

## Review of the Couch Trip

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The question is:- how far does Dan Ackroyd's new film Couch Trip about a Los Angeles radio sex therapist compare with my own experience as an agony uncle coping with London's neuroses five times a week on air at LBC? Let me tell you.

First, at \$1 million a year, Dr George Maitlin earns at least \$950,000 a year more than I do. When I go on holiday, my replacements are not paid \$200,000 in cash nor are they put on microphone without the teenciest little audition to check whether they are competent. Nor are we lucky enough to get Dan Ackroyd with his wonderful radio bass to do the job.

Second, I do not have a fully qualified lady psychiatrist with a 42DD chest, endless legs and upswept blonde hair sitting in the control room monitoring the calls and blowing me reassuring kisses through the glass partition. The station is short of facilities and I have to make do with Keith, who works as a producer, knows nothing of manic-depressive psychosis in theory, sucks a pipe and is a fellah. Nor does the company see fit to supply a smart lawyer offering seven year contracts (oh yes) just because I happen to encourage more people to listen to the station. [Me to programme controller - "I've increased the audience by 137.5% in one year". Reply: "Well I'm not increasing your fee by œ137.5%!"]

Third, and let's get off the subject of money, I never find it helpful to terminate a caller's train of thought with the expletive: "Bullshit!" I sincerely value the therapeutic use of silence but have not yet achieved it with a crisp "Zip it up, Gladys". Nor do I throw interpretations about with quite the emphasis of "Oh come on, you're thinking penis and vagina, here. You're thinking hot and sweating bodies in a steaming humping mass". Perhaps I should. Wait till the IBA's abolished...

Fourth, I don't personally read out commercials promoting hang gliding after talking to a listener suffering from vertigo.

Fifth, I don't say "fuck" on the radio.

Sixth, I don't offer free therapy on the radio nor invite the audience home.

Seventh, I don't take parties of clients by bus to a baseball game in the hope that "mass transit with sporting input" could become the internationally recognised cure for premature and retarded ejaculation. But I'm thinking about it.

And I'm thinking about it with a smile on my face because this wonderfully funny film does recognise that people's problems are more effectively responded to by those with a love of life than by technical experts. Hence the layman Ackroyd's astounding success. Psychiatrists are not portrayed here as lovable or clever. I also think Couch Trip exactly conveys how it feels to be in charge of a radio phone-in when the first caller on the line appears to be a chimpanzee called "Scott", whooping and grunting. Confusion turns to disbelief and yields to retaliation. "Scott, the vet will be here on Thursday, at nine".