

Ian Smith Q&A

Crushing tour 2024

Tour press release: <https://www.textualhealing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Ian-Smith-Crushing-tour-2023-2024.pdf>

Images:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/w8g4cmgkg4n1c7d3pv8vc/h?rlkey=q5q5eiz856nykx9f5cu6bst1v&dl=0>

What is the show about?

The show is about stress, love and driving a tank over a car in Slovakia with my hairdresser - three timeless themes. It's about me stressing out all the time and wondering what I can do about it.

What's it like driving a tank?

Unfortunately, I didn't get to drive the tank myself - I had to sit in the back while a trained professional did it. I imagine if I got to drive it I'd have crushed more than 1 car, not been able to stop and ended up driving through the centre of Bratislava screaming at people to "help me stop this thing!" But the trip was very fun, I'd highly recommend it. You get to smash the car with sledgehammers for 30 minutes before you drive over it and it's a lot of fun. If you can't get over to Slovakia, I recommend asking around for people who are about to scrap their cars and seeing if they'll let you smash them up for a bit.

Is car crushing the weirdest holiday you've been on?

I went to Chernobyl with my brother - that's probably the weirdest one. My brother hadn't been abroad before and that's where he wanted to go. You have a Geiger counter around your neck like a piece of jewellery that keeps beeping to let you know you're in a high radiation area, it's not the most reassuring thing to have around your neck. The tour guide let us roam around a bit and we walked around some abandoned flats. Again, would recommend. Scary though.

Tell us more about how you tried to deal with your anxiety? Is a bit of anxiety good for performing?

I think being stressed is quite good for comedy - I don't think audiences want to hear a comedian who has a perfect life and finds everything fantastic. I like hearing about the

weird and awkward situations people have been in and why things are shit, so we can all laugh at them together. I try and relax, do a bit of meditation and yoga, but that comes in waves - I'll do it for 2 days and then not do it for another 5 months. That sort of thing. I went to a sensory deprivation floatation tank and found that to be a terrible experience and nowhere near as relaxing as advertised. I got salt water in my eyes and felt like I'd been pepper sprayed by some riot police.

Do you have a favourite joke in the show?

I have a joke about a man getting sacked from a vineyard which depending on the gig can last between 3 minutes and 35 minutes. I hope that intrigues you enough to come along.

Tell us about how Northern News came about?

I lived with Amy, and another very funny comedian David Callaghan, during the Edinburgh Fringe for a few years and the best part was sitting in the living room chatting and making each other laugh. We all did a pilot together - but with me and Amy were based in London so started it together then. The papers up North seem to be disproportionately filled with bizarre stories, so there's a never ending stream of source material - in my home town of Goole for example, three different girls got stuck in basketball hoops within three months and there was a local vote as to which of the two water towers looked most like a salt or pepper pot. Complete madness.

How does writing for radio/podcast differ from writing stand-up?

I think a podcast is a lot more intimate - you're coming into peoples homes, or their commutes. I think it becomes much more about the rapport between the hosts, I always find it most enjoyable when you feel like you're listening to friends who are just chatting shit and trying to make each other laugh, it's contagious.

Writing for radio is a lot more intense, because you have a short deadline and you've got no choice other than the subjects - and the news lately has been pretty bleak or dull, so you have to do your best to find the humour in anything that gets thrown at you! When I work on The News Quiz I usually spend a day and a half sat at my laptop manically typing and only see the outdoors when I'm on the journey to the recording.

What's next for you?

I have a Radio 4 series commissioned for next year, like my show it's all about stress and my failing attempts to be a more relaxed person. I'll also be filming this show, so I'm really looking forward to that. In May I'll be heading to New Zealand Comedy Festival with this show - I haven't been for a while and I've really missed it. Then I'll start work on my next

solo show! Luckily I'm still stressed so I'm sure I'll have lots to write about.