

THE SITCOM **SHOW**

by Emily Pope

SCANDAL

I found a trail of
cherry tomatoes ...
and they were NOT
YOURS!

Voice of Jo

NEW DRAMA

Ok so I think if
I am really honest
I'm just a bit sick
of you

Emily Pope

NO ONE FROM HACKNEY COUNCIL WAS HARMED IN THE MAKING OF THIS FILM

The Court **Summons**

EPISODE 1

*Starring Emily Pope with the voices of Jo,
Kate, Katie, and reluctantly Maja*

BIG NEW DRAMAS

I don't know if that is
the same, I think that
is worse.

VOICE OF MAJA

EXCLUSIVE

The thing is babe you
just need to cheer up.

VOICE OF KATE

PLUS!

You want my advice
babes, write a book.

VOICE OF KATIE

WARNING: THIS IS WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO COMEDY IF WE KEEP GOING THE WAY THAT WE ARE

Opening Credits

Episode 1: The Court Summons; starring Emily Pope with The Voices of Jo, Kate, Katie, and reluctantly Maja

WARNING: THIS IS WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO COMEDY IF WE KEEP GOING THE WAY THAT WE ARE

Overture

Oh and I'm feeling directionless yes
But that's to be expected
And I know that best
And in creeps the morning
And another day's lost
You've just written wondering
And I reply fast
All you need to save me
All you need to save me
Call
And I'll be curled on the floor
hiding out from it all
And I won't take any other call'

CLIP 1 - THE COURT SUMMONS BILL

Emily brandishes court summons letter.

'Right - where's the flash? You know, do a degree in fine art and pretend you know about digital media, it's great. This is a court summons for nonpayment of council tax and what happened is I paid about 7 days late as bloody usual and they take you off a payment scheme and they say you owe them 700 pounds for the whole end of the year and then obviously no one can afford 700 pounds for the whole end of the year so then they send you red letters and a court summons and then you phone them up and you say I'm sorry I can't afford that and they've already given you the court summons so that's on your credit rating forever and if you turn over the letter it actually says we understand that as the council some people can't afford to pay this so if you give us a call we'll put you back on the payment scheme. So effectively what they do is they fuck your credit rating, so you can't ever get a house, and they keep reinforcing a really unfair property market because you

are stuck in a precarious situation where you have to pay rent, ridiculously high rent, to people who already have money right, so they are keeping you in that situation but they don't actually want you to go to court or to prison as that also costs them money, so they give you the option to go back to paying exactly as you were before, but with less of a chance of ever being able to progress economically. So that, I think, is not very good, really is it, Hackney Council? Oh god, getting cross now aren't I, so I've messed it up, I'll just pop that there and be on the phone to them for er...45 minutes, on hold. This is a ruler that my friend Katie bought from Poundland to cheer me up, it's holographic, isn't that a nice positive overlay to the appalling court summons so we'll just cover that up and ignore it. That's quite good.'

Cut to webcam head shot of Emily Pope

EMILY POPE
Ok so I am really good at ignoring things, you know finding alternative methods of coping. What I was doing for a while, a good friend told me, was fucking people so I didn't have to get the night bus. She actually said to me - in a cab back to hers - *don't worry, you don't have to fuck for a bed*. I thought - you patronising bitch what are you talking about I'm doing this because I want to and I have...*AGENCY*. Then I thought about my options. An hour and a half journey home post-3 A.M. or leave on time before the last train. I found neither appealing. I don't like UberPOOL and I do like - casual sex. Anyway, distractions, what better way to distract myself from the court summons and the fact that I can't even get a Wonga loan, by making it into a piece of art.

Cut to Black Screen

VOICE OF JO
Well that's like me really, I've got all these clothes on the drying racks in the living room which I can't deal with, and it is so full in there I have to dodge five clothes horses just to grab a pair of knickers and I realise this has be-

come a drying room and not a living room, and I've put myself in exile in my own house.

VOICE OF MAJA
I don't know if that is the same, I think that is worse.

