

Monty Python's Flying Circus

The show that leaves you wanting less.

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Cleese; Michael Palin; Neil Innes; Douglas Adams*

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The Spanish Inquisition Sketch

Graham Chapman: Trouble at mill.

Carol Cleveland: Oh no - what sort of trouble?

Chapman: One on't cross beams gone owt askew on treddle.

Cleveland: Pardon?

Chapman: One on't cross beams gone owt askew on treddle.

Cleveland: I don't understand what you're saying.

Chapman: (*slightly irritatedly and with exaggeratedly clear accent*) One of the cross beams has gone out askew on the treddle.

Cleveland: Well what on earth does that mean?

Chapman: I don't know - Mr Wentworth just told me to come in here and say that there was trouble at the mill, that's all - I didn't expect a kind of Spanish Inquisition.

(*Jarring chord*)

(*The door flies open and Cardinal Ximinez of Spain enters, flanked by two junior cardinals. Cardinal Biggles has goggles pushed over his forehead. Cardinal Fang is just Cardinal Fang*)

Ximinez: Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition! Our chief weapon is surprise...surprise and fear...fear and surprise.... Our two weapons are fear and surprise...and ruthless efficiency.... Our three weapons are fear, and surprise, and ruthless efficiency...and an almost fanatical devotion to the Pope.... Our four...no... Amongst our weapons.... Amongst our weaponry...are such elements as fear, surprise.... I'll come in again. (*Exit and exeunt*)

Chapman: I didn't expect a kind of Spanish Inquisition.

(*Jarring chord*)

(*The cardinals burst in*)

Ximinez: Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition! Amongst our weaponry are such diverse elements as fear, surprise, ruthless efficiency, an almost fanatical devotion to the Pope, and nice red uniforms - Oh damn! (*To Cardinal Biggles*) I can't say it - you'll have to say it.

Biggles: What?

Ximinez: You'll have to say the bit about Our chief weapons are...

Biggles: (*rather horrified*) I couldn't do that... (*Ximinez bundles the cardinals outside again*)

Chapman: I didn't expect a kind of Spanish Inquisition.

(*Jarring chord*)

(*The cardinals enter*)

Biggles: Er.... Nobody...um....

Ximinez: Expects...

Biggles: Expects... Nobody expects the...um...the Spanish...um...

Ximinez: Inquisition.

Biggles: I know, I know! Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition. In fact, those who do expect -

Ximinez: Our chief weapons are...

Biggles: Our chief weapons are...um...er...

Ximinez: Surprise...

Biggles: Surprise and -

Ximinez: Okay, stop. Stop. Stop there - stop there. Stop. Phew! Ah! ...our chief weapons are surprise...blah blah blah. Cardinal, read the charges.

Fang: You are hereby charged that you did on diverse dates commit heresy against the Holy Church. 'My old man said follow the-'

Biggles: That's enough. *(To Cleveland)* Now, how do you plead?

Cleveland: We're innocent.

Ximinez: Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

(Superimposed caption: 'DIABOLICAL LAUGHTER')

Biggles: We'll soon change your mind about that!

(Superimposed caption: 'DIABOLICAL ACTING')

Ximinez: Fear, surprise, and a most ruthless- *(controls himself with a supreme effort)* Ooooh! Now, Cardinal - the rack!

(Biggles produces a plastic-coated dish-drying rack. Ximinez looks at it and clenches his teeth in an effort not to lose control. He hums heavily to cover his anger)

Ximinez: You....Right! Tie her down.

(Fang and Biggles make a pathetic attempt to tie her on to the drying rack)

Ximinez: Right! How do you plead?

Cleveland: Innocent.

Ximinez: Ha! Right! Cardinal, give the rack *(oh dear)* give the rack a turn.

(Biggles stands their awkwardly and shrugs his shoulders)

Biggles: I....

Ximinez: *(gritting his teeth)* I know, I know you can't. I didn't want to say anything. I just wanted to try and ignore your crass mistake.

Biggles: I...

Ximinez: It makes it all seem so stupid.

Biggles: Shall I...?

Ximinez: Oh, go on, just pretend for God's sake. Ha! Ha! Ha!

