

Sketch Show Pilot

By

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FADE IN:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE

A sombre DOCTOR sits opposite middle aged FRANK HENDERSON and his TEENAGED SON.

DOCTOR

I'm afraid it's... it's bad news, Mr Henderson. You have tumours in your throat, and... well, I'm afraid it's a very aggressive illness.

Sad, serious music fades up as Frank deals with the enormity of the situation. His son awkwardly puts a supportive hand on his shoulder.

FRANK

Oh... oh, God. Well is there anything... anything at all I can do?

DOCTOR

Mr Henderson, there *is* a surgical procedure, but it's not without its risks.

FRANK

What have I got to lose?

DOCTOR

If we act fast, we can remove the tumour, but the blood loss would be significant. We'd need to patch you up with skin from elsewhere on your body.

FRANK

Sounds OK so far.

DOCTOR

Well, bizarrely, Mr Henderson, in this case, the most effective area for transplant is the base of your penis, and your testicles.

FRANK

Right... so you'd...

DOCTOR

We'd remove an amount of skin from the penis and testicles, and use that to patch up the lacerations in your throat.

FRANK  
And that would save me?

DOCTOR  
If all goes to plan, yes.

The Son thinks about this. He sniggers.

TEENAGED SON  
Yo... so you'd be sucking your own  
dick?

He sniggers. Frank and the Doctor both think hard about this.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD - MORNING

A close up on Frank Henderson's gravestone.

We cut to CREDITS.

INT. VARIOUS HOUSES

In a MONTAGE, various close up shots of superfluous gold. Drawers and jewelry boxes overflow with necklaces and trinkets.

VOICEOVER  
Do you have unwanted gold? Would  
you like to see it put to better  
use?

INT. ARTHUR MATTHEWS' HOUSE

In a nice living room, ARTHUR MATTHEWS, 50s, faces the camera. He's warm and friendly, presentably dressed.

ARTHUR MATTHEWS  
Hello, I'm Arthur Matthews, and I  
need your gold. I'm not going to  
resell it. I just want to melt it  
in a big pot, for fun.

Bullet points appear, corresponding with his speech:

- Not going to resell
- Just melt gold in big pot
- Will be fun

He continues:

ARTHUR MATTHEWS (CONT'D)

I can't offer you any money in return, but I assure you there's nothing sinister going on here; I just want to melt some gold in a pot. Imagine a witch stirring a cauldron, if that helps. That's just an illustrative aid, of course - there's no witchcraft involved. Though I will be using a cauldron to melt the gold.

Further bullet points:

- No sinister intentions
- Like a witch
- But not a witch
- Will be using a cauldron

INT. WOMAN'S KITCHEN

A WOMAN records a testimonial.

WOMAN

Yeah, I had some gold I didn't want, and... I dunno, it would've been nice to get some cash for it, but I can see how this sounds fun too.

(long pause)

Big pot of melty gold.

INT. ARTHUR MATTHEWS' HOUSE

Arthur continues:

ARTHUR MATTHEWS

But that's not all. Send in 10 kilograms of gold or more, and you can come round to my house and watch the gold melt. You can even stir it yourself, as long as you're gentle, and give the spoon back as soon as I ask.

Bullet points:

- 10 kilograms
- Have a little stir
- Be gentle
- Give the spoon back

INT. MAN'S HOUSE

A MAN provides a testimonial.

MAN

I gave Arthur a box of doubloons,  
and he let me come and stir the  
gold. I quite enjoyed it, until he  
snatched the spoon off me.

INT. ARTHUR MATTHEWS' HOUSE

Arthur responds.

ARTHUR MATTHEWS

I'm sorry I snatched the spoon. But  
this only demonstrates my passion  
for melting gold. There is no cash  
reward, but there *is* a chance to  
make an old man happy.

Bullet points:

- Regrets snatching the spoon
- Demonstrates passion
- No cash
- Make old men happy

Arthur wears thick gloves and holds a long spoon.

ARTHUR MATTHEWS (CONT'D)

I'm ready. Are you?

INT. LIVING ROOM

We see the end of this advert playing on TV, then pull back  
to see a dining room table. Four 20-somethings, WILL, GEORGE,  
ANGELA and SARA, sit around it.

They each have shot glasses in front of them; in the middle  
of the table is a bottle of liquor. They finish a round of  
the drinking game *I Have Never*.

ANGELA

...and all I had to clear it up  
with was a single square of Bounty!

The group laughs.

