Gatsby.

A famous novel by the American writer F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Please keep it down. We’ve got a long way to go.

A common way of telling people to be quiet (or at least quieter).

You want to play Arizona State? You give them Mighty Mouse, Elvis.

Note that public schools are often simply named after the state in which their in. “Mighty Mouse” was a famous Disney cartoon figure.

Toni Clifton is gonna go on Taxi next week, and that should let him blow off steam and relieve the stress.

“To blow off steam” is to do something that allows you to release some anger or frustration. “To relieve stress” is to reduce the level of stress one has, which is the tension one feels from the problems of life.

***Andy decides to destroy Taxi, with the help of Tony Clifton.***

How are you? :: Peachy.

A silly adjective which means fine or good, though it is usually said sarcastically.

I will have this fraulein and then the one with the big strudels.

Two German words--the first means woman, and the second is a type of pastry, though Andy uses it to mean female breasts.

It’s my buddy’s first time with a prostitute. :: What are you talking about?

A “buddy” is a common way to say a friend. “What are you talking about?” is one way to express total disbelief when a person tells you something which is obviously not true (as is the case here).

Sometimes he is Tony and he wears a tux.

Short for “tuxedo,” a very formal suit that men wear at weddings.

Oh, we busted through! **Come on**, girls!

“To bust through” a physical line or blockade is to go past it.

“Come on” is the most versatile phrasal verb in English, meaning everything from “let’s go” (as it does here), to “stop telling lies.”

Hey, hot shot! How you doing? Take a hike!

A “hot shot” is a colloquial expression for a person who is very important or accomplished, or at least thinks they are. “Take a hike”

is a funny way of telling someone to go away, or perhaps get lost.

Here’s your script, Tony.

The written words to a movie or play, with directions for the actors.

**Bullshit**, bullshit, my line.

“Bullshit” is one of the truly great obscenities, meaning lies, half-truths, or in this case, worthless nonsense. A “line” in a movie is the words from a script that an actor says.

That’s hilarious.

Like hysterical, another good word for extremely funny.

I can’t afford **to blow** this whole episode. We have to let him go.

“To blow” something is a common colloquial way of saying to do it very badly. An “episode” is a single show in a multi-show TV series.

I’m not sure how Andy is going **to take this**.

In this case, “to take something” is to emotionally react to it (When people get bad news, some take it well, and others take it poorly).

I don’t give a fuck who that is. I’m gonna fire him.

A vulgar but common and useful way of saying “I don’t care at all....”

Andy, I have the utmost respect for your artistry.

To have “the utmost respect” for something is to have the highest possible respect or admiration for it.

He’s been waiting for this his whole life. ∴ Andy, they’ll be other shots.

In this case, other “shots” are other opportunities.

Please let him down gently. ∴ Trust us.

“To let a person down gently” is to tell them bad news in a very loving or caring way, so that they will not be too hurt.

How about a bathroom? I may have shit in my pants.

A very crude way of saying to have defecated in your own clothes, and an expression that is often seen when people are extremely nervous.

It makes Tony real. It gives him three dimensions.

A “three dimensional” person appears to be like a real person, even though they may be a character in a film, or perhaps a distant celebrity.

If you book Tony, do not expect to get Andy. :: I’ll take my chances, all right?

“To take one’s chances’ is to take a big risk for a possible big payoff.

You make one more sound, and I’ll put your fricking head in the soup.

This is Tony’s way of telling people to shut up. Remember that “fricking” is a less vulgar way of saying “fucking,” but it’s also rare.

Thank you. I do all my own stunts.

A “stunt” is a dangerous act of bodily skill, such as jumping off a building, that is often filmed for a movie (A “stunt man” does them for a living, and is an important part of the movie industry).

Kaufman is crapping on my act.

“To crap” is a vulgar verb meaning to shit or defecate, or here, to ruin.

What do you have here? A big elaborate joke that is only funny to two people in the universe.

“Elaborate” means full of detail, with many parts, or complicated.

What is the point? :: It’s fun, George.

One of the most critical questions in colloquial English, or one way of asking “What are you exactly trying to tell me?”

Short of faking my own death or setting the theatre on fire, I don’t know what else to do.

“Short of doing” something means to do everything but that which is mentioned. “To fake” your own death is to pretend that you have died.