Cut to webcam head shot of Emily Pope

EMILY POPE
Yeah I know right, we are all living in houses which seem to be under a cloud that inspires comedy, and decreases hugely the functionality of appliances. Anyway, if you hadn't already worked this one out, I'm playing myself, maybe this is all a bit meta, ugh, fuck, maybe this is all a bit meta, which is kind of the most annoying way ever of saying self-referential. So everyone else in this is playing the part of a text message, or a voice in my head, which alludes to 'group chat' and also a huge feeling of instability. I've been thinking a lot about solipsistic anxiety and how I could've just made up all the conversations that I have in order to satisfy an internal monologue which would be, er, quite disturbing, really. Basically I have written how I would imagine my friends would respond to me because although I've got abysmal coordination I've got excellent communication skills and because this is an art film, it actually intends NOT to be what it was set out to be in the first place, this is possibly the only way art is convenient to me at the moment. So - I'm aware this is not live - no one was in the room with me, clapping and watching me as I made this. That would have been very disconcerting. I think I just got quite attached to the word sitcom and then it was too late to say well, actually this is another interesting collage filmed on a mixture of an iPhone and a webcam, and maybe it could do quite well on YouTube, if I'm lucky. Er - brilliant. It will be a depiction of - frustration - boredom - anxiety probably, ambivalence and hope, with particular attention to nonpayment of council tax

Cut to webcam head shot of Emily Pope

EMILY POPE
Look, all I am trying to do, is make a really unflattering self-portrait, so could you be a little bit more supportive? Maybe I'll put you on Twitter to get my own back. Either I'll quote you directly, or I'll say something more general, like, oh the feeling when you are so hungry and you haven't slept and you keep saying to everyone at work, oh I've had such a good sleep. Or - last night I saw someone in the pub unplug the fruit machine just so they could charge their phone. Honestly, something exceptional is happening every five minutes. So if you hadn't already noticed, I am also slightly hungry. Great excuse, making a film, try and enact the film yourself, so I got to go out and get pissed last night and then wake up at the crack of dawn to film this. So, I've got no problem telling you about that and I don't mind at all that someone once said to me that just looking at my face reminded them of a glass of pinot grigio. Anyway, maybe I should make a confession at this point, I've spent the last hour on Facebook stalking Sinead O'Connor. I'm completely obsessed with her in a really unhealthy way, and I keep checking her profile, and am considering actually writ-

Cut to Black Screen

VOICE OF MAJA
Emily - no. Are you OK? I think you should really, just, play yourself back and listen to it and have a think about it.

VOICE OF JO
I think what you are maybe doing, is framing yourself too much by how you feel you are positioned socially and economically. Can you just try and you know - try and calm down a bit?

VOICE OF KATE
I mean it's just another sound art piece really isn't it, someone says dick, fuck, lesbian, or cunt and everyone in the room looks around and pretends they are really into it. It's not like someone can put it up in their house. You want my advice babes, write a book.

Cut to webcam head shot of Emily Pope

EMILY POPE
I've been increasingly getting the feeling that, you know, people are not really on my side! I feel a bit like the time a friend came over and said look I've been trying to buy parking permits for three hours at the council office and you know when you know your are in a comedy sketch and you are the butt of the joke, my card kept getting declined, so I cried in the office and I realised I had taped RIP in the back of my jacket and I had drawn tears on my face, and I forget that this kind of self-expression really isn't that normal, and I was crying about the parking permits with tears on my face and I realised no one was going to take me seriously. So I said, Pete Burns, David Bowie, and Victoria Wood are all dead. This is because all of the greats are giving up in the face of global austerity...and fascism.

VOICE OF KATE
I think it might be time for a break now babes. You know, when you get that ad break when you are watching the telly so you can go to the loo?

CLIP OF CREDIT RATING AD ON TV IN LIVING ROOM

ing to her to see if she would like to be friends and a lot of people have told me that they think this is an unwise move.

Cut to Black Screen

VOICE OF KATE
The thing is, and I really do mean this with the best will in the world, I don't think that what Sinead O'Connor needs is a 26-year-old who is mildly dysfunctional at best, and at worst really dysfunctional. It's also really quite rare that you hear so-and-so celebrity who had a public breakdown is now absolutely fine, following an intervention by a well-meaning artist, on an air bed with a hole in it, in Hackney.

VOICE OF MAJA
Absolutely do not, I mean do NOT, attempt to make friends with Sinead O'Connor.

Cut to webcam head shot of Emily Pope

EMILY POPE
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VOICE OF KATE
I think it might be time for a break now babes. You know, when you get that ad break when you are watching the telly so you can go to the loo?

