

BEYOND THE JOKE

THE LOWDOWN ON COMEDY, THEATRE,
TV, FOOD, TRAVEL & SAM CAMPBELL

[NEWS](#)[PREVIEWS](#)[REVIEWS](#)[VIDEOS](#)[INTERVIEWS](#)[OPINION](#)[CONTACT](#)

News: Rare Daniel Kitson Footage Unearthed

By Bruce Dessau on 9/4/2014



In an age when pretty much everything from your first pooch to your dying croak ends up on YouTube there isn't much of Daniel Kitson around. In his early days there was a famous clip of him on Blockbusters aged 15 knocking around when Bob Holness asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up and he said "stand-up comedian". That clip now appears to be gone. Possibly taken down by Kitson, possibly taken down by Holness before he died. I suspect the former is more publicity-shy than the latter.

A few weeks ago, however, I was tipped off about a TV documentary that featured Kitson when he was pretty much totally unknown. It was a late night Channel Four

series called *The Other Side* and in 1999 it produced an episode called *Edinburgh Madness* which went to the Edinburgh Festival in search of "the fringe of the Fringe". The one hour programme featured a number of performers who have either never made it big or knocked the comedy game on the head. Except, that is, for 22-year-old Daniel Kitson, who has done pretty well, despite being described in the blurb as "the Bernard Manning of the millennium".

That year Kitson was performing in a double-header with Lennie Bennett-lookalike Lee Canterbury, who has recently cropped up on the circuit again. They were performing in a truck in Grassmarket run by Noel Faulkner, who runs the Comedy Cafe in Hoxton. At the time I think his management company was managing Kitson. The show was called *The Monkey Touchers* in the Fringe brochure but by the time the show was performed there was no monkey touching in it whatsoever.

Hindsight is a wonderful thing of course, but it is clear looking back on the documentary that Kitson was uniquely gifted. And I think the programme-makers realised it too. He and Canterbury dominate the doc, cropping up performing in their venue, loitering around outside and just hanging around in their flat watching football and playing video games.

While Kitson is the junior partner he is clearly the more charismatic one. There is one point where the interviewer asks both of them a question. Lee gives a brief answer, Kitson then gives a lengthy, eloquent answer then the interviewer asks an affronted Lee the same question, having already forgotten his original answer.

As for Kitson's onstage material, there are none of the sentimental stories about old folk that seems to be the recurring motif of his [recent theatrical shows](#), but one can certainly see the origins of the potty-mouthed genius that would be nominated for a Perrier Award two years later and then win the award pretty unanimously in 2002. He flirts, he swears, he smirks, he riffs. His distinctive, almost Chaplinesque waddling walk in very much in place. All of this in the back of a van to a frankly sparse audience.

And now the bad news. I saw this documentary by going to the British Film Institute in London and paying £12. There is no sign of it online whatsoever. I'm amazed it has never been unearthed before. I know when list programmes about comedians want to feature Kitson they struggled to find footage. I did think of trying to work out a way of selling my knowledge of this clip to the highest bidder, but in the end I thought I might as well put the information out there. So next time there is a stand-up list programme hopefully some of this footage will be included in it and actually make it worth watching for a change. Otherwise here's a [link \(http://www.bfi.org.uk/archive-collections/searching-access-collections/research-viewing-services\)](http://www.bfi.org.uk/archive-collections/searching-access-collections/research-viewing-services) - go and book yourself into the BFI. And if anyone has access to that Blockbusters clip, do let me know.

Follow

Articles on beyond the joke contain affiliate ticket links that earn us revenue. BTJ needs your continued support to continue - if you would like to help to keep the site going, please consider [donating](#).