

"Tracey Takes On..." Season 1 Episode Guide, Review and Commentary

Part 1: Episodes 1 through 5

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This is a detailed episode guide to, review of, and commentary on episodes 1 through 5 of the award-winning first season of TRACEY TAKES ON ..., the HBO series starring Tracey Ullman. Sprinkled throughout the guide are my commentaries and reviews of the various episodes, sketches and bits.

OTHER EPISODE GUIDES

Episode guides to other seasons can be found at <http://www.rreini.com/tracey/>, as can a concise episode guide for all seasons (no commentary, one-line descriptions of sketches).

Episodes are listed in the order of their original airdate on HBO.

1. Romance (Jan. 24 1996)

OPENING: We see Tracey asleep in bed, but her mind is racing with ideas related to romance. "Romance ... Cupid ... arrow ... chocolate ... saccharine ... sugar rush ... sappy ... Love Boat ... Casablanca ... A Fine Romance. Then all of a sudden, BINGO! She's awake ("Yeah - I'll take that on!"), and we roll credits.

SHORT BITS:

Rayleen Gibson (stuntwoman) She's telling us about her stuntman husband Mitch, who is height- challenged (i.e., he's a Little Person). However, in one particular area, he's not small at all

Mrs. Noh Nang Ning (donut shot owner, of indeterminate Asian origin) She compares love to donuts -- they taste good, but they can make you feel sick and vomit, and you never want anything to do with them again, but when you recover, you want some more.

Virginia Bugge (politician's wife) The most profound romance she ever had was with - her horse. Having 1000 pounds of muscle between one's legs ... uh, perhaps we should move on.

MODERATE BIT (moderate in length, that is):

College student Hope (who strongly reminds me of an older Francesca McDowell [one of my favorite characters from THE TRACEY ULLMAN SHOW (hereafter abbreviated as TTUS)]) is in a coffeehouse, attempting to study. But she's distracted by the sight of a cute guy sitting across the room. We hear her thoughts: is he a struggling grad student at art school? Could he be The Guy for me? When he goes to the counter, she goes up there too and begins to speak to him. The lights dim (fantasy sequence coming, folks), and they dance (to the theme from "A Man and A Woman"), where he sweeps her off his feet. Back to reality: when she speaks to him, he freaks out, grabs her and is thrown out. Hope takes it as a sign that she really should be studying. REVIEW: Not a bad sketch at all. I think I'm going to like Hope.

ANOTHER SHORT BIT:

Chic (New York cabbie of Middle Eastern origin -- a man) When he left the Middle East, he went to L.A., but the chicks out there were only interested in money. "Do you want to (bleep) me or (bleep) my Mercedes?" he asked. So he went to New York where he became a self-proclaimed chick magnet, hence the name. Check out his love compartment! COMMENT: The makeup job that turns Tracey into Chic is excellent. It's so good, it's almost scary.

MODERATE BIT:

Harry Rosenthal (Michael Tucker) is in the hospital after suffering a heart attack. Wife Fern is very concerned and nearly distraught. She's been running the resident ragged with her "emergency" calls. She tells Harry (who is unconscious but beginning to come around) he'd better recover in time for them to go see the Chinese acrobats, 'cause they don't get out of Beijing that often. She goes on: perhaps it's time for him to retire, sell the drug stores, and move to Florida. Finally, Harry awakens. His first words to Fern: "Shut up!" REVIEW: Again, not bad. In her own way, Fern is showing her deep love for her husband. A very well-portrayed character.

