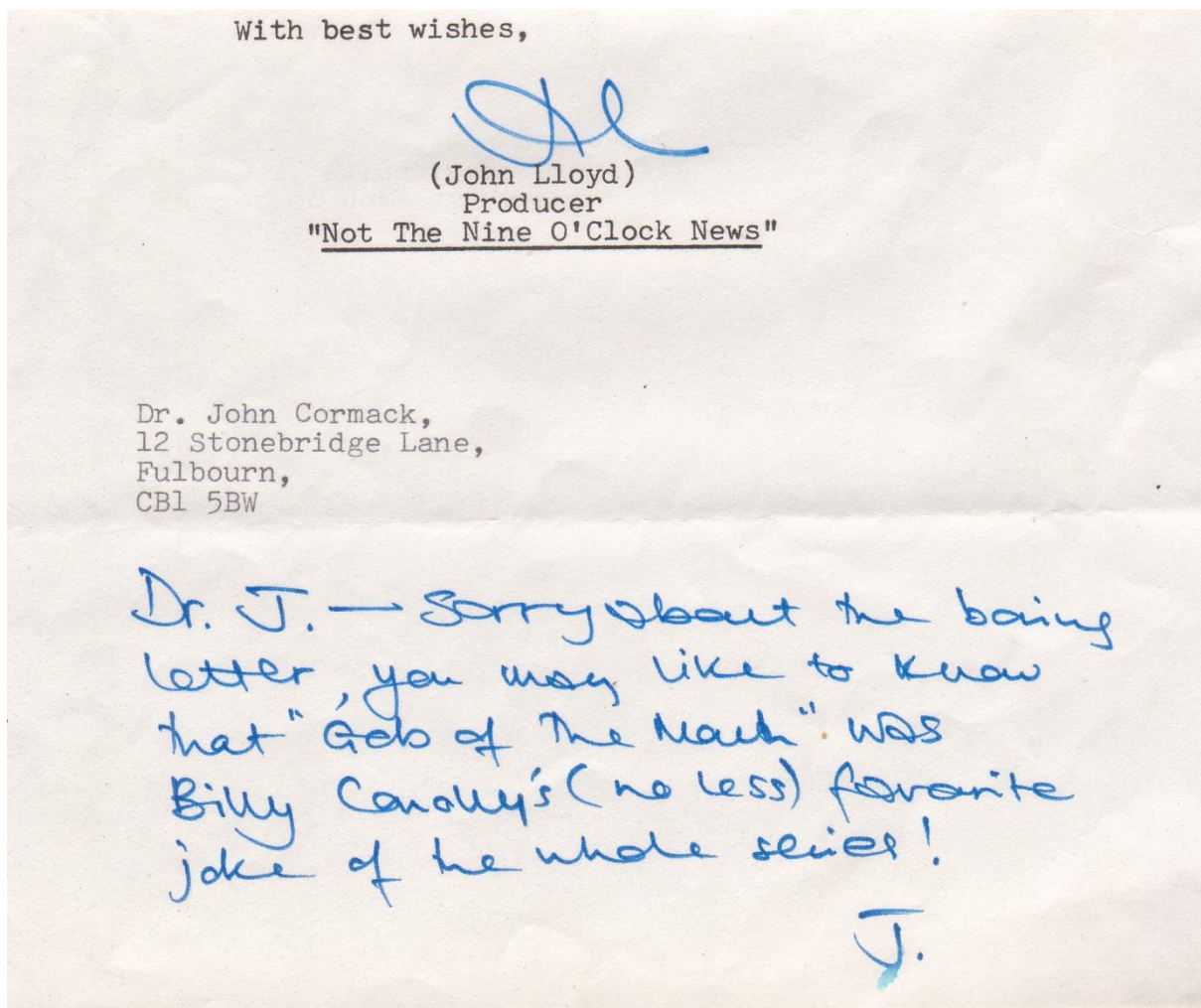


Not the Nine O'Clock News – and Comic Relief's Red Nose Day

My name appeared on the credits of an episode of Not the Nine O'Clock News which started with a sketch about children being rounded up and carted off to see the Rolf Harris Show on Saturday mornings. Some have assumed I had something to do with it - but I didn't, in fact, write that sketch. (In its defence... whilst it appears to be in bad taste now the details of Harris' secret life are known, it was fairly innocent at the time).

