

## [Transcript] No Such Thing As A Fish / 494: No Such Thing As A Human Wind Turbine

Hi everybody, Andy here. Just before we start this week's show we wanted to introduce our special guest. She has been on the show once before and she was so great that we thought we had to have her back. It is the brilliant Sophie Duker. If you don't know Sophie already, if you didn't listen to the episode she was already on, if you haven't seen her on Taskmaster, she is a fantastic stand-up. She's really brilliant and you're about to hear that on the show. So there's no need for further evidence of it really, but if once you've heard this show you would like to see or hear a little bit more of Sophie's comedy, as you will, there are a couple of ways to do that. So firstly she had a tour earlier this year which was called HAG. That tour sold out and also is in the past so it's impossible to see it, but there are new dates added to that tour. They're all on her website which is [SophieDuker.com](http://SophieDuker.com), a very ronsil website but it does contain those dates so that's why you want to visit there. The other thing she's doing soon is that on the 26th of October this year she is hosting a one-off edition mega show at Hackney Empire in London. It's a show she's done loads of times before, it's called Wacky Racists, but this one is going to be a bigger and better edition than ever. There are going to be all-star guests, there are going to be stand-ups, there are going to be songs, there are going to be stupid games, you name it, it will be there. It's going to be great fun. That's it for this introduction. I hope you've enjoyed it, but not as much as I hope you enjoy the show itself. On with the show. Hello and welcome to another episode of No Such Thing as a Fish, a weekly podcast this week coming to you live from the Soho Theatre in London. My name is Dan Schreiber, I'm sitting here with James Harkin, Andrew Hunter Murray and Sophie Duker and once again we have gathered around the microphones with our four favourite facts from the last seven days and in no particular order here we go. Starting with fact number one and that is Sophie. What an honour. Oh you're welcome. My fact is, Barbie, the lady of the moment, was based on a high-end German cool girl. That's right, there's a sex worker in your child's bedroom. That little freesong, that was 150 people just being slightly titillated by that thing and shocked. She's based on a different doll, is Barbie. Picture the scene, it's 1956. Your Ruth Handler, the inventor of Barbie. My mum was born 1956 and now I've got my mum in my head which might make this next bit difficult. It will. You're there with your mum. It's pretty sexy and in the window. Dan's mum has just been born. Oh sorry. Back to the future. This is way, way beyond. Your mum's been born, she's in a crib somewhere, she's not involved. It doesn't matter who you are, you are. It's 1956, there's a doll in a window. The doll is Bill Lily. Bill is a German tabloid and Lily is the doll that is sold in association with that tabloid and she was sort of a sexy, flusy. And that is what Barbie is based on. When Ruth Handler saw Lily in the window, she said, and I quote, I didn't know then who Lily was. I saw only an adult-shaped body that I had been trying to describe for years, which I love because presumably all around her were adults. But I would say no adults in the same shape as Barbie though. No, she's got weird proportions. And dolls, dolls were for children and they were of children, weren't they at the time? Yeah, that was the revolutionary thing. At the time, if anyone's seen the Barbie movie, which we are not promoting because their budget is big enough, but if you see the Barbie movie, you'll see that a lot of dolls for kids were just of kids, but Barbie was this like sexy, well not sexy, Barbie's not sexy, but she was kind of