***Andy becomes a wrestler, and meets Lynne while beating her.***

**Bam!**

The sound made when two objects crash violently into each other.

I wanna be a bad guy wrestler in the worst way.

To want to do something “in the worst way” is a slangy way of saying to want to do it very much.

I hate to break it to you....but you don’t have the build for it.

“To break” bad news to a person is to tell them it, and in this case, “the build” refers to the type of body a person has (thin, fat, etc...)

These guys are huge; They would kick your ass.

“Huge” means extremely big. “To kick a person’s ass” is a vulgar and common way of saying to beat them up, or attack and badly hurt them.

Maybe I could pick on someone a little smaller than me.

“To pick on” a person is to harass and threaten them, often physically.

Women are superior in many ways.

A higher rank or level, or perhaps, just better.

When it comes to scrubbing the potatoes, mopping the floors, they have it all over women.

“To scrub” is to clean by rubbing, and “to mop” is to clean a floor with a tool called a mop, which is a stick with a sponge attached at the end. If men “have it all over women,” they are considered better than men.

You’re pathetic.

An important adjective which means ridiculously bad, hopelessly unsuccessful or worthy of pity.

I want no kicking, no scratching, no headbutts.

A word from the sport of wrestling in which one person tries to injure another by hitting them with their head as hard as possible.

It’s up to you to pin me.

In wrestling, “to pin” a person is to hold their shoulders against the ground for several seconds in order to win the wrestling match.

No choke holds! Yeah, come on!

The act of holding a person by the neck so that they can not move.

The winner and still undisputed intergender wrestling champion of the world....Andy Kaufman!

A ridiculous title! “Undisputed” means universally accepted, and “intergender” refers to sports in which men and women play together.

Here is your complimentary photo of Merv, and your turtle wax.

“Complimentary” means free, and is often used when a company gives away promotional gifts. “Turtle wax” is a type of material made of fatty oil (in this case, from turtles), used on cars to make them look new.

Here is your gift voucher to Red Lobster.

A “gift voucher” is a receipt or ticket that allows a person to get a product or service for free (Here, a meal at the Red Lobster restaurant).

I want to thank you for doing such a great job. :: Don’t patronize me.

“To patronize” a person means to treat them as if you are looking down on them, sometimes as if they were a child (Though note that to patronize a business means simply to use their products or services).

Like the old days of the carnival barker when he'd get the crowd all riled up.

A "carnival" is a huge public celebration, often with lots of shows, dancing, and food (The carnival barker was a person who would lead the celebrations, but this term is almost never used). To get a crowd "all riled up" means to get them very angry or excited.

So you just pretend to be an asshole? :: That's what I'm good at.

Perhaps the most common of the vulgar insult nouns.

We got the room all worked up, like punk rock.

To get a group of people (in a room) "all worked up" is to get them very emotional, excited or angry. "Punk rock" was a type of very loud and political rock music popular in the late 1970s.

Andy, they detest you.

"To detest" is a powerful verb which means to hate with great passion.

The next time you make an appearance, women are going to picket.

"To picket" a performer is to walk back and forth, carrying signs that protest their opinions (Workers will picket an employer's place of business if they go on strike for better wages or working conditions).

You have not given them any clues that this is a parody.

A "clue" is a small piece of information that helps people solve a mystery or a problem. A "parody" is an imitation or act that is designed to make fun of something (in this case, of wrestling).

I was just so impressed with your wrestling moves.

Physical body movements used to try and pin the opponent.

You had a huge boner on national television!

A funny slang word for an erection (a hard penis).

Memphis is the wrestling capital of the world.

A city in the state of Tennessee, famous for barbecues and Elvis Presley.

I'll get up in the ring...and I'll announce that

I'll marry the first woman who beats me.

"The ring" is the stage where boxing and wrestling matches take place.

We'll run off and get married on the David Letterman show.

A popular late night talk show that is still on TV (as of 2000).

What do you say? Is this for real?

"Are you being serious?"

I'll take you on, you sissy!

“To take on” a person is to compete against them, or in this case, to wrestle them. A “sissy” is a silly slang word for a scared person who doesn't have any courage (It's also used for a boy who acts like a girl).

That's true! This is all a set-up, Kaufman.

A “set-up” is a plan that is designed to fool people, often by having those who are involved act out certain contrived or fake roles.

