

Channel 4
Factual
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Opening Remarks

Janey Walker

Head of Education and Managing Editor, Channel 4

Hello everybody. My name is Janey Walker. I am Managing Editor and Head of Education here at Channel 4 and I would like to thank you for coming. We have changed the format of our PACT events for this autumn, so you are here at the Factual event. I hope that is where you wanted to be. We have an Entertainment event tomorrow and a Drama one the following day.

I will just let you know the format of this afternoon. Julian Bellamy, who has been Head of Channel 4 since May, with the briefest honeymoon period on record, will start off the session this afternoon. We will then have a short while with Rosemary Newell, taking you through the Channel 4 schedule. We then have four sessions with different commissioning departments talking about the opportunities and the kind of thing that they are looking for next year.

There will then be 10 minutes of chaos while we move chairs around and organise for everyone to have one-to-one sessions with the commissioning editors. With that, I will hand you over to Julian.

Changes at Channel 4

Julian Bellamy

Head of Programmes, Channel 4

I. Opportunity

Hello everyone. This is my very first briefing day as Head of Programmes at Channel 4. I thought what I would do, as I know each of the commissioning editors is going to take you through some of the specific requirements that they have and some of the opportunities and so on that they have, is take you through some of the broad themes of some of the changes that we are making, and some of the broad opportunities that present themselves accordingly.

The first thing that I would say is that there is obviously huge strength and depth at Channel 4. I had the good fortune of being able to present the autumn season for Channel 4 and there are some fantastic things coming up this autumn. We have new drama in Peter Kosminsky's *Britz*, a big new environment event launched last night called *Dumped* from factual entertainment, a whole range and raft of new factual shows from *Bringing Up Baby*, through to new arts projects and so on, and some new entertainment from Russell Brand, *Russell Brand's Ponderland*. In many ways, there are huge strengths and depths at Channel 4.

I also think, however, that Channel 4 has always had an uncanny knack of reinventing itself, reinvigorating itself and refreshing itself before it becomes too repetitive and too stuck in its ways. That is why we want to kick start a process of creative renewal on the channel to find the next generation of fantastic, memorable, brilliant Channel 4 shows.

In practical terms, the good news should be that there are huge opportunities, frankly, for you the producers. I do think – certainly a big theme coming through when you hear all of the commissioning editors – that you should feel that, firstly, there is a real sense of urgency now amongst the commissioning editors, to start moving and start commissioning as fast as possible. Also, there is this broader sense that I genuinely think the biggest call to action is to you – the independents for some years on Channel 4. I think it is a really quite exciting time on the channel.

I will take you through the four large themes of the changes and our thinking at the moment.

II. Themes of Change

1. Making Room for the New

The first, and probably most important, is to make room for the new. There should be, and you should feel I think, a real focus on the new and untried in 2008.

To do that, we have to make sure that we have enough room to do it. That does mean – and if you have read the papers in the last few days you will know – that we are saying goodbye to some brilliant series that have served us very well over the years, ranging from *Brat Camp* to *You Are What You Eat* or *It's Me Or The Dog* and so on. It also means taking some rather tough decisions, in our determination to create space for the new, and resting *Celebrity Big Brother* for instance on Channel 4 in 2008.

All of this frees up slots for the commissioning editors to commission into for 2008. It also means, in some instances, creating some new slots for home-grown primetime originations. For instance, I do not know if specialist factual is going to be talking here, but certainly they will be able to talk to you about some of the opportunities opening up on Sunday evenings for specialist factual.

Broadly speaking, I will not delve too far into the money side of it, but broadly speaking, the way we will pay for this is that we will be spending less money on American series in 2008 – something in the region of about £10 million less – and also moving some of our money from late nights into primetime. There is a real determination there, backed up with slots and money, to make room for the new and find the next generation of fantastic shows.

2. Increasing the Range

The second key theme is increasing the range of our primetime offering, to a degree. In part, that comes naturally from stopping or resting some of our big primetime series. I would also like to think that there are more real opportunities for some new flavours in the mix. For instance, we are thinking very, very hard at the moment about adventure and travel. It is something that – I know Hamish, and to a certain degree the documentaries department – we all feel there is a real opportunity for us and it is something that is, to a certain degree, missing on the channel at the moment.

3. Increasing the Scale

The third key theme is scale. I think it is very important that Channel 4 always ensures that there is enough room for the odd and the curious and the genuinely experimental. I think it is also true to say that scale and being big is more important than ever. I think you will see that running through some of the themes this afternoon, for instance, you will surely hear that there is a real appetite for more stripped events in features and factual entertainment. There is a determination to expand *Cutting Edge* from being something that is about eight documentaries per year up to a minimum of 20, possibly as many as 30, per year.

There is a real focus on a few big campaigning seasons being a key feature of the Channel 4 schedule. We have one this autumn, which is on child literacy. We have another big one in the New Year in which we have, amongst other things, Gordon, Jamie and Hugh fronting a campaign for a season against damaging, unhealthy and processed food. We are really looking for the next seasons there and that should be something that comes through loud and clear.

4. Staying Relevant

The last point is about relevance. Make no mistake, although we are saying goodbye to some series that frankly performed rather well for us, and have continued to perform well for us, we absolutely want to be as well-watched and relevant as ever. In factual, for instance, one of the great things that Channel 4 has done is find genuinely educational and informative subjects and set them in an entertainment context. You can see that running through the DNA of the channel. Whether it is *Secret Millionaire*, whether it is *Dumped*, whether it is *Embarrassing Illnesses* and I think we are as keen as ever for those. Broadly speaking, I think that my list of priorities for 2008 is finding more of those series at 21.00 is a big theme running through all of our commissioning efforts at the moment.

Those are the four big themes running through our thinking: more space for the new, more range in primetime, a real focus on scale without closing possibilities for the small and the one-off, and an absolute determination to be as well-watched and as relevant as ever. I genuinely hope that you feel as energised and excited as us, and as I do at the moment, because I really, really do think that there are some fantastic opportunities for everyone.

I have probably already used my time allocation. Unless there are any questions, I will hand over to Rosemary Newell. Are there any questions, or have I shouted you into silence? I think I have. I will hand you over to Rosemary.

2008 Schedule

Rosemary Newell

Controller of Broadcasting, Channel 4

I. Opportunities in Factual

1. Schedule Template

Good afternoon everybody.

I always do a chart; I cannot do anything without a chart. What this is – Julian talks to you about the overall picture of what we are looking for next year – is my opportunity now to tell you about where in the schedule all of the factual programming that we are hoping to commission, will play. I am basically going to run through all of the opportunities for the programmes from the factual genres for next year.

The crucial thing to start off by saying is that this is an overall template of what the Channel 4 schedule looks like at any given moment. You do not really need this chart; you could probably look at a listings magazine and work it out for yourselves, but this gives you a rough overall picture of what the pattern is that the schedule works from. In red are the factual slots; in black are the slots from other genres. I will not focus on those. I will only focus on the parts in red.

The days of the week run across the top and the time runs down the side. I will start off here.

