

THE SITCOM
SHOW
by Emily Pope

NEW DRAMA

THE WORLD
IS GROSS,
AND SO AM I

SCANDAL

INSTAGRAM
IS ANNOYING,
AND POETRY
IS SO FUCKING
ANNOYING

PLEASE NOTE - THINGS HAVE TO GET WORSE BEFORE THEY GET BETTER

**SKIVING
OFF**
EPISODE 3

BIG NEW DRAMAS

MORE CUTS ARE
A BETTER FINALE
THAN SAVING LIVES

EXCLUSIVE

WHAT THE FUCK
IS THERESA MAY
THINKING

PLUS!

WORKING IN KFC
AND DESPERATE
SCOUSEWIVES

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



PRESS TEXT

In this press release I am going to play on the word episode. I prefaced my last episode with the title sequence *Things Really Do Have to Get Worse Before They Get Better*. After that particular episode, things did not get better. The best way I can describe this feeling is to say - I've gone from wanting to staple things to other people's heads as a sort of half-arsed joke I'm just about get away with, to wanting to stick a compass in my own eye in order to change things up a bit.

I've heard, in times of crisis, it is good to take a look at how you got to where you are. So, in keeping with the genre of situational comedy - this is the *flashback* episode. In it, I will examine the act of making excuses to avoid paid work, the things people are willing to lie about in order to get paid work in the arts (an alternative title for this episode was going to be *Gay For Pay*) and take a look back at some of the different jobs my friends and I have done in and outside of the arts, for the entertainment of the viewer.

I used to clean an old people's home for my job when I was 17. I can still remember how the old people smelled when they died in the mornings. Then, one of the first art related jobs I got in London was chairing a panel discussion about women in the arts, and I desperately wanted to call the discussion, *A Fine Art Degree: Aren't There Cheaper Ways to Become a Waitress?* No one liked my title, I had to change it to something more sensitive, and I realised people might not understand my need for a sense of humour in relation to labour, because they had no necessity for a sense of humour with reference to this topic.

I have been thinking, I should try to be a bit less intense. However, the act of giving myself *so much* advice negates this sentiment. It's ok, because I've heard that around the time of turning 27, something fairly intense happens with Saturn which messes everything up and on top of this, apparently, all the arrows on my astrology chart are pointing to sex, death, love and money. Aside from the chart, I know that the deeper I get into the arse end of arts administration, the more I am working myself into a hole. The idea of having *any boss at all* is becoming more and more intolerable, and maybe, actually, I don't want to go to any weddings this year. The system is working

against me and I don't like losing, so I've started lying more than usual in order to abscond from work and stare at the walls.

SCRIPT

I read *The Bell Jar* this week. Just - setting the tone for you -

And - I've been talking to myself I've been saying "Have you tried being a *bit less intense*"

And then I've been worrying that the act of *interrogating myself* Totally negates that

Admittedly - as per the introductory clip - I can be quite dramatic. Sitcoms normally have characters who have narcissistic reactions to anything remotely negative which happens to them, so I'm just trying to - er - emulate a bit of that.

Whilst I know I'm lucky to be employed and

This feeling, I think, of luck, is another trap that neoliberalism likes to wield.

Things haven't been going very well and I think when you hit rock bottom, e.g. spend all day at work googling *Too Low for Zero*, *Down to Zero*, and other songs with zero in the title and remembering that your dad called Joan Armatrading Joan Armaplating and that was annoying, and that Instagram is annoying, and that poetry is SO FUCKING annoying - it is probably good to take a look at how you got to where you are.

So - this is the flashback episode. In it, I will examine the act of making excuses to avoid paid work because I have been skiving off, the things people are willing to lie about in order to get paid work in the arts (an alternative title for this episode was going to be *Gay For Pay*) and take a look back at some of the different jobs my friends and I have done in and outside of the arts, for the entertainment of the viewer.

To give a bit more background - in the middle of this unreliable patch (which isn't really a patch) - secretly I am a disaster but my communication skills allow me to feign some sort of control, so let's just say - *the mask slipped*. I was asked to chair a panel discussion on *Call out Culture* and because I was being unreliable and worrying about sex, death, love and money more than usual because of something to do with Saturn and being about to turn 27, I sent none of the emails I was supposed to, and the event got cancelled. I was 200 quid down, but very relieved that I

didn't have to participate in another farcical discussion.

If I did chair a panel - I'd introduce it like this:

Hey you - Standing on two - Intricately tattooed legs - I REALLY enjoy your lilac bowl cut.

This signifies to me that you are indeed progressive, and you do have excellent political leanings. I know you like to teach others about everything ALL THE TIME.

I agree, it's important, however, I got uninvited to a wedding a while ago simply because I had a partner who wasn't a bloke.

I do wonder what that distinction does to the relationship between me and say, you, with my recent experience *positioned* (I know you love that word) alongside yours.

I know you recently got your mortgage approved and I am pleased you passed your credit check with flying colours. You seem to be really LIVING ON THE EDGE.

I'm sure you do think, ALL COPS ARE BASTARDS.

I wonder how much contact you have personally had with the police?

I do not think that any *criminal* would agree with you that the purpose of their life is in fact, a *radical act*. I think they would prefer your life, in exchange for LESS radicality and MORE stability.

You exaggerate a lot. You do this in order to commodify anything which has been consistently awarded the big fat prize of economic and social discrimination and use it to get a paycheck.

You are a symptom of hyperreality - unable to distinguish between fiction and reality.

