

# REAL LIFE EXPERIENCE

## Episode 1: 'Level Up'

**'Highly commended' by Kate Rowland, Jon Plowman and Sophie Clarke-Jervoise for the Trans Comedy Award 2013.**

**6 x 30 minutes. Young Adult Comedy**

### **Logline:**

*A young transman starts his final year of school, socialising as a boy for the first time.*

### **Synopsis:**

*Luke Young, 16 - a geeky female-to-male transexual - is entering his last year of school when his doctor tells him he has to get some 'real life experience' living as male.*

In episode one, it's Luke's first day back - and his first day socialising as a guy - and things aren't exactly going well.

When the head teacher 'outs' him in an assembly, his best mate Faiza goes head-to-head with the school board, and Luke finds himself exactly where he doesn't want to be: in the spotlight.

Dumped by his gal pals, Luke makes friends with Tam Campbell, a real lad's lad and an unlikely ally.

Kicked off the school football team before he even tries out, things can't get any worse - until Luke uses his trans status to his advantage and becomes an unlikely hero to a group of lads who can't get served at the pub.

**Michael Richardson**

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A nice living room in a nice family home. Modern, tasteful.

Andy Young - 40s, a gruff, masculine mechanic - sits in an armchair in front of the TV. He's holding a mug of tea on his beer belly, square-eyed, watching *Top Gear*.

Beside him, Ryan Young - 11, a grubby school boy, half-dressed for school - the mirror image of his dad: as Andy lifts his mug of tea, Ryan does the same. *Slurp*.

Jean Young - 40s, a nurse, dressed for work, scatter-brained, excited - enters from the kitchen. She's fiddling with a digital camera she doesn't know how to use.

On the floor: a bucket of LEGO, tipped out.

Jean steps on a LEGO, bare feet, reacts: the greatest pain known to man.

JEAN

Oh, in the name of the Baby Jesus  
have I not told you to pick these  
up?

Ryan doesn't react, just slurps his tea, passive aggressively. Jean barely notices, goes back to fussing with her camera.

JEAN

Oh, the big day!

Andy doesn't react, ignores Jean. Intentional.

JEAN

I don't think this is working.

Jean jumps as the battery hatch pops open, a proper, dizzy Mum.

JEAN

Oh, no batteries!

Suddenly, Jean's rooting down the side of Andy's armchair. It's as if he's only just noticed she's there.

ANDY

Eh, hey! Hey! Watch it! What you doing?!

Jean emerges with the remote control, clicks off the TV.

ANDY

Eh, I was watching that.

Jean pulls the batteries out of the remote control, transfers them to her camera.

JEAN

(SHE MIMICS HIM) Eh... I was watching that.

(TO RYAN) It's your brother's big day, first day at school!

(POINTED) And we're all going to be excited for him.

Andy rolls his eyes, shakes his head, says nothing. Ryan does the same.

Camera at the ready, Jean stands at the bottom of the stairs.

JEAN

Luke! Luke! You ready?

There's movement at the top of the stairs then: Jean gasps, almost welling up.

JEAN

Oh, my wee soldier, don't you look smart? All grown up...

It's as if she's talking to a six year old.

Pull back and reveal: Luke Young - 16, a female-to-male transguy, nerdy but cool, ready for school - thoroughly embarrassed.

LUKE (TO CAMERA)

There's literally no way this can go well.

Jean's camera flashes, capturing a startled picture of Luke.

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EXT. THE YOUNG'S HOUSE

2

Suburbia. The Young's house is nice, but beige.

Jean's bustling Luke out the door, a slouching, hoodie-wearing teenager.

LUKE

Bye, Dad!

A moment. No reply.

Jean shoots Luke a worried look, unnoticed, as they make their way over to her car, a Mumsy Volvo.

Luke's opening the car door when: Jean's fiddling in her handbag, patting down her pockets, looking for something.

LUKE (TO CAMERA)

She's forgot her keys.

JEAN

Forgot my keys! Two seconds!

Jean rushes inside.

LUKE (TO CAMERA)

We're going to be late. We're always late. Anyway, I'm Luke. And here's what you need to know about me.