LONG SKETCH:

Pro golfer Midge Dexter (Julie Kavner) is having a lousy first round at the Slim Line golf tournament. In fact, she's never won a tournament in her career. But her "nutritionist", Chris Warner, is sticking by her. And there's good reason: she and Midge are secretly lovers. "Nutritionist" is just a front (a front that's hard for Chris to maintain, by the way), because Midge is still "in the closet". Chris is upset that she can't run out and greet Midge (meaning hug and kiss her passionately) if and when she ever wins, but Midge won't hear of it (wouldn't be prudent, as George Bush might say). However, she promises that it'll happen one day. As the tournament continues, Midge goes on a roll and is a serious threat to win. Meanwhile, Chris is given a personal golf lesson by a guy she bumps into -- literally (with possibilities for getting even more personal instruction). Tensions build; Midge and Chris have a spat, but they make up. The tournament comes down to the final hole. If Midge makes the putt, she wins. She makes the putt! After a few tense seconds (will she or won't she?), she motions to Chris to come on out of the gallery, where (to the sounds of "I Kissed a Girl" by Jill Sobule) they passionately hug and kiss ("Let's see that again on replay", say the commentators). Then we notice a few more golfers coming out of the closet. It's one big lovefest on the green, and maybe in the press box too

COMMENTARY: This was the most hilarious sketch of the night, IMHO. Using "I Kissed a Girl" was a very nice touch.

This sketch segues into Fern and Harry at the hospital, where they're watching the tournament. Wasn't that romantic, asks Harry. "Two girls kissing? That's disgusting", says Fern. Then Harry starts to sing "Do You Love Me" from "Fiddler on the Roof", and Fern joins in. Looks like things will turn out all right for them.

END CREDITS appear on top of a Linda Granger rehearsal (she's a has-been performer who's "still here"). She's had four husbands -- and three of them were hers! But the greatest romance of all was - and is - life itself. "So who needs men?"

OVERALL COMMENTS (Jan. 25, '96): Not a bad start to the new series -- not a bad start at all. These sketches were on a par with the best ones from TTUS. Whereas TTUS could be a bit uneven at times, tonight's episode started strong and stayed there. If this trend continues (and I have no reason to doubt that it will), then this is just the beginning of a very long run. Bravo!

2. Charity (Jan. 31 1996)

OPENING: This is the same as last week's, albeit with a different word association voiceover: "Charity -- begins at home -- faith, hope and -- donation -- panhandler -- pledge (or major credit cards) -- tax free -- Farm Aid, Live Aid, Deaf Aid -- We Are the World -- Sweet Charity".

SHORT BITS:

Janie Pillsworth (magazine editor): She tells us about the day the office staff donates leftover food from a meeting to a homeless man down by the ATM. In gratitude, he gives them a poem. It's brilliant! They use it in the magazine, and it's a hit! So now they feed him once a month and he gives them good copy in return.

COMMENT: This was a very funny bit the first time I saw it (on a promotional appearance Tracey did on some talk show). We first saw Janie in A CLASS ACT as a schoolgirl, then in TAKES ON NEW YORK as an adult, in her position as editor.

Hope Finch (college student): She holds up placards (a la Bob Dylan in an old music video) which say she'd like to talk about charity, but she's done a lot of reading for the blind -- and her voice is shot.

COMMENT: A cute bit. I hope we see more of Hope in the future.

LENGTHIER SKETCHES:

Fern and Harry (now in Florida) want to do something for charity. So they organize a benefit performance, with a Western theme. The rehearsals may be a bit ragged (very ragged, actually), but everyone's heart is in the right place. Finally, the big night arrives. Harry gets a phone call with important news and rushes to tell Fern. But she's caught up in the moment, making sure everything's ready for the show. Finally, Harry gets Fern's attention (and everyone else's -- he fires his prop gun) and tells her the good news: they found a cure for the condition the benefit is for! That is wonderful news, but not to Fern; she's upset that her work is now for nought. But Harry comes to the rescue: go on with the show, then tell everyone afterwards. Fern is mollified. However, next year's benefit will have to be for an incurable disease

COMMENT: This wasn't bad. Wasn't great, but wasn't bad.