(Biggles turns an imaginary handle on the side of the dish-rack)

(Cut to them torturing a dear old lady, Marjorie Wilde)

Ximinez: Now, old woman - you are accused of heresy on three counts - heresy by thought, heresy by word, heresy by deed, and heresy by action - four counts. Do you confess?

Wilde: I don't understand what I'm accused of.

Ximinez: Ha! Then we shall make you understand! Biggles! Fetch... The cushions!

(Jarring chord)

(Biggles holds out two ordinary modern household cushions)

Biggles: Here they are, lord.

Ximinez: Now, old lady - you have one last chance. Confess the heinous sin of heresy, reject the works of the ungodly - two last chances. And you shall be free - three last chances. You have three last chances, the nature of which I have divulged in my previous utterance.

Wilde: I don't know what you're talking about.

Ximinez: Right! If that's the way you want it - Cardinal! Poke her with the soft cushions!

(Biggles carries out this rather pathetic torture)

Ximinez: Confess! Confess! Confess!

Biggles: It doesn't seem to be hurting her, lord.

Ximinez: Have you got all the stuffing up one end?

Biggles: Yes, lord.

Ximinez: *(angrily hurling away the cushions)* Hm! She is made of harder stuff! Cardinal Fang! Fetch... The comfy chair!

(Jarring chord)

(Zoom into Fang's horrified face)

Fang (terrified): The Comfy Chair?

(Biggles pushes in a comfy chair - a really plush one)

Ximinez: So you think you are strong because you can survive the soft cushions. Well, we shall see. Biggles! Put her in the Comfy Chair!

(They roughly push her into the Comfy Chair)

Ximinez: *(with a cruel leer)* Now - you will stay in the Comfy Chair until lunch time, with only a cup of coffee at eleven. *(aside, to Biggles)* Is that really all it is?

Biggles: Yes, lord.

Ximinez: I see. I suppose we make it worse by shouting a lot, do we? Confess, woman. Confess! Confess! Confess! Confess!

Biggles: I confess!

Ximinez: Not you!

Flying Lessons

Mr Chigger: Excuse me, I saw your advertisement for flying lessons and I'd like to make an application.

Secretary: Appointment?

Mr Chigger: Yes, yes.

Secretary: Certainly. Would you come this way, please?

(She gets up, clutching a file and trips off in a typical efficient secretary's walk. Mr Chigger follows. Cut to a river. She goes straight in without looking to right or left, as if she does this routine as a matter of course. Mr Chigger follows. Halfway across the river they pass a couple of business executives hurrying in the opposite direction.)

Secretary: Morning, Mr Jones, Mr Barnes.

(Cut to a forest. They come past towards camera, passing a tea trolley on the way with a tea lady and a couple of men around it.)

Secretary: Morning Mrs Wills.

Mrs Wills: Morning, luv.

(Arty shot. Skyline of a short sharp hill, as in Bergman's 'Seventh Seal'. They come in frame right and up and over, passing two men and exchanging 'Good mornings'. Cut to seashore. Tripping along, they pass another executive.)

Executive: Take this to Marketing, would you.

(They disappear into a cave. We hear footsteps and a heavy door opening.)

Secretary's Voice: Just follow me.

Mr Chigger's Voice: Oh thank you.

(Cut to a shopping street. Camera pans in close-up across road surface.)

Secretary's Voice: Oh, be careful.

Mr Chigger's Voice: Yes, nearly tripped.

Secretary's Voice: Be there soon.

Mr Chigger's Voice: Good. It's a long way, isn't it?

Secretary's Voice: Oh, get hold of that - watch it.

Voice: Morning.

Secretary's Voice: Morning. Upstairs. Be careful, it's very steep. Almost there.

(Camera reaches a GPO tent in middle of road.)

Voice: Morning.

Secretary: Morning. *(they emerge from the tent)* Will you come this way, please. *(cut to interior office, another identical secretary at the desk)* In here, please.

Mr Chigger: Thank you. *(he enters and first secretary trips off he approaches the second secretary)* Hello, I saw your advertisement for flying lessons and I'd like to make an appointment.

Second Secretary: Well, Mr Anemone's on the phone at the moment, but I'm sure he won't mind if you go on in. Through here.

Mr Chigger: Thank you.