CUT TO:

INT. LUKE'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK

3

Luke's sat on his bed, looking down at something in his lap.

LUKE (VOICEOVER)

I like reading.

Pullback and reveal: Luke's reading a blue mag - *BABES WITH LAZERS!!* - a hand down the front of his boxer shorts.

EXT. THE YOUNG'S HOUSE - FLASHBACK

4

A small, well-kept garden. Luke - in his PE kit - half-heartedly kicks a football at the shed.

LUKE (VOICEOVER)  
I like football.

The football rolls back towards him, miserably.

INT. LUKE'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK

5

Luke's back in his bedroom, in his boxers and binder (a tight 'vest' that gives him the appearance of a flat chest), dancing around, holding a Lynx can as a microphone.

LUKE (VOICEOVER)  
And I like really cool music.

LUKE  
(Rapping, shaking his bum) My  
anaconda don't want none unless  
you got buns hon!

BACK TO:

EXT. THE YOUNG'S HOUSE

6

Still in his back yard, standing by his Mum's car: Luke grimaces, as if he's just seen what we've seen.

LUKE (TO CAMERA)  
Sorry. Anyway. Origin story.  
First there was...

CUT TO:

INT. MATERNITY WARD - FLASHBACK (1990S)

7

Jean - hospital gown, big earrings, huge nineties perm - is in bed, her legs in stirrups.

Andy's by her side - a shellsuit and goatee, David Beckham highlights - wincing: Jean's crushing his hand in hers, right in the middle of a contraction.

JEAN  
Fuck. You. Andy!

From between her legs: a nurse emerges, holding a squealing baby with a big, pink, Miss Pacman-style bow on its head.

NURSE  
It's a... girl?

The nurse presents Jean and Andy with the baby, a confused look on her face.

BACK TO:

EXT. THE YOUNG'S HOUSE

8

Luke shakes his head, shrugs.

LUKE (TO CAMERA)  
Then there was...

INT. YOUNG'S LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK (1990S)

9

The Young's living room, pure nineties, a big, floral sofa.

Jean's sat on the sofa, getting Young Luke - aged six, pre-transition - ready for his first day at school: skirt, blazer, the Miss Pacman bow still on his head.

Young Luke fidgets with the bow, tries to pull it off.

JEAN  
Come on, stop that, you've got to look nice for school!

Jean smacks his hand. Young Luke looks to camera, shakes his head: *what is she like?*

LUKE (VOICEOVER)  
And then there was...

INT. LUKE'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK

10

A few months ago.

Luke's sat up in bed, duvet wrapped tight right up to his neck, pink bow off his head and in his hands.

LUKE  
(Tearful, confessional) Mum, I think I might be...

LUKE (VOICEOVER)  
And then...

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - FLASHBACK

11

Doctor Mike - 30s, a perky, Asian doctor - holding a comically oversized syringe, grimaces as he throws Luke over his desk, trousers down, goes to inject testosterone into his backside.

LUKE

Aaaargh!

BACK TO:

EXT. THE YOUNG'S HOUSE - DAY 1

12

Luke's still wincing - ouch! - rubbing his bum.

LUKE (TO CAMERA)

And now, this!

Luke indicates his school uniform, brightly.

He grimaces.

Jean exits the house again, hollering over her shoulder, to Andy:

JEAN

Get him to pick up those LEGOs.  
And make sure he keeps his  
trousers on all day (muttering)  
old enough to know better. (To  
Luke) Always late, eh?

Luke winks to camera as he gets into the car.

INT. JEAN'S CAR

13

Jean's in the driver's seat, munching a breakfast bar.

Luke's fidgeting in the seat next to her, pulling at his hoodie, tugging at his binder. Nervous.

JEAN

I don't know why you won't let me  
drive you to school.

LUKE

I'm not six, Mum.

JEAN

I know, but, your first day?

LUKE

It's not my first day.

JEAN

You know what I mean. Anyway,  
you'll let me drive you to  
Chloe's.

LUKE

That's different.

JEAN

How's that different?