Linda Granger (an actress who's seen better days) has decided to go behind the cameras for her directorial debut. Accompanied by her little dog Killer, she introduces her project: a documentary on and solicitation for funds for the Aged Animal Actors Home ("AAAH"), run by stuntpeople Rayleen and Mitch Gibson. Rayleen introduces us first to a chimp, who suddenly becomes agitated. Perhaps that should be "aroused", 'cause the camerawoman was having her period, and the chimp could tell. So Mitch comes and takes the chimp away so he can, er, indulge himself. Next, we see a retired python. Later, we see a dog that performed as Sandy in "Annie" for several years; he's developed an intense aversion to anyone with red hair (gee, wonder why?). Then we see a cockatoo that used to speak but has gone silent (Alzheimer's). When it's time to wrap up and tell everyone where to send contributions, Linda realizes that Killer is missing. Turns out Killer has just become the python's lunch. Linda is devastated (but the camera keeps rolling; she wants to have her shock on tape for reference, so she knows what it looks like). Rayleen has the presence of mind to mention the phone number for the Home.

COMMENT: When Linda made her on-camera introduction, the image that crept into my mind was Troy McClure from THE SIMPSONS ("Hi, I'm Troy McClure! You may remember me from ...") Hm, maybe they should get together :). As always, it's the little touches that make the character (the USA movie about the frozen embryos; just enough collagen in the lips this week; keep the camera rolling to capture the shock, for reference in future acting jobs). I think I'm going to like Rayleen.

A Vietnam veteran named Carlos (Cheech Marin) is down on his luck. He's in front of a market holding a sign saying "Viet vet will work for food." He gets his share of abuse, but one person takes him up on his offer: Kay Clark (yes, this is the same Kay from TTUS). The yard needs a lot of work, and would he be willing to do it? Yes, says Carlos (albeit a bit reluctantly). They ride over on Kay's moped, and Carlos gets to work. When he's finished, Kay treats him to a splendid meal, including that wonderful English dessert known

as "spotted dick". Carlos is not very grateful. You see, he'd rather have just received money at the market and not worked at all; he didn't expect Kay to take him literally at his word. He leaves in a huff. Later, Kay finds Carlos in a seedy dive and does pay him for services rendered. Carlos eventually accepts the money. As they leave, he has a confession: when he left, he took some of her mother's medications (yes, Kay's mother is still alive, which may be a miracle in and of itself) with an eye to selling them on the street. He returns the bottles (marked "amphetamines") to Kay. She appreciates his honesty, but she tells him that she regularly switches the medicines from one bottle to another so Mother can't get into trouble when she's away. The bottle marked "amphetamines" actually held laxatives ... very potent laxatives. As some of Carlos's unhappy customers come looking for him, he decides he'd like to work for some more food ...

COMMENTS: Kay was one of my favorite characters from TTUS; it's nice to see her again. And Mother is still with us, though for the life of me, I can't see how, with all the ailments she has. When Carlos tells of his 'Nam experience, seeing the blood, the guts, the limbs all over the place, and Kay says "Oh, you've seen Mummy's room, then", that got a good laugh (though I knew that a line like that was coming). The biggest laugh for me was the amphetamine-laxative switch.

CLOSING CREDITS: We see an older white woman (no name given, though in a future episode, she's identified as Ruby Romaine) talking about "mercy humps" (romantic liaisons with men whom she feels sorry for). One such liaison turned out to be very fulfilling

OVERALL COMMENTS (Feb. 1, 1996): In total, I would have to say I preferred last week's episode, although the Kay sketch gave me my biggest laugh. I was almost rolling on the floor in laughter.

3. Nostalgia (Feb 07 1996)

OPENING BED SEQUENCE: "Nostalgia -- deja vu -- Fifties -- 'Happy Days' -- Sixties -- Beatles -- 'Yesterday' -- Woodstock -- baby boomers -- old fashioned -- the wireless -- black and white TV -- LP's -- for the record. Nostalgia."

SHORT BITS:

Janie Pillsworth (magazine editor): What do we want her to she be nostalgic about? Vivienne Westwood fashions -- or this morning's breakfast? She's too busy for nostalgia.

Mrs. Noh Nan Ning (donut shop owner): She's nostalgic for TV shows with talking objects (horse, car). Now there's Susan Powter; she talks too much. Howdy Doody -- now there was a good program!