like older, mature. Yeah, I read there was a journalist from the New Yorker magazine called Ariel Levy, who later referred to this as a sex doll, Lily. Now, she was still only six inches high. Right. Oh, really? So I don't know. I take some imagination to use that as a sex doll, I imagine. But they used to give it to people like if you went on a stag do, you might get this sexy doll, right? Or they would, some men would hang it on their windscreen of their car and stuff like that. Because that's what you do with your sex toys, you put the Barbie gets a lot of stick for being regressive. But I think Ruth Handler was very progressive. And she was a very, she was an ambitious business woman. It was her and her husband, Elliot, they founded the company together, they made all the decisions about it. And I think the idea was that Barbie would never get married. Barbie was able to, it was to expand girls' imaginations about what they could do and their imaginations should extend beyond marriage and motherhood is the basic idea. Okay, right. Yeah. So in that sense, she did start as a fashion model, and then became a fashion editor the next year, and then a fashion designer. But Barbie did do a lot of stuff other than that. She went to space before Man even went to the moon. There was astronaut Barbie. Four years before Man went to the moon, there was astronaut Barbie. Okay, but we did go to space before we went to the moon, just not to... Yeah, okay, so. Before... Wow. Not to shit on that. She was, yeah, okay. Has Barbie been to the moon, Sophie? Before we could even have bank accounts. Oh, yeah? Barbie bought her first dream house. Okay. In 1962, she bought the dream house. Wow. With whose money? Ken's. Yes, Ken's money. That's amazing. I like as well, just speaking of astronauts, so the fact that Barbie was designed by a guy called Jack Ryan, at least the physical making of Barbie was. Really? And he was a guy who he was an engineer for the Pentagon. He made missiles. So he was, yeah, he was someone who had a whole different career, and then Mattel hired him, and he worked out amazing things, like the fact that she had a twistable waist that was a new innovation to toys. And I don't know if you remember this, and I very much remember this, the clickable knees of Barbie. How do you remember this? Because I used to bring to school every day a disembodied leg of Barbie with me. Mr. Shriver, Mrs. Shriver, come in. Yeah, it's not a problem. It's nothing bad. So I used to, when I was younger, and I still kind of do, and I should have a Barbie leg on me again, actually, and this is advice for everyone listening. I click my fingers a lot, obsessively click my fingers, and I needed something to stop me. And the clickable leg of a Barbie gives you the same sensation as clicking your own finger. So I used to sit in class and disembodied leg. Yeah, I just used to sit clicking Barbie's leg over and over in school. And your sister had to bring in a Barbie with at least one of its legs missing. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, she wasn't too happy about that. But I genuinely tried out if you've got a problem with clicking your fingers. Okay. Pretty. But I also think it's really interesting. I didn't know that the guy that designed Barbie was a missiles designer, because he actually made some quite big, that, well, Mattel made some quite big changes to Barbie when they changed her from the original prototype of Bill D'Lilli at the model, which Mattel then bought up. They softened her eyebrows, relaxed her lips, upgraded her plastic and whited her skin. Okay. Oh, but we don't know what she could have been green. And at one point, the nipples and breasts of an early prototype were daintily filed off. Oh, can you daintily file nipples? It's a more difficult process than that. But related to that, of course, is Ken's bulge. Oh, yeah. Which I haven't seen the movie, but I believe they reference in the movie. And Ruth Handler, who created Barbie, she wanted Ken to have a proper bulge in his

groin.

And the people at Mattel were having none of it. They thought that no mother would buy a doll, which had a bulge in its groin. And this became a really big argument. They brought in a Freudian psychologist to ask them what to do. And he said, oh, yeah, well, all the girls are just going to want to undress Ken. So, you know, you're going to have to think about it. You're going to have to do something. What were they thinking when they brought in a Freudian psychologist? Completely fine and normal. Yeah, don't worry about it. Yeah, bringing a leg of a Barbie in school, completely normal. It's normal to fancy your mum when she's just born. Absolutely. But they came up with a solution, which was they were going to mold the swimsuit directly onto Ken. So you wouldn't be able to get the swimsuit off. Did they do that? And they were going to put a very slight bump in the groin. So just enough that would keep Ruth happy, but not enough that would scare people off. But the problem was that it all came down to finance in the end. So putting the shots, molding the shots on cost a couple of cents. Putting the extra lump on was about half a cent worth of plastic. And they decided over the millions that they were going to make, it wasn't worth it to do it. And so that's why he ended up with the bulge. Yeah. Wow.

Wow. Yeah. And we were talking about Barbies in space earlier. Yeah. Something about sex dolls in space. The Russian cosmonaut Valery Polyakov, he spent the record amount of time on the mere space station. And according to him, the Russian government offered him a sex doll for his time on the mere. Wow. Yeah. Wait, what was the record? Do you know the record time? 14 months he was there.

Long time. It's a long time without a sex doll. Long time. Yep.