CLIP OF CREDIT RATING AD ON TV IN LIVING ROOM

'You've got a poor credit score!' 'Just plays credit rating adverts, that's all it does, the TV.'

CLIP OF TOILET THAT WON'T FLUSH

'Brilliant. Why is that now not flushing? Brilliant news! Probably will get accused of doing poverty porn now, it's not really is it, it's just an unflushed piece of tissue with blood on it.'

VOICE OF KATE
The thing is babe you just need to cheer up.

Cut to webcam head shot of Emily Pope

EMILY POPE
So this is the part where I get my shit together and I get up on time and I call the council and I have a coffee. Anyone who says they don't need caffeine in the mornings I am automatically suspicious of, and I say with some authority on the phone er HELLO, I'm feeling really pissed off actually. I can't afford your 600 quid bill, and er, I know your game.

VOICE OF KATE
After you've accomplished this, you should probably actually leave the house for a bit.

VOICE OF JO
I think you need to switch conversation styles. Imagine you are emailing a friend late at night, like you know how artists talk to other artists about concepts and politics and rant at each other unintelligibly as if either party will have a hope in hell of understanding what the other is on about, do that.

EMILY POPE
Hi OK, hope you're well. I am now typing.
So, I feel like
Winter is coming and we are all too polite to go looting or set the city on fire and, To put it another way I've been feeling like reciting Kipling's 'IF' poem all the time But mumbling about 'how to keep your head when those all around you are losing theirs' Isn't going to win me many friends whilst I'm on the night bus I've always had that stranger on a train syndrome, and now I'm the stranger, on the bus

Road less travelled – How to - how to DO anything

How to – that was on ITV – it was a really terrible programme
How to – read the Dreamer's Dictionary and not laugh out loud
Still on the bus – *Definitely not laughing*
Recite IF in head
Think about casting friends in Oliver! The Musical
Maybe I'd be Fagin – I re-view the situation quite a lot
It's a fine, fine life isn't it? I have this need to compare myself to Nancy in Oliver
Where's the tankard? Loud woman yells (or sings, quite a bit, holding a tankard) and then dies
Fairly unusual in life for the loud one to die at the hands of another
People often say 'it's always the quiet ones'

About victims and also about abusers and if you take a balanced view those two words can be reversed and applied to the other
And also can be contained within one body
The other - as in - the othered, by the mainstream
And also as in – The abuser can be the victim
And visa versa
And this is about being the helper and also needing help
Or rewriting Oliver, so that Nancy kills Bill Sykes, who was effectively her boss
And then my mum said to me on the phone, I really DON'T care about the social and political effects of Oliver! The Musical can you please just GET A REAL JOB.
This is going to need a really heavy edit. I keep doing this thing late at night where I send well punctuated and enthused emails, and in the morning I wake up, and I'm like, no. Why. I think this obsession with Oliver, as with Sinead, has gone a little bit too far.

Take me to Church, I've done so many bad things it hurts
said Sinead O'Connor
And in an imaginary conversation, I say to her Babe - someone really needs to monitor your use of Facebook
I KNOW no weapon formed against you or I shall prosper
BUT
Someone really needs to monitor what you put on your monitor
The lengths I'll go to for a

Ok so I think if I am really honest I'm just a bit sick of you, me, all of us conscientiously objecting to stuff, responsibly objecting. What about just wild objection. Anyone who keeps saying we are all the same is full of shit. The woman I saw begging on the way home on the train was not enjoying it, she is not the same as me with the council tax debacle okay, because whilst this is hard, yeah, I've got the ability to make this film you know, have a glass of wine, I've got a job, her sensible trainers which she got from the hostel are not ADEQUATE FUCKING RESOURCES, which is what I should have yelled at the man across from me on the train talking about adequate fucking resources, all her presence did was give the man across from me the chance to talk about *I, Daniel Blake!*
Then his Tinder date gave him a really withering look.
Anyway, you should ask yourself, why is it you find this story so refreshing? Anyway, you should ask yourself, why is everything around you so stagnant?
I'm sick of talking about class, because, everyone's lying about it all the time. Newsflash, it is really OK that your mum paid the phone bill one time, please don't make up that you are in fact an orphan. It means

story are totally abnormal.