I brought a real wrestler; She's trained and she's ready.

If a person is “trained” for a particular skill, they have spent time practicing it.

Foxy Johnson is going to take Kaufman to the woodshed, folks.

“To take a person to the woodshed” is to physically beat them very badly, though this is a rarely used expression (A woodshed is a small building for storing wood).

The King took matters into his own hands.

“To take matters into your own hands” is to do something difficult yourself, rather than rely on others. Note that Lawler is “the King of Memphis wrestling.”

I am a national TV star and I do not like dumb stupid crackers coming into the ring and pushing me around.

A silly insult, although it's worth noting that “cracker” is used by some blacks to refer to uneducated white people.

This is assault and battery.

A legal term which refers to the act of physically attacking a person (To assault a person is to hit them, and a battery is a continuous attack).

Wrestling is a very serious sport to me and I don't appreciate some jerk like you trying to make fun of it.

A widely used and useful insult noun for a mean, unpleasant or abusive person (like bastard, creep, asshole, etc.)

You wanna rassle me, Memphis style?

Note Andy's pronunciation of ‘wrestle,’ which is the way an uneducated person from the Southern US might say it.

I'm gonna make you scream for mercy.

“To scream for mercy” is to beg for somebody to stop (It's usually used when a person is being tortured or abused).

Is it an act, or you just addicted to causing trouble?

To be “addicted” to something is to be physically or emotionally dependent on it (many people are addicted to cigarettes and drugs).

I'm not a prop. Don't ever treat me like that again.

A "prop" is anything on a stage that's used in a play (People don't want to be treated like props, since it makes them feel used or unimportant).

I just get caught up, that's all.

"To get caught up" in something is to become totally obsessed by it.

He's the Southern Heavyweight champion. He'll kill you.

Wrestling, like boxing, is divided into divisions based on how much people weigh (Heavyweight, middleweight, etc...)

First you piss-off women, then you piss-off the South.

"To piss-off" a person is to make them very angry (and note that a person can *be* pissed-off).

It's like, they'll give you carte blanche and let you get back in the business of making people laugh.

To give a person "carte blanche" is to let them do whatever they want (This is a French expression which literally means white paper).

Kids love this stuff.

Note that "stuff" can refer to anything in general, in this case a type of comedy.

I don't do drugs, and I don't enjoy making light of them.

"To make light of" something is to act as if it isn't important or serious.

***Andy continues to destroy the TV shows he's on, and then faces the wrestling champion Jerry Lawler in the fight of his life.***

In this sketch, two married couples are out to dinner, and everybody has secretly brought along a joint.

A "sketch" is a short informal piece of acting.

A "joint" is a marijuana cigarette.

Carl was the last one to sneak to the bathroom to get a little high.

"To sneak" to some place is to discretely go there so that nobody will notice. "To get high" is to get the sensations of happiness, relaxation, etc. that people get when they take drugs such as marijuana.

Restaurants are amazing, aren't they? All these strangers sitting around stuffing dead animals in their faces.

A common and useful alternative to incredible, wonderful or perhaps fantastic. "To stuff one's face" is to eat a lot of food. These words are probably the thoughts of a person who doesn't eat meat!

I'm sorry, I can't do it. I can't play stoned.

A person who is "stoned" is high on marijuana or a similar drug.

Read the cue cards!

Cards that actors can secretly read if they forget their words while performing in a TV show, movie or play.

**Cut it out!**

A great colloquial expression which simply means "stop it!"

Don't you touch me! You're a nut!

A funny slang word for a crazy person.

Ladies and gentlemen, you have all just participated in a happening.

A silly and old-fashioned (1970s) word to describe a public event that is designed to cause a lot of controversy or discussion.

We don't want to upset the folks at home, so now

Andy is going to tell them that it was just a prank.

A "prank" is a useful word for a playful trick or joke that was not intended to harm anybody.

ABC told me to tell you that this whole fight episode was staged. It's a lie. It's a cover-up.

In this case, an "episode" is a single event or incident. If something is "staged," it is performed like in a play, but it isn't real. A "cover-up" is an attempt to hide something that's embarrassing or illegal.

These things happen all the time at the networks, only they cut away. They cut to a commercial.

