

TV MAGAZINE

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ON LIFE WITHOUT
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MOST WANTED

WHY EVERYONE'S
AFTER A PIECE OF TV'S
FAVOURITE COMEDIAN
MICHAEL MCINTYRE

COVER STORY |

ADDICTED TO LAUGHS

Funnyman Michael McIntyre on why comedy's a drug, texting Simon Cowell and freaking out his family

WORDS PAUL SIMPER

Manchester, Saturday morning. In a meeting room hidden away in a swish hotel, our cover star is getting to work on his breakfast of a boiled egg and soldiers; with his other hand, he's using his phone to spy on his family at home in North London. For Michael McIntyre, this is life on tour.

"I've got cameras around my house and I can access them online," says the 36-year-old comic, who's dad to Lucas, seven, and five-year-old Oscar. "It is quite weird. Lucas called me last night and I told him I'd seen him playing football. He was like: 'Really?!' I can see when my wife Kitty has got home safely, I can see the kids... The only terrible thing was when my wife checked the cameras on her iPad and discovered there was an alien in the garden."

"We wait for the punch line."
"I'm not kidding you!" he says. "Kitty phoned me in a panic so I had a look and she was right – there was a f***** alien in my back garden. I showed it to Grazio, my tour manager, and if I hadn't spoken to him I would never have worked it out because I have no logic in my head. An insect had landed on the camera lens, which made it look like a 6ft alien. I had to call my wife back – by then she was hiding and the children were upstairs in a make-shift panic room."

HOMESICK BLUES

We can't help thinking that maybe Michael has been away from home a little too long.

"Is it depressing that I was looking forward to chatting to you?" asks Michael who, as we speak, is midway through a six-night date in Manchester as part of a record-breaking 71-day nationwide arena tour. "Being on stage is fun, but my days are so boring that I woke up this morning and thought: 'Oh good, I can talk to TV Magazine today!'"

"What do you do in the day? You don't want to wear yourself out but you don't want to do too little either. Sometimes it's nice to just sit in a restaurant and chat to people – I sort of show off a bit, so it's good. I can find jokes like that. But then they tell me they're coming to see me that night and I think: 'Oh s***, I don't want them thinking that's all of my material.'"
"It's just mental exhaustion really. There's no way I could convince a jury my life is tiring – my

day is a disgrace! I'm in bed for 70 per cent of it." It's somewhat surprising to learn that, despite huge success since he first made a name for himself on the comedy circuit nine years ago, Michael still doubts himself.

"There's quite a lot of lonely speculation when you get back to your hotel room," he says. "You wonder if the audience were laughing as much as they have done before. I'm always worried because sometimes comedy can feel like an embarrassing way to live your life: 'What am I doing talking about my dentist or booking things online? This isn't a way to earn a living. It's nonsense.'"

We remind him that the late Bob Monkhouse famously kept a book full of jokes that he would top up so he never ran out – is that something Michael has considered?

"I'm not that well organised," he says. "I occasionally write things on my phone but when I read them back, I don't know what they mean. Sometimes I mix them up with things I just need to buy."

He scans through the notes on his phone.

"Look at this," he says, showing us an example.

"It says: 'Curtains, darker' which is a joke – when I woke up one morning in Belfast, it was so bleak that I opened the curtains and the room got darker. But below that is: 'I Chichester single bed' – which is something my wife wanted me to buy."

That's not the only order Michael has taken from his wife recently. His 13-year relationship with Kitty

– who he married in 2003 – has provided him with plenty of material, from choice details about her hair and make-up regime, to the red mist that descends when he fails to put dirty plates in the dishwasher. But there is a very clear line she won't allow her husband to cross.

"I do a joke about tights and a friend was telling me what it was like watching his wife put Spanx on," he laughs. "I thought the whole palaver

2003
THE YEAR MICHAEL WAS NOMINATED FOR BEST NEWCOMER AT THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

"THIS ISN'T A WAY TO EARN A LIVING. IT'S NONSENSE"



Michael with his wife Kitty



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THE RECORD-BREAKING NUMBER OF NIGHTS MICHAEL PLAYED AT LONDON'S O2 ARENA THIS YEAR

sounded hilarious so I asked my wife if I could use it after the tights joke and say that she wore Spanx. She looked at me and very firmly said: 'No.'
"She was like: 'I don't wear Spanx, I work very hard in the gym. You cannot go on your DVD and say I wear Spanx!' I said: 'Think of all the lovely holidays we can have when the DVD sells well.' She just said: 'F*** the holidays. I'm not having people looking at me thinking that I'm cheating.'"

