

Review



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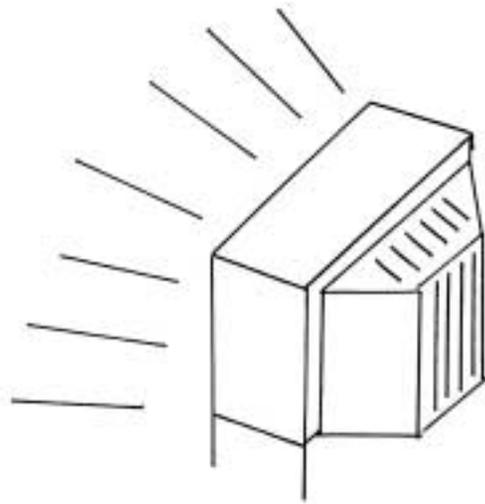
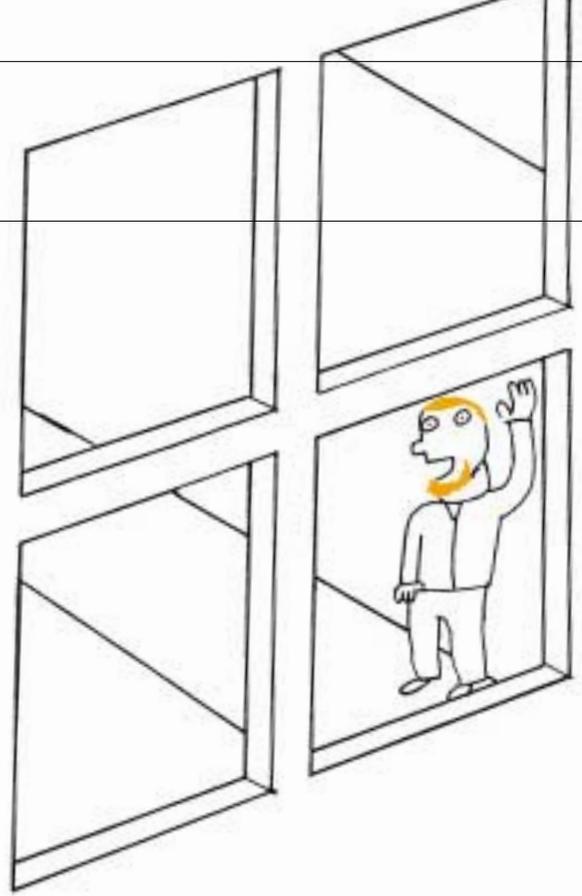


Channel Four Television Corporation Report and Financial Statements 2003

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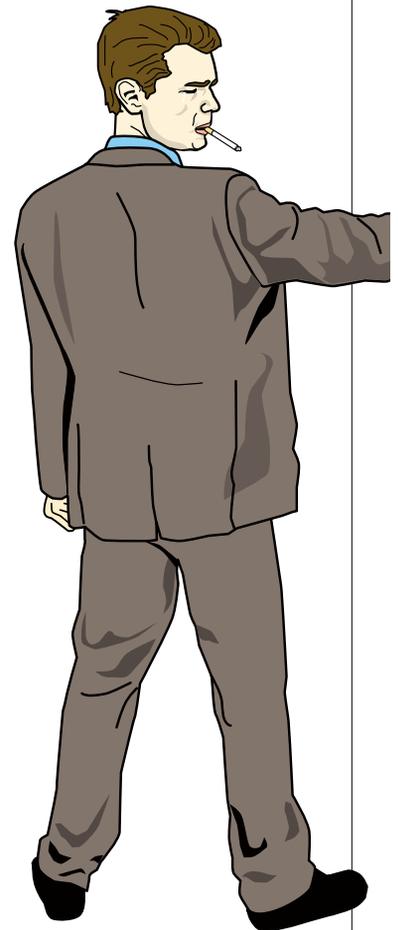
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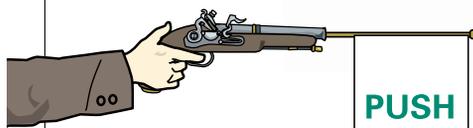
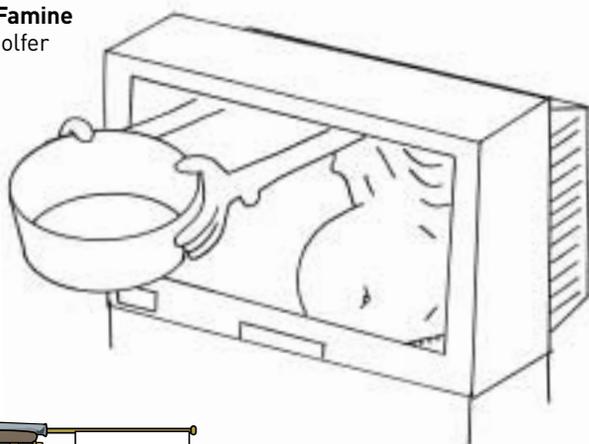
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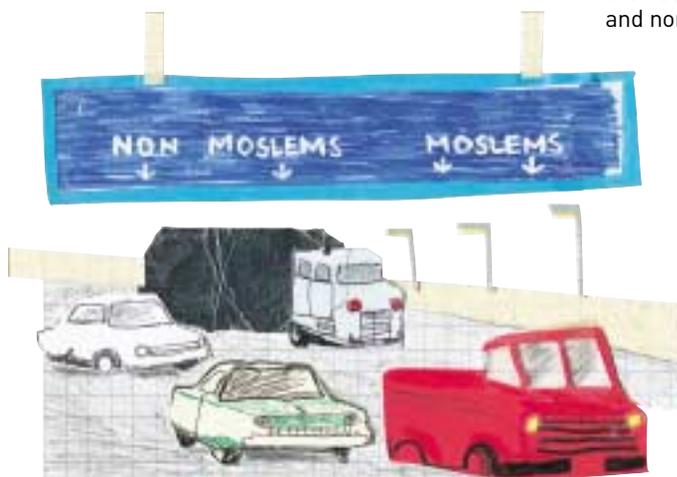
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“The organisation must work hard to retain its independence”

In the new environment created by the Communications Act and the establishment of Ofcom, the role and purposes of public service broadcasting in Britain are likely to be examined and tested as never before. Channel 4 has a remit that has been clear and consistent since its beginning in 1982, and at its heart is the word ‘innovation’.

The requirement to be innovative is what drove Channel 4 to develop its very particular brand of independence and irreverence. Innovation is now more important than ever. Research suggests that audiences value it. Ministers want to see more of it. Ofcom hopes to measure it. And more and more channels are striving for it, in the process aping many of the formats and chasing much of the audience which has been critical to Channel 4’s success. Of course, successful innovation is not delivered by any particular formula or piece of legislation. It comes from a talented workforce, a strong management team and a flow of original ideas. Channel 4 is fortunate in having all those ingredients in abundance.

Under Mark Thompson’s leadership, and after two tough years, 2003 was a year of creative and commercial success with strong programmes, plenty of controversy, a shelf full of awards and an accurately forecast return to healthy profitability – with the prospect of the 4 Ventures’ businesses becoming cash positive in 2004.

A further source of Channel 4’s strength is its unique structure, which allows it a freedom to take creative risks in a way not open to any other broadcaster. Channel 4 works with over 300 independent production companies to create original, exciting viewing. In a highly competitive market, increasingly dominated by large vertically integrated media organisations, the value of that independence – to viewers and to the creative talent which supplies Channel 4 – is only going to grow. The organisation must work hard to retain its independence. Channel 4’s strategy is not to choose between a decline in risk-taking and a decline in audience share. It must be to aim for even greater boldness – in the programmes we commission, in the formats we develop, and in the way we run the main channel and the 4 Ventures’ businesses that are crucial to its future. The next few years will unquestionably be full of surprises and challenges. The best way for Channel 4 to meet them is to go on surprising and challenging its audience.

I am delighted to be asked to take over the Chairmanship of Channel 4 for this next chapter in its story. I pay tribute to my predecessor, Vanni Treves, who has left me an organisation with an enviable reputation, a talented team and a clear set of values and priorities. I intend to keep it that way.





Building Channel 4's future

One story dominated the headlines in 2003: Tony Blair's decision to take this country to war against Iraq. There was really only one story about broadcasting too: Andrew Gilligan's famous 6.07 report on the Today programme and the tragic chain of events which followed it.

Iraq was a fearsome test for journalists working in every medium and Channel 4 passed it with flying colours. *Channel 4 News* asked more questions and unearthed more new angles than any other broadcast news programme, but it combined its robustness with the fairness and rigour which its viewers have come to rely on. A few weeks ago, its coverage of the war was honoured in the Royal Television Society's annual journalism awards.

Channel 4 reflected the momentous events of last year in programmes as varied as *Bremner, Bird and Fortune*, the *Political Awards* (where viewers voted David Kelly the most politically influential figure of 2003) and *The True Face of War*, one of the most memorable of many outstanding documentaries. These achievements are a modest consolation for the loss we still feel for those friends and colleagues at ITN – including *Channel 4 News*' much-loved Gaby Rado – who died during the conflict.

The qualities which informed our response to Iraq – independence, originality, a willingness to go further than other broadcasters – were visible in many of our other programmes, from *The Deal* to *The Death of Klinghoffer* to *The Last Peasants*. Channel 4 once again led innovation in factual programmes from *The Theory of Everything* – an engrossing series on the apparently intractable subject of super-string theory – to a new crop of entertaining and telling popular formats, among which *Wife Swap* and *How Clean Is Your House* stand out. In comedy and drama, 2003 was a year of real onscreen success (*Bo Selecta*,

Second Generation), but also of intense development behind the scenes. The results of that work are already visible in early 2004.

Financially, Channel 4 made real progress in 2003. Substantial cost savings and better than expected performance from 4 Ventures meant that – despite a disappointingly flat advertising market – we could give the main channel its largest ever programme budget and still make group profits nearly three times larger than in 2002. All hours share fell slightly, but the economically more important peak share remains close to its 20-year high and Channel 4's strength among younger audiences remains rock solid. New hits, stronger financial reserves, successful new businesses, a much lower cost-base, a larger slice of TV advertising: over the past two years, we have established a firm foundation on which to build Channel 4's future. We are now turning to the question of what that future should be and how our unique combination of innovation, diversity, and independence of spirit can best be maintained and strengthened in the years to come.

2003 also meant saying goodbye to two exceptional colleagues. Vanni Treves was Chairman through six years which saw record ups and downs in the advertising sales market, a new Communications Act and the creation of a new regulator Ofcom. His dedication, wisdom and commitment to public service broadcasting kept Channel 4 on the right track. Tim Gardam, our Director of Television, also departed after a brilliant period in office. Like Vanni, Tim's belief in Channel 4's values never wavered in the five years he was here. No matter how great the competitive pressures grew, he always found a way of balancing the search for commercial success with genuine and passionate public service ambition. We thank them both.

Audience

What do viewers value about Channel 4, and why?
What do they think Four is for?