I'm not sure which sketch I wrote in that particular show – it was a long time ago. It might have been one called 'Divorce' or it could just have been Gob of the Month - which John Lloyd said "was Billy Connolly's favourite joke of the whole series. "



Divorce was a rewrite of the marriage service (with Rowan Atkinson as 'the vicar') ... except that, in this ceremony, as you'll have already

guessed, the couple are splitting up. 'Gob of the Month' was a spoof on 'Goal of the Month' which was very popular at that time. It goes without saying that this featured footballers who had just scored a goal and who, unlike today (when they get up to all sorts of contortions) a lot of them just turned round and jogged back, gobbing spectacularly as they did so. The commentary did not finish on the goal but continued to build to a climax as the player gobbled on the ground. I know it doesn't sound particularly edifying on the printed page but it worked quite well with Mel Smith's commentary.

'Divorce' has had a number of resurrections. It reappeared on the Not the Nine O'Clock News album (hedgehog Sandwich), was used in a Red Nose Day TV prog, and was reprised in a show called 'The Secret Policeman's Other Ball' which raised funds for Amnesty International. It also

+++

The story behind my involvement is that I saw John Lloyd at The Cambridge Arts Theatre when he was a young flaxen haired member of 'Footlights' - and he saw our little review group at the Edinburgh Fringe and/or in London (but didn't think much of it.) He produced a radio programme called News Huddlines (with Roy Hudd) soon after he joined the BBC and there was a need for 'quickies' and 'one liners.' (Most of mine ended up 'on the cutting room floor.') When John Lloyd moved on to television he took his little black book (containing the details of all the writers had used when working in radio) and contacted us to ask if we would be prepared to submit material for the new program. This was a very economical way of working because we only got paid for what was used ... although the BBC (unlike the NHS) was scrupulously honest and would pay royalties even when the show was screened in some remote and sparsely inhabited part of the world. Occasionally there would be a mini-bonanza ... such as when a sketch appeared on an album or whatever.

The non-commissioned writers tended to have day jobs/careers so they wrote in their spare time 'for fun.'. The success rate for was not high - Jimmy Mulville who went on to found Hat Trick Productions (which makes programs such as 'Have I Got News For You') was in charge of reading through the scripts I submitted ... and he put the majority in the bin (and a jolly good job too or I'd have been embarrassed by them to this day!) He did say, however, as if to make amends, that a lot of

viewers thought 'Gob of the Month' was going to be a regular feature ... and kept writing in asking if it could be repeated.

After he finished working on Not the Nine O'Clock News John Lloyd went on to produce Spitting Image, a topical programme which used puppets constructed by Fluck and Law which depicted the politicians, royals and 'celebs' of the day. I took my daughter, Laura, along to the first scriptwriter's meeting - she was very young at the time and was frightened by some of the puppets (Tebbit and Breznev being two of the most eerie.) The pilot programme we were shown wasn't great - and I thought it would probably die the death so I didn't offer to contribute - but they got their act together and it went on to be a great success, of course.

John Lloyd's next 'major adventure' was Blackadder - about which I need say no more as it is still being repeated on a regular basis. If you want more details, see:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Lloyd_\(producer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Lloyd_(producer))

DONATIONS

You can still, of course, donate to Comic Relief ... and your contribution will make a big difference to people both here in the UK and around the world. The link is:

<https://www.comicrelief.com/donate>

Amnesty International is, needless to say, still going strong. The recent report by Amnesty International which exposes the Syrian government's calculated campaign of extrajudicial executions by mass hangings at Saydnaya Prison has made headlines around the world. To donate, the link is:

[https://www.amnesty.org.uk/campaign/chameleon-2017?gclid=CjwKEAiArIDFBRCe_9DJi6Or0UcSJAAK1nFvdvPkWTTvxjFEVcGxwJ4kXT-AJWeoAUfgjjXw-eYCqhoCQrDw_wcB ...](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/campaign/chameleon-2017?gclid=CjwKEAiArIDFBRCe_9DJi6Or0UcSJAAK1nFvdvPkWTTvxjFEVcGxwJ4kXT-AJWeoAUfgjjXw-eYCqhoCQrDw_wcB...)

or Google: 'donate to Amnesty international.'