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

If it's a particularly special holiday Michael wants to save for, he could always phone up old pal Simon Cowell and request another well-paid TV gig (although, since it's been reported that he's expected to earn around £20million from his current tour, that might not be necessary). Besides, after his stint on the *Britain's Got Talent* judging panel last year, once, it seems, was enough for Michael.

"I enjoyed the whole *BGT* experience but it wasn't real. I think I thought there was a shortcut to success – to suddenly assume I was going to become some sort of Cheryl Cole 'darling of the nation' was maybe a little short-sighted," he admits, with blunt honesty. "You go on a big show like that, then more people know you and you become more famous – but no one's ever come up to me and said: 'Oh, I loved it when you said three yeses.' People love you when you're doing what you do – being funny."

"I got sidetracked, it was never my ambition to judge freestyle footballers and street dancers. Now I'm doing tours and hosting shows like *Michael McIntyre's Comedy Roadshow* – that's more fun for me. Why should I be doing jobs where I need to have an end-of-term report from Simon Cowell?" Did he get one?

"No," he shrugs. "I just said lots of nice things about him in a text and he replied: 'Ditto.'"

He roars with laughter: "The laziest compliment! But that's the point, really."
"And if *I'm A Celebrity... or Strictly* came calling? Would he be tempted?"

"That's a depressing question," he laughs. "Are you familiar with these shows? *I Was A Celebrity... Get Me Back On TV!*"

With reality TV off the agenda, it seems there's just one thing Michael is prepared to add to those notes on his phone when this tour is over: a well-deserved rest. But that will only last for as long as he can resist the lure of an audience.

"I don't even know what drives me to work because I'm an extraordinarily lazy human being, so not working doesn't make me restless," he says. "I only get restless when I'm off because I start to be funny again. It's not that I feel I'm wasting my jokes on my wife and kids, it's because big laughs are like a drug. That's what I strive for."
Michael McIntyre: Showtime is out now on DVD and Blu-ray

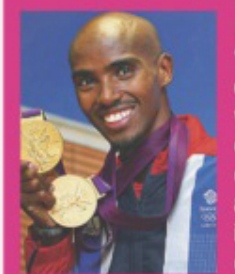
MICHAEL'S TOP 2012 TELLY



DOCTOR WHO
"I'm really looking forward to getting my kids into *Doctor Who*. I actually peed next to Matt Smith once at the National TV Awards, and ended up getting his phone number. It's quite fun to have famous people's numbers. I put his in my phone under 'Doctor Who'. But then, a couple of weeks ago my son had a nasty reaction to his booster jab so I decided to text my doctor – Doctor Dan. Unfortunately, I actually sent it to Doctor Who. I have not received a reply."



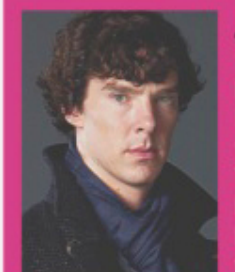
HARRY HILL'S TV BURP
"I'm very sorry to see *TV Burp* go. I was in it once – nearly threw up with excitement! It was about someone in *Corrie* who looked like me. I used to always watch *TV Burp* before going on stage, now it's *The One Show*."



THE OLYMPICS
"Super Saturday was so extraordinary and Mo Farah was great. Some events were over in a minute, but his went on – he hung on. London is amazing. The Olympics made it seem like the greatest place on earth and, arguably, it is."



DIAMOND JUBILEE CONCERT
"Grace Jones' performance was absolutely hysterical. Our love of the Royal Family is based on very little because we don't know them, but the Queen not taking herself too seriously was very cool."



SHERLOCK
"Benedict Cumberbatch is brilliant – I like it when Sherlock looks at people and can tell what they've been eating. Though I still can't work out how he faked his own death. I'll have to check out some internet forums and read some theories."