But Polyakov decided that he wouldn't take the sex doll onto mere. Can you guess why he decided not to? Because it's so embarrassing. No, it's not like the aliens are going to turn up and go, what's this? Cosmonaut Polyakov, we're getting your broadcast loud and clear. Wait, is there an extra astronaut floating past you? No, that wasn't it. Because he was married. Oh, he was married, actually. But that wasn't, I guess it was kind of the reason. He decided that if he started using the sex doll in space, he might get so used to it that he wouldn't be able to give it up when he got back down to Earth. Right. Whereas on Earth, you do, is it different in space to sleep with her? I suppose you're lonely. You might form an attachment like Tom Hanks and Wilson. Exactly. Did he have sex with that? It's implied. It's pretty heavily implied, guys.

I don't know the Russian history with sex dolls, but I did find out a fact when I was researching sex dolls, not for this, that in 2018, the mummified remains of a Russian man were found in his home and he was embracing a sex doll on the sofa like in Pompeii. That is nice. When I said like in Pompeii,

I meant nothing like Pompeii. We don't know that the sex dolls weren't in Pompeii because they would never have survived the volcano, would they? That's a good point. They didn't have the first things to go. We've got another Barbie thing. Can we talk about the Teen Talk Barbie? This was a later varietal. So it was 1992. This was released and each of the dolls sold said four of 270 possible phrases, right? So my doll might say four different things to your doll, and they worked out that they would have to sell 200 million of these things for there to be the odds that two of them would say exactly the same four phrases. That's a big selling point, obviously, but this was a controversial one because it's the one that said math class is tough as one of the phrases, and that's been slightly misremembered as her saying math is hard, which she didn't say, but she did say math class is tough. It's pretty much the same thing.

Yeah, it's pretty similar. So this is prompted a bit of a pushback from people saying this isn't a great message to say to girls. And in 1993, the next year, there was this group of performance artists in Manhattan. They called themselves the Barbie Liberation Front, right? And this is what they did. This is so good. They bought a load of Teen Talk Barbies off the shelf. They also bought a load of G.I. Joe talking Duke dolls, right? They swapped the voice boxes and then they put them back on the shelves. So you ended up with people who bought G.I. Joe dolls, which said, will we ever have enough clothes? Let's plan our dream wedding. Meanwhile, the matching Barbie was saying things like eat lead. That's so good. It is time for fact number two, and that is Andy. My fact is that Eastern screech owls have live-in snakes as housekeepers, which their children sometimes eat. There's quite a bit going on here. There's a new book out, a new owl book out, by Jennifer Ackerman, and it's called What an Owl Knows as a great book. And she quotes this amazing study. There was a scientist called Frederick Gelbach, who studied the Eastern screech owl, right? This is an owl. It lives in a nest. It lives in kind of Texas and thereabouts. Oh, it should be kind of called the Western screech owl. They probably know what they're doing. Imagine they listen and they're going, fuck, we're finally rumbled.

We had like 100 years of no one noticing. Murray? Basically, it turns out one in five nests of this Eastern screech owl contains a live snake because the parents go and get food for the chicks and they bring back the snakes alive to the nest. And they bring them back and some of them get eaten, if you do, but a lot burrow down into the nest, which is full of stuff that snakes love. You know, it's half-eaten bits of food and pellets and all sorts of fecal matter, fecal matter. Yum, yum, yum. And so a lot of insects turn up to eat those horrible things, and the snakes actually, they like to eat the insects. So they tidy up the nest for the owls. And it's good because the owl chicks in snakes which contain a live housekeeping snake grow up bigger and stronger and healthier than the chicks in the nest which don't contain a live snake. So it's actually a kind of... It's amazing. It's a mutual thing that's going on. Here's the thing, though, just for people's image at home of what's happening here. When we say snake... Yeah, it's probably like a cobra, right? Exactly. We're talking like, you know, they're twirling up and stuff. These things are like smaller than worms, right? Like they're super tiny. Exactly, because there's a cool image in your head of like a giant snake. So constricted. Yeah, yeah. These are like little tiny little... Oh, yeah. But they're six. They're small. Oh, no, no, absolutely. Just... If you saw one, you would genuinely think it was a worm. The only difference is they have scales, but the scales are almost impossible to see. It literally just looks like a worm. But they're one cool thing. They eat a lot of other insects, like they eat ants and stuff like that. But they like to eat baby ants, and they go into their ants' nests, but obviously all the ants are going to attack them. And so what they do is they secrete a noxious chemical and they shit at the same time, and they mix these two things up, and they roll around in it so they're covered in noxious shit, and then the ants will not go near them, and then they can nom, nom, nom, nom, nom. Brilliant. Yeah. I didn't look up any facts about the tiny snakes, but I did think, how do these owl babies get here? It's going to be through owl sex. And... Oh, yeah. Very true. Yeah. Owls have sex in a really interesting way. So, like, they don't have sex how we would imagine. Yeah. How are you imagining, just for the... It's 1956. Do you imagine like a sort of... I'm finding it a little better actually. I'm really trying to imagine. I'm thinking like doggie style, because they can move their heads 360 degrees around.