2. Weekday Evening Slots

This is 20.00 on a Monday. 20.00 on a Monday, as you are probably all very aware, is the slot where we place the majority of our *Dispatches* programmes. As you know, we are now commissioning up to 40 *Dispatches* in the course of a year. Many of those will play into the Monday slot. In addition to *Dispatches*, there will be some other current affairs programmes on a Monday at 20.00, some authored history, some religion, essentially those programmes that will provoke some argument. They will quite often be polemics, personal points of view, and very, very often they will be Pick of the Day. They have the DNA of Channel 4 going through them. They are provocative, argumentative, difficult, interesting programmes that are always current and quite often presenter-led. Those are being commissioned through current affairs and specialist factual.

The expectation, in audience terms on a Monday, so that you know, is not high. We are not expecting these programmes necessarily to deliver big audiences to the channel. However, they have an incredibly important role in other ways, in attracting a lot of attention, and they stand up for what the channel is all about.

Moving on to Tuesday through to Friday at 20.00 – again I am sure this is all very familiar to you all – this is where we play the majority of our features and lifestyle programmes. The part of the commissioning department essentially responsible for 20.00 is Sue and Walter in features. This is where you will see all of our property programmes, personal makeover, life change, body image, food and all of those areas that Sue is looking to explore in features. We commission both half hours and hour, Tuesday to Friday, and quite often we use some of the better know titles to help launch other half-hour series at 20.30. There is a huge amount to be done next year at 20.00. There is obviously a good number of returning series that are the real building blocks of that 20.00 slot, but there is masses and masses of opportunity for new programming coming through at 20.00.

At 21.00, again you can see pretty consistently across the course of the week that this is a slot where we play factual programming pretty much every day of the week apart from Fridays. On a Monday it is where we tend to focus now on our feature-length pieces. There will also be our single dramas running into this slot. However, this is also our opportunity for those 90-minute and two-hour science programmes, history and sometimes current affairs or feature documentaries etc. There is a huge range here that will tend to feel very contemporary and will always be reviewed and previewed. These are well-funded, big, major single pieces. What we are aiming for is to pretty much have a single programme here every week of the year. This is also where some of the undercover 21.00 *Dispatches* investigations may well play as well.

Tuesday and Wednesday is really the home of contemporary factual, whether this is coming through from the documentaries department, features or from factual entertainment. Again, we really, really have a lot of scope for commissioning into this slot for next year. We are looking for more series, as well as singles here. This is like asking for the Holy Grail but we are looking for that ultimate, returnable format series. It has been a while, probably, since we have had a really successful returning format and there is plenty of scope on Tuesdays and Wednesdays for those to play. As Julian has said, and I think as Kevin said in Edinburgh, there will be no returning series at 21.00 next year, apart from *Grand Designs* that is, which will be in the schedule next year; we are not that mad. We have to take a deep breath to be sitting here and saying that, but we want those series that can start next year and return in 2009. There are lots and lots of opportunities for series and some singles here, but we are after those three-, four- or six-part series that have the potential to return on a Tuesday or Wednesday night. They obviously have the benefit of sitting alongside those shows at 20.00, so you can really make for an evening that feels as though people could tune in and stay with you for the night.

Thursday is a very important slot. Again, Julian has just mentioned that we are putting a lot more behind singles. We are probably the only channel to be doing this. We are looking for probably up to 30 *Cutting Edge* programmes next year, so that is a lot of single films to be commissioning. We also have other contemporary documentaries and specialist factual series and singles here – history, science and religion playing into Thursday at 21.00. This will be the key home for *Cutting Edge*, and as I said, there is going to be up to 30 films playing across this slot next year.

That probably covers most of the week. The only other thing to point out is that, what we try to do at 22.00 is to run most of our fiction. At 22.00 during the week, there will be a combination of drama – both UK drama and US drama – and some comedy as well. We do, however, want to encourage some 22.00 factual commissioning as well. There is not as much around as at 21.00, but obviously by 22.00 there is a little more room for more subversive wit. We are therefore looking

for some new anthology series and singles to play at 22.00 as well. The scope is not quite the same as at 21.00 though.

3. Weekend Slots

Moving on to the weekend, the principal area to concentrate on is 19.00 on a Sunday. This will be the slot again for some of those core public service genres including the arts and including music performance. Some history and some religion will play into the 19.00 Sunday slot. Once again there is opportunity for commissioning into here.

Then, at 20.00 and 21.00 – and I know that Liam and Hamish are going to talk to you about this in a while – at 20.00 we want to open up a slot for what we have called ‘inspirational, escapist Sunday features’, that is anything that you would want to watch on a Sunday at 20.00 that is not currently on at the moment. We feel that there is real potential to be tapped on a Sunday at 20.00 and so far we have not managed to do that quite in the way that we want to. We know that *Top Gear* has done phenomenally well at 20.00 on Sunday and we feel that too many people are watching *Top Gear* because we are not providing enough competition. We know there is the thought of travel, escapism, relaxation, that is, the sort of programme that reminds you that it is still the weekend and not the beginning of the week.

We have released funding into 20.00 on a Sunday, so there are many slots to commission there. Then another new genre, to which Julian has just alluded, is this notion of adventure and travel for Sunday at 21.00. This is an area of programming that we have not really concentrated much on, on Channel 4, but we have opened up 15-20 slots next year for adventure and travel on a Sunday night. Again, we will be trying to work hand in hand with the 20.00 slot so that you get a real sense that we are giving people a treat for a Sunday evening.

4. Departing from the Weekly Schedule

The only thing I would finish by saying is that this clearly looks like a very prescriptive map. It could be the schedule that we would run every week of the year. However, the whole point of this is that we will rip it up from time to time and do something completely different. What we want to do is to try to make people accustomed to where particular types of programming play. Then, once we have made them used to it, we will throw them a surprise. What we will do from time to time is strip programmes across the week and play things in a different way so that you have a sense of event, and a sense of importance, if you are showing something across Monday to Thursday at 21.00. Obviously, we also have the seasons and campaigns that Julian was talking about, which we would want to play into the peak time schedule. From time to time, the whole template is binned and we do something completely different. There is always, always scope; the idea will always lead the schedule and not the other way around.

I hope that makes sense to people. If there are any questions, please say so.

Participant

Question Inaudible.

Rosemary Newell

No, at 22.00 again, it is hours that we are looking for really, singles or series. We have not commissioned a great deal. The subject matter tends to be subjects that appeal to a slightly younger audience, because the audiences become younger as the evenings go on. You can have a bit more fun at 22.00, in 18 certificate factual programmes that push the envelope a little more, than can play at 21.00. They can be rude, witty and fun.

Participant

What happened to *The Last Word*, and why does it not appear on there if it is still around? It was 23.00 on weeknights, was it not?

Rosemary Newell

The Last Word used to play on More 4 and it is no longer part of the More 4 schedule. We are still talking actively about whether there is a talk show that we could bring into the Channel 4 schedule, but as yet, we do not have the right idea.

Participant

On Sunday, [inaudible] preference [inaudible]?

Rosemary Newell

Again, led by the idea but usually ours.