Unfortunate Rolf Harris Sketch - Not The Nine O'Clock News

written by

Curtis
& Bell

Colin
Bostock Smith

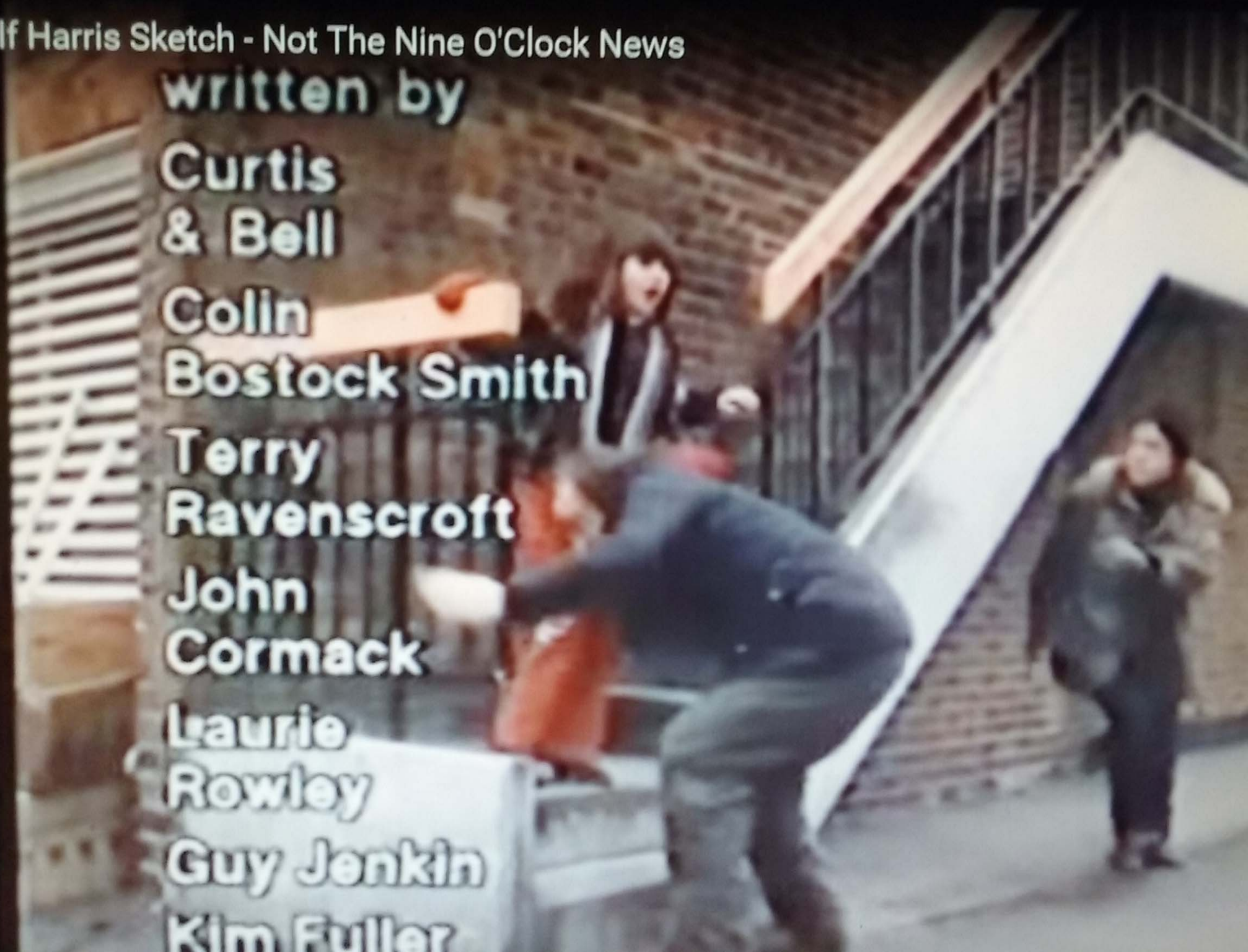
Terry
Ravenscroft

John
Cormack

Laurie
Rowley

Guy Jenkin

Kim Fuller



BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION
TELEVISION CENTRE WOOD LANE LONDON W12 7RJ
TELEPHONE 01-743 8000 TELEX: 265781
TELEGRAMS AND CABLES: TELECASTS LONDON TELEX

23rd October 1980

Dr. John Cormack,
12 Stonebridge Lane,
Fulbourn,
Cambridge,

Dear John,

Many thanks for this sketch. We had read it through, but I'm afraid we just can't make it work properly. It is very funny on the page but it reads very slowly and I just think it would be too long on the programme. Also it's nearly uncuttable because it need to be "accurate" and paced slowly, I think.