Kay Clark (care giver): She can remember when there was only one flavor of Metamucil. Now there are so many -- not that Mother could taste them, anyhow

COMMENT: Notice the rubber gloves Kay is putting on. I don't want to know why

LONGER SKETCH:

The scene is a kitchen in Moscow, in the days of the Soviet Union (a picture of Stalin is prominently displayed). The family (father, mother and daughter) are talking. Special treat for dinner, says daughter: pickled carp! Look at this onion I traded for sexual favors with the new manager of the cooperative, says mother. Father remembers what life was like in the Gulag. There's a knock at the door, and the atmosphere grows tense. But it's only son Yuri, who's brought some some hard-won turnips. They are drinking homebrewed liquor (made from potato peelings, shoe polish, and grandpa's eyedrops). There's a knock at the other door; it's the grandson, who wants to speak to his mother (Tracey's character) in the other room. The other room is a very well furnished bachelor pad. Turns out this is Moscow 1996, and they're holding a yearly reunion in the kitchen. Grandson has Westernized, but the others have not. He doesn't remember what it was like, they say. We have everything, they sing, but bring back those precious days.

COMMENTS: An interesting premise, funny in concept, though not as much in the execution. I liked it a bit better upon second viewing.

ANOTHER SHORT BIT:

Trevor Ayliss (flight attendant -- he is openly gay): His younger friends want to know all about the swinging '70's, before the era of safe sex. He then tells us all about the bathhouse scene, describing it as a sort of "gay chicken soup with dumplings". It was fun -- too much fun.

LONGER SKETCHES:

We're at the home of Ruby Romaine, a veteran makeup artist. She settles down to watch a documentary called "The Epic that Never Was", which was about "Safari", a major motion picture which was never completed. The film was to star Laura Demerol as a nun and Alicia del Mar as the love interest (she and director Buzz Ganz were an item). It also starred Jud Preston, "one of Hollywood's most dedicated hellraisers." There were many problems with the production -- over time, way over budget, and key scenes had yet to be shot. Midway through the shooting, a little-known actor named Ewen is given a much expanded role, becoming a co-lead. Was this in recognition of newly discovered talent and potential, or was it something else? In a key fight scene, Ewen is impaled with an errant spear throw and dies. The production is canceled, and the movie is scrapped. Was it an accident? Was it jealousy? Was it an insurance plot? We may never know. The woman who would know, Alicia, quit the business, rented an apartment from Ruby (who appears in the documentary), then returned to her Mexican home. She is believed dead. But Ruby knows better; Alicia's working the lunch cart at the studio. TAG: Trevor and another male flight attendant (who also is gay) are talking about the documentary as they prepare the plane. Did you see those Watusi? Woo-woo! And those thongs -- they're on sale at Walgreens!

COMMENTS: Our makeup artist is a bit of a bigot, as she said some uncomplimentary things about Mexicans. I liked the description of Jud Preston as "one of Hollywood's most dedicated hellraisers" - that's a bit like calling Spinal Tap "one of England's loudest bands." The characters of Ruby and Laura were very well portrayed, though I must say that I don't particularly like the characters.

We hear singing. It is Erin, a folk singer, who's sitting on her patio reminiscing about the Sixties with her manager. There's just one problem: Erin's memory isn't worth a hoot. She remembers playing at Monterey with Janis Joplin. Untrue, says her manager; you were still in school when Janis died. Guess the saying about the Sixties is true: if you can remember the Sixties, then you really weren't there.

COMMENTS: This had its moments.

UNDERNEATH THE CREDITS: Chic the cabbie is at the gas station telling us about recent fare John Travolta. He then starts to reminisce about the disco era, a time which seemed perfectly made for him. His favorite song? "Disco Duck"

OVERALL COMMENTS (Feb. 9, 1996): I would not put this among my favorites, though I think it improved a bit upon its second viewing.

4. Royalty (Feb 14 1996)

OPENING BED SEQUENCE: "Royalty - Crown jewels - privilege - peasants - palace -- in-breeding - Miss America - Royal jelly -- Prince of Wales -- Prince of Tides - artist formerly known as - royalty."