I am going to hand over to Hamish and Liam now, who are going to take you through Sunday evenings.

Sunday Nights

Liam Humphreys

Commissioning Editor, Features

I. Introduction

Good afternoon everyone, I am Liam Humphreys and I am here to talk about Channel 4 features at 20.00 on Sundays. I will be followed by Hamish Mykura who will talk to you about specialist factual at 21.00 on Sundays.

Channel 4 is opening up and actively looking to resource a Sunday primetime slot, this is a big opportunity for features in 2008. The recent success of *Wife Swap* on Sundays has shown that there is a large audience who are looking for a Channel 4 alternative to the existing tidal wave of heritage programming on other channels. We want to provide young, exciting adventures, as opposed to the television equivalent of Saga holidays currently being served up by other broadcasters. Be it revisiting Britain's coasts, pondering its favourite views or meandering around its mountains Channel 4 wants to offer an alternative for all *B-road Britain* refuseniks.

What are we looking for to fill the factual void between these mountains and crumbling coastlines? Channel 4 is about celebrating Britain but not through soft-focus cultural heritage. We need programming that feels contemporary and surprising and has Channel 4 attitude. I am not going to show you clips of programmes that we are already doing because I would prefer to talk to you about the real and exciting opportunities that exist in features for you and for us. I want to talk to you about what we want and the slots available rather than what we are already doing.

II. Shameless Sunday

Essentially we are looking for 60 minute series which feel distinctively Channel 4. This means, features factual territory which is broad in its appeal but young in attitude, is super-aspirational and is information rich. In terms of Channel 4 features output it is unlikely that the Sunday 20.00 slot is going to be filled by rigid 30 minute formats, we are not looking for the next *How Clean Is Your House?* Or *It's Me or the Dog*, but by information-rich stories. We want narratives that are full of character, jeopardy, drama and ambition. The realisation of people's extraordinary dreams. Essentially our ambition for Sundays at 20.00 is to deliver programming which allows the viewer to put off the working week for another couple of hours and allows them to bathe in an aspirational bubble bath, instead of worrying about the impending Monday morning. To help them achieve this it may be useful for you to think of the 20.00 slot as Shameless Sunday.

1. Aspirational

It might be shamelessly aspirational which translates in to the rich aspiration of *Grand Designs* more than the reality of *Location, Location, Location*. What are the new breed of romantic aspirational lifestyle journeys? How should we reinvent *No Going Back*? What new real aspirational trends should we be tapping into? And what new ways can we find to talk about the way we live today?

2. Escapist

Sundays might be shamelessly escapist, we are looking for travel series but this means travel plus a features territory, be it food, property or lifestyle. As features skews female, we are only likely to do a series on mountains if a meal is cooked at its summit. Seriously though, one illustration of this point is an idea where we take two chefs to kill, cook and eat their way up the world's food chain, from a snail to an elephant.

3. Entertaining

Sundays might also be shamelessly entertaining. We would love another *F word*, what other feature's subject matter could justify this combination of entertainment format with features content? And what other talent could carry it? In summary I think the most important thing to remember is that in order to welcome viewers to 20.00 on Channel 4 on Sundays we need to have a broad appeal but be distinctively Channel 4 in attitude.

III. What We are Looking For

1. Talent

I think this can be broken down into three headlines of what we are looking for and ways for you to crack this slot. The first is talent, whatever we do in features, be it narratives, hybrids or studio shows, will always be talent-led. We are already looking into new vehicles for existing talent but we remain very keen to find new talent and new faces on primetime Channel 4. We are looking for hugely charismatic experts in their field, not presenters but pioneers. These are people that you would like to go on a journey with, people you feel you could learn something from and people who you instinctively like and trust.

Channel 4 has always been about discovering talent and we need to find the next wave of new faces. These are people that you would not imagine being on the BBC, they would probably have a contemporary outlook on life and possibly something new and iconoclastic to say. We are not looking for dinosaurs to front our shows, attitude must come before age. We need more authorship, we want to go on more journeys with more people and we want your help in finding them.

2. Content

The second headline is the entertainment format with features content. Above and beyond the talent-driven narratives our holy grail is to provide something completely new in terms of both

content and grammar. We want new shows which are both lively and wide awake and which rub against the slumber of Sunday evenings. Two good recent examples of this are *Top Gear*, which is essentially an entertainment show which happens to be about cars and the *F Word*, a brash and clever entertainment show about food.

The *F Word* was originally commissioned for Sunday at 20.00 so hopefully that gives you some idea of the ambition for this slot. Food and cars are therefore covered but what other features territories are ripe for reinvention in this way? Travel, design and fashion are all strong possibilities but remember it is always about marrying the right idea with the right talent.

3. Events

The third headline is events. We want to do more stunts, campaigns and stripped events. One idea we are currently thinking about is *Grand Designs Live*, a week of live *Grand Designs* related programming, based around the *Grand Designs* event which takes place annually in London's Docklands, which will start on Sunday and be stripped in prime time across the week.

What other live exciting events are happening in the real world which relate to features territory? Again, please ask what makes it distinctively Channel 4? We are more akin to blowing things up than covering flower shows, and it is about finding new and exciting ways to bring large audiences to subjects that they would not normally watch. We also want stunts, a good example of this would be *Kill It, Cook It, Eat It*. I think it is a great example of show-not-tell TV, a clever way of grapping the audience's attention and delivering an important message at the same time.

IV. Factual Features Content

Lastly we would love to have some new competitive formats with factual features content. Again think what feature's territories – if combined with the right talent – could be adapted? The door really is wide open. I think it is an exciting opportunity for all of us and I hope that this has been useful information for all of you to that effect. I will now be taking some questions, but if any of you would like more details please grab me after the event.

Participant

Hi Liam, if you have got the right idea will you work with producers finding the right talent? Or do we need to come to you with both?

Liam Humphreys

I think there is room for both, it is often the case that with the right talent we will find a vehicle to go with it, if we have a good idea we will work with you to find talent. As a general rule of thumb it is probably harder to find the talent than the idea. I think that talent is key with regard to features. Hamish will now talk to you about 21.00 on Sundays, thank you very much.

Hamish Mykura
Head of Specialist Factual, Channel 4

I. Introduction

Thanks Liam. I have brought some clips, on the basis that usually at this point people can do with watching some.

[Video shown]

I take the view that in specialist factual you have the opportunity to make the most interesting programmes on the most interesting channel in the country. In terms of the sheer range and ambition of our output I hope that is going to be evermore the case in the coming year.

In these clips you saw some of the programmes that speak to what we are doing on Sundays and some that do not. To start off with, before I speak about our new Sunday output, I will have a quick canter through some of what we are presently looking for. We are actively commissioning in specialist factual with a lot of space for next year, and a lot of programmes to get.

I will start off by saying that it is our ambition to win awards, that should be one of your objectives in coming to this department. We won the BAFTA this year for our film about Nuremberg, the Grierson for *The Year London Blew Up* made by Ed Coulthard and had an Emmy nomination for *9/11: The Falling Man*. So really you should be aspiring to make the very best programmes in this department.