So very sorry about that.

As ever,



(John Lloyd)
Producer,

"Not the Nine O'Clock News"

**Having received this letter from John
Lloyd I did cut it – (it was over-long) - and
they did use it.**

For sketch click on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wIY2DIpmS2I>

BBC records

NOT THE NINE O'CLOCK NEWS

ROWAN ATKINSON · GRIFF RHYS JONES · MEL SMITH · PAMELA STEPHENSON



NOT THE NINE O'CLOCK NEWS

BBC
records REB 421

Available on Cassette No. ZCF 421
© BBC 1981 © BBC 1981
Made and printed in England
Manufactured and distributed by PRT Ltd.

Taken from the BBC television series transmitted 1980 starring
ROWAN ATKINSON, MEL SMITH, PAMELA STEPHENSON and GRIFF RHYS JONES



SIDE 1

1. **LOYAL APOLOGY** (Griff Rhys Jones and Mel Smith)
2. **NEWS SUMMARY** (David Kind, Ray Price and Laurie Rowley)
3. **CONSTABLE SAVAGE** (P. W. Newstead)
4. **BARONET OSWALD ERNOLD MOSLEY** (Peter Brewis)/BBC-EMI MUSIC LTD.
5. **UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE** (Guy Meredith)
- *6. **(I LIKE) TRUCKING** (Richard Curtis, Howard Goodall, Rowan Atkinson)/NOEL GAY MUSIC, COP. CON.
7. **SIR ROBERT MARK** (Craig Warren Nicholls)
8. **HI-FI SHOP** (David Renwick and Andrew Marshall)
- *9. **ENGLAND MY LEOTARD** (Kate Bush)/Kate Bush Music Ltd. sub. pub. by EMI MUSIC LTD. (Lyrical pastiche Peter Brewis)
10. **DIVORCE** (John Cormack)
11. **POLITICAL OBIT** (Peter Steggles)
12. **THE MAIN POINTS AGAIN** (Laurie Rowley)
13. **BAD LANGUAGE** (Richard Curtis)
14. **GIFT SHOP** (Tony Hilton)



SIDE 2

1. **HEDGEHOG APOLOGY** (Rowan Atkinson)
- *2. **SUPA DUPA** (Richard Curtis, Howard Goodall)/NOEL GAY MUSIC, COP. CON.
3. **SOCCER VIOLENCE** (Colin Bostock Smith)
4. **(BECAUSE I'M) WET AND LONELY** (Barry Manilow Song) (Howard Goodall, Richard Curtis)/NOEL GAY MUSIC, COP. CON.
5. **THAT'S LIES** (Mark Smith, Peter Richardson, Nigel and Roger Planner)
6. **CREED (THE NEW REVISED VERSION)** (Colin Bostock Smith)
- *7. **I BELIEVE** (The Reagan Song) (Richard Curtis, Howard Goodall)/NOEL GAY MUSIC, COP. CON.
8. **THE AIDE** (Richard Curtis)
9. **THE MAIN POINTS AGAIN** (Nat Clare, Pete Sargeant, Colin Gilbert)
10. **NOT THE PARROT SKETCH** (Richard Curtis)
11. **OPEN MARRIAGE** (Guy Jenkin)
12. **LAGER** (Barry Bowes)
13. **AND FINALLY.....** (John Burrows, Nat Clare, G. Mahlowe, Andrew Marshall)

The items marked* are in stereo.

* Signature tunes by

Nic Rowley/Noisy Music Ltd.

Technical Assistance by Philip Burwell, Phil Ashley, Peter Sidhom and Neil Pemberton.

Television direction Bill Wilson.

Television production John Lloyd and Sean Hardie.

Album production John Lloyd, Sean Hardie and William Grierson.