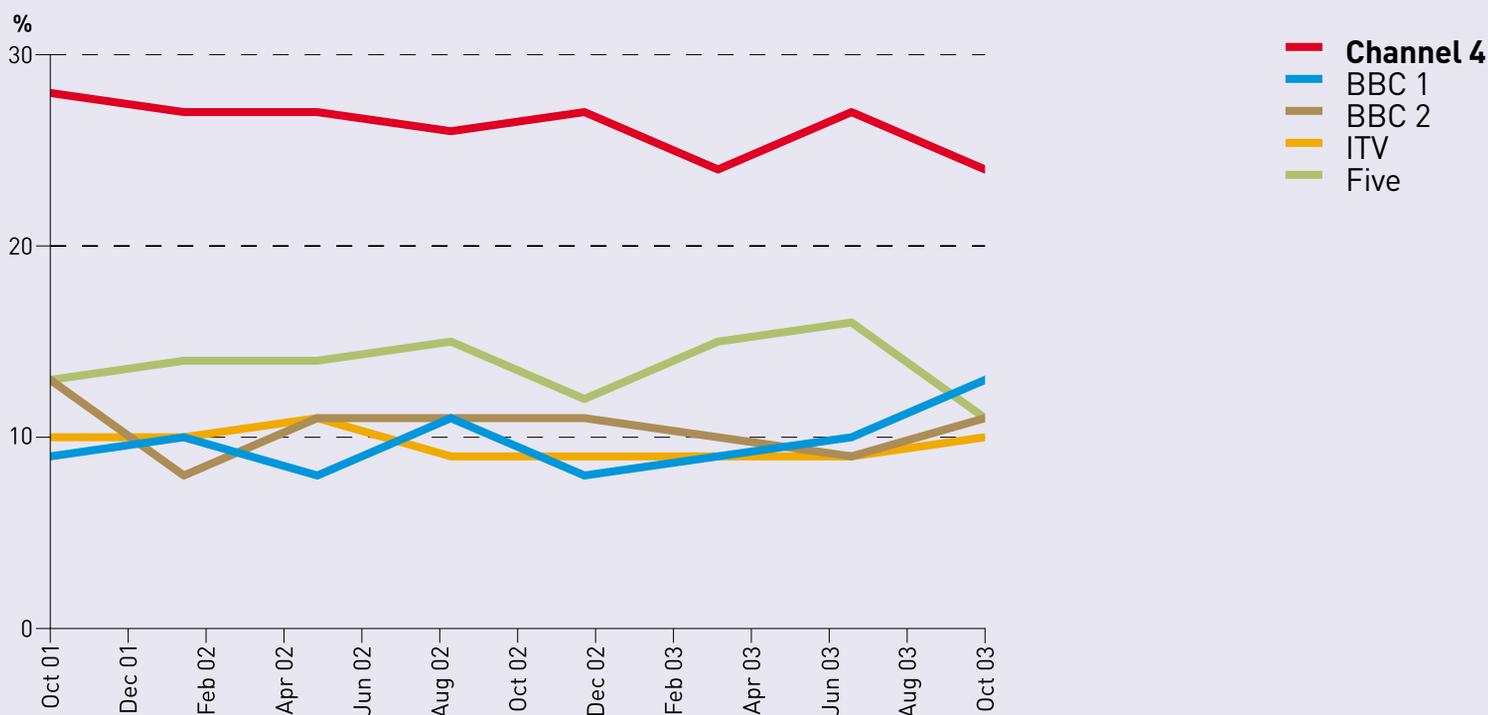
“Without Channel 4, TV would be sadder, duller, more middle of the road”

The Communications Act of 2003 sets out in some detail a definition of public service broadcasting measured in terms of news, current affairs, the arts and other genres. In addition, the Act places particular requirements on each of the main public service broadcasters. Channel 4 is required to be:

- ‘innovative’, ‘experimental’, and ‘distinctive’;
- to ‘reflect the tastes and interests of a culturally diverse society’; and
- to make programmes “of an educational nature and other programmes of educative value”.

It is the remit we want and we lobbied to get it. For government, regulators and broadcasters, definitions of public service broadcasting and the desire to pin down such slippery notions as ‘innovative’ or ‘distinctive’ have generated long running and highly specialised debates with their own arcane vocabulary. Most of it has relatively little connection with the way viewers think and talk about television. So it seems reasonable to ask, if the purpose of public service broadcasting is to serve the public, what do the public want – and say they want? What do they value and why? And what brings them to Channel 4? What do our viewers, rather than our regulators, think Channel 4 is for?

Takes a different approach to subjects



In a typical week 40 million people tune in to Channel 4. We can't possibly talk to them all. But we do have a comprehensive programme of research which works in two principal ways: by asking a small number of questions of large numbers of people, and by asking a much larger number of questions of much smaller groups of people, where we can allow conversations to develop along many different paths.

What emerges is a wide variety of responses from different sections of the audience to different parts of Channel 4's schedule. But the responses, and the language in which they are expressed, overlap sufficiently to produce an unmistakable consensus. For example, viewers see innovation as a key characteristic of Channel 4, although for men over 50 it's *Test Match Cricket* which exemplifies that quality, whereas for young women it's *Big Brother*. In October 2001, we asked a representative sample of a thousand adults:

"In your opinion to which TV company, if any, do the following statements most apply;

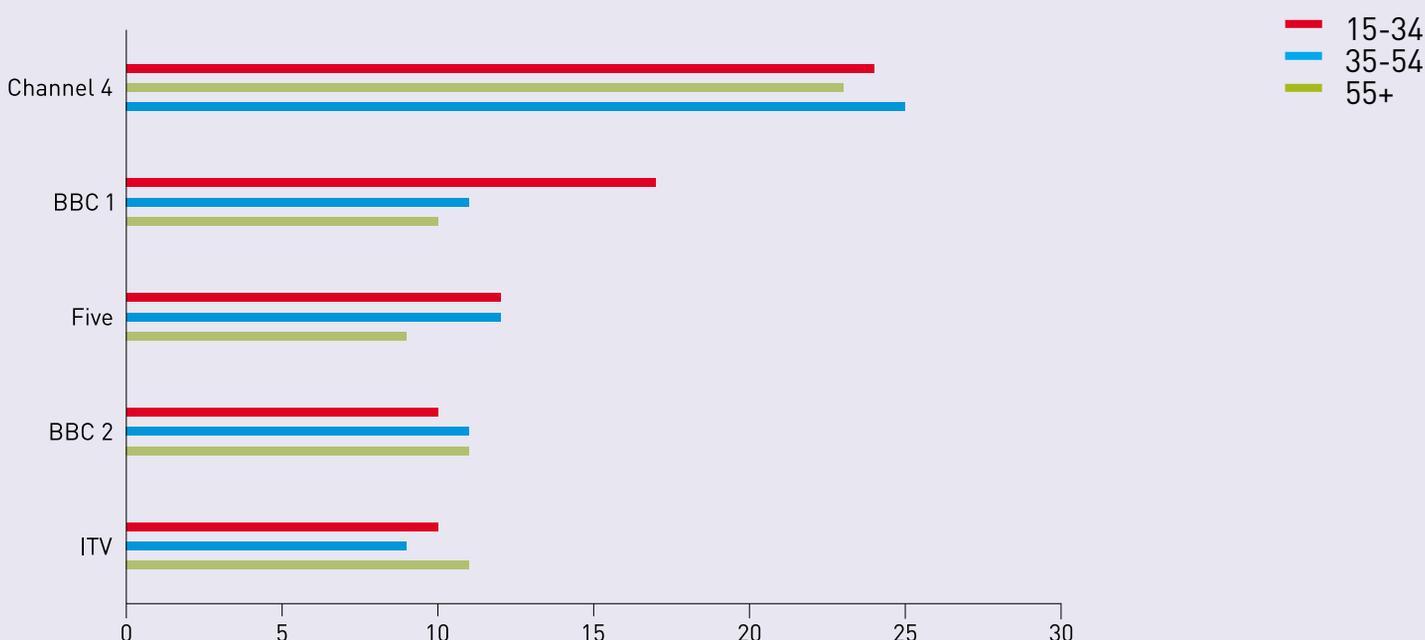
- takes a different approach to subjects;
- covers ground other channels wouldn't".

These questions go right to the heart of Channel 4's remit to be innovative, distinctive and diverse. Every two months since, we have repeated the exercise to track our

viewers' perception of what we do relative to the other main public service channels, BBC 1 and 2, ITV 1 and Five. Not only are the results emphatic, they hold true across all the adult age groups and across time, with the exception of summer 2003 when what viewers felt to be an unremarkable *Big Brother* produced a significant, albeit short-lived downward 'blip'.

Broadcasters, regulators – and sometimes even critics – can fall into the trap of gearing their expectations for a programme according to conventional genre definitions; – arts programmes should be 'demanding', entertainment 'undemanding'. But viewers do not see things so neatly. What they tell us they look for are qualities such as 'different', 'thought-provoking', 'inspiring', or 'a programme I would talk to my friends about'. Last year our series *Jamie's Kitchen* was an entertainment hit but was valued by audiences for more than its entertainment value – scoring well above average as 'inspiring', 'modern' and 'different'. *The Hajj*, a thought-provoking series about religious belief, also rated highly with viewers as 'original' and 'inspiring'. *Operatunity* took what television usually treats as the toughest of all art-forms – grand opera – and, while focusing uncompromisingly on its toughness, turned it into something which viewers rated as 'original', 'entertaining' and 'inspiring'. And while →

Takes a different approach to subjects – response by age group



we continue to log our public service output in terms of how many hours of arts or news we do there is a growing range of programmes that cut across all the traditional categories. Was *Wife Swap* a documentary, an entertainment programme, or a slice of 'reality TV'? The viewers didn't care. They saw it as one of the programmes that made most impact in 2003, not just on Channel 4 but on British television overall.

One of the strongest themes to emerge from our more in-depth research is that viewers think of Channel 4 as brave – prepared to push boundaries, taking nothing for granted, prepared to shock:

- "They take a gamble, and push for your entertainment, regardless."
- "A while ago you would never have seen or heard half these programmes. They're getting brave at pushing the edges a bit further, that *Under the Knife with Miss Evans* – it made my toes curl"
- "The documentaries are near the knuckle... the eating disorder one... the man who chose to die. I don't want to watch them but I have to."

Those responses raise significant issues for us. What prompts one viewer to tell our researchers "it opens your eyes to what is really going on" makes another phone our viewer enquiries desk to tell them they will never watch Channel 4 again. In a television