II. One-off commissions

One-offs play quite a big part in what we do and I think that the one-offs that have really worked have been the ones that have grabbed hold of the national agenda, made headlines and have been completely unashamed to have been angular, spiky and look at things from a perspective that is counter to the mainstream. The classic examples of that are *The Great Global Warming Swindle* film and the film *Diana: The Witnesses in the Tunnel* which for different reasons were absolute talking points when they came out, and were both really important pieces of journalism and well-made features. These are the qualities which really inspire me when I am looking for a big one hour or 90 minute one-off.

I would also put some of our 9/11 coverage into that category. *The Man Who Predicted 9/11* and the other film made by Steve Humphries which is called *9/11: The Miracle of Stairway B*, alongside *9/11: The Falling Man*, have all been great films about that subject. These are contemporary history and we can do contemporary science in exactly the same vein, in fact *The Great Global Warming Swindle* was contemporary science.

III. Weekday Documentaries

We are particularly looking for presenter-led documentary series during the week, ones that are going to deliver ratings without sacrificing an intelligence of concept. I think we can do a lot here with reality and formatting, as long as it does not intrude against the content. I would say that series like *That'll Teach 'Em* have been great examples of how we have done that in the past and the Richard Dawkins presented series was also a good examples of that, his most recent one was called *Enemies of Reason* and its predecessor about religion was *Root of All Evil*. Using authorship in a way that grabs the agenda, but again delivers programmes that are popular with a high profile.

Our presenters are not only professors in tweed jackets, Gunther von Hagens is a good example of someone all together more edgy, who has established himself as a household name thanks to his exposure on Channel 4. I am not just looking for more insane Germans in hats but I am looking for people who can do the kind of thing that Gunther does in terms of taking a subject which sounds specialist, in this case human anatomy, and through a factual theatre deliver it up to a much larger audience.

IV. Weekend Documentaries

Those really are programmes for weeknights, at the weekend we have traditionally been rather confined in terms of specialist factual output to early evenings on Saturdays and Sundays. We are still doing programmes that run in these slots, but in addition we are going to be doing new runs of series at 21.00 on Sundays.

If you wanted a way to characterise the programmes then they are about trying to prolong the weekend, you do not want to turn off the television and go and polish your shoes or do the kids' homework just yet, you want another hour to enjoy the weekend. They should not be too intellectually difficult, but they should be programmes that bring content in a way that really makes you sit back and watch.

I triangulate what we are doing on Sunday nights between three different series, I put *That'll Teach 'Em* a classic living history programme at one edge, I would put *Top Gear* at one point on it, with its in-studio talk format, and I would put travel and adventure programmes at the third point, this would include things like *The Beckoning Silence*, where Joe Simpson, who made *Touching the Void*, returns to the Eiger, the mountain that has always obsessed him. There he finds out how it is to be a slightly older climber, whose bottle is starting to go. It is a great adventure film, made with high production values.

1. Medicine Men

We are also doing a series called *Medicine Men* which is classic Sunday fare. Identical twins who are both qualified Doctors are fascinated by tribal medicine and the origin of medicine from plants and animals that are found in the rainforest. They visit various different tribal locations and experiment with what you can do with the medicine that you find there. The great thing about them being identical twins is that they are a walking, talking and living control experiment, so one of them can take the bark of a particular tree and the other one can take an aspirin and we can see

whose buboes go away faster. It is also a beautifully made series, with a sense of sympathy for the landscape that it is in, which I think is fantastic.

2. **Bringing Up Baby**

I also showed you a clip of *Bringing Up Baby* which is another example of living history. This programme is coming on very soon. The idea is that this takes three decades of baby care approaches. A 1950s approach, which is basically about leaving the baby outside and about not giving the baby too much love and affection and how all of that builds a routine and character.

The second approach is from the 1960s and from Dr Spock, which is more psychological and more trying to intuit what the baby wants. The third one is a more 1970s hippy approach to childcare which involves never putting the baby down. It explores in great detail how these different decades had these very different views of the correct way to bring up a baby.

What it also does, by the means of three *Supernanny*-type figures, is put three families through their paces using these particular techniques and the results are really dramatic and interesting to see how the families fare using these different techniques. It is history brought to life in the most vivid and practical way. It is also something that does what I was talking about at the outset, with the global warming film. It takes on a lot of the real certainties of our society and gives them a real rough shaking while always being absolutely thoughtful, considered and intelligent about what the purpose of that is.

So *Bringing Up Baby* is one of the programmes that I am really excited about and I would like more of. To conclude I would say the shop is open, we have had six months of not commissioning very much and now with some of our 2008 output already having been moved forward into 2007, 2008 is looking empty. I am commissioning fast and I am really eager to have all your ideas so bring them on. Any questions or comments?

Participant

What is the approach to digital cross platform programming? Is there a plan to include it in the commissioning?

Hamish Mykura

I have a little note here saying that if nobody talks about online I should talk about it. The answer is that there are various things that happen in new media and cross platform with our output. The straightforward is channel4.com, which is a good place for material which backs up programmes and which generally feeds off what programmes are doing. Some of those things can be terrifically effective, particularly with some of our bigger series.

Now that Channel 4's education spending is going almost exclusively online rather than onscreen, there is a real opportunity to tie in with aspects of our particular programmes which have a real application to our education output. This will appeal to school age children and young adults as well. I will give you a very good example of this, later in the year we are doing a really extensive series about the Bow Street Runners and policing in Georgian England. What we are doing online

for that is a fantastic video game, it is like Georgian *Doom* in a way. In it you are in a world in which there is no police force and in a slightly *Sims*-like way you have to think what it is that you will require in order to develop a police force. From there you go and take down Georgian pimps and bank robbers. It uses the dramatised material from the programme and turns it into an online video game in a way that I have never seen before.

I am fantastically excited, and slightly frightened, by what they can do now with those kinds of applications and I am really keen to do more with them. If you are coming to me with an idea and it has got a new media application or a new media idea that goes along with it then you should really put that to the fore, because it can really help with commissioning.

Participant

Hamish, both you and Liam talked about travel, can you characterise what you are looking for that is different in the travel adventure genre?

Hamish Mykura

We have done a fair amount with travel and adventure, we used to do a lot more. Recently we have done some things, there is the Discovery commission, *Born Survivor*, which is the Bear Grylls programme that has come in for a fair amount of stick in the papers recently. Fundamentally though, we defend that programme as a fantastic how to guide to survival in the wilderness. With a charismatic character like Bear you can get programmes which go way beyond what Ray Mears used to do, and take you into a world of travel and adventure which is fundamentally about experiencing it rather than being told about it and it is about going with presenters who discover, learn and face the hardships in a way that has a sort of travelogue quality, a kind of gonzo quality on the road rather than a lavish Michael Palin type experience where you feel that everything has been mapped out by the researchers months in advance, and every chance encounter has been put in the call sheet six weeks before.

A lot of it is about that and it is largely about finding the right presenter. I know we can talk in the abstract about who the right presenter is, but all I would say is that if you send me a DVD of a presenter it is the very first thing that I put in the machine. We are really actively looking for new presenters who can work for us at the moment. Thanks very much.