SHORT BITS:

Rayleen Gibson (stuntwoman): Wouldn't it be easier to learn about the kings in school if we remembered them not by number (Henry IV, Charles II, etc.) but by a phrase that reflected their true character? Then

you'd have Henry the Serial Killer, George the Nut Case, Edward the Shirt-Lifter .. and Charles the Jerk (referring to Prince Charles). She then proceeds to question Prince Charles's taste in women (i.e., Diana vs. Camilla).

Fern Rosenthal (retired homemaker): Who's royalty? Steve and Eydie, that's who. HE'S still looking good.

LONGER SKETCH:

Kay has decided to replace her faithful moped with a car, so she goes to the used-car lot. Her salesman (Alfred Molina) is known as "The King", because he claims to be the son of the last King of Albania, who was exiled when the Communists took over. His fellow salesmen don't believe him, but Kay does. He also happens to be a very handsome and charming man. She is entranced by his tale of life in exile -- living in France, meeting the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. She gets a car, but that's not the end of the relationship. They have dinner at an Albanian restaurant, where he asks her to arrange a loan so that he can continue to finance his plans to restore the monarchy in Albania. He needs a loan, all right, 'cause his credit card's no good and he can't pay for the meal. But Kay comes to the rescue. Unfortunately, she can't rescue his loan application. He's seriously in debt and has two tax liens against him, so the loan is rejected. What to do? Give him her life savings, that's what. When she goes back to the dealership, she learns that he skipped town, that he was wanted by the police. She feels betrayed and devastated, but life goes on. Two months later, she hears about "The King" from a mutual acquaintance, the owner of that Albanian restaurant. He gives Kay a big bouquet of roses, the money for the restaurant bill, and a letter from Europe. He's been successful at raising funds and support. Perhaps he really was the King

COMMENTS: Brilliant -- simply brilliant! I especially enjoyed the fantasy sequences -- one had the partisans on the border, ready to ride into Albania and take over, but they needed a scout, and Kay volunteered; the other had the king and queen being cheered by his subjects, and guess who was queen?

SHORT BIT:

Ruby Romaine (make-up artist): She's reading an old movie magazine article about Grace Kelly marrying Prince Rainier. She then proceeds to say some not-very-nice things about Ms. Kelly and the French.

LONGER SKETCH:

Sydney Kross, high profile divorce lawyer, has made a videotaped message for Princess Diana, offering her services in the forthcoming divorce from Prince Charles. People with bulimia have low self-esteem, says Sydney, so allow me to be your chum. We can stay up late eating raw cookie dough. You set a bad precedent by letting him keep the castle. You are entitled to 50% of his "earnings" (including 50% of Wales!). Of course, such friendship and service comes with a price - namely, 500 dollars or pounds per hour (whichever is higher).

COMMENTS: I liked this sketch, too. It gave the royals what they deserved. A thought: in the old days, stuff like this could get one thrown in the Tower of London.

NOTE (Sept. 15, 2000): This sketch was removed from repeats of the episode after the death of Princess Diana in 1997. This is quite understandable and appropriate. Personally, it's harder for me to enjoy the sketch now in light of what happened. To date, it has not been restored. Perhaps after sufficient time has elapsed, it might be restored, but that could easily take 10-20 years or more.

SHORT BIT:

Hope Finch (college student): America DOES have its royalty -- Traci Lords, the artist formerly known as Prince, Larry King, B. B. King, and of course, The King -- Elvis!

LONGER SKETCH:

Member of Parliament Timmy Bugge (Hugh Laurie) and his wife Virginia (Tracey) are going to be hosting one of the Royal Family for dinner. Naturally, there are a lot of things to take care of before the event (take up the carpet in the dining room, put the dog to sleep, send the kids to Oslo). And during the event, never leave the table before HRH (for Her Royal Highness, the otherwise-unnamed royal) does. The event does not go smoothly. HRH (also Tracey) complains about everything. But do our hosts allow that to fluster them? Of course not. Well, she doesn't, anyway. In the meantime, he's slipped and fallen on the floor, breaking his arm in the process. But he carries on, because that's protocol. And HRH carries on and on, telling all about the "earrings" she gave to Diana one Christmas. The dinner party finally ends as HRH leaves (can't miss "The X Files") -- followed soon after by everyone else, who are in desperate need of relief. Only our hosts remain, and they are dejected because the dinner was a failure. No it wasn't, says HRH's assistant; HRH delights in making the people around her as miserable as possible, and she certainly enjoyed herself tonight. They must do it again sometime - and they will

COMMENT: This was pretty good, too - another well-deserved exposure of the foibles of the royals AND of the upper classes. Notice how Timmy is looking forward to his good spanking while watching "Baywatch" ('nuff said about that).

