



GRANDMA BUTTERCLUCK'S GIGGLE EMPORIA

A treatment by Phil Collinge and Andy Lord

OVERVIEW

With programming such as 'Little Britain', 'Four Non Blondes' and 'The Mighty Boosh!' the sketch show format has made a welcome comeback in recent times. Grandma Buttercluck's Giggle Emporia is a proposal for a traditional mainstream approach to sketch comedy with a BBC 1 slot in mind.

In the backstreets of Manchester, tucked between Abdul's Mini Mart and a 'private shop' is Grandma Buttercluck's Giggle Emporia, a Victorian style shop dealing in all things comedy.

Each programme will open and close with a sketch based in the shop and setting up the premise of mainstream comedy accessible to everyone. In between these two items will be a series of unconnected sketches and quickies covering any subject under the sun. (See sample sketches at the end of this treatment).

PRODUCTION NOTES

The series will be a team comedy, calling for a group of actors with a wide range of talent. There will be a few regular characters, but the series will not rely upon prior knowledge of the characters or their catchphrases and will instead focus on presenting self-contained, funny sketches which can stand by their own merits.

A key element of the series will be the team of performers assembled to interpret the material and we are keen to include a diverse cross-section of ages, genders, sexual orientation and ethnic groups within this team - not so we can randomly write a sketch about a Chinese person, but rather to reflect the multi-cultural and diverse society in which the sketches are set.

SELLING POINTS

Winning Formula - In today's channel-hopping culture, the sketch show format is perfect to grab someone's attention and whet their appetite for more of the same. It's not new, but it works.

Low Cost - Phil and Andy are experienced sketch writers who understand budget limitations and can produce genuinely funny material which doesn't require a cast of thousands or CGI effects.

Mainstream - Sketch comedy doesn't have to appeal to a particular age or socio-economic group. This is mainstream comedy, albeit not necessarily seven o'clock on Sunday evening fare.

Saleable - Sketch comedy has a rich, proven history as a marketable commodity to the world's television broadcasters.

'New Media' - The BBC's commitment to streaming media and downloadable video would be well served by a successful broken comedy show which can be edited into short segments.

Made In Manchester - Meet the BBC's commitment to increased regional commissioning.

SCENE: INT. GRANDMA BUTTERCLUCK'S GIGGLE EMPORIA. DAY

A TYPICAL VICTORIAN STYLE SHOP. THE SHELVES ARE LINED WITH BOOKS, BOXES AND COMEDY EPHEMERA - A FEZ, VENTRILOQUIST DOLLS, TWO BOWLER HATS ETC.

A BORED ASSISTANT WEARING A BROWN SHOP COAT IS BEHIND THE COUNTER. THE DOOR OPENS AND WE HEAR THE SHOP BELL. A TALL MAN IN A PAC-A-MAC ENTERS.

CUSTOMER (LIKE JOHN CLEESE) Hello...?
ASSISTANT Sorry mate we're just closing for lunch.
CUSTOMER Never mind that my lad, I wish to see some sketches...
ASSISTANT Oh yeah, what kind of sketches...
CUSTOMER Have you got any with parrots in them?
ASSISTANT Dead parrots?
CUSTOMER Yes, pushing up the daises, gone to join the choir invisible, that sort of thing.
ASSISTANT No.
CUSTOMER No?
ASSISTANT No, sold the last dead parrot sketch about half an hour ago.
CUSTOMER Oh. Got any set in hardware shops. (LIKE RONNIE BARKER) Four candles, got any 'P's, that sort of thing?
ASSISTANT No mate, no call for them, should be...but well...
CUSTOMER What about two blokes in a pub? (DUDLEY MOORE) 'Get out of here, Funny!
ASSISTANT (DUDLEY MOORE) Funny!
CUSTOMER Funny!
ASSISTANT No.
CUSTOMER Oh, what have you got then?
ASSISTANT There's about half an hour of Grandma Buttercluck's Comedy Emporia in that bargain bucket over there.
CUSTOMER Right...(CLEESE) D'you get wafers with it?
ASSISTANT Sod off.

THE MAN WALKS SHEEPISHLY AWAY

ASSISTANT I've got some Bobby Davro out the back if you want, plain brown wrapper, no questions asked...

END

SCENE - INT'. TRENDY PUB. NIGHT.

A MAN IS SITTING AT A TABLE NURSING TWO PINTS OF LAGER. A SECOND MAN COMES OVER AND SITS DOWN.

PETER There you go Colin...Pint of lager.

COLIN Eh?...Sorry Peter, I was miles away then.

PETER I thought you were in the Gents?

COLIN I was miles away, because I was thinking...And I was thinking about the proliferation and diversity of your ethnic groups on a worldwide scale, and the integration therein globally.