Cutting Edge

Meredith Chambers

Commissioning Editor, Documentaries

I. Introduction

Hello, I am Meredith Chambers the commissioning editor for documentaries and in particular I look after *Cutting Edge*. The first thing that I want to say is that there is some very good news in the sense that *Cutting Edge* is expanding very dramatically next year. We are certain to have 20, possibly 25 and if we get the right ideas coming through we could be looking at up to 30 episodes.

The main thing to say about that extended run of *Cutting Edge* for next year is that we have not commissioned that many. There are two key things that I would like to make clear today, first of all we are definitely open for business in terms of *Cutting Edge*, and secondly that 30 is quite a lot and that means that it is really important in terms of the run's success that we have an extraordinary variety of tone, flavour, colour and experience. I will go into those two things in more detail in a while but really simply we are a department that needs your best ideas very quickly.

The run might be split into two halves and I know that we still need good films for the first half of next year, as we all know some of the most successful films are the ones that you start a year before. If we are going to have a rich run in the second half of the year I would like to be starting films now. There is a lot of business to be done and importantly this notion that documentaries or *Cutting Edge* are the place for the darkest and most terrible aspects of human nature, it is kind of true, but really it is the place for fun, adventure, excitement and good times.

I will show a tape and this tape is made of a number of films, not all *Cutting Edges* but a number of films from our department over the last few years and is there to give a sense of the breadth of what we have been doing. There is a film or two of what is coming up to give a sense of the flavour and tone of what we are looking for and have been doing.

[Video shown]

II. Content of the Films

That is a collection of a few of the firms that have been out in the last couple of years, first of all I just want to talk about the sort of values that we should have in the films that call themselves *Cutting Edges*.

1. Clarity of Proposition

The first thing to say is that they need to be pretty simple propositions; they need to be things that the audience can understand quickly and clearly. Not just because it is a competitive environment

at 21.00, but also so people can have a strong sense of what they are going to get and be immediately drawn to them. I have no doubt that the films will then have intelligent, bright, witty and sharp things to say about the subjects they are in, but in the first instance I think they need to be pretty clear right from the start about what these films are.

I think they then need to be very clear about what job they are doing and too often I think some of the documentary films are reflective of interesting things in the world, but they come and they go. What we need to be sure about is; if a film is politically provocative then it is very angry, if a film is trying something new then it is wilfully, demonstrably and scarily innovative and if a film is going to be entertaining then it is damn entertaining.

If it is going to be all three then that is fantastic but it cannot be, and it is Peter Dale's phrase, 'nice to have'. This means not bad, and sort of reflecting something that we half know is going on. I think they have to be either demonstrably doing a job, and that is either being cross and angry with the world and doing that Channel 4 thing, being incredibly inviting at 21.00 as entertainment or being incredibly ambitious as a risk-taking documentary.

2. Risk

I also think they should be risky, authored and most importantly funnier than the things we are putting out. I think risk is a bit of a cliché, but for me risk is the sense that the viewer gets when watching it that they knew this film could fail at any point. I do not mean that they think 'that is a risky idea', I mean that they could see that the director was always riding on the coattails of something tricky or dangerous. I do not mind failing heroically, I would much rather that our films had that inherent sense of danger or risk because I think that the viewer can spot it.

3. Authorship

It also important that the films continue to be authored by the country's best filmmakers. I do not necessarily mean the established talent, I hope that *Cutting Edge* remains the home for the most established talent but also for the bright new upcoming filmmakers. I am very proud of the fact that a couple of the best films of the past few years have been made by first-time directors. It is imperative that *Cutting Edge* does not become a closed shop for the old hands, but certainly asks the old hands to do their best work and continue doing that. But more importantly than anything else, at least some of our films have to be funny. They have to be immediately accessible and make the audience laugh.

4. Organisation Structure

However many films we end up doing it will be a lot and I would be foolhardy to think that I could find that many gems. So I am going to share that load with Simon Dickson, who I am sure you know as one of our best commissioners of single films. We will probably share the list rather than split it directly in half. We are going to keep on talking so we can construct this run and at the same time Angus Macqueen and Sarah Mulvey are also going to find films that they are excited by. To all intents and purposes Simon and I will be the point people for this expanded run, and we will have to talk among ourselves and with you to make sure we construct an exciting run of films.

III. Categories of Films

Beyond that I think the most useful thing I can do is give you a shopping list, it seems terribly literal but it is a way of enunciating the sort of films that I think are out there and giving you a sense of what I think is missing. The predominant category that has always been the feature of *Cutting Edge*, and will remain so, is the present tense observed documentary. But more importantly we should look at it as adventure stories, as films that promise a very dramatic 48 minutes where things will happen. Not a snapshot of something, not three cases that prove the rule but a thing that will unfold in front of your eyes. That is why I think it is very important that all the film proposals have a sense of adventure and journey in them. I have broken that down into six categories.

IV. Film Proposals

1. Exciting Adventures

For me the standout omission from what we have got at the moment is adrenaline-fuelled exciting adventures. I remember *Snatched*, which was a very exciting film about women trying to get their kids back, or *Jump Britain*. These films showed that the world is an exciting place where people live quite dangerous lives.

2. Reactive Films

Secondly we should be doing more films that are reactive. Once every now and then we should be right on the agenda, we should send our best filmmakers out to dispatch from things that are happening right now. *The Hunt for the Washington Sniper* was one of the best examples of where that worked and I think at least two or three times next year we should be making 48 minute films about things that are in the news and giving them the values and the qualities of understanding that come with the best documentary making.

3. Access to Characters and Institutions

We need more films that have great access to great characters and great institutions. For me it would be lovely if someone could bring us people of the quality of *The F***ing Fulfords* or the extraordinariness of access like *An Impossible Job*, the Graham Taylor film of some years ago. There has been a drying up of the well of access, and it is probably a fact of life that most things have been accessed by now, so where is it that has not? Or where can we look again and reinvent the way that we tell the stories of the access to those institutions? Where can we bring new, modern filmmaking techniques, or a new way of looking at some of the important access in life?

The access that I think matters the most is the access that impacts on everyone's day-to-day life. So it is Tesco rather than an obscure department of a government body. It is everyday access that has an impact on the way we live our lives.

4. Adventures of the Heart and Mind

Another place where adventures happen is in the mind or in the heart – it is not always off a cliff. I am sure that Simon Dickson will continue to be interested in finding the human interest films that he has made his quality benchmark. *Make Me Normal* was one of the standout films of a couple of years ago and *Breaking Up With The Joneses* was an extraordinary piece of work from last year. Somewhere in the *Cutting Edge* run we need to have a flavour of the bittersweet human interest stuff that he does so well.

5. Social and Political Adventure Stories

I am also very interested in social and political adventure stories. Two of the films that I felt most heartened by were *Pram-face* of last year which looked at single mothers and *Aged 12 and Looking After the Family* earlier this year. Both of them got very very good figures and addressed proper subjects and were talked about and written about. They had a social and political dimension and so when people wonder whether we are bothering to do the important political stuff any more, yes we are, and we are finding the subjects that deliver big audiences.