SHORT BIT:

Trevor Ayliss (flight attendant): He remembers an experience with Princess Diana and her entourage, and he was not impressed. They insisted on taking all of the First Class section, which meant David Bowie and Iman had to right in Club Class (poor things).

SLIGHTLY LONGER BIT:

Linda Granger is rehearsing her lounge act. What would she do if she ruled the world? Make sure that everyone could be cancer-free, like she is. And the rehearsal continues

COMMENT: The character of Linda can be a bit annoying, since she has a continuous focus (hangup?) on being "100% cancer free". Certainly, being cancer-free is great (and I wish everybody were that way), but enough already!

CREDITS: There's no sketch beneath the credits this week, only a longer version of the theme song. It's kind of a cute number; it's growing on me

OVERALL COMMENTS (Feb. 16, 1996): The first half of this episode was, to borrow the title of another series, absolutely fabulous. And the rest of it wasn't bad, either.

5. Family (Feb 21 1996)

OPENING SEQUENCE: "Family -- duty -- Christmas, Thanksgiving -- guilt -- family ties -- family values -- family tree -- La Familia -- Cosa Nostra -- All in the -- Keep it in the -- Sly and the -- family."

SHORT BITS:

Fern Rosenthal (retired homemaker): She will never pressure her daughter to have children, 'cause she had children, and it ruined her life

Virginia Bugge (politician's wife): She's a firm believer in corporal punishment; indeed, it's been part of her family for generations (it's even noted in the coat of arms). It's hard to practice it at home nowadays -- that's why they have boarding schools, where it's in the hand of experts

Kay Clark (care giver): One of the few memories she has of her father was just after a motorbike accident in Picadilly Circus (the sidecar carrying Mother and Kay separated from the bike and crashed; he kept going). She recalls the advice Mother gave her after that accident: don't ever get married, 'cause men will kill you after they do nasty things to your downstairs areas. She has taken this advice to heart. Only family could be that protective of you

COMMENT: Some protection ...

Rayleen Gibson (stuntwoman): She and husband Mitch aren't ready to have children yet (if ever), so they take great pains to make sure they don't (including multiple birth control devices and techniques). When the lights go out, we learn why they need all of those methods

Sydney Cross (attorney): She's got a small child on her lap. It's not her child; she's a Big Sister. It lets her do the "motherhood cross-cultural thing" a few times a week with no hassle; it can come in handy during trials when things aren't going well (I have to see to the baby), etc. But did she count on having to remove snot from suede?

Chic (New York cab driver): He's cursing at a store owner, whom he accuses of selling him bad falafel and watered-down Coke. The store owner's his brother, by the way

LONGER SKETCH:

Mrs. Noh Nan Ning has taken her young niece to the skating rink to practice for an upcoming competition. She wants her niece to win in the worst way, and she lets her know it (a "Win or else" attitude that really puts the pressure on). The mother of another skater (Julie Brown, the red-haired one) is appalled by this. She makes it a point to emphasize to her daughter that the competition is thing, not whether or not you win (though she **is** state champion). When mother steps out for a moment, Mrs. Noh offers the daughter a doughnut. She refuses; Mother's forbidden doughnuts 'cause they have too much sugar, and it would break my special diet. Mrs. Noh then tells her her likely future: she's pretty, so she's likely to get pregnant at a young age. Next come the Ice Capades, which leads to eating doughnuts to get the energy to do 10 shows in a day; then you're fired for being too fat and you have to survive by making snowcones from the shavings off of the rink, then you die. So why not have the doughnut right now and skip the heartbreak? This works; now the champion is fed up with skating and refuses to practice. All this for the benefit of Mrs. Noh's niece

COMMENT: Mrs. Noh is something of a cheapskate -- she has the nerve to charge Julie Brown's character for the doughnut she was offered (freely offered, most would think). What she will do to help her family members Another thought: Mrs. Noh reminds me of the character of Paul McCartney's grandfather in "A Hard Day's Night": she's a bit of a mixer, butting in and starting trouble between friends.