SARA

OK, my turn, my turn. I have  
never... been to court!

Will and George both drink. Sara and Angela murmur excitedly.

SARA (CONT'D)

Alright, go on Will, what did you  
do?

WILL

Oh, there was a BNP rally in town the other month and I... I threw some eggs at the speaker. Nothing much, caused a bit of chaos, you know, but...

Everyone else nods and murmurs their support.

ANGELA

Alright, Will! George, what did you go to court for?

GEORGE

Kidnapping.

Everyone stops and frowns at him. He looks surprised.

ANGELA

What?

GEORGE

Kidnapping? Yeah. I, er...

He trails off and looks down at his arm, where he's written the message "DON'T MENTION THE KIDNAPPING".

GEORGE (CONT'D)

You know, it was... no big deal.

SARA

I think this is a big deal! Who did you kidnap?

GEORGE

Oh, just... you know, just some little girl.

WILL

You kidnapped a little girl?! Mate, that's insane!

GEORGE

Oh, no, it's not. Actually, it was surprisingly easy, you've just got to be in the right place at the right time, and then be prepared to, er...

He trails off again. He looks back down at his arm to see a second note: "IF YOU DO MENTION THE KIDNAPPING, DON'T BOAST ABOUT IT".

ANGELA

But how are you not in jail?

GEORGE  
 Evidence gets misplaced, you  
 know... things happen! Can we just  
 move on?

A long pause. Angela realises it's her turn.

ANGELA  
 Right, OK. Well, I've never  
 kidnapped anyone...

George knocks back a shot.

ANGELA (CONT'D)  
 That wasn't my go! God. Alright,  
 erm... I have never slept with  
 someone younger than me.

George takes a shot. Everyone stares at him, gob smacked.

GEORGE  
 What? Oh, I know what you're  
 thinking! Come on, guys, give me  
 some credit!

WILL  
 I think I might head off.

SARA  
 Yeah, me too.

GEORGE  
 Hey, hang on, I haven't had my turn  
 yet! Come on, I've got a good one!

Sara and Will reluctantly halt their exit.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 Right. Now look, I might have done  
 some things I'm not proud of, but  
 who hasn't? And hey, at least I've  
 never murdered anyone!

He pauses, then looks at his arm. A final note on his arm  
 reads "AND ABOVE ALL, BE YOURSELF!" He smiles, then drinks a  
 shot. As he slams the shot down, it tips over and turns  
 into...

EXT. STREET

A can, sent flying by a kick. We're in BLACK AND WHITE. Four  
 50s TEENS mooch down a street, looking directionless.

TEEN 1  
 So, you guys wanna go to the diner?

TEEN 2

I dunno. I'd rather catch a movie.

TEEN 1

Come on! I'm starving!

DANNY, a meek teen, finds himself pushed out of the decision making process.

TEEN 2

There's a new Diane Downs picture playing across town. She's hot stuff!

DANNY

(trying to get into the group)

Maybe bowling could be fun?

TEEN 3

Hey, the diner or the theatre. They're both great options.

TEEN 1

We gotta go to the diner.

TEEN 2

Alright, fine. You win.

The three teens sprint off, leaving Danny spluttering. He hangs his head.

VOICEOVER

That didn't go to well, huh, Danny?

DANNY

I've got all kinds of great ideas - but those guys never listen to me!

VOICEOVER

You know, if you were to make a few changes, you could make it so that no one ignores you again!

DANNY

You mean by acting real confident, and explaining my argument in a calm and concise manner?

VOICEOVER

No, no, no! You need to get angry!

Very long pause.

DANNY

Huh?

INT. RESTAURANT

Chirpier music plays as we see a man in a restaurant going absolutely bezerk at a waiter, who can do nothing but stand there and nod.

VOICEOVER

Getting angry has been an effective tool in a man's arsenal since time began. Take this fella here. He wasn't sure what a Cobb salad was, and it turns out he doesn't like it. But if he just gets a little angry...

DANNY (V.O.)

Then he gets the whole meal for free!

The Waiter walks off. The Man leans back in his seat, victorious.

VOICEOVER

Now you're getting it!

INT. HOME

A Mother yells at her small child.

VOICEOVER

And it's not just the men who use anger! This lady is tired of the noise her son makes while he plays with his toy train. With just a little sprinkle of anger, she can be sure he'll think twice next play time!

DANNY (V.O.)

But won't that just teach the child that anger is an appropriate reaction to minor problems?