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14. **GIFT SHOP** (Tony Hilton)

Amnesty
International
PROUDLY PRESENT

OTHER

THE SECRET POLICEMAN'S BALL

ROWAN ATKINSON
ALAN BENNETT
JOHN BIRD
TIM BROOKE-TAYLOR
JASPER CARROTT
GRAHAM CHAPMAN
JOHN CLEESE
BILLY CONNOLLY
JOHN FORTUNE
BARRY HUMPHRIES
NEIL INNES
CHRIS LANGHAM
GRIFF RHYS JONES
ALEXEI SAYLE
PAMELA STEPHENSON
JOHN WELLS
VICTORIA WOOD



FIRST HALF



1) JOHN CLEESE, JOHN BIRD, ROWAN ATKINSON
& THE ENTIRE CAST
"A Word Of Thanks"



2) ROWAN ATKINSON
"Road Safety"



3) JASPER CARROTT
"Australian Motor Insurance Claims"



4) JOHN CLEESE, PAMELA STEPHENSON
& GRAHAM CHAPMAN
"Clothes Off"



5) VICTORIA WOOD
"Had It Up To Here"



6) JOHN FORTUNE & ALAN BENNETT
"Men's Talk"



7) ALEXEI SAYLE
"What's On In Stoke Newington"



SECOND HALF



1) DAME EDNA EVERAGE
"The Royal Australian Prostate Foundation"



2) JOHN WELLS
"Denis On The Menace"



3) ROWAN ATKINSON & JOHN CLEESE
"Beekeeping"



4) NEIL INNES
"Song In A French Accent"



5) ROWAN ATKINSON, GRIFF RHYS JONES,
PAMELA STEPHENSON & JOHN FORTUNE
"Divorce Service"



6) CHRIS LANGHAM
"Reading The Riot Act"



THE BOYS: GRIFF RHYS JONES
JOHN FORTUNE ROWAN ATKINSON



7) JOHN CLEESE & COMPANY
"Top Of The Form"



THE GIRLS: TIM BROOKE-TAYLOR
JOHN BIRD GRAHAM CHAPMAN



8) BILLY CONNOLLY
"Drinking"

Produced by Martin Lewis. Stage Show Directed by Ronald Eyre. Assisted by John Cleese.
Sound Production by John Strudwick. Executive Producer for Amnesty International: Peter Walker.
Recorded at "The Secret Policeman's Other Ball" - The 1981 Amnesty International Comedy Gala,
at The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London on 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th September 1981.

Recorded by The Rak Mobile. Engineered by Tim Summerhayes.

Mixed and edited at The Basing Street Studios. Mastered by George Peckham.

Rowan Atkinson appears by kind permission of Arista Records. Jasper Carrott appears by kind permission of DJM Records.

Billy Connolly appears by kind permission of Polydor Records. Pamela Stephenson appears by kind permission of Phonogram.

Artist's impression of Another Secret Policeman by Colin Wheeler. Laymen's impression of Another sleeve design by Martin Lewis & Graphyk.

Photography by Michael Putland

Amnesty International would like to offer its very real thanks to all of the above, especially the director and performers, (who gave all their services entirely free of charge),
and to everyone else who in any way assisted in the production of the show, the movie, this album, the music album, the book,
the sweatshirt and The Secret Policeman's John McEnroe Inflatable Cake Stand, including:

John Altman, Clive Anderson, Richard Armitage, Humphrey Barclay, Jeff Beck, Martin Bergman, Lisa Bonnichon, Adrian Boot, Lyn Boot, Keith Bradley, Peter Brown, Ken Campbell & friends, Sharon Campbell, Minnie Cardwell,
Doreen Chanter, Ernest Chapman, Eric Clapton, John Cohen, Mel Collins, Phil Collins, Miles Copeland, John Cormack, Paul Cosh, Ruth Cowan, Frances Crook, Chris Cross, Jeff Daly, Carl Davis, Bernard Docherty, Dave Donleo, Donovan, Martin Drover,
Sheena Easton, Jean-Luke Epstein, John Etheridge, Johnny Fingers, Roger Forrester, Mo Foster, Kristin Fridriksdottir, Michael Friend, Cathryn Gama, Rob Geldhof, Harvey Goldsmith, Malcolm Harcoppe, John Halseott, Michael Hamlen, Colin Harrison

Companion Record to
"THE SECRET POLICEMAN'S OTHER BALL - THE MUSIC" (HANA 6004)
starring JEFF BECK, ERIC CLAPTON, PHIL COLLINS, DONOVAN,
JOHNNY FINGERS & BOB DELROY. STING, THE SECRET POLICE