A TV network that "cuts away" suddenly stops broadcasting the program they had on, usually to go to a commercial.

That kid is totally meshuga.

A funny Yiddish (Jewish) word for crazy or emotionally disturbed.

You can hear the ovation, or lack of one, for Andy Kaufman.

"Ovation" is loud cheering or public approval, and "a lack of" something is a shortage or complete absence of it.

The cheers turned to jeers.

"Jeers" are boos, or loud screams of disapproval.

Lawler is going to settle a score for each and every one of us, because we've all been insulted by this hideous Andy Kaufman from Hollywood, California.

"To settle a score" is to get revenge, or punish somebody for something they had done to you. "Hideous" is a powerful adjective which means extremely bad, disgusting or even shocking.

I just want to say a couple of things to you **disgusting** people.  
Another powerful adjective meaning horribly unpleasant, ugly or perhaps shockingly bad or evil.

He's just engaging the audience. He's riling them up.  
"To engage" an audience is to actively interact or discuss something with them. "To rile up" the audience is to get them angry or upset.

They are going to lynch him.  
"To lynch" a person is to kill them by hanging them from a tree.

Oh, good grief.  
A very gentle way of expressing surprise, frustration or anger.

I'll tell you something Kaufman. We've had enough of your crap!  
A vulgar alternative to 'bullshit,' meaning lies, nonsense, or in this case, unpleasant and obnoxious behavior.

Kaufman doesn't want any part of Lawler; He's an absolute embarrassment to humanity, this man from Hollywood.  
To not want "any part of" somebody is to want to avoid them.  
"An embarrassment to humanity" is a person whose behavior is so awful or evil that they are best known for how horrible they are.

Kaufman got nailed with something.  
If a person has been "nailed with" something, they have probably been hit or attacked by it (A nail is a pointed metal tool used with hammer).

Did you come down here to wrestle or act like an ass?  
A type of donkey, and of course, a jerk, idiot, creep, moron, etc...

I can't believe that the king is gonna go through with this.  
"To go through with" something is to actually do it.

That big mouth son of a gun has a free headlock.  
A "big mouth" is a person who talks a lot. "Son of a gun" is a dated way of referring to a person, usually to one who is doing something strange or crazy. In wrestling, a "headlock" is the holding of your opponent's head in such a way that they can't easily move it.

Business may pick up here.  
If business "picks up," it increases or becomes more active.

The king folded him up like an accordion.  
A musical instrument that's played by folding the middle part together.

The king is asking if they want to see the pile driver.  
An illegal act in wrestling in which you take your opponent's body, lift it in the air, and pound it into the ground, head first.

Kaufman is out of it.

If a person is “out of it,” they’re either completely unconscious (as is the case here), or they’re so disoriented they can’t understand anything.

That’s an automatic disqualification, right there.

An act that when done by an athlete automatically leads to them being thrown out of the match or game (In this case, Lawler’s pile driver).

Andy is very sincere....He’s gonna apologize to Jerry Lawler and repent for all his bad-guy shenanigans.

“Sincere” means completely honest and without falseness.

“To repent” is to regret or apologize for a bad action. As an adjective,

“bad-guy” is anything that a bad or immoral person would do, and “shenanigans” is a colloquial word for silly acts of trouble making.

I’m sorry for all the grief I’ve ever given.

A strong word for emotional pain.

It’s just a role. It’s not me.

The playing of a character for a movie or play.

You said some pretty inflammatory things.

Note the use of “pretty” as an adverb meaning moderately, or to a fair degree. “Inflammatory” refers to any statement or artistic work that is likely to cause great emotional reaction such as anger.

I don’t know if that’s a neck brace or a flea collar.

A “neck brace” is a support worn around the neck to protect it after it has been injured, while a “flea collar” is a strap worn by dogs and cats to keep fleas away (fleas are tiny insects that bite and bother animals).

I could have sued you for everything you got, but I didn’t because I’m not that kind of guy.

“To sue” a person is to go make a legal claim against them in court, in order to demand money for a wrong that was done by them.

I guess you’re just poor white trash....

and I guess that’s too lofty a concept for you.

“Poor white trash” is a very pejorative (negative) term for poor and uneducated whites. “Lofty” means high, or perhaps of very good quality.

A “concept” is a general idea, thought or understanding.