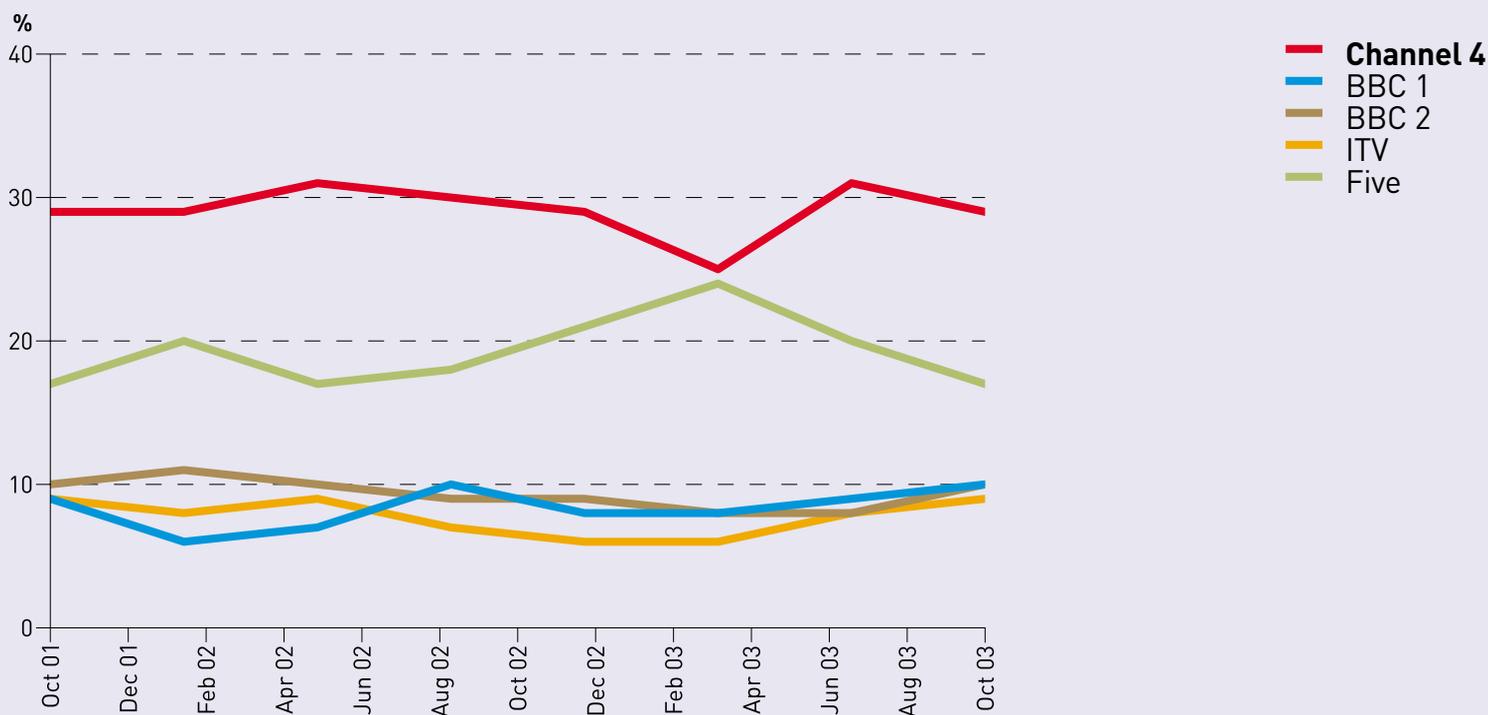
environment in which most channels crowd into the middle ground and base much of their appeal on familiar shows and safe formats, there are some obvious upsides to being the channel that pushes at the edges of the envelope, but the risk of failure is that much greater.

There is also a softer side to this sense that Channel 4 "moves television on", and that is a perceived ability – and willingness – to get to real people and real issues more than other broadcasters:

- "They get up close and personal."
- "They get under the skin."
- "They make you see life a bit differently."
- "They tap into viewers as equals."

This sense that Channel 4 provides a different perspective is widespread even by those who don't necessarily watch much of our output themselves. They want to know that what we do – and what they think we do – is part of the mix available to them. This is particularly true in the harder factual parts of the schedule – news and current affairs – where viewers see Channel 4's special role as ranging from providing information and independent analysis to providing a spur to action:

Covers ground other channels wouldn't



- "A programme on Iraq discussed whether it was a good thing to go to war or not... they're not frightened to deal with that kind of thing."
- "They had a documentary about the Taliban and I knew nothing about them... I remember going on the internet and looking up 'Taliban'."

For some it goes further. They see Channel 4 as not just providing a different view, but as a source of inspiration for change:

- "You tend to get stuck in your comfort zone, your entertainment and soaps, and then you watch Channel 4 and you think, bloody hell, I didn't realise that was going on and it gets you thinking... that's how you develop."
- "You don't want to just go around thinking that what you think is right the whole time. Some kind of different slant on it means you can look at it another way and improve the way you think about it."

Our viewers would far rather we tried and sometimes failed than failed to try at all – they recognise that what we do means occasionally offending sensibilities, or just getting it wrong, but they see that as a risk worth taking because, when it works, the rewards are high. It works for us, too. Our reputation gives us an exceptionally strong profile with the two sections of the audience

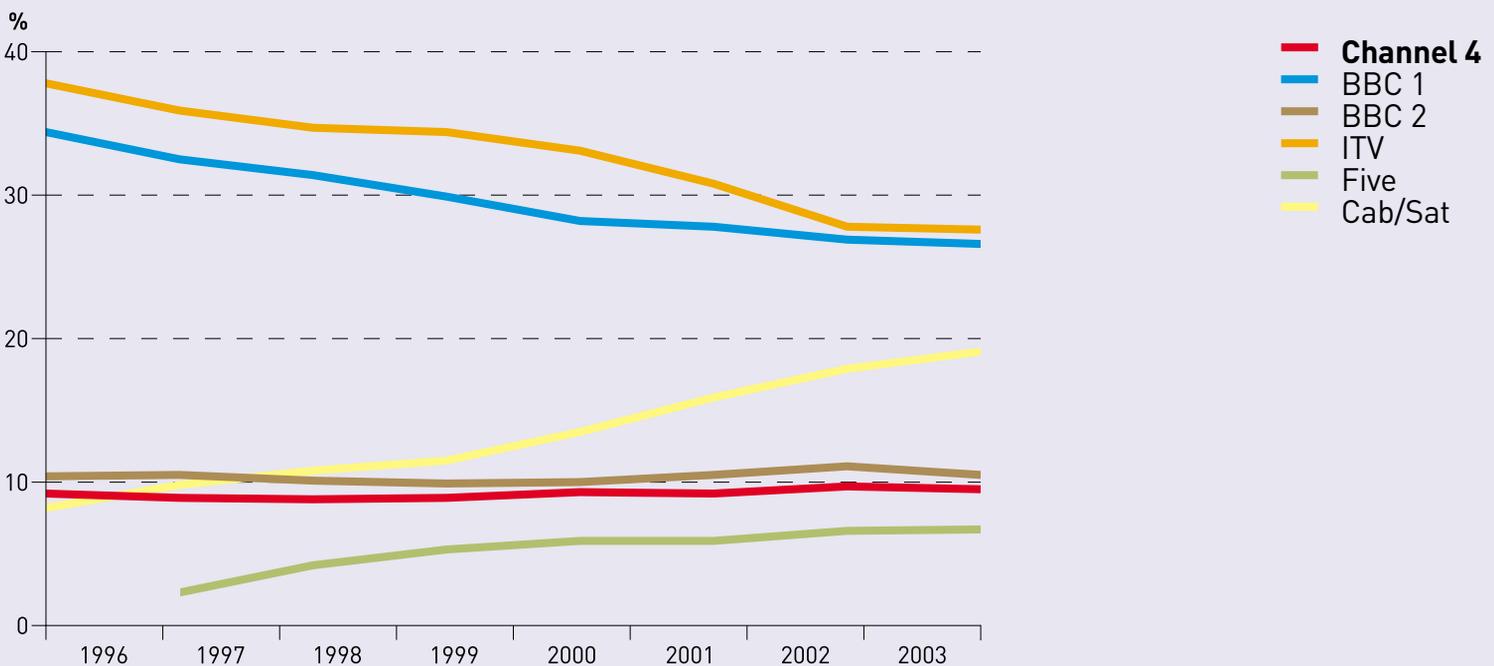
advertisers most want to reach – young adults (usually defined as 16-34 year-olds) and the higher income ABC1s. This attractive advertising profile, in turn, allows Channel 4 to earn a disproportionate share of the total television advertising revenue available in the UK, enabling us to fund risk-taking and high value programmes.

Despite the rapid growth in new channels and more intense competition to reach audiences with innovative content, Channel 4 has succeeded in holding its own. The graph below shows the cable and satellite channels (including E4) more than doubling their share of the peak-time audience over the last eight years. During that time Channel 4 has remained remarkably steady, from a 9.2% share in 1996 to 9.5% in 2003.

That comes from building a close relationship with our audience, finding out what they want from us that they feel they do not get from other channels. In the process, we contribute to keeping public service broadcasting relevant to people's lives and keeping Channel 4 right at the heart of Britain's contemporary culture.

In reviewing 2003 we take heart from the comment of one young man who told our researchers "Without Channel 4, TV would be sadder, duller, more middle of the road."

Share by channel in peak-time (17.30-24.00)



Operatunity

***Operatunity* offered members of the public the chance to sing a principal role with English National Opera – and on national television. Part competition, part intensive training programme, it created two new singing divas, one a blind mother of two, the other a supermarket checkout operator. And it had an impact on the lives of everyone who took part.**

Taking the 'them and us' out of opera

Margaret Rapacioli, singer, one of six finalists

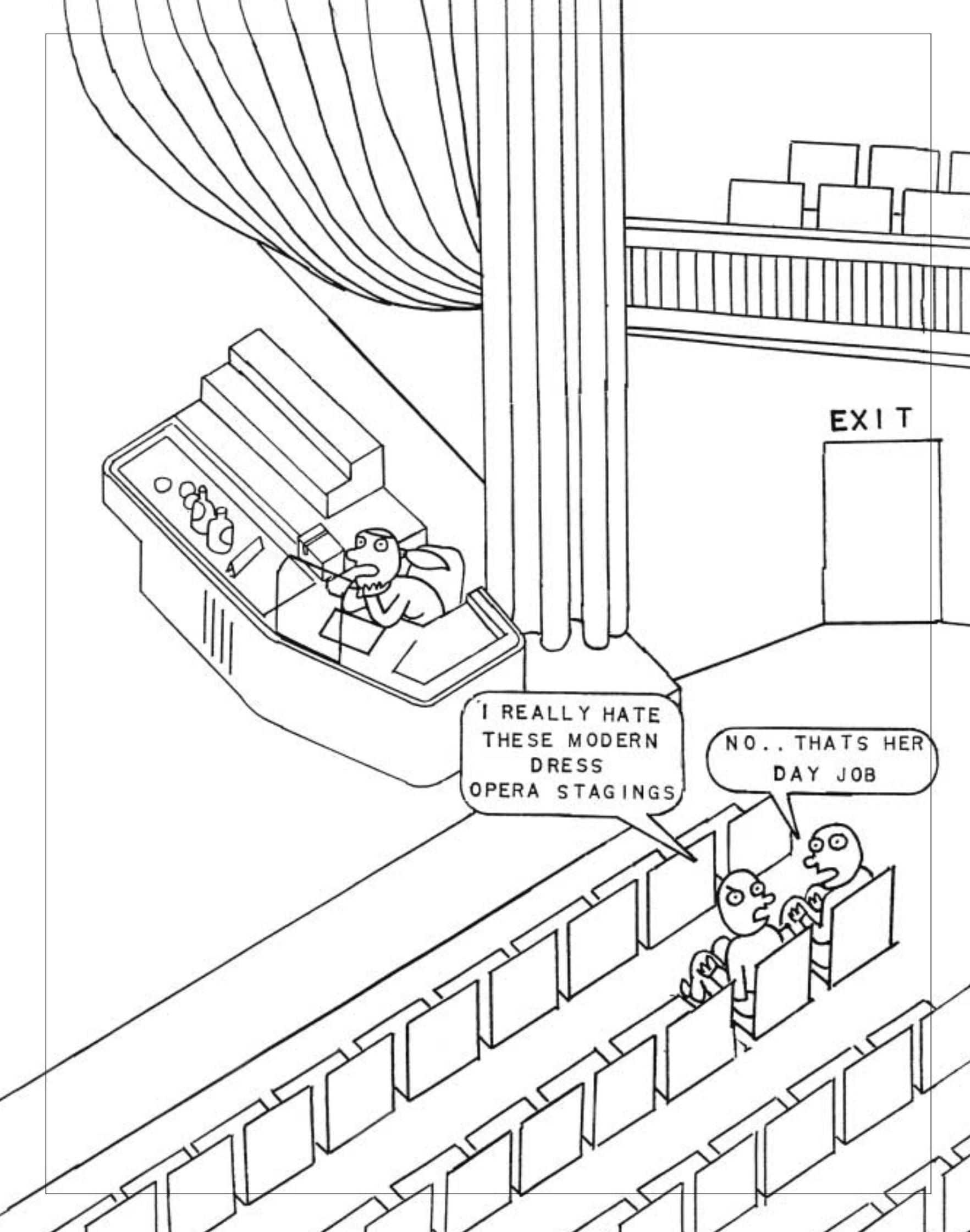
“Operatunity changed my life. I had applied at the suggestion of a friend, and almost as a joke. Although I was very disappointed not to be one of the winners, I couldn't believe I made it to the final six of the hundreds who had applied. I don't think the television programmes portrayed just how hard it really was – the whole experience was so tough, so intense, that when I went back to work I vowed I never wanted to sing again. But hate turned to love. It had awakened a passion in me for opera and, much as I wanted to put it back to sleep, I couldn't. It was like an obsession. I felt as if I had to test if this was what I really wanted to do so I got a role with an amateur company, took a short training course, got myself an agent and I'm now enrolled on a very prestigious national training course. It's a complete shock to be on it and, of course, there's no guarantee I'll get anywhere because there are thousands of talented people out there – but I love it.”