PETER Were you?

COLIN Look 'round here...We've got Mr Lee's Chippy...Abdul's Mini Mart...and Winston on the milk round...There's even a Welsh bloke works in Mothercare.

PETER So?

COLIN So...When you look at the world, there's white people in Africa and America...There's Asian people in the West Indies...I was just thinking how good it is that all the races are starting to mix and live together.

PETER In perfect harmony, like my piano keyboard, Oh Lord why can't we?

COLIN Then I got to thinking...Where are all the Eskimos?

PETER Eskimos?

COLIN When did you last see an Eskimo round here?...I think its anti-social.

PETER Yeah...where's the Eskimo restaurant round here?!

COLIN Steady on, I didn't say that!...That's going too far...Do you know what Eskimos eat?...Blubber!

PETER Blubber?

COLIN Yeah...Deep-fried blubber.

PETER What's blubber then?

COLIN Well basically it's fat ...Eskimos eat deep fried fat.

PETER Fat fried in fat?

COLIN Yeah...Or put another way, hot fat...And snow.

Continued...

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PETER Snow?!

COLIN Yeah...An Eskimo's staple diet is hot fat and frozen water...So as you can see...Eskimo cuisine is not something that is much sought after.

PETER Still doesn't explain why there's none of them living round here though...I mean, if I was eating that lot...I'd be on the first seal out of there mate.

COLIN Mmm...And of course living as they do in the snowy wastes of the Arctic... They are faced with a number of hazards.

PETER Like what?

COLIN What colour is snow?

PETER White?

COLIN And Polar Bears?

PETER White again?

COLIN And Eskimos?

PETER Sort of...Pale brown.

COLIN Taupe, yeah...Stand out like a Chicken McNugget on a Welsh Dresser they do...Which is why they would be safer living here in Salford... I'm going to look up the address of the Eskimo Ambassador in the Thompson local, and send him a letter.

PETER Which one are you going to send him?

COLIN I thought I'd send him a lower case 'G'...Or perhaps a capital 'J'.

PETER Right mate I'll help you look...Finish those yak butter crisps and we'll go back to my place.

END

SAMPLE SKETCH - BEEP!

SCENE - EXT'. STREET. DAY.

A TEENAGER IS WALKING DOWN THE STREET. WE HEAR A STEADY BEEPING NOISE. HE STOPS AND PATS HIS POCKETS. HE FINDS HIS MOBILE PHONE AND GETS IT OUT.

THE REGULAR BEEPING CONTINUES THROUGHOUT AS HE PRESSES VARIOUS BUTTONS AND SHAKES IT TO MAKE IT STOP.

CUT TO, AN ARTICULATED LORRY REVERSING TOWARDS HIM.

CUT BACK TO, THE TEENAGER SHAKING HIS PHONE.

WE HEAR A CLUNK AND A GROAN AS IT HITS HIM

END

SCENE - INT'. LIVING ROOM OF A HOUSE. NIGHT.

A WOMAN IS SAT ON A SETTEE WATCHING TELEVISION. SHE IS HUGGING A CUSHION AND SMILING AT THE TV.

CUT TO. TV SCREEN. A VERY HANDSOME MAN IS SINGING A LOVE SONG.

CUT BACK TO SETTEE. A MIDDLE AGED AND OVERWEIGHT MAN COMES IN. HE PICKS UP THE REMOTE CONTROL AND CHANGES THE CHANNEL TO ONE SHOWING FOOTBALL.

THEY WATCH THIS FOR A FEW MOMENTS, BUT THE WOMAN LOOKS IRRITATED. SHE TAKES THE REMOTE CONTROL AND CHANGES THE CHANNEL BACK TO THE HANDSOME SINGER.

THE MAN LOOKS AT HER FOR A FEW MOMENTS AND THEN TAKES THE REMOTE AND CHANGES THE CHANNEL BACK TO THE FOOTBALL.

THE WOMAN LOOKS ANGRY NOW. SHE TAKES THE REMOTE AND POINTS IT AT THE MAN. SHE PRESSES THE BUTTON AND THE HANDSOME SINGER FROM THE TELEVISION REPLACES THE MAN.

THE HANDSOME SINGER LOOKS AT THE WOMAN FOR A FEW MOMENTS, THEN HE PRESSES THE REMOTE CONTROL.

THE WOMAN IS REPLACED BY HER HUSBAND. THE HANDSOME MAN LOOKS PLEASED AND MOVES CLOSER.

END

SCENE - INT'. A BAR. NIGHT.

A BALD MAN IS SAT ALONE IN A BAR. A MAN AND WOMAN COME OVER AND SIT IN THE EMPTY SPACE AT THE SIDE OF HIM. THEY ARE DEEP IN CONVERSATION.