(He goes through door. Mr Anemone is suspended by a wire about nine feet off the ground. He is on the telephone.)

Mr Anemone: Ah, won't be a moment. Make yourself at home. *(into phone)* No, no, well look, you can ask Mr Maudling but I'm sure he'll never agree. Not for fifty shillings ... no... no. Bye-bye Gordon. Bye-bye. Oh dear. Bye-bye. *(he throws receiver at telephone but misses)* Missed. Now Mr er...

Mr Chigger: Chigger.

Mr Anemone: Mr Chigger. So, you want to learn to fly?

Mr Chigger: Yes.

Mr Anemone: Right, well, up on the table, arms out, fingers together, knees bent...

Mr Chigger: No, no, no.

Mr Anemone: *(very loudly)* Up on the table! *(Mr Chigger gets on the table)* Arms out, fingers together, knees bent, now, head well forward. Now, flap your arms. Go on, flap, faster... faster... faster... faster, faster, faster, faster - now jump! *(Mr Chigger jumps and lands on the floor)* Rotten. Rotten. You're no bloody use at all. You're an utter bloody wash-out. You make me sick, you weed!

Mr Chigger: Now look here...

Mr Anemone: All right, all right. I'll give you one more chance, get on the table...

Mr Chigger: Look, I came here to learn how to fly an aeroplane.

Mr Anemone: A what?

Mr Chigger: I came here to learn how to fly an aeroplane.

Mr Anemone: *(sarcastically)* Oh, 'an aeroplane'. Oh, I say, we are grand, aren't we? *(imitation posh accent)* 'Oh, oh, no more buttered scones for me, mater. I'm off to play the grand piano'. 'Pardon me while I fly my aeroplane.' Now get on the table!

Mr Chigger: Look. No one in the history of the world has ever been able to fly like that.

Mr Anemone: Oh, I suppose mater told you that while you were out riding. Well, if people can't fly what am I doing up here?

Mr Chigger: You're on a wire.

Mr Anemone: Oh, a wire. I'm on a wire, am I?

Mr Chigger: Of course you're on a bloody wire.

Mr Anemone: I am not on a wire. I am flying.

Mr Chigger: You're on a wire.

Mr Anemone: I am flying.

Mr Chigger: You're on a wire.

Mr Anemone: I'll show you whether I'm on a wire or not. Give me the

'oop.

Mr Chigger: What?

Mr Anemone: Oh, I don't suppose we know what an 'oop is. I suppose pater thought they were a bit common, except on the bleedin' croquet lawn.

Mr Chigger: Oh, a hoop.

Mr Anemone: 'Oh an hoop.' *(taking hoop)* Thank you, your bleeding Highness. Now. Look. *(he waves hoop over head and feet)*

Mr Chigger: Go on, right the way along.

Mr Anemone: All right, all right, all right. *(he moves hoop all the way along himself allowing the wire to pass through obvious gap in hoop's circumference)* . Now, where's the bleeding wire, then?

Mr Chigger: That hoop's got a hole in.

Mr Anemone: Oh Eton and Madgalene. The hoop has an hole in. Of course it's got a hole in, it wouldn't be a hoop otherwise, would it, mush!

Mr Chigger: No, there's a gap in the middle, there.

Mr Anemone: Oh, a gahp. A gahp in one's hhhhhoop. Pardon me, but I'm off to play the grand piano.

Mr Chigger: Look, I can see you're on a wire - look, there it is.

Mr Anemone: Look, I told you, you bastard, I'm not on a wire.

Mr Chigger: You are. There is.

Mr Anemone: There isn't.

Mr Chigger: Is.

Mr Anemone: Isn't!

Mr Chigger: Is!

Mr Anemone: Isn't!

Mr Chigger: Is!

Mr Anemone: Isn't!

Mr Chigger: Is!

Mr Anemone: Isn't!!

Mr Chigger: Is!!!

Voice Over: Anyway, this rather pointless bickering went on for some time until...

Caption on screen: 'TWO YEARS LATER' Interior cockpit of airliner. *(Mr Chigger and a second pilot sitting at controls.)*

Mr Chigger: Gosh, I am glad I'm a fully qualified arline pilot.