VOICEOVER

It sure will, Danny. And he'll grow up to be all kinds of successful!

DANNY (V.O.)

Wow!

EXT. STREET

Danny looks a little down.

DANNY

Well that's all well and good, but  
how do *I* get angry?

VOICEOVER

It's simple!

CLOSE UP on Danny's hands.

VOICEOVER (CONT'D)

First, get yourself nice and tense.  
Ball those fists, and grind those  
teeth.

CLOSE UP on a jaw clenching. PING! noises as Danny assumes  
the correct pose.

VOICEOVER (CONT'D)

Now you're starting to look angry!

DANNY

(through a clenched jaw)  
Alright! So now my friends will do  
what I want?

VOICEOVER

Not quite yet! You look the part,  
but you've got to *act* the part too!

DANNY

So what do I do?

VOICEOVER

Take things out of context, and  
always assume that everyone around  
you is trying to take you down,  
even if they're close friends or  
family! Never let anyone have the  
last word, and raise your voice to  
an ear splitting level!

DANNY

(screamed)  
Like this?!

VOICEOVER

Whoa! Take whatever you want, just  
don't hurt me!

Danny beams and shoots a thumbs up. Another PING!

INT. DINER

Danny's Teen friends sit at a diner. He slides into a booth  
next to them.

TEEN 1

Hey, Danny! Pass me the mustard,  
will ya?

Danny looks unsure. He looks towards the top of the screen,  
where the Voiceover was coming from.

VOICEOVER

Just remember what we talked about,  
Danny.

Danny passes over a bottle of ketchup

TEEN 2

(frowning)  
Hey, Danny? I asked for mustard.

DANNY

(calm)  
That is mustard.

TEEN 2

Actually, buddy, it's ketchu-

DANNY

(furious)  
It's mustard! Mustard, mustard,  
mustard!

He pounds the table. His friends look very uncomfortable.

TEEN 3

Alright, Danny, it's mustard.  
Whatever you say.

VOICEOVER

Way to go, buddy! You made your  
friends agree with you, even though  
they knew you were wrong!

DANNY

And it's all thanks to anger!

Danny cheers and bashes the table.

VOICEOVER

Alright, well steady on there.

DANNY

(even angrier)  
YOU steady on!

VOICEOVER

Hey, wait a- oh!

The Voiceover and Danny laugh. Danny looks deranged. His  
friends all exchange worried glances. We zoom in on the  
diner's logo...

EXT. FOOTBALL PITCH - DAY

...then pull out on a football shirt bearing the same logo. Five lads, STEVE, MICHAEL, TOM, LEE, and ELLIS, stand at the side of the pitch, talking pre-game tactics.

MICHAEL

...so we know they're going to attack us hard. So let's just keep close, keep calm, and pick our moment.

TOM

Alright. All we can do is our best.

The team murmurs agreement. There's an air of pessimism.

STEVE

Here, lads: shall we just try and have a laugh?

Confused mumbling.

MICHAEL

What do you mean, mate?

STEVE

Well, I was just thinking, maybe we should try and have fun out there. You know, do our best at the football and all that, but have a laugh while we're doing it.

TOM

That does sound like a good idea.

LEE

Yeah, and I mean, I'm not sure, but I feel like if we were all relaxed and having a good time-

STEVE

-having a laugh.

LEE

Having a laugh, yeah, maybe we'd play better as a team?

MICHAEL

Yeah, and even if we don't win, we'll have a good time anyway. A laugh!

STEVE

Exactly! Let's give it a try!

ELLIS

Mmm... I... I dunno.

STEVE  
You don't want to?

ELLIS  
I just think while we're playing football, we should concentrate on the football. There's plenty of time for having a laugh after the game.

STEVE  
I think we could do both at once!

ELLIS  
Well... how would that work?

MICHAEL  
We just, you know, we have fun while we play!

TOM  
Yeah, you know, we'd just not take the game too seriously.

ELLIS  
That's what I'm worried about!

LEE  
No, you know, we'd still take it seriously, but just be a bit like...

He does a silly dance to illustrate his point. Everyone loves it.

MICHAEL  
See?

ELLIS  
I guess that does look like fun...

STEVE  
And we can do other things too. Like make fun of each other for stuff!

ELLIS  
What kind of stuff?

STEVE  
All kinds! Like, erm... is anyone gay?

Nos all round.

STEVE (CONT'D)  
That's a pity, that would've been ideal.