I’m sick of this shit, Lawler. I’m gonna sue you for everything you got, I swear to God.

If a person is “sick of this shit,” they are completely tired of it.

“I swear to God” is a way of saying that “I promise to tell the truth.”

To keep Andy, call 1-900....To dump him, call.....

“To dump” a person is to make them go away, or get rid of them.

This is Saturday Night Live, the hippest audience in television.

A person who is “hip” is very cool, intelligent and up to date with the latest in music, fashion and other aspects of culture.

They turned on you!

A grammatically fascinating phrasal verb! “To turn on a person,” in this context, means to turn against them. Don’t confuse this with to “turn a person on,” which often means to sexually excite them!

It pains me to say this, but I don’t think you two should work together again.

“To pain” a person is to emotionally hurt them.

You don’t have to be sorry Jerry! You’re terrific.

Another word for wonderful, fantastic or great.

It was a shining moment for behavioral science.

A “shining moment” is a great moment of accomplishment (the sun shines light on the earth). “Behavioral science” refers to those sciences that look at human behavior, such as psychology and sociology.

Why can’t I make a gag out of this?

A “gag” is another word for a joke or funny story.

I could go on the show and say it was rigged and I could demand a recount.

If an election is “rigged,” there has been some type of cheating to change the real voting results.

***Andy discovers that life is fragile, and his friends  
and family learn that this time, it’s not just an act.....***

It’s just your stress unraveling itself.

“To unravel” is to become undone or separated, or in this case, to be let out (This often refers to cloth that is held tightly together).

Just slowly come back to the mantra.

A word, often from an ancient language, that people who meditate will say slowly to themselves, over and over again.

We feel it’s best if you don’t attend the retreat.

A place where one goes for peace and quiet (or in this case, to meditate).

We don't doubt your devotion to transcendental meditation.

"Devotion" is complete dedication or attention. "Transcendental Meditation" was a form of meditation that was very popular in the United States beginning in the late 1960s.

We feel you and the program have grown apart, philosophically.

If two people grow apart "philosophically," they have come to have fundamentally different ideas, or even different values.

The wrestling, the sexist remarks, the foul language...

is not becoming of an individual of spiritual enlightenment.

"Sexist remarks" are usually statements that are disparaging or negative toward women. "Foul language" refers to dirty words, such as shit or fuck. If something is not "becoming of" a person, it looks bad for them to have done it. A person with "spiritual enlightenment" has great wisdom or intelligence about religious or philosophical matters.

I think of the world as an illusion and we shouldn't take each other so seriously.

An "illusion" is something that is seen that does not really exist, such as a river that a man dying of thirst may see in the desert.

It's what keeps me balanced. :: It's apparently not working.

In this case, to be "balanced" means to be emotionally healthy.

Hagen Dazs.

A very rich, delicious and popular type of brand of ice cream.

Do you want to move in with me?

"To move in" with a person is to start to live with them.

I got some crummy news. *Taxi* has been cancelled.

A fun little adjective which means bad, unpleasant or unfortunate.

Yuck.

The word a child says when they taste something they think tastes bad.

I noticed that I have a cyst or some kind of boil on the back of my neck.

A "cyst" is a small growth on the body that has liquid inside.

A "boil" is also a type of liquid-filled growth under the skin.

I was thinking that I'm still some kind of a quasi-celebrity, and I could charge people to touch it.

A useful prefix that means somewhat, or to a modest degree (In this case, Andy is still famous, but he's no longer a total celebrity).

We'll just drag it out! You get better, you get worse.

"To drag out" something means to make it last a long time, even if it could be ended much sooner.

I got some freaky rare kind. It's called large-celled carcinoma.

"Freaky" is an interesting word that means strange, or in this case, very rare. "Large celled carcinoma" is the medical name for a type of cancer.

I've just...jerked them around so much.

"To jerk around" a person is to treat them poorly, often by lying to, or fooling them.

That's just the kind of thing that you two would work out to fuck me up.

If two people "work out" something, they work together to create it.

"To fuck up" a person is to treat them very poorly, in this case by completely confusing or fooling them. Vulgar, but common.

We've initiated an aggressive radiation program...

to see if we can eradicate the effected cells.

"To initiate" something is to start it. An "aggressive radiation program" is a type of medical therapy used to kill cancer cells. "To eradicate" something is to kill it, often by pulling it up by the roots.

