

Jo Brand has taken a lot of flak for supposedly loathing men. In fact, she tells Jane Dimond, some are quite good... as a concept



JO BRAND'S COMMERCIAL BREAKDOWN
BBC1/THURSDAY

Q You're known as a man-hater, but is there anything you love about men?

A Oh dear, that's quite difficult! I think you have to concentrate on what individual men are like to find loveable things like creativity and talent. It's just the side of men that becomes a bit yobby and laddy that I don't like.

Q You're a Crystal Palace supporter. Don't you find that you have to tolerate that kind of laddish behaviour when you go?

A I don't go anymore, particularly for that reason. I used to go, but just being shouted at by a wall of blokes is not my idea of fun. I used to love it on the terraces because I think football fans above all other people have such a brilliant sense of humour. But since I've been recognisable, I don't want to get shouted at by loads of people.

Q Sticks and stones break your bones and words hurt you too?

A Yes, and I don't understand why anyone would think I like being abused like that. It's not like water off a duck's back to me at all. I do get upset by it but like anyone with ginger hair or glasses or a big nose, you go through your life having to suffer abuse. In the end you just put up with it or stay in all the time and I do stay in quite a lot!

Q You're famous for saying you can't trust a man who has testicles. What sort of a man can be trusted?

A There isn't one. My husband will be very pleased with that answer!

The problem I suffer from is that all of what I do is comedy but people think I mean it, but of course I don't. Obviously I think there are loads of men you can trust. My comedy isn't a personal political manifesto, it's just jokes and has nothing to do with my life.

Q What sort of person are you?

A Totally different from the way a lot

of people see me, just a normal person who likes to get on with other people, who likes to have a laugh and do normal things like reading and going to the pictures, just a fairly ordinary, reasonably happy person.

Q Do you cry at films?

A I try not to because it would ruin my image - I have to be seen coming out of the pictures punching men in the goolies.

Q You've said that you're a 'nice, angry person'. What are you angry about?

A I'm angry about how the vast majority of people in this world don't give a toss about the vast majority of other people. That takes in an awful lot of things from the way certain workers are treated, right down to kids bullying other kids or assessing people purely on the basis of the way they look. Cruelly basically.

Q Why do you regard your adolescence as having been difficult?

A I had reasonably strict parents who didn't want me to do the things I wanted to do. We fell out so badly in the end that I left home when I was 16 and lived in a bedsit. But I got on very well with them now.

Q You were a psychiatric nurse for eight years. How did that shape your humour?

A It was a very difficult, stressful job and like any job of that nature - the police or ambulance services, for example - you develop quite a dark sense of humour to cope with it, so to that extent it's made a difference.

Q Lots of people were surprised when you got married to Bernie, a psychiatric nurse. Has marriage changed you?

A Not in the slightest. I'm sure people would like to think in a clichéd way that it has and that I now run round the kitchen in a little frilly apron doing as I'm told but it's that whole thing of people over-simplifying my image. They find it hard to put the 'man-hating lesbian' together with

the married person. But because I never was what they thought I was, I just had a normal life, I didn't think it was unusual at all to get married.

Q You're a very private person, and told friends you'd get married in their Christmas cards. Do you find that side of being famous quite difficult to deal with?

A I do, because people respond to you in such a weird way - not in terms of what sort of person you are, only how they think you are. I'm always getting this man-hating response, so it's either abuse from blokes, or women who've been chucked saying, 'I think you're great', so it's a very odd life.

Q What's the girliest thing about you?

A I have girly evenings with my women friends - we talk about clothes, makeup, men and all that stuff. And I love having a foot massage.

Q What would the public be most surprised to learn about you?

A That I like trampolining... I don't really! Seriously, I suppose they'd be surprised that I go to church every week.

Q Are you quite a spiritualist?

A I didn't think I was until I saw the eclipse in Cornwall. I stood in a field with loads of other people and went 'Ooooh'. Now I've converted to Druidism and go around with a big white sheet which means I can double up at fancy-dress parties as Alaska.

Q What will you be doing in 20 years?

A Probably lying in a sewer! No I've no idea. Hopefully I'll have made enough money to retire and I'll just be hiding in the country. I was brought up in the country and it feels like quite a nice familiar place to be.

Q How would you like to be remembered?

A For people to have a laugh when they think about me. I had this allergic reaction to some hair colour a few years ago where my face swelled up to about three times its normal size and I went blind. I remember people standing at the end of my hospital bed just p***ing themselves laughing. I was really pleased that I could give them such a good laugh without even having to do anything.

I stay home to avoid being ABUSED