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

But I'm sure we can think of something. Maybe someone has a small penis or a disease or something.

ELLIS

I don't want to be a stick in the mud, but this sounds like a recipe for hurt feelings.

MICHAEL

No, mate, it's just banter!

LEE

Yeah, just a bit of banter!

ELLIS

Oh, banter! Well... I'm still not sure...

TOM

Maybe we could make up nicknames for each other!

STEVE

Yes! Now you're thinking!

ELLIS

Nicknames?

MICHAEL

Yeah, you know, based on attributes of our personality, or our physical appearance!

ELLIS

Like celebrities we look like?

STEVE

Yes! Exactly!

LEE

And maybe we can make up nicknames for the other team too?

STEVE

Well, we should probably make sure they're up for having a laugh too first. But listen, let's use what we've discussed, play a great game of football... and have a bloody good laugh while doing it!

They all cheer.

CUT TO:

A post-game interview. Steve addresses an offscreen reporter.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Yeah, a great victory today. Me, Lee and Ellis are off for a couple of pints, I know Michael and Tom are planning on seeing a band they like together, and we'll probably meet up as a group for coffee or something early next week. A big win for friendship. Not so much for the team, though, that really was a... a devastating loss.

The camera pans to a shower room. The door opens, unleashing a wall of steam.

INT. BATHROOMS

We intercut between the bathrooms of a MAN and a WOMAN, both deep into extensive morning grooming rituals.

They fuss with their hair, and apply various sprays and creams. They look harried and put out by the whole task.

VOICEOVER

Is your morning routine taking up too much time?

They both realise they're going to be late. They check themselves out once more. They don't look entirely happy, but they've got to go.

VOICEOVER (CONT'D)

Then why not try... being naturally attractive!

INT. LIVING ROOMS

An ATTRACTIVE MAN and ATTRACTIVE WOMAN swan around their living rooms, without a care in the world. The music turns upbeat.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The Attractive people walk down the street. Everyone looks pleased to see them. They're handed various treats.

INT. OFFICE

The Attractive people assemble with a Boss of some sort. They huddle in for a final shot, all looking very happy.

## VOICEOVER

Be naturally attractive. And everything else will just... sort itself out!

## INT. LIVING ROOM

We pull back from the TV playing the advert to see JOHN, a gormless young man sat on the sofa, eating a banana. His house mate SHAUN strolls past.

SHAUN

Right, I'm off to work.

JOHN

Alright, mate.

John takes a second look at Shaun. He thinks, then smirks.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Oh, mate, you've got some toothpaste in your hair.

SHAUN

Have I?

CUT TO:

John sits on the sofa, still smirking, biding his time. Shaun emerges, his hair soaking wet.

SHAUN (CONT'D)

I can't see anything. Must've got it.

JOHN

(stifling a laugh)  
Yeah, must've done.

SHAUN

Anyway, I'm off. See you later.

JOHN

Alright pal. Oh, Shaun?

Shaun turns.

JOHN (CONT'D)

There wasn't any toothpaste in your hair! Not a bit!

Shaun sighs. John shouts with glee and stands up, arms aloft in victory.

SHAUN

Mhmm. You got me.

The living room door bursts open. Their HOUSEMATE strolls in.

HOUSEMATE  
What's all the noise about?

JOHN  
I told Shaun he had toothpaste in his hair and he went and washed his head - there wasn't any toothpaste!

The Housemate's jaw drops into a grin.

HOUSEMATE  
None?!

JOHN  
None!

The Housemate falls about laughing as an EAVESDROPPER pops his head around the door frame.

EAVESDROPPER  
*What* happened?

JOHN  
I told him there was toothpaste in his hair...

CUT TO:

INT. PUB

A crowded pub. All eyes are on John at the head of the table, finishing another retelling. Sat next to him is Shaun, looking furious.

JOHN  
...but there wasn't any!

Gales of laughter. Many patrons slap John on the back and offer handshakes. Plenty of others point at Shaun and laugh.

CUT TO:

INSERT: NEWSPAPER FRONT PAGE

A tabloid - style front page. The headline reads: "WAG PRANKS PAL; TOOTHPASTE NEVER REALLY ON HEAD". The main image shows John receiving the key to the city from a ceremonially garbed Mayor.

CUT TO:

INT. TALK SHOW SET.

A gaudy talk show set. Behind a desk sits BILL GLISSMAN, host.