PROFITS FROM THIS ALBUM GO TO
Amnesty International



THE SECRET POLICEMAN'S OTHER BALL

WITH

ROWAN ATKINSON

JEFF BECK

ALAN BENNETT

JOHN BIRD

TIM BROOKE-TAYLOR

JASPER CARROTT

GRAHAM CHAPMAN

ERIC CLAPTON

JOHN CLEESE

PHIL COLLINS

BILLY CONNOLLY

DONOVAN

JOHN FORTUNE

BOB GELDOLF

BARRY HUMPHRIES

NEIL INNES

CHRIS LANGHAM

GRIFF RHYS JONES

ALEXEI SAYLE

PAMELA STEPHENSON

STING

THE SECRET POLICE

JOHN WELLS

VICTORIA WOOD

IN AID OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



Musical Interlude

The Universal Soldier <i>(Buffy Sainte-Marie)</i>	. . . . .	Donovan
I Don't Like Mondays <i>(Bob Geldof)</i>	. . . . .	Johnny Fingers & Bob Geldof
Farther Up the Road . <i>(Don Robey & Joe Veasey)</i>	. . . . .	Jeff Beck & Eric Clapton
In the Air Tonight . <i>(Phil Collins)</i>	. . . . .	Phil Collins
Message in a Bottle . <i>(Sting)</i>	. . . . .	Sting
Roxanne <i>(Sting)</i>	. . . . .	Sting

* * *

Top of the Form <i>(John Cleese)</i>	. . . . .	Rowan Atkinson John Bird Tim Brooke-Taylor Graham Chapman John Cleese John Fortune Griff Rhys Jones
I've Had It Up to Here With Men <i>(Victoria Wood)</i>	. . . . .	Victoria Wood
Divorce Service <i>(John Cormack)</i>	. . . . .	Rowan Atkinson John Fortune Griff Rhys Jones Pamela Stephenson
Denis and Ronnie <i>(John Wells)</i>	. . . . .	John Wells
Clothes Off! <i>(At Last the 1948 Show: Tim Brooke-Taylor, Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Marty Feldman)</i>	. . . . .	Graham Chapman John Cleese Pamela Stephenson
Alan and John <i>(Alan Bennett)</i>	. . . . .	Alan Bennett John Fortune
Drinking <i>(Billy Connolly)</i>	. . . . .	Billy Connolly
Finale I Shall Be Released <i>(Bob Dylan)</i> . . . . .	. . . . .	The Secret Police

*Sorry, but this is
the 13th time John
Cleese's name has
been mentioned
and we're only
on page 3.*

Top of the Form
(John Cleese)

Rowan Atkinson
John Bird
Tim Brooke-Taylor
Graham Chapman
John Cleese
John Fortune
Griff Rhys Jones

*Sorry, but Ken is
the 13th line John
Cleese's name has
been mentioned
and we're only
on page 3* →

I've Had It Up to Here With Men
(Victoria Wood)

Victoria Wood

Divorce Service
(John Cormack)

Rowan Atkinson
John Fortune
Griff Rhys Jones
Pamela Stephenson

Denis and Ronnie
(John Wells)

John Wells

Clothes Off!
*(At Last the 1948 Show: Tim Brooke-Taylor,
Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Marty Feldman)*

Graham Chapman
John Cleese
Pamela Stephenson

Alan and John
(Alan Bennett)

Alan Bennett
John Fortune

Drinking
(Billy Connolly)