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Just like pet me. But I was thinking, yeah, that's going to be a scary moment.

What? Just when the head of you... Doggie style, and then suddenly the person's face is staring at you.

It's basically like the ex-sist, isn't it? I'd call an Uber at that point. It was so nice meeting you.

Blue eyes. I never properly noticed. I think you can have some respect. Call it owl-y style.

Owl-y style. Yeah, yeah. Oh my God. Owl-y style sex. They already have sex in one position, so you don't have to learn a whole bunch of different things. Okay. Okay. They've got a cloaca, which is an internal chamber with an opening, and when it opens... An eternal chamber. Internal. Not eternal. Quite a nice way of putting it, the eternal chamber.

The eternal chamber. Sure. It's a temporary chamber, opens up temporarily. Inside the chamber is either, depending on the sex of the owl, testes or ovaries. Wow. It's like a rub of requirement for the owl's jump. And when the owls want to get jiggy with it, get owl-y with it,

the cloaca protrudes slightly and they rub them against each other, and that is owl sex. Like the sperm goes into the female cloaca, virtualizes the egg, just one position, no kissing.

Nice. No kissing. But it is called a cloacal kiss, so it's a kiss in a way. Oh, that is sweet.

Do you know how eastern screech owls persuade their children to move away?

Do they explain to them how they had sex? Clearly.

The eternal chamber is opening. Fly my children. No, they withhold food,

and then they remove any food they've stored in the nest. They basically empty the fridge and the cupboards. Oh, wow. They say, sorry, you're going to have to shift yourself. And they also have a particular call which equates to go away. And it's all, obviously, it's good. It's to persuade them to, you know, move on to the next stage of their life. So it is a good thing, you know.

Right, that's great. Yeah, but all owls have different tactics for getting their children to babies to fledge. Yeah, yeah. You know, so in sort of western culture, we might have the boogie man as a terrifying thing for children. Do you know in Hungary what they have, what a Hungarian boogie owl by any chance? It's the copper penis owl. Oh, gosh. And if you're not careful, copper penis owl is going to come for you. So what it is, if you picture a boogie man, this is the same thing, but it's an owl. With a copper penis. Is it copper coloured, or is it just metal? No, it's like metal. It's a copper penis. Is it oxidised?

But what's the threat if it's just a penis? Oh, he'll steal you. He'll steal you. Oh, he'll steal you.

The detail of the copper penis is not relevant, in fact. He just happens. It's noticeable. Like, if you describe the owl that took your child, he could do the head thing, and then there was this metal penis. It was weird not to mention it, in a way. Yeah. And it is like owls are associated with death around the world, I think. Quite often, there'll be a superstition where if you see an owl, someone's going to die really soon. And there's quite a few theories as to why that happens. So there was one guy who's an owl expert from South Africa who reckons that because people quite often

have heart attacks in the middle of the night, and that's when owls are around. Perhaps people have died, and they've heard an owl, and they associate them together. There's another theory from Italy that you would put a body outside when someone's died, and you would put candles around it, and the

moths are attracted to the candles, and then the owls are attracted to the moths. So that's one possible version. And another version from India is that possibly in cemeteries, you might leave food offerings for people, and then you might get mice and rats coming for the food offerings,