6. Middle Class Adventures

The last thing to say about this kind of adventure story is that adventures that happen in the ordinary lives of our viewers, which are called middle-class adventure stories. These are things that impact on the lives of people like you and I. The good examples of things that have worked for us in recent years have been *Bad Behaviour*, *The Chain* which looked at the property chain, and *Sleeping with the Au Pair* though I am not sure that is something will necessarily happen to all our lives, it is certainly a flavour of middle-class anxiety.

V. Further Issues

The other three things are bigger headlines, we are very keen to hear the best jaw-dropping, past tense stories, *The Black Widow* was a perfect example of this. The best crime stories, brilliant comen, which are things that might have been in the *Daily Mail* in the last year, but with exclusive or premier access to the retelling of brilliant and modern folkloric stories.

Daring experiments will be very important in this upcoming extended run of *Cutting Edge*, *Fourteen Alone* was a very memorable attempt to do something really simple, what happens when you do a *Lord of the Flies* exercise and put 14 children in one place. Well you get a great 48 minutes of television and you can say something quite interesting about that generation. *The Seven Sins of England* looked mad on paper, and may have looked madder on screen, but it was certainly one of the most exciting documentary adventures of recent times. I am really open to hearing about other very simple conceits, that when we try them out they unlock the world around us.

The final category is funny films. Of course what I am really saying is that any of the above can be funny or funnier, or can be told with wit and verve that makes sure the audience can sit down and look forward to the next 48 minutes.

VI. Future Films and Series

Of course being as prescriptive as saying that there are seven kinds of films is nonsense. I am absolutely aware that the best films will come out of the blue and have nothing to do with any of those. I promise to keep an open mind about that, and I will be delighted to hear about those ideas. One thing that is really certain is that they will probably come from the smaller indies, and probably from outside of London. As a department we are really keen to work with smaller and regional companies. We will be very imaginative in the way that we will try and make that work in terms of the day-to-day practicalities of a new relationship. The new work system is there and sometimes I am disappointed by how few good ideas are in it.

It is worth saying that as a department the same values that I have been talking about, which are being popular, risk-taking, serious but with a sense of humour, should inform the four, five or six series that we are looking for for next year. *Secret Millionaire* did very well for us last year and that sense of being very popular and lively about the world around us but making a point at the same time should inform the work that we need for next year. We are commissioning now, we have an urgent need for films and we really do want your most watchable ideas. If there are any questions I will be delighted to try and answer them.

Participant

Do you prefer one-offs or documentary series?

Meredith Chambers

As a department we have a need for both right now, *Cutting Edges* are always singles, and we have a great need for good *Cutting Edge* single films right now. For next year we are looking for exciting ideas for series. We have mostly focused on *Cutting Edge* here, but it is worth saying that there is good work to be had from this department in terms of series too. The same criteria applies, they need to feel fresh, invigorating and exciting to watch.

Participant

I am just wondering, the ideas are obviously going to require background so are you going to need the people in place for those before we bring them to you?

Meredith Chambers

A good idea is a good idea and hopefully it jumps out at you. We do not like getting involved in development hell where we give you a bit at a time. If a good idea is there for the taking I hope we will find a way of just going for it and if you know great talent you already have a head start. Otherwise I know who else is available for work right now and may be perfect for it. It will be a question of working with you but we are very able to dig in our pockets and find development money and we are able to be flexible in order to make a project work quickly.

Participant

What about if you have the idea, but need to find the man in the street to put to that idea.

Meredith Chambers

When submitting ideas which seem to be about a territory the crucial thing is to do it in a couple of paragraphs, then I will know whether I want to give you the money to go and find the man in the street. I think that is it for me and next it is Kevin Sutcliffe.

Dispatches

Kevin Sutcliffe

Deputy Head of News & Current Affairs, Channel 4

I. Outline

Good afternoon, I am Kevin Sutcliffe I am the Deputy Head of News and Current Affairs and I am the Commissioning Editor for Dispatches. Has anybody mentioned 'creative renewal' yet? And how many times? I am going to say that the great thing about my job is that I am paid to cause trouble, and I am paid to give you money to cause trouble for me and for Channel 4. In that context I am going to talk to you about current affairs in 2008, and give you a few bullet points about where we are going.

The main thing that I want us to all think about is how we can make current affairs break through in 2008 for Channel 4, in what is a very crowded market with *Panorama*, *Tonight*, *Whistleblower* and everybody else making a lot of noise. There is a very short tape which if we show now will give you a flavour of what we have done this year and then I will give you an outline of where we hope to be.

[Video shown]

I think we own them, as opposed to some of the other areas of domestic stories, which we do not quite own in the same way. So, for next year, *Dispatches* really wants to try to own the domestic agenda more than it has this year, whilst maintaining an amount of foreign coverage in areas that we consider to be important. The key message at the moment is that for 2008 *Dispatches* wants to breakthrough more in domestic investigations than it has this year. I think it broke through with *Undercover Mosque* and it broke through with *Charles: The Meddling Prince*, which seemed to catch a nerve, but it has not regularly broken through in the way that *Panorama* or *Tonight* can.

I am very keen to talk to people who want to talk to us about whether our agenda is right. Do we have a popular touch or should we be more popular? Should we do the same stories as *Panorama*

or *Tonight*? For example, dog-fighting was on the other night, which *Dispatches* often does not tackle. We are seen as a little highbrow but are we too highbrow? It would be nice to know at the end if people think this. Maybe people should think they can come to us with a story about property prices, instead of going to *Panorama* or *Tonight*.

II. The Shape

The shape of *Dispatches* next year will be 40 shows, with possibly 30 domestic and a maximum of 10 foreign. They are all open for pitch – a short email is the usual way of doing that. Usually, the answer is no. In fact, 99% of the time the answer is no. Hopefully, that answer is quick and we apologise if it is not. We feel that is the best way to do it: an email and a quick ‘No, thank you very much – let us move on.’ We are trying to make *Dispatches* distinct. It is an hour, so it is the only hour on primetime. It is an attractive proposition and it is very well-funded. It can do an investigation that takes a year or more. It can do a film that can be turned around in three to five weeks. All of those things are available and in play for next year if anybody wishes to contact the department and we look forward to seeing that.

III. Campaigns and Seasons

Outside of *Dispatches*, we have *Unreported World*, which is made by one particular company, but the new things that we are being asked to think about, which offer us opportunities with creative renewal, are campaigns and seasons. We are being asked to come up with campaigns and seasons and lead them. The best example of that is the literacy season that we have just announced, which we are leading with *Dispatches* and also a three-part redemptive series about 11-year olds learning to write. It is a huge effort and it will be cross-promoted. It will touch many programmes within the channel so other parts of the channel will contribute. It will be an enormous thing in October. Next year we will be asked to do more of those sorts of projects.