BILL  
 Good evening, I'm your host, Bill  
 Glissman and with me tonight, stand  
 up comedian Carl Biscuit...

CARL, a youth oriented comic in an expensive polo shirt, waves and pulls a goofy face.

BILL (CONT'D)  
 ...and national celebrity John  
 Fupp.

John grins and waves, to a sea of applause.

BILL (CONT'D)  
 So, John, I understand your friend  
 had some, er, *toothpaste*, in his  
 hair?

John smiles and raises a finger.

JOHN  
 Well! Here's the rub! There never  
 was any toothpaste!

Bill and Carl look at each other and explode with laughter.

CARL  
 (slapping John on the  
 back)  
 Mate! You should have my job, mate!

EXT. STREET - DAY.

Shaun walks down a quiet street. His posture is hunched, hands stuffed in his pockets. He looks somewhat dishevelled.

A pair of TEENS wander past in the opposite direction. Recognising Shaun, they murmur to each other.

TEEN #1  
 Say something, go on.

TEEN #2  
 No, you.

TEEN #1  
 Alright... oi mate! You've got  
 summat in your hair!

Shaun stops and fusses with his hair. He realises he's been tricked.

SHAUN  
Oh... fuck off! Fucking hell!

EXT. SUBURBS.

John wanders down a path, dressed well and looking happy. A FAN spots him from across the street and sprints across.

FAN  
Oh my God, you're John Fupp!

John smiles, clearly used to this.

JOHN  
Yes, I suppose I am.

She laughs, producing a slip of card.

FAN  
Could you... sign this for me? It's the ticket from your Albert Hall show. God, it was so funny!

JOHN  
(signing)  
Thanks.

FAN  
I've just got to say, I really think you're amazing. The way you humiliated your friend?

John pauses.

JOHN  
Well, I don't know if...

FAN  
Oh, don't be so modest! You *totally* humiliated him! He must've been *crushed!*

We pan in on John's face as he considers this.

FAN (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
(gleeful)  
I bet he's *killed himself!*

EXT. OUTSIDE SHAUN'S HOUSE - DAY.

John knocks on Shaun's door, standing in the middle of an unkept garden. Shaun opens the door, wearing a dressing gown and looking dreadful.

Shaun goes to slam the door, but John blocks it with his foot.

JOHN

Come on.

INT. SHAUN'S HOUSE.

A dark, messy living room. John sits on a cluttered sofa, while Shaun paces. A long pause. Just as John starts to speak, Shaun jumps in.

SHAUN

What are you even doing here, John?

JOHN

I want to say I'm sorry. I want my pal back!

SHAUN

Pal? You've turned my life into a walking hell! Everywhere I go, people are telling me I've got this in my hair, or that in my hair! After five or six times I stopped even checking! For all I know I could have TONS of stuff in my hair!

JOHN

(very long pause)

You don't.

Shaun shakes his head and sits down.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Well, if it's any consolation, I've been having a great couple of weeks. Booze. Babes. BAFTAs.

He slides closer to Shaun.

JOHN (CONT'D)

But it's been nothing without you, buddy.

Shaun looks at him.

SHAUN

Really?

JOHN

Yes really! Look. I'm doing this big show next week, it's going to be on TV. It's a charity gig for... whatever. Why don't you come on with me, tell your side of the story?

SHAUN

And people will stop laughing at me?

JOHN

Course. Just show 'em the real you. They'll love it.

INT. BACKSTAGE.

John and Shaun, suited and booted, stand in a preparation area just behind the stage. John looks loose and confident, Shaun somewhat nervous.

SHAUN

How do I look?

JOHN

Ready to win the public's love, pal.

Shaun turns away, making last minute cosmetic adjustments.

SHAUN

Hey, thanks so much for this John. I can't wait to just get back to normal.

JOHN

Hey, no thanks necessary. Humiliating someone may be easy. It may even get you a whole bunch of attention. But it's not the right thing to do. I totally get that now, man.

Shaun turns back round. He has a great deal of toothpaste in his hair. A STAGE MANAGER zooms past.

STAGE MANAGER

OK guys, you're up.

Shaun exhales deeply and turns to John, smiling.

SHAUN

Alright!

John notices the toothpaste.

JOHN

Er, Shaun?

SHAUN

Yeah?

JOHN  
(beat)  
Good luck, yeah?

Shaun smiles and heads for the stage, to the rising cheer of the audience.

John looks into the camera. He shoots it a malicious grin.

FREEZE FRAME.

TWO TOWNS Over