Some 'opera people' were sceptical about *Operatunity* and I think that's a real shame because a lot of what we did was as intense and demanding as anything I've done since. If I've got one criticism of it all, it's that it's dangerous to open up people's passions like that without their being sure about what happens next. I know how many obstacles there are ahead for me but I'm quite philosophical – this is my time to find out if I can do what I really want to do.”

Paul Daniel, Music Director, English National Opera

*“Operatunity was a first: it not only opened a door into the life of an opera company, it made that door swing both ways and, for the first time, television became a medium which took the 'them and us' out of opera. We certainly risked giving a false impression that fast track training could replace the intensive and lengthy processes that create a true and complete performer. But *Operatunity* celebrated the joint talents of professionals and amateurs in a unique way.”*





I REALLY HATE
THESE MODERN
DRESS
OPERA STAGINGS

NO.. THATS HER
DAY JOB

EXIT

The Deal

The Deal explored the 20-year relationship between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, the two most powerful figures in contemporary British politics.

“...about as good, and probably as close, as television has yet got”

Stephen Frears, director “I was brought up in that golden age when one of the subjects for drama on television was Britain itself – and that’s what I thought I was doing with this film, because these two men have been central to all our lives for at least a decade. I think it’s what I set out to make – an intelligent, entertaining piece of television. As a film-maker you long for things to be handled as well as Channel 4 handled this project. They treated it as an important film without being either pompous or pious about it.”

Peter Morgan, writer “It struck me that at the heart of British politics was an almost biblical story – two brothers separated by their quest for power. When I began to talk to MPs and their advisors about it, I found that after an initial reluctance and suspicion,

they simply could not stop themselves from talking. Why? Because the ‘Gordon Tony story’ is one of the most compelling in British politics. And the more I listened the more interested I became – not in the politics so much as in the depth of raw emotion and passion that their rivalry seemed to arouse. We tried to persuade ITV that, despite the war in Iraq, come the conference season all eyes and lenses would be trained on Tony and Gordon, but it all fell on deaf ears. Then Channel 4 stepped into the breach and with terrific boldness and conviction commissioned it within 48 hours. We started shooting on 14 May and, working with a very tight schedule, were able to deliver it on 28 September, literally the eve of the Labour Party conference. Writing about Blair and Brown as characters in an original screenplay has meant that →





both the Prime Minister and the Chancellor have become like my children – a perversion of nature which has oddly made me lose all objectivity and made me feel over-protective and affectionate towards them both.”

Broadcast on the eve of the 2003 Labour Party conference which, more than any before, seemed to be dominated by the relationship between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, *The Deal* generated widespread public interest and debate. The *New Statesman* commented “...as a story about the shifts in power in a friendship, as an illumination of the truth that in politics there are no friends only rivals, and as record of the richly deserved death of old Labour, *The Deal* was about as good, and probably as close, as television has yet got.”

First World War

A 10-part series based on Huw Strachan's major book, *First World War* broke with the conventional view of the war as an essentially west-European event and located it firmly in a global context. As part of its commitment to creative businesses right across the UK, Channel 4 commissioned the series from a Glasgow production company, making it the largest TV project of its kind ever made in Scotland.

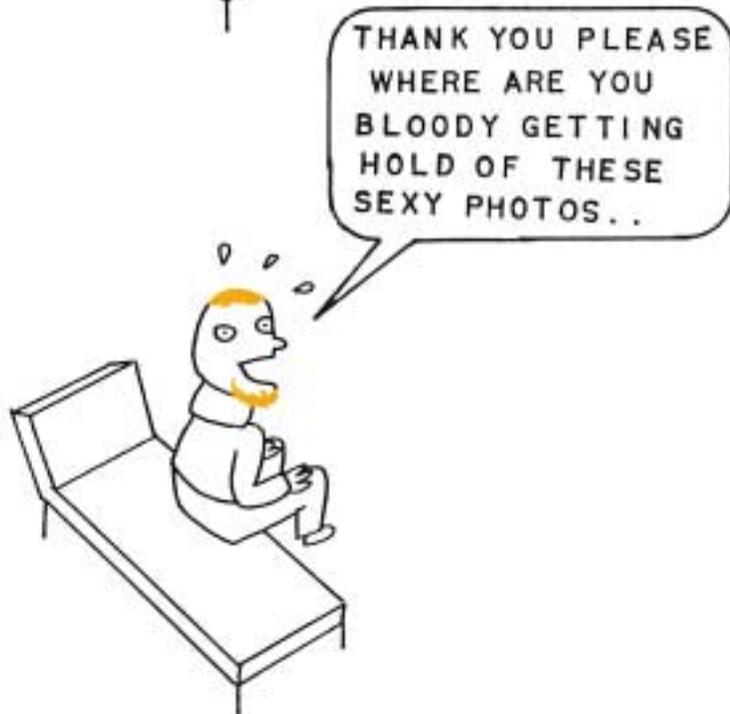
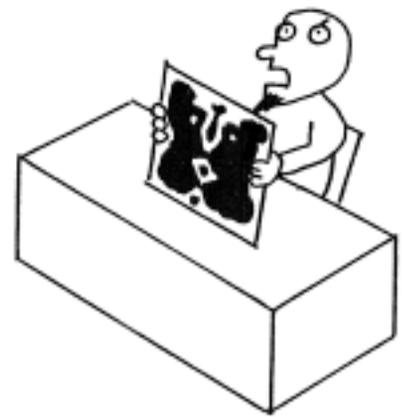
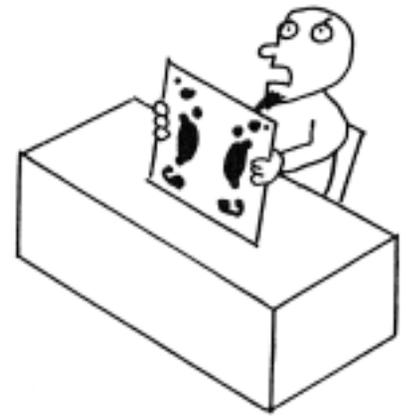
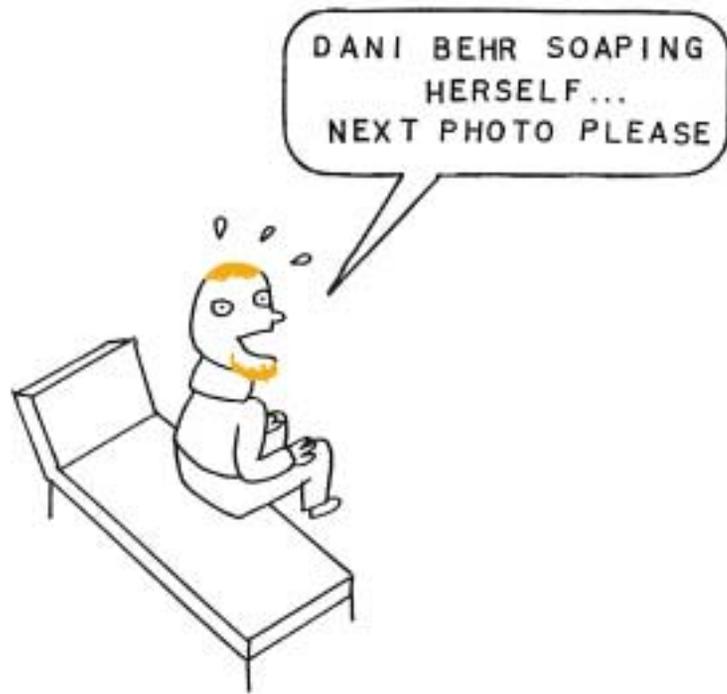
Music from beyond the grave

Jonathan Lewis, series producer "There had been no significant new analysis of the First World War on British television for 40 years. Channel 4's proposition – to take Huw Strachan's book and give us the freedom to bring it to the screen – meant we could be really fresh and bring new ideas into the process. In tandem with those ideas we did that old-fashioned but very radical thing of having no presenter, no interviews, no reconstructions. We wanted the audience to feel there was nothing coming between them and the material. It was a big risk, but Channel 4 took it. In fact, they have been a knockout to work with, a remarkable haven of serious programme making. We were emphatically not telling the usual London-

centric story of this war. By insisting it be based in Scotland, Channel 4 somehow made it psychologically and intellectually easier for us to be free to go wherever we needed to go.

In the course of production Huw Strachan and I came across the music of Cecil Coles, a Scottish composer who had been killed in the trenches in 1918 while still in his early 20s. His work had been recently re-discovered by his daughter and was exactly right as the music for the series. It seemed to bind the whole thing together without rubbing in the Scottish connection – it had been lost and found, it felt like it gave a new perspective on the war – so it was perfect."





Bo Selecta

Some people call him Leigh Francis and a celebrated British comedian but Avid Merrion describes himself as coming from “somewhere near Transylvania, where everybody hated me”. His *Bo Selecta* series were smash hits on E4, then Channel 4 and then sold more than a million videos.

“I invent polite words for swearing so only I know what I’m saying – which is a problem on TV”

Avid Merrion, comedian “I learnt English from TV – elaborate vocabulary – ‘pamphlet’, ‘flannel’, ‘abundance’ – beautiful words. I invent words for polite swearing so only I know what I’m saying – which is a problem on TV. I love celebrities. They glow, like children who eat Ready Brek. I want to make friends with all of them. I loved Beverly Hills Cop when I was a kid. I loved its childishness because it made me laugh. *Bo Selecta* is there to make you laugh, not to make you go away and think you’ve learnt something. It’s not clever. It’s instant. It’s so ridiculous it makes adults feel like kids and they like it. I don’t mock comedy – I can’t do comedy

because I don’t know any jokes. And I don’t ‘mockrise’ celebrities. I love them. I made home movies with my camcorder and I wanted to make them about celebs because there’s so much interest in celebs. But I don’t know any celebs so I make my own – I put cardboard faces on mannequins. I put latex masks on my face. The masks are like cartoon animation, but cheaper. If you can’t get Craig David on your show – dress up as Craig David. Then you can make him do as you like. I make it for kids like a cartoon. I take it to E4. E4 like it. I shit myself. Now it’s a series on Channel 4. Thank you Channel 4 for paying me enough to buy a digi-camera.”