If you are wondering how to think about that, literacy is a domestic subject that touches us all. It is something that is in the papers all the time. We think we have captured the right way of approaching it and we feel we can campaign on it and it will really make an impact. There will be a takeaway both in the web presence and from the films. For next year, we probably need two or three such big ideas for campaigns. We also need seasons. Seasons are slightly more amorphous. You can contribute one show to a season but not quite lead the season. Again, we will be asking everybody. We will be putting out a wide notice for season ideas and campaigning ideas.

IV. Authorship

Where Current Affairs can score next year is in two areas: one is authorship, which I think we do very well and it is something the BBC cannot do. We have people with strong views taking you to places where you do not normally go. In politics, we can do more. We have Peter Osborne, who makes very strong fair-but-authored pieces for us. Who else could we have as authors? In the strand we have called *The Insider*, which is on at 6.30pm on a Friday, some of the authors in there could be grown into an hour. We had a fantastic piece on packaging and how much packaging we use. It was very popular and perhaps at 30 minutes it was thrown away. It could be as simple as that in terms of a piece of breakthrough authorship.

It can be more trenchant, it can be more political, and it can be a daring, radical idea that nobody particularly wants. Sorious Samura made a very important film for us called *Living with AIDS*, where he went to Africa and challenged African men's sexual practices. There had been many films on AIDS that year – the BBC had done a massive season – but the one thing that no one had actually bothered to ask was that question. We made a huge impact with that and won many awards, and we said something that no one else would say. If you are thinking about authorship, think about the 'unsayable.' That does not mean the unsustainable; it means the 'unsayable' – the difficult to say – but it should be supported with fact and reasoned argument.

V. New Faces

The other thing we are looking for is new faces. Who should be on Channel 4? Who should be on Channel 4 Current Affairs? It would be good to find some new faces. We have a number of regular reporters and regular faces. We do not have enough. Are they ageing? Are they too old? Are they too right or too left? We are really open for that. What follows from that, and what we are being asked for by Julian, is can any of these faces be grown into proper faces of 4 with series attached? There is something in developing someone here for the long term that may reap dividends for you later. Here I am thinking about younger authors, younger faces, maybe in their late 20s or early 30s, who have something to say. BBC did the rather good little campaign on BBC2 where pensioners were taken on a journey to get something. Tim from *Newsnight* did it and it was a really nice way of growing Tim, which the BBC seems to have done very well. We should be doing that. Do come to us, even if it seems a mad idea or a mad person. We are really keen to find new faces at the moment.

VI. Conclusion

I do not have a great deal more to say in terms of the opportunities for the department. *Dispatches* is the main driver of the department at the moment and that is where most of the money currently lies. You can get an answer quickly and you can get on and make a film for us very quickly. Judging by the number of gaps I have ahead of me, you need to ring me straight away. However, try to remember that from January Julian has said that *Celebrity Big Brother* is not coming back this year. There are a huge number of opportunities for Factual Entertainment programming and for Current Affairs programming and we are being asked for authors' seasons and campaigns. There is a great deal of pressure to come up with the new, the radical, the interesting – the 'only Channel 4 would say that.' So I encourage you all to drop me or the department an email. There is Dorothy Byrne, Kevin Sutcliffe, Gideon Joseph, and Mark Roberts. Drop us an email and we will get back to you straightaway. We hope we will not disappoint.

Questions and Answers

Participant

There are two big elections next year, we are led to believe. Would you like to talk about how you are commissioning around both of those?

Kevin Sutcliffe

Well, if there is not a big election by October, and I do not think there will be. Clearly, there are issues of what we can report within the period of the election but we try to take a view – a big thought – for example *Politics isn't Working*. We look for a big thought and we look to try to commission around that what others will not do. *Politics isn't Working* was one way of saying, 'Well, they will all just tell you what you want to hear but actually there are bigger issues in play that you will never hear about – here they are.' That tends to be our approach, which is to try and work out where we can get in and have a voice that feels different, particularly with a British domestic election, which has wall-to-wall coverage and everyone is the same. We are looking for the way in, the clever way of prising that open.

It is not quite the same but we did *The Iraq Commission* recently and that was a response to the fact that there has been no real public debate on Iraq so we had a commission. It ran over a week, it was televised, and it made a big noise. That is a way of doing it. It does not have to be a film – it could be an event. With the American election, it is the same issue: you know what films everyone will make. It will be *On the Road with...* Again, is there a way or a character or a person – for example Greg Pallast coming here and talking about America or a new Michael Moore figure – to cover the American election that does not feel like you have heard it all before. We are fishing around for that one big guiding idea first and then who can entertain me? Who can take me on a journey?

Participant

Can I ask a supplementary? Take the American election – will Current Affairs lead on commissioning cross-genre?

Speaker

I am not sure any of my other colleagues would do it. It is probably us. We will probably just do it and if there is a sense that the channel wants to make a bigger statement, then I think probably we would lead it. Maybe we will do something more discreet within Current Affairs, within *Dispatches* plus one or two other extra things. Someone may come up with a clever idea. There is a very good documentary going around at the moment about the electoral machine frauds from a couple of years ago. It is a great film and if someone had a similar idea now, we would be in the market for putting that next to a couple of other shows. We can turn the news and *Unreported World* towards commissioning so things start to get a critical mass. Thank you very much.

Factual Entertainment

Andrew Mackenzie

Head of Factual Entertainment, Channel 4

I. Preamble

I am going to talk to you about Factual Entertainment. We have a very positive message to send out. I hope Julian has informed you that the doors are wide open at Channel 4 at the moment. There are bags of opportunity and nowhere is that more appropriate and true than in Factual Entertainment.

II. Department Changes

About a year, when we last had a PACT briefing, I said we were the department that did *Super Nanny*, *Wife Swap*, *Brat Camp*, *Big Brother*, and the *100 Greatest...* lists. There has been quite a radical change in our department. We are making way for the new in quite a radical way. We are no longer the department that looks after *Big Brother*. We are no longer the department that looks after Sunday night. *Brat Camp*, after the upcoming series, is not coming back. *Super Nanny* and *Wife Swap* are being moved out of 21.00. As a department, we are now solely focused on re-energising the Channel's core output at 21.00, 22.00, and 23.00 during the midweek. It is a massive, massive task.

III. Mainstream Engagement

What kinds of shows do we want? If I take 21.00, 22.00, and 23.00 and break it down schedule-wise, 21.00 is the most competitive area of the schedule, as you will know, and Factual Entertainment's role is to unashamedly engage with the mainstream, which is somewhat of a dichotomy at Channel 4 because we do not like to admit that we like to engage with the mainstream. Our job in Factual Entertainment is to be populist but also to inspire and challenge the mainstream. We are looking for ideas that are popular and entertaining – ideas that absolutely evoke Channel 4's core values of integrity, originality, and sense of purpose, but have a scale, an ambition, and an entertainment value.

IV. Ambitious and Entertaining Constructs

That has not always been the case in our department. I do not think we would now commission shows about divorce and about the education system. We want ambitious entertaining constructs that still highlight important areas of our society. We are not the right department to do a landmark series on the third world, but we would commission a series called *Millionaire's Mission*, which takes unashamed self-made millionaires and sends them to Uganda to revitalise a village economy. It is a high-concept twist, we think, on an important issue.