The other night I got so drunk I researched Oliver so much, I Googled the lyrics, and then I recorded the first 6 songs from Oliver! The Musical on my phone, singing them with no backing track, and I was doing all of the voices and I woke up fully dressed in bed, and I found 6 voice recordings labelled 'Oliver! The Musical 1-6' on my phone. Please don't tell anyone that.

Cut to Black Screen

VOICE OF JO
Yeah, and then when I got up in the morning, I found a trail of cherry tomatoes going all the way up the stairs, and they were NOT YOURS!

Cut to webcam head shot of Emily Pope

EMILY POPE
Ok so I think if I am really honest I'm just a bit sick of you, me, all of us conscientiously objecting to stuff, responsibly objecting. What about just wild objection. Anyone who keeps saying we are all the same is full of shit. The woman I saw begging on the way home on the train was not enjoying it, she is not the same as me with the council tax debacle okay, because whilst this is hard, yeah, I've got the ability to make this film you know, have a glass of wine, I've got a job, her sensible trainers which she got from the hostel are not ADEQUATE FUCKING RESOURCES, which is what I should have yelled at the man across from me on the train talking about adequate fucking resources, all her presence did was give the man across from me the chance to talk about *I, Daniel Blake!*
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I'm sick of talking about class, because, everyone's lying about it all the time. Newsflash, it is really OK that your mum paid the phone bill one time, please don't make up that you are in fact an orphan. It means

social mobility worked for your mum OK, I'd rather talk about something else.
I think by now it is probably fair to admit that the format of a sitcom has almost completely disintegrated and a four way girls on stage relay of comeback to comeback of reductive straight relations whilst canned laughter echoes like the Bunnymen round the basement, is not that interesting to me, unless it happened to be cancelled in its first five episodes because someone was too gay or too black or just a little bit too sharp. I often think if I wasn't so wise beyond my years, perhaps I would've been able to control myself
The wise-beyond-years character always does it for the story
And the accumulation of the story provides the breadth of experience, which forms the base for: advice giving.
Maybe it is more interesting to talk about friendship, than any of the shit I've been talking about.
So this is the part where I get to give the advice. An older friend said to me recently - *I mean - what am I supposed to do with Carol's retirement do? Only FIVE people are coming after she gave THIRTY years service to the MOD. What am I supposed to say? Do a speech? I mean FUCKING HELL. Carol failed all her O levels and then went to nursing college and she couldn't cope with that and then mum and dad wouldn't let her quit and then she slit her wrists in the bathroom and then they finally let her quit and then she joined the Ministry Of Defence. Should I say that? I mean if all else fails we'll buy her sunflowers and dress them up as people so it looks like she has some friends...why are you looking at me like I'm being so horrible? I am just telling the truth. She's been a fucking nightmare for years.*
And I said -
Hysterical requests for ideas from one person to the next are increasing in frequency. Drone strikes are happening in countries we cannot see and people cannot speak to ask for help because their voice boxes have been blown up by the west, and no one is reporting it. A lot of people I know

are temping in luxury property companies whilst struggling to pay the rent and the irony isn't lost on anyone yet it carries ON, people are screaming at immigration vans and recklessly being rude to the police and when women report sexual assault, it goes unnoticed, and the police say things like WELL IT'S NOT REALLY OUR JOB TO TAKE HER HOME WE AREN'T A DROP OFF SERVICE, and navigating this, is becoming, a bit of a nightmare, and I start to forget about obsessively Googling whether or not I am 'co-dependent' or in fact, just a good friend and instead I think I'll watch another clip of Meryl Streep talking about Hillary Clinton. They seem like they are good friends. I recommend you make sure at least a few friends are present at the retirement do, and buy Carol some sunflowers anyway.

END CREDITS

NO ONE FROM HACKNEY COUNCIL WAS HARMED IN THE MAKING OF THIS FILM. I AM SORRY IT WASN'T A PROPER SITCOM
I DID TRY AND MAKE MY OWN CANNED LAUGHTER BUT IT SOUNDED AWFUL - ASK KATIE THANKS FOR WATCHING

Outro

My phone is killing me
My email is killing me
These hours are killing me
My tour is killing me
This flight is killing me
My manager's killing me
My mother's killing me
My landlord's killing me
My boss is killing me
The TV is killing me
Your nagging is killing me
My drinking is killing me
Don't fucking tell me what to do/do/do/do?

My phone is killing me
My email is killing me
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This flight is killing me
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