That'll Teach 'em

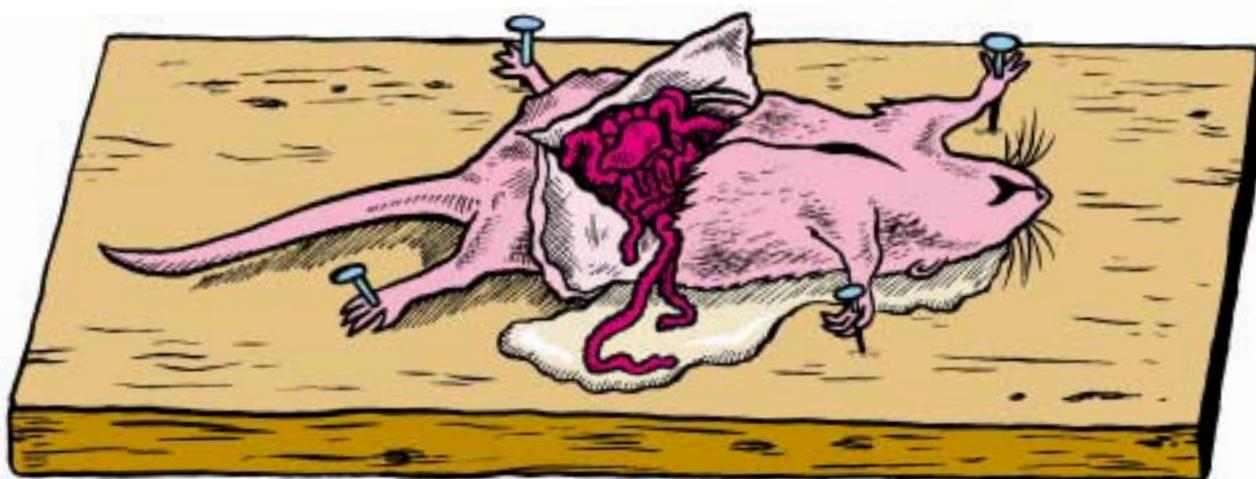
That'll Teach 'em was a five-part series, which put 30 bright teenagers into a meticulously recreated 1950's boarding grammar school environment for a month, complete with spam fritters, tough discipline and real 'O' level exams.

The Best Days of Our Lives?

Simon Rockell, himself an ex-teacher, conceived and produced the series "What I wanted to explore was the accusation that the whole education system is being dumbed down. Could we do that in a way that was accessible and entertaining by putting the question in a broad historical context? Are kids less intelligent today and exams easier than they were 50 years ago? And, if so, why? We got the examining boards involved, although they were very cautious at first, and the exams we set in English, maths and history were real 'O' levels, with, in the case of the English exam, a real-life 1950's examiner – so we could compare 'O' level with the GCSEs of today.

I was thrilled that the series stimulated such a huge national debate. And it wasn't just about academic standards, but about

health, nutrition and even the nature of childhood. It was amazing how the kids bought into what they were doing. They really worked hard for their exams and it was so gratifying to find out that their friends, and a huge number of young people, were watching and discussing the series. We were surprised how quickly they got into making their own entertainment in the absence of television and computers. By making a follow-up programme at the end of the year, *That Taught 'em*, we were able to put the kids in context for the audience, showing them in their real lives, talking about the experience. It's a series I'm really proud of having made for Channel 4, especially as I know how much it touched the younger audience, which is who I wanted to reach."



Channel 4 News

Lindsey Hilsum, *Channel 4 News*' diplomatic correspondent, talks about reporting from Baghdad during the Iraq war. She won the Royal Television Society's 2003 Award for Specialist Journalism. For its coverage of the war, *Channel 4 News* won the Royal Television Society's News Award and an International Emmy in New York.

Telling it like it was

Lindsey Hilsum, reporter "On the second night of air raids, our government 'minder' warned us that Saddam's secret police were combing the hotel, confiscating cameras. As explosions illuminated the night sky, we stuffed our camera into a wardrobe, so when the policeman hammered on the door we were innocently drinking tea and protesting that we'd never filmed a single frame. Luckily, he was too angry to search the room. Despite restrictions, we got out to talk to Iraqis and film nearly every day, never resorting to 'rooftop journalism'. The toppling of the statue was the iconic image of the war but what I'll remember

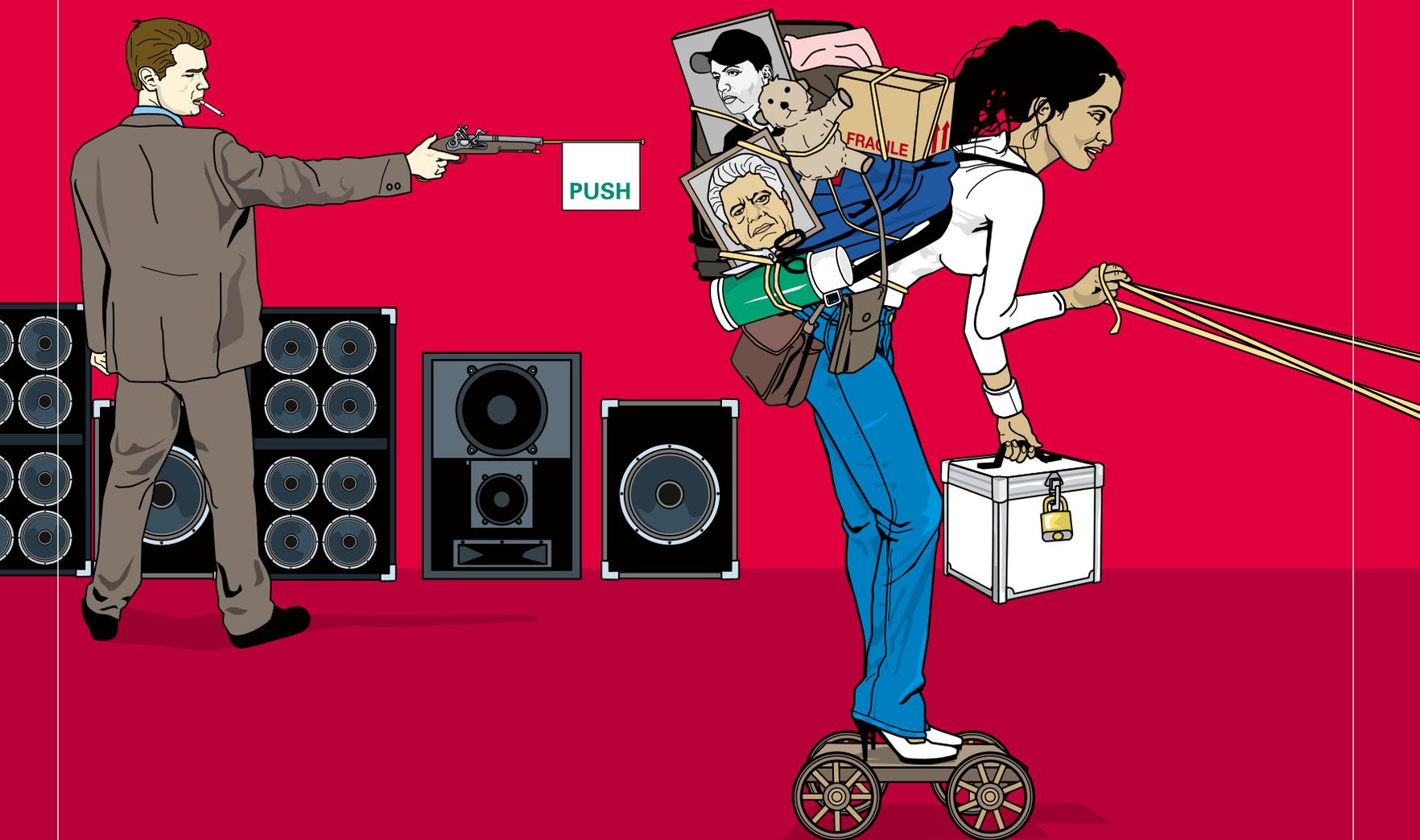
are the more intimate and telling moments that we filmed: an Iraqi family tentatively approaching a US marine with a gift; a former political prisoner whipping out a pistol to shoot a mural of Saddam; our interpreter saving a five-year old girl who had been shot in the head by US marines. In war, all sides lie. With teams all over the battlefield and beyond, *Channel 4 News* challenged the simple moral certainties of both pro and anti war camps, and told stories which revealed the complex feelings Iraqis experienced, as well as the diplomatic and political wars in Britain and America."



Second Generation

Created by a young writer, Neil Biswas, with music by Nitin Sawhney, this two-part drama explored some of the complex relationships between communities, cultures and generations in contemporary Britain.

“This is exactly what British TV should be doing if we want young people to take it seriously in the future”

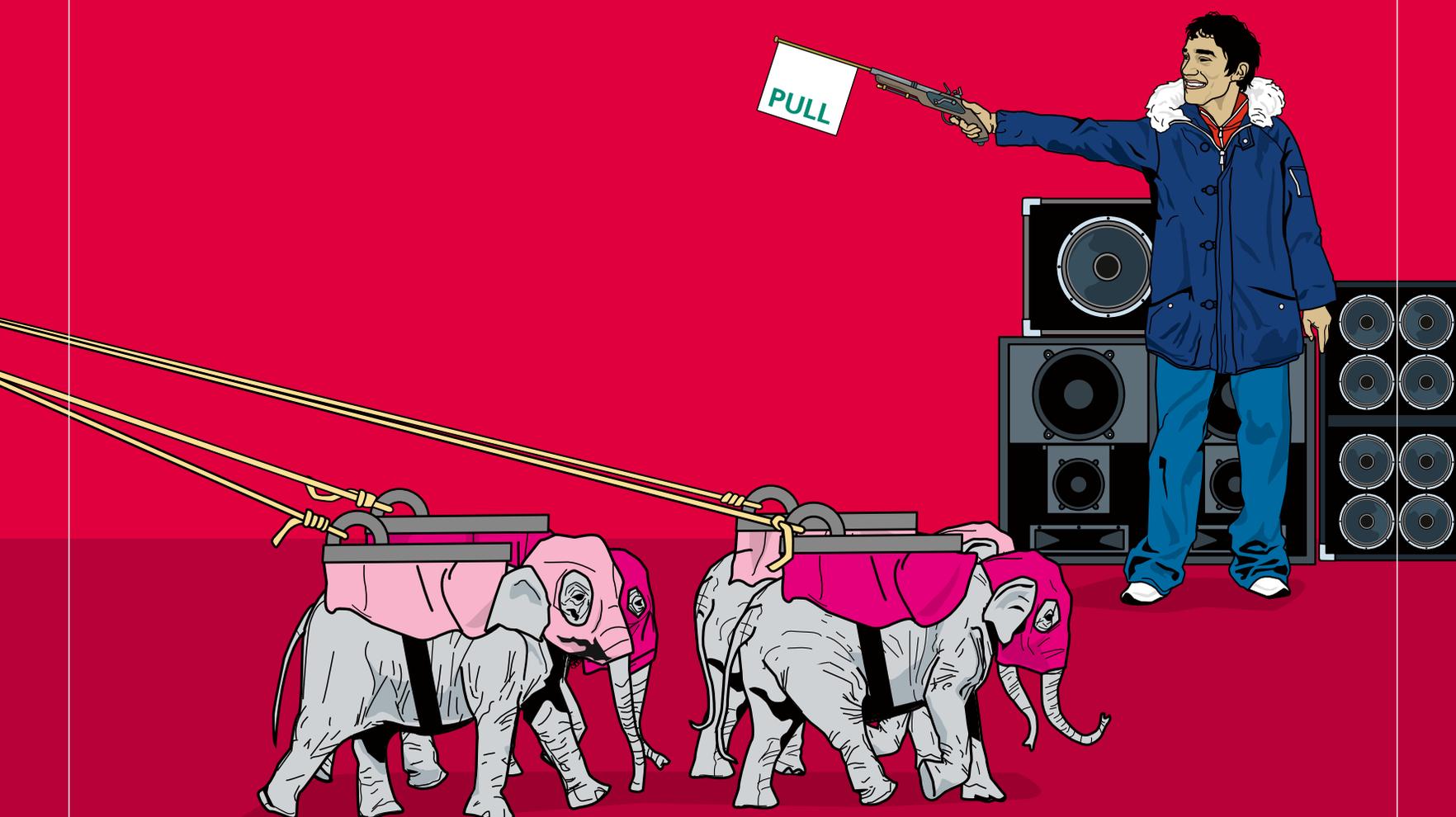


Catherine Wearing, producer “What attracted me was the story and the quality of the writing. Here was a script that had something original to say about second generation Asian families in Britain that didn’t wear its race credentials on its sleeve and let its characters live. I loved what it said about the relationships between different generations. Here was a big passionate piece that genuinely spoke to a diverse audience.