(Cut to BALPA spokesman sitting at a desk. He is in Captain's uniform and has a name plate in front of him on the desk saying 'BALPA Spokesman')

BALPA Man: The British Airline Pilots Association would like to point out that it takes a chap six years to become a fully qualified airline pilot, and not two.

(Caption on screen: 'FOUR YEARS LATER THAN THE LAST CAPTION' Interior

cockpit. For three seconds. Then cut back to BALPA spokesman.)

BALPA Man: Thank you. I didn't want to seem a bit of an old fusspot just now you know, but it's just as easy to get these things right as they are easily found in the BALPA handbook. Oh, one other thing, in the Sherlock Holmes last week Tommy Cooper told a joke about a charter flight, omitting to point out that one must be a member of any organization that charters a plane for at least six months beforehand, before being able to take advantage of it. Did rather spoil the joke for me, I'm afraid. *(phone ring)* Yes, ah yes - yes. *(puts phone down)* My wife just reminded me that on a recent 'High Chapparral' Kathy Kirby was singing glibly about 'Fly me to the Stars' when of course there are no scheduled flights of this kind, or even chartered, available to the general public at the present moment, although of course, when they are BALPA will be in the vanguard. Or the Trident. Little joke for the chaps up at BALPA House. And one other small point. Why is it that these new lurex dancing tights go baggy at the knees after only a couple of evenings fun? Bring back the old canvas ones I say. It is incredible, isn't it, that in these days when man can walk on the moon and work out the most complicated hire purchase agreements, I still get these terrible headaches. Well . . . I seem to have wandered a bit, but still, no harm done. Jolly good luck.

(Back in the cockpit of the airliner. The two pilots sit there. Atmospheric noise of a big airliner in flight. Suddenly there is a banging on the door at the back of the cockpit.)

Zanie: *(off-screen)* Are you going to be in there all day? *(the two pilots exchange a puzzled look, then shrug and go back to flying; suddenly another series of bangs on door)* Other people want to go you know! *(they exchange another look; pause; a heavier bang on the door)* The door's jammed, if you ask me. *(a crash as he attempts to force it; another crash and the door flies open; Mr Zanie enters)* Ah. *(suddenly realizing where he is)* Oh my God. Oh, I'm terribly sorry. I thought this was the bally toilet.

Second Pilot: This is the control cabin.

Zanie: Oh I know that. I'm a flying man, you know... oh yes... Bally stupid mistake...

(A pause. Zanie remains sanding at the back of cockpit. The pilots go on as if he is not there.)

Second Pilot: Cloud's heavy ... What's the reading?

Mr Chigger: 4.8... Steady.

Zanie: If they had all those dials in the toilet... there wouldn't be room for anything else, would there. *(another nervous laugh; not the slightest reaction from the pilots)*

Mr Chigger: *(into intercom)* Hello, Geneva this is Roger Five-O ... What is your cloud reading? Hello, Geneva...

Zanie: I wouldn't fancy flying one of those sitting on the toilet... I mean it'd take the glamour out of being a pilot, wouldn't it, ha ha, flying around the world sitting on a toilet.

Radio Voice: Geneva here. 4.9 ... Heavy... Over.

Mr Chigger: Serious?

Second Pilot: No, not if it keeps at that level, no.

Zanie: Mind you, if you did fly it from the toilet it would leave a lot more space up here, wouldn't it. *(finally he realizes his attempt at small talk is not working)* Well, I'd better get back to the cabin, then. Sorry about the silly intrusion. Bally stupid. *(he pushes lever down on the door which opens directly out of the plane)* Door's jammed. *(he gives it a shoulder charge and flies straight out of the plane)* Aaaaaaaaaarrggghhhhhh!

(Plane noise overhead Continue scream. Outside of a gent's lavatory, there is a big pile of straw. Pause, then Zanie drops onto the straw. He looks up at gent's sign.)

Zanie: Bally piece of luck...

(He brushes himself down and goes into gents. Cut back to cockpit. A hostess enters from the passenger cabin.)

Second Pilot: Oh hello. Everything all right at the back?

Hostess: Yes, they're as quiet as dormice.

Second Pilot: Dormice?