Billy Connolly

Finale
I Shall Be Released *(Bob Dylan)*

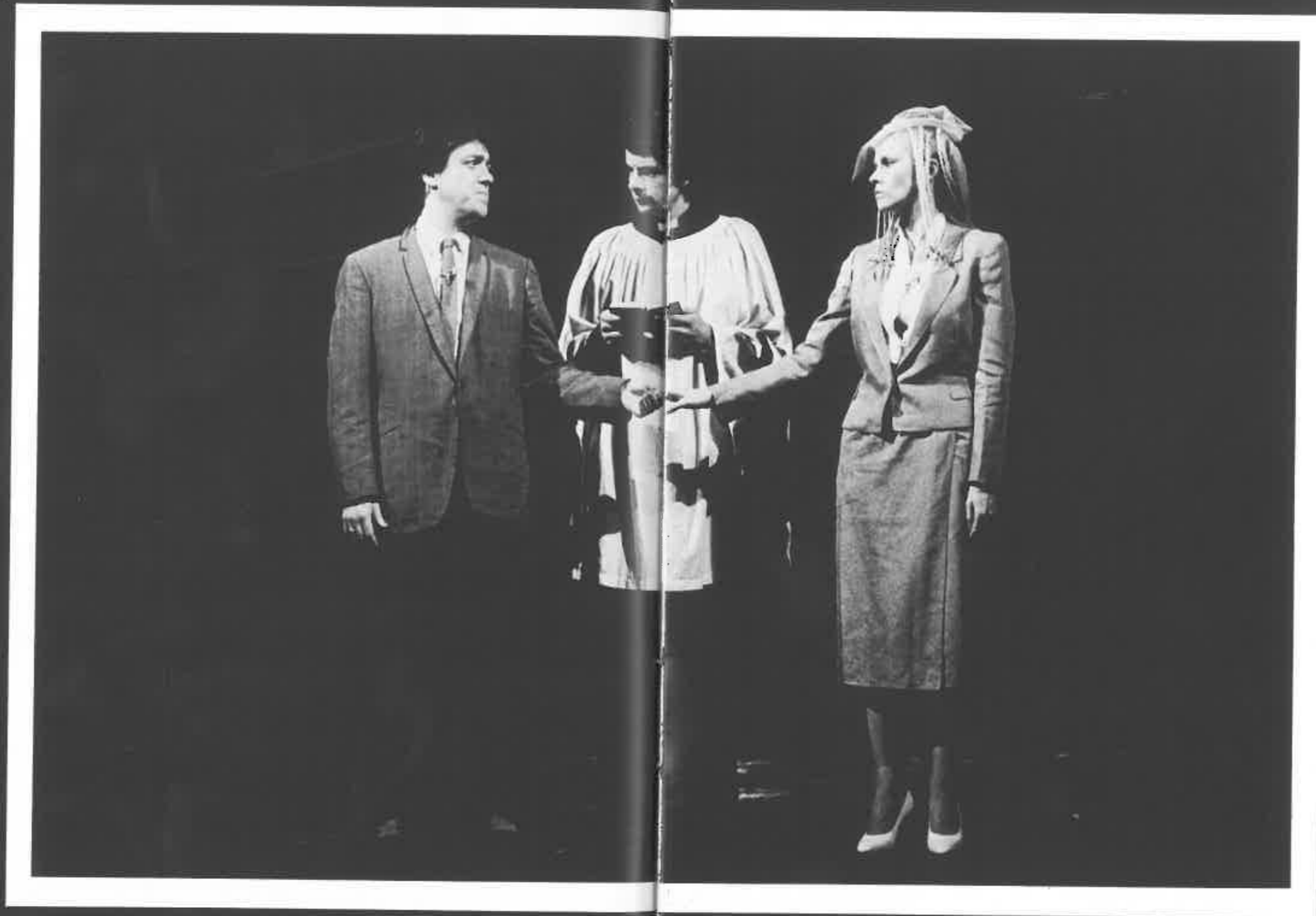
The Secret Police



Divorce Service



At last! A sketch with
Pamela Stephenson in it.



Solemn organ music is heard.

MINISTER. We are here to celebrate the holy sacrament of divorce. Dennis, wilt thou leave this woman, who is thy wedded wife? Dost thou dislike her, despise her, has thou told her a thousand times if thou've told her once to squeeze the toothpaste tube from the bottom and not the top and dost thou

despise her brother, the chartered surveyor, who invites himself to dinner and then drinks thy Scotch after ye have gone to bed? Dost thou dislike her mother, hate her cooking, get irritated that she picks at her toenails in bed, and that the clippings somehow find their way into that little crack in the side of the duvet, and wilt thou forsake her for as long as ye both shall live?

DENNIS. I will.

MINISTER. Muriel, wilt thou leave this drunken shit who is thy wedded husband? Didst thou dislike the brevity and infrequency of his lovemaking and wert thou so sick of having to lie to him about how it's not size that's important and that you may as well be sleeping with one of those seaside collection boxes made out of a mine? Wert thou driven to distraction by the fact that he uses saucers as ashtrays and the fact that when he said he was going to his mother's for the weekend, he was in fact in Ipswich with Elsie Maynard and will you, if given half a chance, cheerfully wring his neck?

MURIEL. I will.

MINISTER. Who taketh this woman away from this man?

FRANK. I do.

MINISTER. It say these words with me: 'I take thee from thy wedded husband.'

FRANK. I take thee from thy wedded husband.

MINISTER. 'To have and to hold, from this day forth.'

FRANK. To have and to hold, from this day forth.