Making it was a joyous experience. Everyone involved realised that they were doing something that had never been done before. It was absolutely not the usual stock-in-trade piece about the Asian community. Filming on the streets of Calcutta with Om Puri and about a thousand adoring onlookers is an experience I will never forget. Working with Nitin Sawhney was

amazing, too. I believe the soundtrack is the best I’ve ever heard on a TV drama, partly because it was integral to the narrative and its mood helped us realise the amazing club sequences. We were sourcing music from all over the world – a nightmare to achieve, but with fabulous results!

Channel 4 sponsored four trainees from minority communities to work with us in various departments on the project. It was great that we had the chance to offer some training like that – I think it’s so important. I was thrilled with the press coverage of the show but a little disappointed with the viewing figures – I thought we had made something which any audience of any age would enjoy. I’m really proud of what we did – I think this is exactly what British television should be doing if we want young people to take TV seriously in the future.”



Wife Swap

***Wife Swap* got the nation talking – about everything from child rearing to class divisions. No single episode did this more dramatically than the swap between Emma Spry from Cornwall, working with her husband to raise two young children and start a new business, and Lizzy Bardsley from Yorkshire, whose larger family and non-working husband entitled her to receive more in benefits than the Sprys earned. Press hysteria ensued as the tabloids vied with each other to demonise the Bardsleys.**

Emma Spry, participant “I’d seen the first series of *Wife Swap* and when I was surfing the net I saw you could apply to take part in a second series. So I did – though I didn’t tell my husband Colin about it. It was a bit of a shock when we were selected but I thought ‘I want a bit of a challenge’. That’s what I thought it was about – putting yourself in an unfamiliar situation and learning how to adjust and cope with it, however challenging. Besides, we all want to know what goes on behind other people’s closed doors. You see other people and think ‘How do they cope with their lives?’ I wanted that kind of learning experience, although while we were actually doing the swap I wouldn’t have said that because it was really hard. Colin and I had been planning to open a restaurant and we were planning to get a manager in to run it because he worked nights, I worked days, we had a hectic ‘pass the children’ lifestyle. Doing *Wife Swap* made us both look outside the box and realise a lot more about our strengths and weaknesses. It made us realise how well we worked together and it’s made us much more family oriented.

Colin was very unsure about it at first but he sees the benefits now, however tough it felt at the time. We’ve got the restaurant, we’re running it together and it’s going very well.”

Lizzie Bardsley, participant “Looking back, at the time it was quite a surreal experience – a million miles from home in a town I’d never been to. I have to say it also felt very choreographed – my life wasn’t my own. But I don’t think the experience has changed me at all. I’m still me – but then my husband Mark and I weren’t off on some fact-finding mission about ourselves. That’s not why we did it. It hasn’t changed the kids either – they’re resilient and the neighbours who →

“We all want to know what goes on behind other people’s closed doors”



were friends before are still friends now. If all we got out of it was that it made our marriage stronger, then it was worth it. Mark said at the time he'd wished he'd never agreed to do it. And I found it hard – the best bit of it all was definitely getting home and seeing the kids. The mistake we made was to read all the bad press, but we both feel more positive about it now and I quite enjoy the recognition. I was misquoted in the newspapers as saying I earned the benefits I received. What I said was that we were entitled to them, which we were. But being at work was always an option for me and I'm pleased I've got a job now."

Two newspaper quotes between them told the whole *Wife Swap* story.

The Daily Mail said: "When the opening episode of this daring new series was aired, it was a talking point for days. Two women had agreed to swap lives for two weeks... For the first week they had to stick to the other family's routine whether they liked it or not. During the second, they could make rules of their own. Obviously, the fun was in placing direct opposites in conflict, and it worked. But as well as making entertaining television, it turned out to be a valid social experiment."

The Daily Express was more succinct: "This is the compulsive reality show that has us all nailed to the couch, agog. ...Miss this and you'll have nothing to say when everyone is trading 'Could you believe it...' moments tomorrow."

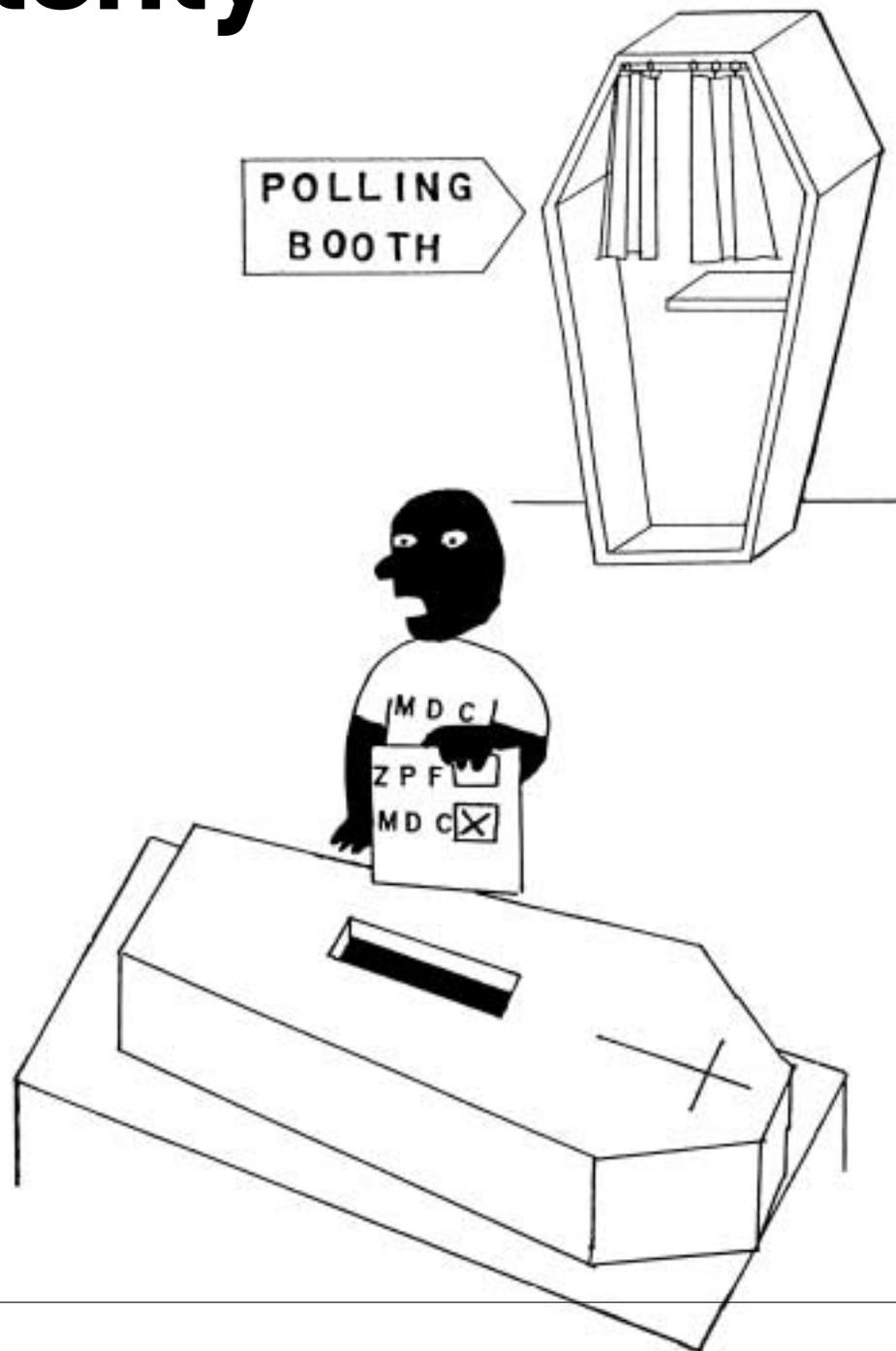


Mugabe's Secret Famine

Posing as a golf-playing tourist, political columnist Peter Osborne travelled to Zimbabwe with film-maker Paul Yule to film, undercover and at considerable risk, a shocking indictment of the role President Mugabe and his Zanu PF Party played in the catastrophe unfolding in that country.

Starvation in a land of plenty

Peter Osborne, reporter "This was the single piece of work of which I am most proud – no, not 'proud' but most honoured to be connected with – in my entire career as a journalist. It was part of a much bigger drive to bring to the public eye something terrible. It didn't change the world but it made many more people aware of what was going on, and the reaction was immense. I've been told that in Zimbabwe it has got a 'samizdat' existence on tape. I still get letters from people who were moved by it. I really believe that only Channel 4 would have given me the opportunity to do this. It was proper, honest reporting which needed a large organisation to throw its weight behind it – the legal, technical and organisational support necessary was enormous. But the people who made it so powerful were those in Zimbabwe who couldn't appear on screen, people who were literally risking their lives by working with us. Wonderful people. It was a real privilege to be involved."



The Hajj

In a unique television and online project, Channel 4 negotiated with the Saudi authorities to allow an all-Muslim production team to follow six young people as they made the pilgrimage to Mecca, a journey which every Muslim wants to make once in their lives.

“You made me wish I was there”



Serfraz Qayyum, youth worker from Middlesbrough "I was in two minds about this. It was my chance to do something good for everyone about our religion. On the other hand I had a lot of doubts. Some people only watch these things to criticise, and would Channel 4 give us a fair deal? But they did. They were committed to making a serious programme about Hajj as it really is. When I came back I felt like a superstar. People came from all over to see me. The series really touched them. A lot of people have told me it inspired them to go on Hajj themselves. All my friends, including non-Muslims, tell me they learned a lot from it and kids have asked me to go to their schools to talk about it. The best feeling I've had is when people say to me "you made me wish I was there".

Kosser Sheikh, financial analyst from London "I kept saying to myself 'Don't let this go to your head – it's only

Channel 4' and because I was thinking like that I wasn't really worried about the presence of the camera or the impact it may have created on other people around me. The whole crew, both the UK and Saudi teams, were brilliant, totally understanding and extremely respectful. I am so glad that together with the other pilgrims I was able to reach the hearts of Muslims and especially non-Muslims. So many people said to me how refreshing it was to finally see something positive, and educational, about Islam in the media. I'm thankful I was able to reach out to so many people and, in a sense, bring them all together and remind them of the beauty of Islam."

During *The Hajj*, Channel 4 screened daily 10-minute video diaries from the pilgrims, 'book-ended' by two one-hour documentaries and five short programmes explaining the five pillars of Islam.