(Door opens and a man in a neat suit enters. From beneath his jacket he produces a revolver with silencer attachment. He points it at the pilots.)

The Pet Shop

(A customer enters a pet shop.)

Customer: 'Ello, I wish to register a complaint.

(The owner does not respond.)

Customer: 'Ello, Miss?

Owner: What do you mean "miss"?

Customer: *(pause)* I'm sorry, I have a cold. I wish to register a complaint!

Owner: We're closin' for lunch.

Customer: Never mind that, my lad. I wish to complain about this parrot what I purchased not half an hour ago from this very boutique.

Owner: Oh yes, the, uh, the Norwegian Blue...What's,uh...What's wrong with it?

Customer: I'll tell you what's wrong with it, my lad. 'E's dead, that's what's wrong with it!

Owner: No, no, 'e's uh,...he's resting.

Customer: Look, matey, I know a dead parrot when I see one, and I'm looking at one right now.

Owner: No no he's not dead, he's, he's restin'! Remarkable bird, the Norwegian Blue, idn't it, ay? Beautiful plumage!

Customer: The plumage don't enter into it. It's stone dead.

Owner: Nononono, no, no! 'E's resting!

Customer: All right then, if he's restin', I'll wake him up! *(shouting at the cage)* 'Ello, Mister Polly Parrot! I've got a lovely fresh cuttle fish for you if you show... *(owner hits the cage)*

Owner: There, he moved!

Customer: No, he didn't, that was you hitting the cage!

Owner: I never!!

Customer: Yes, you did!

Owner: I never, never did anything...

Customer: *(yelling and hitting the cage repeatedly)* Ello Polly!!!! Testing! Testing! Testing! Testing! This is your nine o'clock alarm call!

(Takes parrot out of the cage and thumps its head on the counter. Throws it up in the air and watches it plummet to the floor.)

Customer: Now that's what I call a dead parrot.

Owner: No, no.....No, 'e's stunned!

Customer: Stunned?!!?

Owner: Yeah! You stunned him, just as he was wakin' up! Norwegian Blues stun easily, major.

Customer: Um...now look...now look, mate, I've definitely 'ad enough of

this. That parrot is definitely deceased, and when I purchased it not 'alf an hour ago, you assured me that its total lack of movement was due to it bein' tired and shagged out following a prolonged squawk.

Owner: Well, he's...he's, ah...probably pining for the fjords.

Customer: Pinin' for the Fjords?!?!?!? What kind of talk is that?, look, why did he fall flat on his back the moment I got 'im home?

Owner: The Norwegian Blue prefers keepin' on it's back! Remarkable bird, id'nit, squire? Lovely plumagetunned!

Customer: Look, I took the liberty of examining that parrot when I got it home, and I discovered the only reason that it had been sitting on its perch in the first place was that it had been NAILED there.

(pause)

Owner: Well, o'course it was nailed there! If I hadn't nailed that bird down, it would have nuzzled up to those bars, bent 'em apart with its beak, and VOOM! Feeweeweewe!

Customer: "Voom"?!? Mate, this bird wouldn't "voom" if you put four million volts through it! 'E's bleedin' demised!

Owner: No no! 'E's pining!

Customer: 'E's not pinin'! 'E's passed on! This parrot is no more! He has ceased to be! 'E's expired and gone to meet 'is maker! 'E's a stiff! Bereft of life, 'e rests in peace! If you hadn't nailed 'im to the perch 'e'd be pushing up the daisies! 'Is metabolic processes are now 'istory! 'E's off the twig! 'E's kicked the bucket, 'e's shuffled off 'is mortal coil, run down the curtain and joined the bleedin' choir invisible!!He's f*ckin' snuffed it!... This is an ex-parrot!!

(pause)

Owner: Well, I'd better replace it, then.

(he takes a quick peek behind the counter)

Owner: Sorry squire, I've had a look 'round the back of the shop, and uh, we're right out of parrots.

Customer: I see. I see, I get the picture.

Owner: *(pause)* I got a slug.

(pause)

Customer: Pray, does it talk?

Owner: Nnnnot really.

Customer: Well it's hardly a bloody replacement, is it?!?!?!?!?

Owner: Well! I never wanted to do this in the first place. I wanted to be... A lumberjack!