

## STRANGE TV

*If you enjoy the stranger things in life (and considering you're reading this e-book, you do), then you might be interested in learning about a few of the most bizarre television shows in the history of the universe.*

### **T**HE MIGHTY BOOSH (2004–07, BBC Three)

**Premise:** Take a journey through time and space in this British fantasy comedy about two zookeepers (series 1) turned musicians (series 2 and 3) named Vince Noir and Howard T.J. Moon. Portrayed by comedy duo Noel Fielding and Julian Barratt, Howard and Vince travel to surreal lands and meet crazy characters—many of whom are played by them. (The odd title has nothing to do with the show; it comes from a nickname given to a bad haircut.)

**Strangeness:** The cast is rounded out by Naboo and Bollo. Naboo, played by Fielding's younger brother Mike, is more interested in smoking his hooka than doing magic, but is usually, if not reluctantly, there to save Howard and Vince from scrapes. Bollo (Dave Brown) is a talking gorilla who died in series 1, but comes back for series 2 and 3. He's a DJ and a drummer. And then there's head zookeeper Bob Fossil (Rich Fulcher), who's just wrong on so many levels.

- The break-out character from *The Mighty Boosh* (thanks to a scene that went viral on the Internet) appeared in the episode "The Legend of Old Gregg." Portrayed by Fielding, Old Gregg is a half-man/half-fish who abducts Howard, offers him Baileys Irish Cream (from a shoe), and then tries to marry him. Also, Old Gregg has a "mangina," or as he calls it, his "downstairs mix-up." It emits a spotlight.

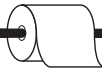
### **Memorable Mighty Boosh Exchange:**

**Howard:** Just imagine the headlines, "Howard Moon...colon, Explorer." Got a nice ring to that, don't it?

**Vince:** *Colon* explorer?

**Howard:** You know what I'm saying. **Vince:**

I think that's got the wrong ring to it.



## **THE MONKEES (1966–68, NBC)**

**Premise:** If you haven't seen this show since you were a kid, you might not remember how funny, bizarre, and ahead of its time it was. Based around a Beatles-esque band—Mike Nesmith, Davy Jones, Micky Dolenz, and Peter Tork—each episode features a wacky adventure and a song or two.

**Strangeness:** In Monkeeland, there really are mad scientists, haunted houses, and pretty much every stereotypical villain. In one episode, the evil wizard Glick devises a plan to take over the world by broadcasting a type of hypnosis through the TV in the form of a never-blinking eye. It gets the entire country stoned.

- The sitcom was the first to regularly break the fourth wall. Once, when our heroes don't know how to get out of a bind, Micky leaves the set and walks into the writers' room, which is full of smoking Chinese men sitting on the floor in front of typewriters. They hastily write new scripts.
- In one of the final episodes, Frank Zappa, dressed up as Mike Nesmith, interviews Mike Nesmith, who is dressed up as Frank Zappa. (Or is it the other way around?)

### **Memorable *Monkees* Exchange:**

**Peter:** Are you scared?

**Micky:** No, I'm not scared; I'll welcome this duel. The symbol of good against the symbol of evil, and I know I'm gonna be the victor!

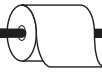
**Davy:** Because the symbol of good always wins?

**Micky:** No, because the lead in a television series always wins.

## **BETTER OFF TED (2009–10, ABC)**

**Premise:** This quirky workplace sitcom is set in the confines of a soulless research-and-development company called Veridian Dynamics. Ted (Jay Harrington) is the nice-guy executive who is tasked with keeping his oddball underlings and manic boss in check. He also tries not to lust after pretty new coworker Linda (Andrea Anders), who had her hairstyle stolen by the aforementioned manic boss Veronica (Portia DeRossi).

**Strangeness:** Veronica cheerfully thrives on the fear she instills in her underlings. But she can be quite motivational: "Now get in there and run that meeting like a shark driving an assault vehicle through a herd of seals wearing chum pants!"



- In one episode, the building's motion-sensor system stops recognizing dark-skinned people. But instead of fixing it (which would be “racially insensitive” because it shows “preferential treatment”), all of Veridian's black employees are assigned a white person to follow them around so they can open doors and ride in elevators. But the African Americans still can't activate the water fountains, so, in attempt to show how “racially progressive” it is, Veridian installs manual water fountains beneath signs that read “Blacks Only.”