ANYWAY

Let's take the chair as a character. I was not always such a cynic. In fact - I used to get called "refreshing" all the time, which is the most irritating thing a middle class person can say to anyone working class, ever. One of the first art related jobs I got in London was chairing a panel discussion about women in the arts, and I desperately wanted to call the discussion *A Fine Art Degree: Aren't There Cheaper Ways to Become a Waitress?* No one liked my title, I had to change it to something more sensitive, and I realised people might not understand my need for a sense of humour in relation to labour, because they had no necessity for a sense of humour with reference to this topic. Alongside this voluntary job organising feminists to talk to each other on stage I was fortunate enough to work in art shipping,

[SHEEP CLIP]

In actuality, not a very sharp contrast. During the recession in 2008, if we are honest, is where ALL THE TROUBLE REALLY BEGAN FOR ME. Maybe I should just study economics?

Anyway - during the recession I worked as a cleaner in the old people's home. The choices were to work in Warren's Bakery and wear a lime green tabard with a purple t-shirt, which I did until I got the sack for dying my hair green and turning up hungover, or work in the old people's home. My favourite old person was this woman called Barbara who was German and used to be a model, until I found out she used to be in the Hitler Youth.

I can still remember how the old people smelled when they died in the mornings and then I would have to ring the emergency bell, and say "I think Maisie is dead - but I am not sure."

[KEVIN TALKING ABOUT WORKING IN KFC AND DESPERATE SCOUSEWIVES]

SO ON TOP OF THIS - ON TOP OF THINKING ABOUT PLAYING ON THE FORMAT OF A SITCOM AND HAVING VERY REAL FLASHBACKS OF ALL OF THE JOBS I'VE EVER DONE AND ASKING MY FRIENDS ABOUT ALL THE JOBS THEY'VE EVER DONE AND THINKING WHY DO I STILL END UP DOING CHAOTIC JOBS IS IT JUST SOMETHING ABOUT ME... YOU KNOW

I keep having a lot of dreams because I took too many drugs for a couple of weeks

(Or in reality I've taken too many drugs for ten years and this has resulted in some *interesting* thought patterns - evidence of this is COMING UP)

The dreams involve rats eating my face and lightning hitting my face and the end of the world and obviously: a musical, in which everyone is an alien

The aliens sing songs from *Half a Sixpence*

which is essentially a musical about class difference, and aspiration gone wrong and there is one song that has the lyrics

If I had money to burn
A hole in my pocket

If I had money to burn - I'd go like a rocket

Down to the town without a stop
And go right into the music shop
And buy me a banjo

which sounds like a metaphor for buying a bullet from Ann Summers on payday which really - is not very adventurous, but, whatever works for you - ANYWAY

This dream progressed to a scenario where I was no longer watching a musical and the aliens expanded so they no longer fit on the stage and eventually were so much bigger than the earth that they could pop volcanoes as if they were spots and the aliens told me this, whilst being on top of these strange mopeds which they could fly into outer space

and the odd thing was - when they told me about the volcano I could see the volcano being popped as if it were a spot and when they turned their faces towards me they looked like friends and when they turned their faces away they were, *obviously*, half rat half pigeon - like all aliens apparently and the whole thing reminded me of

clips in that film by Adam Curtis *Hypernormalisation*

and also of viral videos of people popping spots that some people find satisfying and I find gross and the aliens on mopeds were no bigger than normal humans so I didn't understand how their hands were bigger than earth and then I thought maybe this was a 'conspiracy' video like the ones about the Illuminati and then

I felt *suspicious*

which is how the DUP must feel about the dinosaur bones in the Natural History Museum -

and in relation to this I have been thinking, WHAT THE FUCK IS THERESA

MAY THINKING about 100 times a day and I have concluded that Theresa May is probably thinking

(with reference to the DUP being another kind of circus, as per the title of this piece)

Goodness - that circus is alarmingly close to my VERY nice amphitheatre, perhaps they can help me get a bigger audience
Bloody hell, I'll have to give them the finale in my show

It would seem that the fee she is paying them for providing a finale is 1.5 billion which is quite a big budget musical being staged in the House of Commons

Reviews say, it has none of the triumph of *Half a Sixpence* Although *Half a Sixpence* disappointingly ends in a marriage, at least the poor people get married

because they really love each other and the rich woman called Helen is left on her own to be miserable and teach woodwork to the disadvantaged.

Surprisingly, I had another thought: The conservatives can't organise that amount of money

(1.5bn as mentioned before, try and keep up, I know it is hard, I too am having trouble following the news)

for the NHS, or even ensure that the poor are not murdered by their own government with fires by investing in adequate social housing with 1.5bn

So they really must be looking for a spectacle better than *saving lives* for the finale

And then I thought - AHHHHH

What I understand to be lifesaving is different to a conservative understanding of lifesaving - *clearly*

And also the conservatives will obviously think MORE CUTS are a better finale than saving lives So - I think they are thinking - Oh wonderful we can get away with paying out for a lot less abortions now that we are aligned with the DUP

that can be the new cut, the money saver!

You can now only have an abortion if you've been raped and can provide videotape evidence of this and a signed confession from the perpetrator, and also they get to *save a life* as long as they reduce the person carrying the child to an inanimate vessel, so I guess our versions of what makes someone a person who qualifies as *alive* is different, too

I do not believe that someone has to be a cis man to be considered alive

I think that they have to be breathing

I appreciate that that concept relies on a belief in science

And the DUP believes that dinosaurs did not exist and that evolution is not real

And in the midst of all this - considering all the flashbacks -

I think I am EXCELLING at staying alive

The world is gross, and so am I, but, note to self: *Please*

be careful not to draw too many poorly researched philosophical parallels or everything will merge into a dirge of similitude where I am just as awful as everyone else and actually I think I can do better than that

Someone said to me a while ago, I can't tell if you are being trite on purpose

Of course I am being trite on purpose, this is a piece of art

[JO DOING A HANDSTAND] [ALEX AT WORK CRYING LAUGHING ABOUT LACK OF WATER IN AIRBNB]