Adult at 14

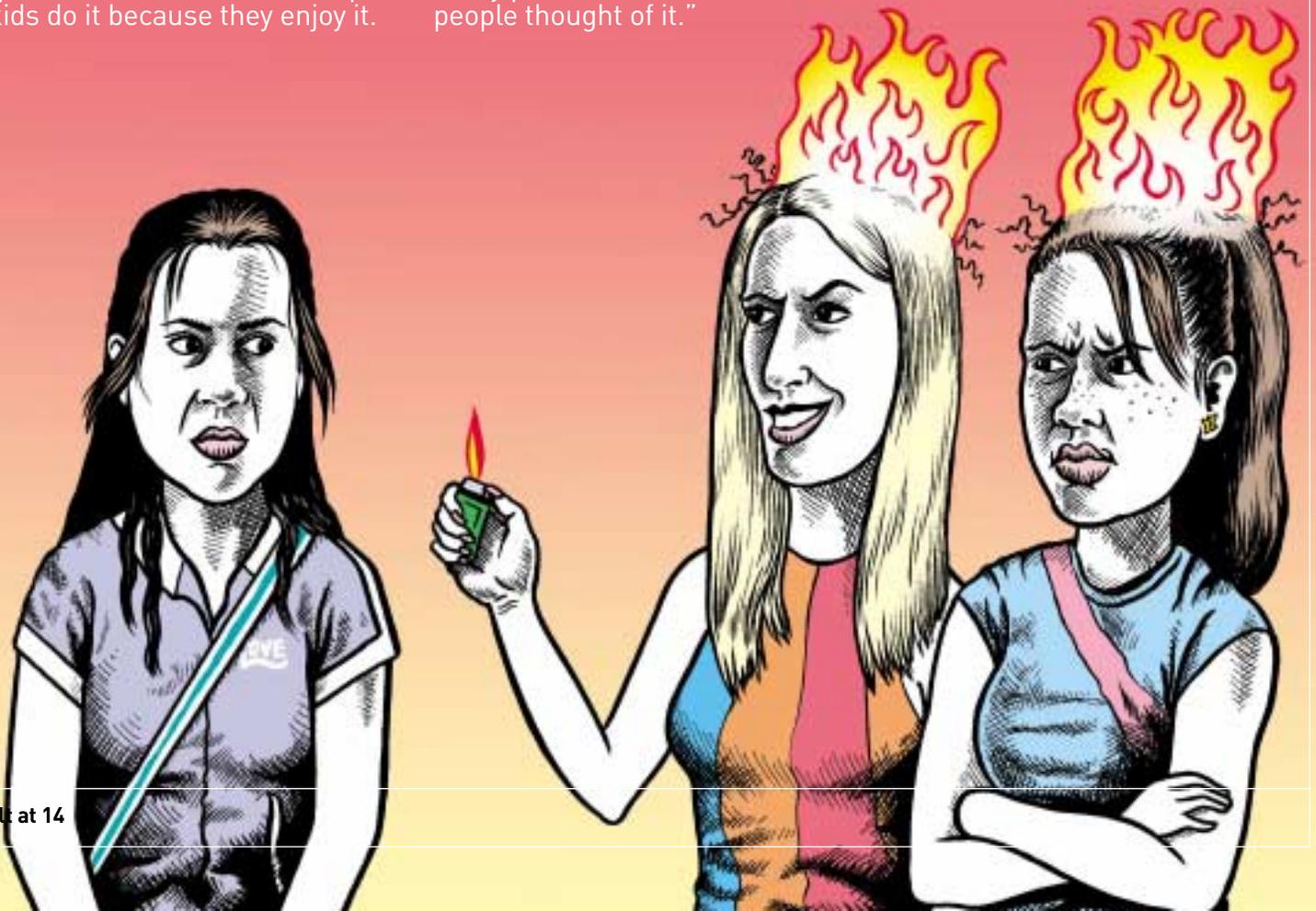
The five programme *Adult at 14* series looked at a Britain in which peer pressure, pornography and changing perceptions of sexuality hit teenagers in ways few adults acknowledge. *Age of Consent* reported teenagers' views on sexual behaviour. The drama *Pleasureland* explored the pain of peer pressure.

“You’ve got to decide things for yourself”

Paula Hector, associate producer, *Age of Consent* “Teenagers seem happier talking about their criminal activity than their sexual activity. Big swaggering boys clam up at the thought that their mums might see them on TV. Parents just refuse to face up to the facts of their children’s sexual activity. We had youth workers telling us how kids remain largely ignorant of even the mechanics of sex, and despite watching pornography! We wanted to show that kids need to be empowered to make sensible decisions when they are ready to do so. You can’t just explain teen sex as a result of peer pressure – kids do it because they enjoy it.

We seem to forget the heart-warming side of it – all that teenage petting and snogging.”

Katie Lyon, actress “It wasn’t until after I’d got the part that I read the full script, and I was quite shocked when I did. I think it’s a story that applies to anyone. It’s not just about school-kids and it’s not just saying under-age sex is bad. It’s saying you’ve got to stick up for yourself, you’ve got to decide things for yourself, not just at school but right throughout your life. I didn’t think I’d be able to get that much across and so I was really pleased with how it went and what people thought of it.”



Time Team Big Dig

***Big Dig* saw thousands of viewers of Channel 4's long-established archaeology programme *Time Team* working with professional archaeologists over a June weekend, digging 'test pits' in back gardens and open spaces across the country to create a people's map of Britain's archaeological heritage.**

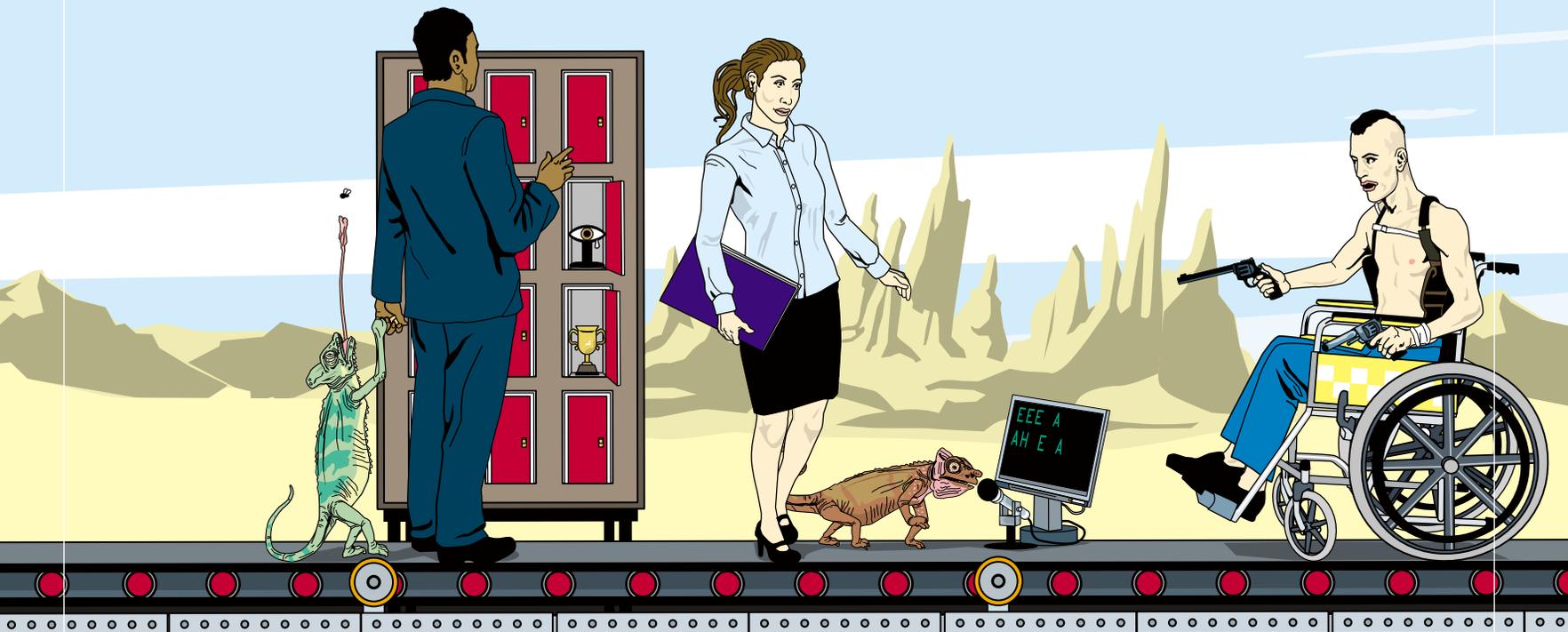
Digging for Britain

Peter Ellis, Senior Officer at Her Majesty's Young Offenders Institute, Olney "I watch *Time Team*, so I knew about *Big Dig*, and I knew there had been a medieval village near the prison. I'd also done a short archaeology course at Warwick University so I got in touch with someone in their adult education department who ran a special four-day course for us. We dug three test pits during *Big Dig* and found some medieval pottery and – what I was really looking for – a medieval road way, possibly a 'hollow way' with a centre drain. You only ever hear about prisons when it's bad news and here we were on Channel 4 and dozens of websites. The lads were over the moon. They'd never done anything like this. One of them planned to go on to study at Warwick University when he got out of prison. Of course, we had jokes about digging holes, and, of course, there were security implications doing something like this in a prison. But it was a great experience with fantastic results."

The world of professional archaeology was divided over the *Big Dig*, but careful planning and an extensive network of professional online and on-the-ground guidance made it, in most eyes, a highly successful promotion and democratisation of archaeology. Wendy McKenna, a graduate archaeologist and one of the dig leaders said "On my project, the oldest person to lift a trowel was 69, the youngest five. It's so important that people can be involved in something like this, because it's their heritage."



“I’m proud to be part of Channel 4 and part of this scheme”



Creative talent is the lifeblood of any media business, so it's not very surprising that Channel 4 provides or supports dozens of industry training initiatives. But Channel 4's multi-million pound talent programme does much more than groom new workers for the TV industry – it aims to create new opportunities for individuals and small creative businesses, to raise ambitions and inspire change. Here's what that meant for just a few of the people we worked with in 2003.

The **Junior Researcher** scheme provides an all-round grounding in the basics of television production, so that after a year participants have the skills and confidence to seek work as junior researchers. Participants are placed with independent production companies, with personal mentors and additional training at Channel 4. Part of the scheme's purpose is to broaden the ethnic diversity of the industry's workforce. **Preya Chauhan** has been working with *Maverick*, a Birmingham production company. **“Selected from over 800 applicants, all 12 black**

members of the scheme are finding out what they can offer the television industry not just because of their colour and culture but because of the many skills they have. All of us are in placements in different companies, but we face similar triumphs and challenges. It has opened doors for me I didn't know were there to be opened and for this I am truly thankful. I feel proud to be part of Channel 4 and part of this scheme.”

Another participant is **Emma Smith**, working with *Talkback Productions*. **“We trainees are flag-bearers of the next generation of achievers in a fantastic industry. Channel 4 has had the foresight to recognise that the industry needs to reflect the societies that live in the British Isles. I am very proud to be part of this scheme and I am sure that the sum of our contribution will be more than our individual parts. A great deal of faith has been placed in all of us and we feel a real need and desire to succeed.”**

Channel 4's show for deaf viewers, **Vee-TV**, has employed many deaf people on each of its 12-week runs.