THE MAN LOOKS AT THEM FURTIVELY.

HE BEGINS TO EDGE CLOSER TO THE WOMAN.

WHEN HE IS RIGHT AGAINST HER, HE REACHES FOR HER LONG BLOND HAIR, AND DRAPES IT OVER HIS HEAD.

THE MAN SMILES HAPPILY TO HIMSELF. THE COUPLE LOOK SHOCKED.

END.

SCENE - INT'. DOCTOR'S. DAY.

THE DOCTOR IS WORKING AT HIS DESK WHEN THERE IS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

DOCTOR Come.

THE DOOR OPENS AND A RATHER INEFFECTUAL MAN ENTERS.

MAN Doctor, Doctor!

DOCTOR Ah...Mr Patterson...And what seems to be the problem this week? ...
Saying everything twice again are we?

MAN Help!

DOCTOR (PAUSE) Oh!...Only once...Now, if you could just climb onto the couch and
relax...

HE COMPLIES.

DOCTOR ...Now, what can I help you with?

MAN I'd like to teach the world to sing.

DOCTOR Wouldn't we all Mr Patterson...Wouldn't we all...Now if you could just be
a little more specific?

MAN I'm lost in music.

DOCTOR I see...

MAN I am the walrus.

DOCTOR Sorry?...You think you're a walrus?

MAN I should be so lucky.

DOCTOR I'm sorry Mrs Patterson...I haven't got the faintest idea what your problem
is...Can you please tell me.

MAN We have all the time in the world.

DOCTOR Well, yes...But do remember that you're paying for my time ...So if you'd
get to the point.

MAN Money's too tight to mention.

DOCTOR Well I suggest you tell me what the matter is.

MAN I'm all shook up!...Crazy!...Be bop a Lula!

DOCTOR Ah!...Song titles...You feel that everything you say should be a song title?

MAN More than a feelin'.

Continued...

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DOCTOR ...Right...Now we're getting somewhere...And how did all this start?

MAN It started with a kiss.

DOCTOR Really?...And who was the lucky lady?

MAN Eleanor Rigby.

DOCTOR Of course...And where exactly did this kiss occur?

MAN Saturday night at the movies.

DOCTOR Kissing in the back row no doubt...And what happened afterwards? ... What did you say to her?

MAN Let's spend the night together.

DOCTOR Really?...And was she interested?...What was her initial reaction?

MAN Come up and see me, make me smile.

DOCTOR Right...Right...Lucky old you...And when did you take her up on this generous offer?

MAN Yesterday.

DOCTOR Mmm?

MAN All day and all of the night.

DOCTOR I don't need to know the intimate details...I'm just trying to establish what's triggered off your somewhat unusual response.

MAN Every little thing she does is magic.

DOCTOR I'll try and remember that...And I'm sure that has some bearing on your condition...But to be honest Mr Patterson I can think of no reason why you shouldn't continue with this relationship...I'm sure that this...Er...This behaviour of yours will sort itself out...Let's face it Mr Patterson in your case they usually do...Only last month you were convinced that you were a bowl of strawberries...And now this.

MAN I'm addicted to love.

DOCTOR And why not?...It won't do you any harm...As long as you enjoy yourself and take precautions...

MAN Love is a battlefield.

DOCTOR Of course it is...And the last thing you need is a dose of the old...

MAN Itchycoo Park.

DOCTOR Exactly.

END

SCENE - EXT'. A SUBURBAN STREET. DAY.

A MAN IN AN ANORAK AND CARDIGAN IS WALKING DOWN THE ROAD. HE IS BALD APART FROM A RING OF MID LENGTH HAIR AROUND HIS HEAD.

A PUNK ROCKER APPROACHES FROM THE OTHER DIRECTION. HE IS WEARING SKIN TIGHT BONDAGE TROUSERS AND LEATHERS ETC. HE HAS A RAINBOW COLOURED SIX-INCH MOHICAN HAIR CUT.

AS THE PUNK PASSES, THE MIDDLE AGED MAN STOPS AND LOOKS AT HIM, DEEP IN THOUGHT. HE THEN TURNS, SEES A HAIRDRESSERS SHOP AND WALKS IN.

FADE. FADE UP.

THE MAN COMES OUT OF THE HAIRDRESSERS. HIS RING OF HAIR IS NOW MULTICOLOURED AND IS STANDING OUT TO THE SIDES. (LIKE A HAT BRIM AROUND THE SIDE OF HIS HEAD).

HE WALKS AWAY DOWN THE STREET WITH A LOOK OF SATISFACTION.

END

SAMPLE SKETCH - LUNCH

SCENE - INT'. TRADITIONAL PUB. DAY.

A MAN ENTERS AND GOES TO THE BAR.

MAN Gin and Tonic please, and do you do bar food?