- The show's two nerdy scientists, Phil and Lem (Jonathan Slavin and Malcolm Barrett), are responsible for creating and then testing the company's questionable products—including weaponized pumpkins, killer pandas, an octo-chicken that lives in a web, and steak grown in a lab (which today is actually being done in real life).

**Memorable *Better Off Ted* Exchange:**

**Phil:** Lem? You ever get the feeling the ooplasm cultures are looking up at you, worshiping you like a vengeful god?

**Lem:** No! Cytoplasm cultures sometimes, but never ooplasm.

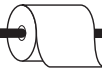
**Phil:** Sometimes you are a complete stranger to me.

**GREEN WING (2004–07, Channel 4)**

**Premise:** This hour-long Britcom is set in a hospital, but none of the storylines revolve around medicine (you rarely even *see* a patient). Instead, the action focuses on the personal lives of the misfit doctors and immature human resources workers.

**Strangeness:** The plot reads like a typical soap opera...kind of: Disheveled Dr. Caroline Todd (Tamsin Greig) is in love with the witty and handsome Dr. McCartney (Julian Rhind-Tutt), but Mac's best friend, the misogynistic anaesthetist Dr. Guy Secretan (Stephen Mangan), lusts after Dr. Trodd...er, Todd. Meanwhile, the perverted head of radiology, Dr. Alan Statham (Mark Heap), lusts after hospital administrator Joanna Clore (Pippa Haywood), who is aging and bitter and hates Alan, but she keeps stringing him along because she's bored. Meanwhile, the hospital's relations manager, Sue White (Michelle Gomez), is downright nuts.

- Sue White may be the weirdest of the weird. One day her arms might be five feet long. On another day she might have a live camel in her office. Or she might be dressed up as a squirrel. And what she does to a comatose doctor in series 2 can't be printed here. (This



show is most definitely *not* for anyone under 18.)

**Memorable Green Wing Exchange**

*Mac and Caroline are talking when Guy walks up to them and says...*

**Guy:** Can you get a verruca on your penis?

**Caroline:** I can't, can you?

**Mac:** Never tried, pretty good at most parlour games, though.

**Guy:** A friend of mine fell knob first into a foot bath at a swimming pool, he was wondering, that's all. I'm not interrupting anything, am I?

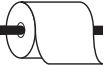
**Mac:** Just the evolution of mankind.

**Tim and Eric Awesome Show, Great Job!** (Cartoon Network, 2007–10)

**Premise:** This live-action “Adult Swim” sketch comedy show looks like what would happen if a public-access station was taken over by overgrown children. Starring Tim Heidecker and Eric Weirheim—along with a bunch of their awkward friends—the comedy duo plays multiple characters, including incredibly weird versions of themselves. Combining gross-out humor and disgusting sound effects with biting satire, the 20-minute episodes fly by so fast that when the credits start to roll, you might just have to pick up your jaw off the floor and try to forget what you just saw.

**Strangeness:** The show is sponsored by a fictional (thank goodness) company called Cinco. A sample product: the Cinco Napple. When you need to avoid something important, eat the Cinco Napple, which is coated with a hefty helping of “sleeping gel” to make you fall asleep instantly. The Cinco Napple is also injected with a bowel irritant that will cause you to wake up in horrible distress about 15 minutes later. It's advised that you wear a pair of Cinco D-pants to contain all of that “D.” The Cinco Napple is endorsed by Alan Thicke, the dad from *Growing Pains*.

- A show this crude should not have such notable cameos, but it does—including Jeff Goldblum, Zach Galifianakis, Weird Al Yankovic, Will Ferrell, Bob Odenkirk (of *Mr. Show* and *Breaking Bad* fame), David Cross, Tom Skerritt, Fred Willard, Michael Cera, and Michael Gross (the dad from *Family Ties*, who shows you what's *really* gross). Our favorite guest star: John C. Reilly, who plays Dr. Steve Brule. He appears on a local newscast to give questionable



(and often nonsensical) medical advice.

**Memorable Steve Brule PSA:** “What the heck you gonna do if you’re on a picnic and have an ice cream and the ants crawl on the ice cream, what are you gonna do? You’re gonna eat the ants because it’s made out of protein. For your health!”

**Save the date:** The next full moon on Halloween will occur in 2020.