What a crock! :: How dare you make light of this!

A "crock" is a good slang word for bullshit, or nonsense (It is literally a piece of pottery, or dish). "How dare you..." is a way of saying "You have a lot of nerve to..."

Dad, I cried when he broke his neck. He's not getting me again.

This is Janice's way of saying she won't let Andy fool her again.

He wants us scratching our heads, asking us 'is this real?'

If a person is "scratching their heads," they are acting as if they are very confused.

It's Ceder-Sainai. It's a show-biz hospital.

Ceder-Sainai is a well known hospital in Los Angeles.

I don't think that doctor guy was very convincing.

If a person is "convincing," they are persuasive, or able to convince the people they are speaking to that they are telling the truth and know what they are talking about.

No more Kaufman stories; He's burned us too many times.

In this case, "to burn" a newspaper is to fool it.

He's also ordained in holistic medicine.

If a person is "ordained," they are officially approved to be a religious leader, usually a priest or minister. Here, the person is ordained in "holistic medicine," which is a type of Eastern or Chinese medicine.

Andy, you're the king of negative energy.  
George's way of saying that Andy gives off  
a lot of negative emotions or feelings.

If these negative vibes get out, everybody is gonna be talking  
about how sick I am, and it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.  
"Vibes" is a very slangy but common word for emotional energy (negative  
or positive). A "self-fulfilling prophecy" is a prediction or belief that  
comes true because of the very fact it's believed. Thus here, Andy thinks  
he'll get sick just because everyone thinks he is sick.

I want it to be everything that is joyful in the world, piled one thing on top of the  
other, until the audience can't stand it and they turn into children.  
"Joyful" means very happy. If something is "piled" on top of another  
thing, it is put physically on top of it. If the audience "can't stand it"  
anymore, they can no longer accept it (although in this case, because it's so  
wonderful, and not because they hate it).

I don't want to do that. That's a bummer.  
A fun word for anything that is very bad, disagreeable or unpleasant.

Even if he has to work for 10 years to pay it off, he'll do it.  
"To pay off" something over time is usually to make  
monthly payments until the debt is no longer owed.

She's 94 years young!  
Note this positive way of talking about a person who is actually old.

I'm delighted to be here. It's real overwhelming to me.  
"Delighted" is happy, and if something is "overwhelming," it is so large  
or great or amazing that it is hard to accept or understand.

We found one of the original hobby horses from your movie.  
A wooden horse that children ride in amusement parks or carnivals.

Is there a doctor in the house?  
A classic line, and the thing to say if a person gets sick on stage!

Praise the lord, she's alive! Hallelujah!  
Two religious expressions, both of which are a way of thanking God.

Milk and cookies.  
A favorite food combination among American children. And adults.

The blue crystal has very high vibrations,  
and it's wonderful for it's healing powers.  
A "crystal" is simply a type of rock, though some people say it can act  
like medicine. "Vibrations" are waves in the air, or perhaps a form of  
energy. "To heal" a person is to cure them, or defeat their disease.

Looks like something my dog puke up.

“To puke” is to throw up or vomit (To puke *up* is rarely used).

We could skip the meal and go straight to the montage a trois.

Andy’s ridiculous pronunciation of “menage-a-trois,” which is a French word for sexual activity between three people at the same time.

It will be a Saturday morning kind of thing where I can goof off with the kids.

Saturday morning is known for having lots of kids cartoons on TV.

“To goof off” is to play around or act silly.

Put your arm around the person sitting next to you  
and sway back and forth to the rhythm of the music.

“To sway back and forth” is to gently move your body from one side to another in a swinging motion. “Rhythm” is the beat, or regularly repeated sounds that are heard in most music.

You want to see Andy tonight? Anybody  
got a flashlight and a couple of shovels?

A metal tool used for digging holes in the ground.

# **Man on the Moon**

## **Possible Questions for ESL Class Discussion**

1. Was Andy Kaufman a genius, or just crazy? Or both, or neither?
2. Did Andy know when he was acting and when he wasn't? Did his fans?
3. Were Andy and Tony "the same person"?
4. Which of Andy's characters did you like the most? The least?
5. Did Andy enjoy being hated by the audience?
6. What did you like and not like about this movie?