BARMAID Yeah...It's all on the board over there.

SHE POURS HIS DRINK

MAN OK, lets have a see what we've got...Right...I'll have the
Ploughman's Lunch please.

BARMAID Sorry, that's off.

MAN No Ploughman's Lunch?...What about the 'Businessman's Breakfast'?

BARMAID Yeah that's still on...And the 'Engine Driver's Dinner', and the
'Hairdressers' Mid Morning Snack'.

MAN No...I'll have the 'Dentist's Soup'...followed by the 'General Labourer's
satisfying snack'...And the 'Person of no particular occupational choice
Side Salad'.

BARMAID Right.

SHE GOES TO THE KITCHEN. THE MAN LOOK ROUND WHILST ENJOYING HIS PINT. AFTER A FEW
MOMENTS THE BARMAID RETURNS.

BARMAID Sorry, foods off, the Chef's on his lunch!

END

SCENE - INT'. A WILD WEST SALOON. DAY.

THE IMAGE IS IN CINEMASCOPE.

WE SEE A BAR RUNNING THE WHOLE LENGTH OF THE ROOM AND A SET OF SWING DOORS AT THE LEFT HAND SIDE OF THE PICTURE. 'COWBOY FILM' MUSIC IS PLAYING.

THE SALOON DOORS OPEN AND A COWBOY ENTERS. AS HE WALKS IN, HE 'BANGS HIS HEAD' ON THE CINEMASCOPE LINE AT THE TOP OF THE PICTURE. THE FURTHER IN HE GOES, THE MORE RESTRICTED HE IS BY THE LINES AT THE TOP AND BOTTOM OF THE SCREEN.

THE FINAL SHOT SHOWS HIM BENT DOUBLE TRYING TO SQUEEZE INTO THE NARROW FRAME.

END

SCENE - EXT'. A STREET. DAY. DAY.

WE WATCH A YOUNG MAN FROM BEHIND AS HE WALKS DOWN THE STREET. WE SEE THE DISGUSTED REACTIONS OF AS MANY PEOPLE AS WE CAN AFFORD, AS THEY WALK PAST HIM.

THE MAN STOPS AND SITS DISCONSOLATELY ON A BENCH/WALL. THE CAMERA PANS AROUND TO FACE HIM DURING A V.O.

V.O. Are you suffering from acne?

WE SEE THAT THE YOUNG MANS FACE IS A 'BAG OF PUSS'.

V.O. Do you struggle to pick up girls?

THE YOUNG MAN LOOKS INTO CAMERA AND NODS SADLY.

V.O. Are animals scared when they notice you?

WE HEAR A STARTLED MOO (OR ANY ANIMAL NOISE UNSUITABLE FOR A TOWN CENTRE STREET)
THE MAN NODS SADLY INTO CAMERA.

V.O. Do people retch when they see you in the street?

WE HEAR A RETCHING SOUND OFF CAMERA. THE SUFFERER NODS SADLY AGAIN.

V.O. Well, now your troubles are over.

THE SUFFERER LOOKS INTERESTED.

V.O. New medical research can cure you of this affliction in just five minutes.

THE SUFFERER LOOKS VERY INTERESTED.

V.O. D'you want to give it a try?

THE SUFFERER NODS ENTHUSIASTICALLY.

THE PICTURE FADES TO BLACK, THEN UP AGAIN (OR INSERT A 'FIVE MINUTES LATER' CAPTION)

THE SUFFERER IS SAT IN THE SAME POSITION, BUT HE IS NOW WEARING A HOODY, WHICH COMPLETELY COVERS HIS FACE.

V.O. New 'hoody', relief for people who have to look at acne sufferers everywhere!

END

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A BORED ASSISTANT WEARING A BROWN SHOP COAT IS BEHIND THE COUNTER. THE DOOR OPENS AND WE HEAR THE SHOP BELL. A TALL MAN IN A PAC-A-MAC ENTERS.

CUSTOMER (AS JOHN CLEESE) Hello...

ASSISTANT Sorry mate we're just closing for lunch.

CUSTOMER Never mind that my lad, I wish to register a complaint. I wish to complain about Grandma Buttercluck's Comedy Emporia, which I purchased not half an hour ago from this very boutique.

ASSISTANT Oh yeah, the comedy sketch show, what wrong with it?

CUSTOMER I'll tell you what's wrong with it. It's finished, that's what's wrong with it.

ASSISTANT Has it?

CUSTOMER Yes.

ASSISTANT Better run the credits then?

CUSTOMER I thought you'd never ask.

WE HERE A PARROT SQUAWK

CUSTOMER Was that a parrot?

ASSISTANT No

CUSTOMER No?

ASSISTANT No... No, no, no ... No, no, no, no, no (PAUSE) Yes.

END