LUKE

(Grinning) I can't be bothered to  
walk to Chloe's.

They both laugh.

A moment, then:

JEAN

Your Dad'll come round, you know?

Luke shuffles, uncomfortable. Knows where this is going.

LUKE (TO CAMERA)

My Dad and I used to be really  
close.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK (1990S)

14

Andy - shellsuit and goatee - is sat in his armchair,  
holding a mug of tea on his belly.

Beside him, Young Luke - 11, dressed for school, a girl's  
uniform, still in the Miss Pacman bow - the mirror image  
of his dad: as Andy lifts his mug of tea, Young Luke does  
the same. *Slurp*.

Grinning, Andy lifts his leg, farts. Luke does the same.

They both laugh.



EXT. THE YOUNGS' BACK GARDEN - FLASHBACK (1990S) 15

Shellsuit Andy and Young Luke - a girly PE kit, the Miss Pacman bow - are in the back garden, Andy standing in 'goal', in front of the shed.

Young Luke wallops a football at his Dad, 'scores', the football banging off the shed door.

Young Luke throws his arms up in the air in celebration.

Andy rushes forward, scoops him up, celebratory, proud.

EXT. RIVERSIDE - FLASHBACK (1990S) 16

A picture postcard image of a riverside.

Andy and Young Luke are in fishing gear - the Miss Pacman bow on top of a green fishing boater - sat up in deck chairs, rods in the river.

Young Luke beams at his Dad.

Andy nods, proud as punch.

LUKE (VOICEOVER)

Now it's more...

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK (PRESENT) 17

The living room, present day.

Andy's sat in his armchair, watching Top Gear.

Luke enters, grins at him.

LUKE

Hi, Dad!

ANDY

(Grunts)

EXT. THE YOUNGS' BACK GARDEN - FLASHBACK (PRESENT) 18

The scene from earlier.

Luke - in his PE kit - half-heartedly kicks a football at the shed.

The football rolls back towards him, miserably.

EXT. RIVERSIDE - FLASHBACK (PRESENT)

19

The same picture postcard image of a riverside from earlier.

Andy and Ryan, in fishing gear, sat up in deck chairs, rods in the river.

Andy looks at Ryan, proud as punch.

Grinning, Ryan lifts his leg, farts. Andy does the same.

They both laugh.

BACK TO:

INT. JEAN'S CAR

20

Back in the car, Luke's staring out of the window, shuffling uncomfortably.

Jean mistakes this for first day nerves.

JEAN

Look, love. Are you sure you want to do this?

Luke sighs. They've been through this.

JEAN

You could take some time out. Decide what you want to do. I mean, there's always college. Fresh start.

LUKE (TO CAMERA)

Look, I know she's right. It's just, all my friends are there. And Dr Mike said part of my transition was to:

CUT TO:

INT. DR MIKE'S OFFICE - FLASHBACK (PRESENT)

21

Over Dr Mike's desk: Dr Mike leans forward.

DOCTOR MIKE (TO CAMERA)

Function full-time as a student.

BACK TO:

INT. JEAN'S CAR - DAY 1

22

LUKE  
Before I could get...

Luke looks down at his crotch: he has a finger sticking through his fly, a makeshift willy. He wiggles it, whistles.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
...the whole enchilada. And what better way to prove I can function as a student than to go back to my old school, get my A levels, and get into uni?  
(beat)  
Yeah, there's literally no way this can go well.

JEAN  
Oh, look. They've got another water feature.

Jean pulls up outside Chloe's house: nice, middle class, but tacky, all pink and purple crazy paving, fairy lights, a few too many water features in the postage stamp-sized back yard.

Jean leans over for a kiss. Luke sits, face scrunched up in disgust.

JEAN  
Text me as soon as you get there, alright?

Luke rolls his eyes, gets out of the car.

EXT. CHLOE'S HOUSE

23

Nervous and slumped, Luke walks up the crazy paving towards Chloe's house.

He knocks on the door. A moment.

Chloe Davies - 16, pretty, blonde, butter-wouldn't-melt - answers the door in her school uniform.

A moment of realisation. They haven't seen each other since before...