Despite their talent and experience, many of them have subsequently found it difficult to get work on mainstream production projects. In an effort to break this depressing cycle, Channel 4 has been helping Vee-TV veterans find work on mainstream production projects. **Caroline O'Neill** went to work with *Optomen TV*. **“After three years working in DEAF television, this was my first stint as a researcher in a mainstream environment. The day I started I was terrified – but my fear was unwarranted. I think that working at Optomen has strengthened my determination to break into the mainstream. It has made me realise I'm just as capable as the next person of doing a good job – if not better! I enjoyed Optomen immensely and met some really special people there. I hope to collaborate with them again in the future.”**

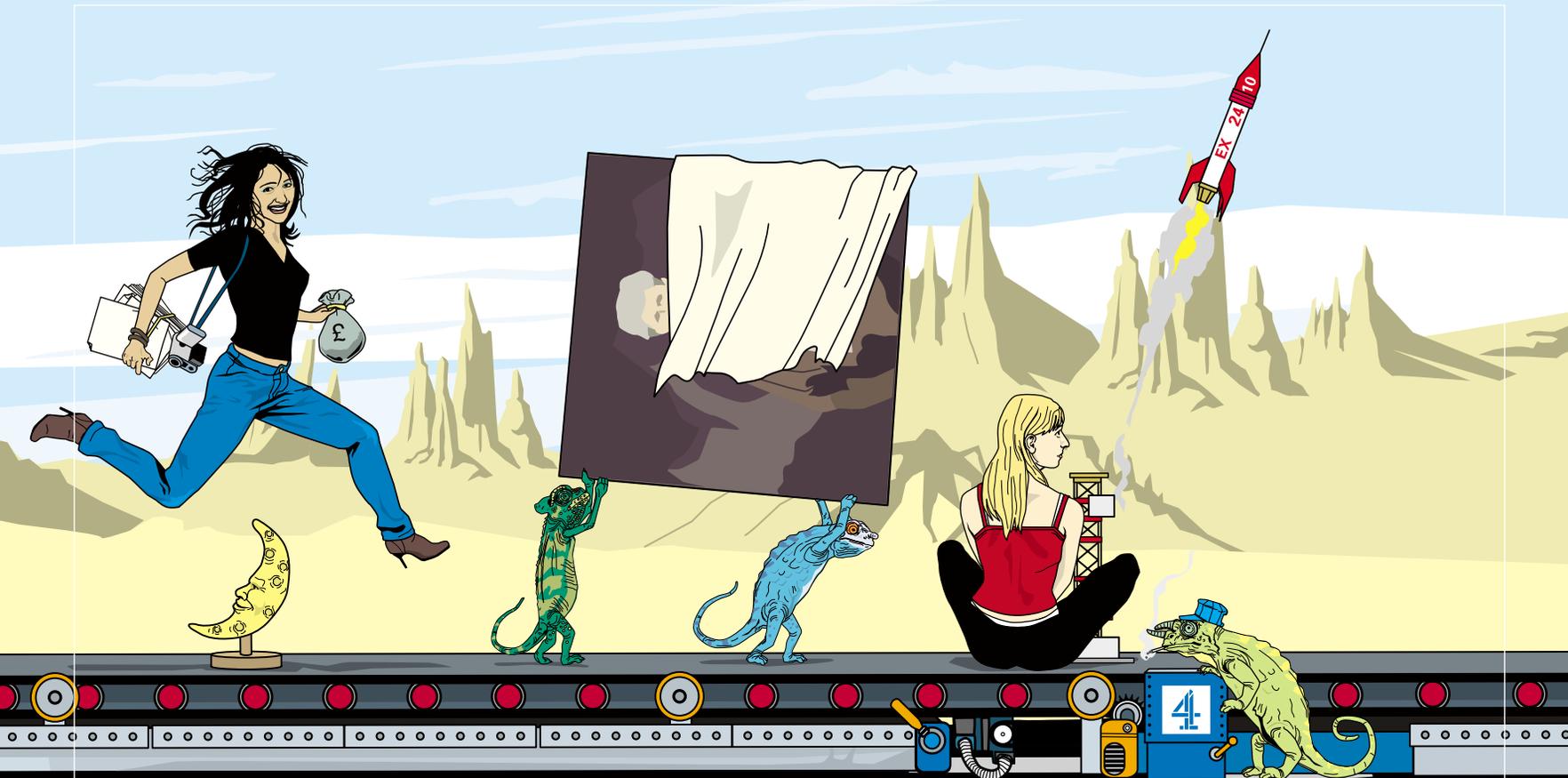
‘The Slot’ is the five-minute programme that follows *Channel 4 News* at 7.55 each weekday evening. It provides a UK-wide platform for the untried and the unusual, for aspiring film-makers and embryonic production companies. *Spectre Broadcast* was

a new company established by **Beadie Finzi** and **Rupert Murray**, two film-makers with professional experience but without the time or resources to develop what they called “the slate of projects that was uniquely us – a vehicle for our own filmic passions”. **Beadie Finzi** says: **“We wanted to make something about a very non-mainstream, kooky, music scene in the US and we took the idea to Channel 4. They said ‘work this up’, they really pushed us, made us do the research, prove there was something there worth doing. ‘The Slot’ was a perfect way for us to show what we could do. It led to a 40-minute film for Channel 4, and since then we've had a desperately busy year. Getting the break at Channel 4 was invaluable, and so was the support, the nurturing. The people we've dealt with have been really exceptional, they've helped us immeasurably.”**

The **Disabled Actors Bursary** scheme gave 10 disabled actors a year's membership of the *Actors Centre* in London, and access to any classes they wanted to attend. It culminated in a two day shoot with the

celebrated director **Penny Woolcock** who cast the actors in scenes from well-known TV dramas and feature films which had not been written or cast for disabled actors. The aim was to show that if the acting is good enough, the disability is irrelevant. **Paul Henshall** was one of the 10. **“This course has been superb. I've learnt a lot, met a lot of people with different ideas and backgrounds – and I've re-learned things I already knew but had forgotten. It's made my work so much better and given me new confidence, helped me see what my strengths are – not from a disabled angle but just as an actor.”**

Another was **Mandy Colleran**: **“Thinking that you enjoy doing something is not the same as having it as a realistic career option. This has made me see where I have skills and where the gaps are. The training and the tutors were great – the scheme gave you access to the kind of people you don't get access to on your own. But at a philosophical level it was about confirming whether or not this was something I could do.”**



IDEASfactory is Channel 4's online and on-the-ground project which provides information, training opportunities and a discussion forum for young people who want to make their creativity part of their working lives, not just their leisure lives. It brings together education authorities, regional development agencies and a range of private and public bodies. The website attracts about 45,000 users a month.

A young woman who had been runner-up in a script writing competition sent this to the IDEASfactory website: **"Fantastic news! I've just been offered some funding to make the film! I'm so pleased. Thanks for shortlisting that script in the first place, it made me realise the story did have potential as a short film. Then the master classes you ran got me interested in the actual process of film-making, something I'd never considered before. I started to dream about what it would be like to make my own film and now – a year later – it looks like it's about to become reality. I'm over the moon."**

The mother of a young IDEASfactory user sent this

message to the site's West Midlands co-ordinator: **"I would just like to thank you for keeping in touch with Davy. I don't think he believes in himself where this opening is concerned and I'm very grateful that you still involve him in what's on offer. He's working in a plastics factory earning £140 a week but I know he has great potential for other things. It's such a waste, because he passed his GNVQ in Media Studies with all the other subjects that go with that course."**

ART4 is Channel 4's new contemporary art collection of purchased and commissioned work by emerging artists in the UK. It enriches the working environment for Channel 4 staff and, as it grows, will be available on loan to regional galleries and museums around Britain to enhance their collections of contemporary British art. One of the selected works is a portrait of Paddy Joe Hill, one of the Birmingham Six and the founder of the Miscarriages Of Justice Organisation (MOJO). It was painted by a young Gainsborough-inspired Scottish portraitist, **Michael Fullerton**. He told the

Glasgow 'Sunday Herald': **"It's good it ended up in Channel 4 because a lot of my work is about information – how it goes from one place to another – about the structures of authority involved. I'm interested in Gainsborough because he makes these persuasive, seductive images and to me that's a powerful thing. I do feel the mass media is quite like that as well... I was quite chuffed. It's a good audience, it gives MOJO a plug, and it's going to be lent to museums up and down the country for a long time to come. Channel 4 are trying to help artists, particularly people in my position, at the start of their careers... There's something quite benevolent about the whole thing."**

The **Researchers Development** programme gives 10 non-London based production companies the opportunity to employ a researcher on a fixed-term contract of a year to work exclusively in the areas of research and development. Since the programme started in 2001, Channel 4 has invested over £1 million. **Emma Chatterjee** works with the Plymouth company **TwoFour Productions**.

"It's been a really intensive training experience for me and an extra pair of hands for the company. We had about 10 projects in production that were all going to come to an end at around the same time. Having a development team meant that we have managed the process better. People have been able to stay in work and the company is growing into new areas, doing things we'd never have dreamed of doing a year ago. For companies out in the regions, the Researchers Development Programme can be a real lifeline. It's changed the whole way the company works."

Channel 4's **Trainee Deputy Commissioning Editor** programme has given three talented professionals from ethnic minority backgrounds a year's experience working as senior professionals at the heart of Channel 4. One of them is **Bridget Bakokodie**: **"What I've got out of this is an intimate knowledge of how broadcasters and commissioners work, something it's difficult to know from the outside. That understanding will translate into something of practical**

benefit for any company I work with when I've finished at Channel 4. The Channel has also benefited by my presence – not just because of my race but because I bring a different voice. Diversity is always a good thing. The point of the scheme was to redress an imbalance. The Channel needs more diversity, it will be the richer for it."

And finally... working with our chosen designers, Browns, we asked four talented young illustrators to help us create this **Annual Review**. **Elliot Thoburn** (one of whose illustrations adorns this page) says: **"This has been a real big break for me, not only in terms of possible career progression, but also with the development of my own creative process. Channel 4 and design agency Browns allowed me considerable creative freedom. Working with them has been a constant learning experience. Seeing the way the other illustrators have approached the brief has been a real highlight of the experience and I think the diversity of the styles is a real strength to the whole piece."**

We hope you agree.

A typical Channel 4 audience?

Channel 4 has about a 10% share of the UK television audience, but three-quarters of all viewers find something they want to watch on Channel 4 each week. The four covers of our Annual Review reflect that diversity of taste and interest.



Wife Swap attracted more than 25% of all television viewers, with audiences of up to 7 million, 60% of them women. The series was the winner of the 2003 Broadcast awards for Best New Programme, and Best Popular Factual Series. It also won the award for International Programme Sales. Illustration by **Luke Best** © 2004.



1.2 million people watched **The Hajj** on television, and many more visited the award-winning web site. After the series, Channel 4 launched an SMS phone messaging service, Islamic Inspirations, which by the end of the year had sent over three-quarters of a million messages. Illustration by **Elliot Thoburn** © 2004.



A majority of the 1.5 million people who watched **The Deal** were women, and almost three-quarters of them were upmarket ABC1 viewers. Market research failed to reveal how many of them were Cabinet ministers or spin doctors. Illustration by **Gwyn Vaughan Roberts** © 2004.



More than half of **Bo Selecta's** audience was young people (16-34's) split evenly between men and women. The second series won the 2003 Broadcast Award for Best Comedy Programme or Series and was the UK's third biggest selling Christmas video. Illustration by **Lorna Miller** © 2004.

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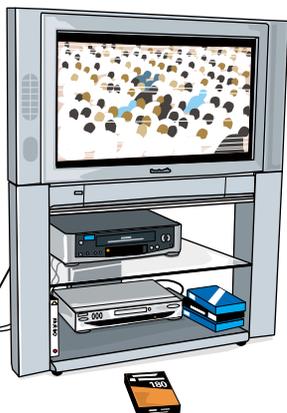
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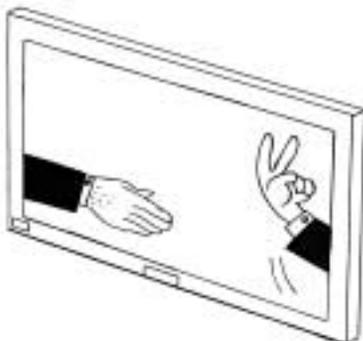
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