The best example of a show that is an indicator of the way we should be going is *Dumped*. It started last night and runs this week. It is a show about the environment. The environment is an area that I would have struggled to convince myself to commission. Frankly, I thought that all the ideas I heard were a bit dull and then a company who had never worked for Channel 4 before walked in with an idea that was big in Sweden. This did not bode that well but I thought the idea was brilliant and the company turned out to be a company that had a very successful production background. It was called Outline.

The idea was to take 11 people and stick them on a landfill site and see what happened. Can they live on what we all throw away? For me, it instantly had that element of 'I want to see what that looks like' and I thought 'Can you do that?' Any idea where you think, 'Bloody hell, are we allowed to do that?' is a good thing. Above and beyond that, past the entertainment values and the constructed documentary reality values that you are going to get from a well-cast group of people, there is, by osmosis, a great deal of public service value. We throw away an enormous amount. We recycle less than Holland. We recycle less than a quarter of what we actually throw away. There are important issues here for our society. Frankly, I am not going to watch *It's Not Easy Being Green* but I might watch *Dumped*.

V. Subject Areas

When we think about what subject areas might suit the Factual Entertainment department, it is worth thinking that we need to find a radical, challenging, scaled-up, and ambitious way of coming into all those ideas. *Dumped* also slightly changed the grammar of the way that we have been making shows. We are stripping it across a week, which you could say is a scheduling trick but it has the feeling of an event. We tried it last year with an idea called *Too Big To Walk*, which worked quite well, and I think BBC3's *Baby Borrowers* worked really well. The starting point for *Baby Borrowers* was the fact that Britain has the highest rate of teen pregnancy but the show was not about that at all. It became something far more entertaining and compelling than that simple rather dry statistic that you read in *The Daily Mail*.

Going forward, for the 2008 schedule we need four or five 21.00 series. I would really hope that two of them have the scale and ambition of *Dumped* and have the epic quality where you know you are going to see shots from a helicopter and where you know you are going to see big, wide shots that evoke good, ambitious televisions. Getting to these ideas is not easy but rather than asking, 'What are the subjects that people care about?' there are more simple questions that we have used in brainstorming techniques. What shocks you? What pisses you off about society? What is the worst point of your day? We had a meeting with a producer recently who said that the worst point of her day was driving to work. It was annoying because she could not predict the traffic, she always got stuck in it, she knew that she was pissing on the environment by getting in her car, and she also knew that the journey would be hell and would increase her stress levels.

VI. The Woman Who Stopped Traffic

So we started to think about whether there was a programme in that. Is there a programme in town-planning? She worked out that there was one particular roundabout where the worst traffic jams and anger actually happened. There is probably nothing there but eventually this idea got boiled down rather counter-intuitively to the fact that had she not got in her car, her life might have been

better. She could find another means to travel where she wanted to go. The idea borne out of this, which we did a pilot of and which has now become a series for next year, is an idea called *The Woman Who Stopped Traffic*. This simple Factual Entertainment idea is now about a woman going to an area – the pilot was in Marlow – which still has tight medieval roads and where everybody drives 4x4s, taking 20 minutes to drive a mile.

She goes to this car-obsessed town and says, 'In a month, we are having a no car day. I am going to get this town out of their cars.' And it kind of works: from that very amorphous thought of how we are going to solve Britain's traffic problem there is a very simple Factual Entertainment format that has come out of it. A woman goes to a precinct and she says, 'I am going to make you get out of your cars,' and Middle England says, 'Fuck off, no you are not,' and you get quite good actuality out of it. The overriding premise is that we are attempting to solve something that touches all of our lives. We all have a relationship with traffic, whether we get in our cars and we love our cars or whether we get stuck in traffic jams or knocked off our bikes, as I did this morning.

I just want to up some 21.00 thoughts. I am overusing these words but 'entertaining,' 'scale,' and 'ambition' are key words for what we want. We have four or five series that we need to commission. We have commissioned two, *The Woman Who Stopped Traffic* being one of them, for next year. There is loads of opportunity.

VII. 10pm Output

I am going to run a tape now. It is a big rough-and-ready. It has some shows that are coming up and some shows that have recently been on. I will talk about them and 10pm a little more when you have watched the tape.

[Video shown]

There are at least two examples there of the kind of programming that we would love to produce more of at 10pm. Julian has given us more money to expand our output at 10pm. In the past, we have done light-hearted or subversive or slightly funny documentaries that tell you something about contemporary society. *Virgin School* is a really good example. It is a very sensitive film, if you watch it, and a very clear film made by a brilliant filmmaker, but it has a slightly tongue-in-cheek title. It is quite incredulous that there is a school for virgins; it is quite incredulous that about 5% of people, when they reach 40, have not lost their virginity. I think that is worthy of a Channel 4 hour but it has a slight sense of humour.

I think we need more documentaries with that slight wit. *Fat Pets* was another example. We are proud that Justin Lee Collins fronts a few of our documentaries. *The Convention Crasher* is the one series at 10pm that we have commissioned next year. I need four or five or six. The pressure is on a little bit and when we talk about there being lots of opportunities, the boot is on the other foot at the moment on Channel 4. I do feel that there is an enormous opportunity for you and a great deal of pressure on us to find good ideas. *The Convention Crasher* is about as entertaining as we would get in this spectrum of these 10pm ideas. Justin goes to a convention, the World Celebrity Impersonators Convention, and attempts to win their competition. It is a bit *Celebrity Faking It*, it is a bit of Justin's tomfoolery, but also it is a window into the quite unusual world of the American psyche.

VIII. Authors

It was interesting hearing Kevin say that he wants more News & Current Affairs authors because we need more Factual Entertainment authors. I wish I could clone Justin with his youthful enthusiasm. We need perhaps a Justin with more journalistic kudos, some people who could take this essence of subversive wit and tell us a little more about contemporary Britain in some way. We would love some more people who could do some immersive quests. I am quite jealous of BBC3's *Booze Bird* and Liam in the Features department did *Super Skinny Me*, where people actually live and breathe what they are attempting to find out. I would love to find some more of these. The key to these is finding onscreen authors and I would really like to find some onscreen authors. Let us be bold, original, and thought-provoking.

IX. Commissioning Editors

Does anyone want to ask me some questions? I could talk about this for hours but it might help if it was more tailored to somebody's needs. Whilst someone is thinking of a question, let me tell you that we have three extremely talented commissioning editors in our department and we have broken up what everybody does. If you have a 21.00 series idea, Dominique Walker is the person to go to. If you have an idea for 10pm, a short series or any one-offs throughout the schedule, Alistair Pegg is the person to go to, and Ruby Kuraishe is an editor in our department who will continue to look after the E4 output that we provide and also develop some of the supply base for a number of our other one-off suppliers.

Janey Walker

We are going to invite you onto the terrace to get yourselves a drink. You should have tickets; if you want a one-to-one session with the commission editor. There are a few tickets left, so if you do not already have, you can go get one. Thank you very much for coming, everybody.

**This Full Transcript Report was produced by Ubiquis Reporting
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