MINISTER. 'For I am Frank Hodgkiss, the lounge lizard from accounts.'

FRANK. For I am Frank Hodgkiss, the lounge lizard from accounts.

MINISTER. 'And thereto I plight thee my troth.'

FRANK. And thereto I plight thee my troth.

MINISTER. Those whom I have put asunder I bet no man can join together. Dearly beloved, divorce is an honourable state and is not to be taken in hand lightly, inadvisedly or wantonly to satisfy men's carnal lusts, although that's a pretty good reason, and forasmuch as Dennis and Muriel have consented to abandon holy wedlock and instead to pledge their troth to whomsoever tickles their fancy, I pronounce that they be man and woman apart and henceforward shall be free to be swingers and frequent singles' bars that have been approved by the Archbishop of Canterbury, perhaps dancing cheek to cheek. Amen.

MURIEL. Amen.



80s THE BEST OF BBC COMEDY THE EIGHTIES

EIGHT HILARIOUS 1980s SHOWS

- The News Huddlines** Alas Smith and Jones
- Not the Nine O'Clock News** Victoria Wood - As Seen on TV
- Yes, Minister** A Bit of Fry and Laurie
- Blackadder** The Man From Auntie

Entertainment and enlightenment - 1980s comedy produced both in abundance. At one end of the decade *Yes, Minister* was lifting the lid on the Machiavellian machinations of Whitehall mandarins, at the other Ben Elton was motormouthing off at the abusers of power. Elton also co-wrote the remarkable *Blackadder*, while contemporaries Fry and Laurie proved equally witty.

The '80s provided women with a welcome seat at comedy's top table - Victoria Wood, a true original, being among the first to prosper. The emphatic success of *Not The Nine O'Clock News* opened many doors, leading to the long-running *Alas Smith and Jones*. In terms of longevity, though, few can match *The News Huddlines*, a good old-fashioned radio comedy with topical one-liners and sketches.

So sit back, put your feet up and enjoy another decade of great comedy.

Mark Lewisohn, Author, Radio Times Guide to TV Comedy

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Design by Town Group

All these recordings were previously released in: 1990, 1991, 1994, 1997, 1998

COMEDY
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THE BEST OF BBC COMEDY THE 80s

THE BEST OF

BBC COMEDY

80s

THE EIGHTIES

BBC COMEDY

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EIGHT HILARIOUS EPISODES OF BBC COMEDY

THE PROGRAMMES

The Best of BBC Comedy

SIDE 1: THE NEWS HUDDLINES

28 November 1991

SIDE 2: NOT THE NINE O'CLOCK NEWS (compilation)

THE NEWS HUDDLINES

With Chris Emmett, Roy Hudd
and June Whitfield

Sketches by: Charlie Adams,
Mike Coleman, Michael Dines,
Dave Dixon, Gerry Goddin,
Wendy Gray, Tony Hare, Peter Hickey,
Robert Linford, Jenny Maynard,
Alistair Newton, Richard Parker,
Ged Parsons, Les Rowley, Phil Rowson,
Ivan Shakespeare, Bill Smith,
Richard Stoneman, Tony Wheatley,
Clive Whichelow, Syd Wright
Producer: Dirk Maggs

The News Huddlines is BBC Radio 2's longest-running comedy series. Since 1975 Roy Hudd, Chris Emmett, June Whitfield and an assortment of special guests have been amusing the nation.

In this special 300th edition of the show the team take an irreverent look back at the 80s, from the Church to the NHS, ending with Roy Hudd singing *Ever Since the Argies* as Bud Flanagan!

NOT THE NINE O'CLOCK NEWS

With Rowan Atkinson, Griff Rhys Jones,
Mel Smith and Pamela Stephenson
Producer: John Lloyd

The brainchild of BBC radio producer John Lloyd and current-affairs expert Sean Hardie, *Not the Nine O'Clock News* first hit BBC2 on 16 October 1979. The four members of the team were Rowan Atkinson, Chris Langham, Mel Smith and Pamela Stephenson. The second series (with Langham replaced by Griff Rhys Jones) won the Silver Rose at the Montreux Festival and for the next three years the irreverent and innovative sketches made the show one of the most talked about on television.

The show had an open-door policy when it came to scripts, with anyone being able to submit sketches for consideration. The regular team included some of today's most successful comedy writers: Richard Curtis, Andy Hamilton and Guy Jenkin, and David Renwick.



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