SHORT BIT: Ruby Romaine (make-up artist): She remembers her parents, who were rather large individuals She remembers when they moved to California and lived among the orange groves of North Hollywood (unlike the "taco stands" of today, if you know what she means).

COMMENT: Ruby definitely shows her prejudices in this bit. How unfortunate

LONGER SKETCH:

The scene is an America-to-London flight, where we find flight attendant Trevor Ayliss hard at work in first class. He talks with fashion editor (and regular passenger) Janie Pillsworth, who's off to the Paris fashion shows. He then goes back to coach to talk to Janie's kids, who are with their nanny (mummy can't be disturbed). Leann, another flight attendant (Joanna Gleason) sees Trevor being good with the kids, and this gives her an idea. She wants Trevor to father her children. Her biological clock is winding down rapidly, and she can't afford to wait any longer. Trevor is reluctant to do this; for one thing, he's gay (though he did have a sexual experience with a certain Deirdre Birkenshaw once); for another, he has a longtime lover and companion, Barry (Michael McKean), and he doesn't want to be unfaithful. As you would expect, Barry is

not too keen on the idea. But Trevor decides to go ahead with it, as a favor to a dear friend. They plan the big event for a layover in Washington, D.C. It's not easy for Trevor to get motivated; think of England, says Leann ("I'd rather think of Antonio Banderas", replies Trevor as he closes the door). Back in England, Barry asks Trevor if he did. Trevor eventually says no, he couldn't. However, he's volunteered to donate his sperm to Leann; while he's "donating", he'll have Barry's picture with him. All is well. Several weeks later, Leann is not feeling well. It's morning sickness; yes, she is pregnant. And it turns out that Trevor had told a little lie to Barry, for he had indeed done the deed (it wasn't making love, for he could only do that with Barry).

COMMENT: This was a nice sketch. It wasn't so much a "funny, big laughs" sketch as it was a "feel-good" sketch. And I did feel good at the end, because I could sympathize with all of the main characters (Tracey's Trevor, Michael McKean's Barry, and Joanna Gleason's Leann). An awkward situation was resolved satisfactorily (mostly), and nobody got hurt. There were a number of little laughs throughout the sketch, mostly side remarks of Trevor's, such as the Antonio Banderas line cited above, his joke about the supermodels doing drugs in the lavatories, his response to "I don't want to make it hard for you" ("I thought that was the point"), etc. I also liked Trevor talking about life at 18, when he was, in his own words, "sexually confused"; he was unsure whether to listen to Barbra Streisand records or to go watch the Manchester United soccer team. One more thing: Tracey's daughter Mabel played Janie Pillsworth's daughter Olivia.

SHORT BIT:

The Rosenthals: They're looking for a condo, and it's not going to have a family room. They're retired now, so, in one sense, they're not a family anymore.

LONGER SKETCH:

Hope Finch is showing a film in the Freshman Film Festival, and she's viewing it with her parents. The film shows a very dysfunctional family (Mom, Dad, Brother, Sister, and the dog): Dad's a bum, Mom's not much better, and the kids are brats. The dog pulls out a gun and shoots them all. The End. If there was a message for her parents in the film, they didn't get it.

CREDITS: Linda Granger is still rehearsing her stage act. This week, she's talking about her daughter and praising Alcoholics Anonymous. A non-alcoholic toast to AA! But the keyboard player is drunk

OVERALL COMMENTS (Feb. 23, 1996): This wasn't bad. I liked the Trevor sketch the best, though I nearly always get a kick out of the short bits.

[Commentary on TTO Season 1, Episodes 6-10 and the "Best Of" special](#)

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