and then the owls come for the mice or the rats. Okay. So that's probably why all around the world people have this association. It does. South Africa, and they get a really bad rap in lots of places, and they're not beloved universally around the world. And there are some places where they're still really ill-ominy. Yeah. And in Ghana, in the forest, a lot of people associate them with witchcraft, but it's actually really important that the owls stay because otherwise the forests are full of rats. Right. Exactly. There was a prediction in 2015 that wind turbines might all be made like owls. To look like owls? To be given feathers. Because owls fly so quietly. Because they do. It has to do with particular feathers they've got at the leading edge of their wings. Right. And there was a suggestion, why don't we just put feathers on all our wind turbines so that they can turn faster and be quieter? And I don't want to live in a world where we don't have feathery wind turbines. Yeah, that's cool. I just love it. I'm not as part of research for this, but I was reading today that we might be turning humans into wind turbines soon. And go on. So it's a technology. I didn't fully read, so I wasn't prepared to talk about it today. But what it is is you'd have a contraption on you. And what they've worked out is that when we're walking, we're moving our arms all the time, right? So we're generating movement. We're generating energy in the same way that a turbine might. So why not bottle our arm swing and then we can power ourselves at night? I know they can't see you on the podcast, but you're literally walking like a Lego man. Also, Dan, sorry, I can power myself at night already. I don't need the hardest energy of my arm swing from the day. What do you mean we can power ourselves at night? Well, it might charge your phone when you're asleep. Exactly. Or the arm movement. No, you're generating. Okay, look, we're different. But you do get, I've read about there's been some gyms where they attach the treadmills to the lights and they get the lights going by people going on the treadmills all day. That is very cool. Yeah, I like that. It's possible. Okay, he likes that. That's fine. Yeah. So if we were one four and one against at the moment, could you make the final call? I don't like it. I what if you've not got very strong arms, long arms? What if you've got no arms? Oh dear. Is this the hell I want to die on? Okay, this is not Dragonstone. I didn't invent this. This is a thing that is happening. Can I ask, can you attach it to other parts of your body that swing while you're walking? What a confident way of putting it. Do you think, oh, I'm actually powering a small turbine down here? I actually powering the whole of Milton Key's just walking to the shops. Can I tell you about the International Owl Centre in Minnesota? Please do. This is an amazing place. They do lots of brilliant work with Owls, International Owl Centre, and staff have to be able to do owl noises to get a job. Brilliant. It's so cool. Is that just what they claim in the interview? You put on your CV, you know, barn grey, all of that. No, because people come into the office saying, I heard a particular owl. Can you help me identify it? And the staff obviously have to be able to say, oh, well, did it go, whew, or did it go, wah, or whatever? That helps you identify it. So, you know, they may as well, apparently there's the hardest owl on the planet to replicate is the brownfish owl, which is so low that most people can't even reproduce the sound. Okay. It's almost impossible to do. I'm the farm brown owl. Brown fish owl? Brown fish owl. You've got enough, but you've misnamed yourself. Yeah, good. Yeah, you have, like everyone obviously thinks that owl's just hoots and go, hoo-hoo, toe, whatever. But they shriek, yapp, chitter, squeal, squawk, warble. This is all from the book that you read. The sooty owl makes a noise.

It only speaks to Matthew Corbett. Really? What's that, sooty owl?

Is it named after us? No, it's because it's sooty as in the colour of soot. They make it sound like a dropping bomb. What? It's like... Wow, that's amazing. I'm not sure if they have the bomb at the end, they think it's just the thing. That's very cool. And the northern screech owl, if he wants to find a, if it's a male and wants to find a female, then he does exactly 112 toots per minute to try and attract her. And he'll do that from half an hour after sunset until half an hour before sunrise. So all night he's doing 112 toots per minute. Wow. Isn't that incredible? If a female comes into his territory and he notices her, he ratches it up to 260 toots per minute. Right. And then if she buggers off, then he'll follow her doing 160 toots per minute. Wow. Two, two, two, come back, come back, come back. Wow. Do they have secular breathing? Is it like beatboxing? Can they do... It's a great question. You probably need that, wouldn't you? I would say so. I don't know how the syrinx of owl works, but yeah, you would think they would have to breathe as well. Here's another question. This is so odd that this is a part of the show because of the last fact, but we used to leave my sister's Barbie dolls outside on a little veranda bit in Australia where we lived. And we didn't play with them for a long time because, you know, none of them could stand. So she was in, she lost interest. And we went out one day and we got the toys out and Barbie was basically hairless, the bold headed, right? And what we realised was a bird had been stealing strands of hair and making a nest in a tree up. And I looked online all day to see whether or not that is a real thing because that's my memory of it is that we went out and we made that connection. And I saw there was one image of the Barbie doll in its hole as part of a bird's nest. So the bird had grabbed the hair and incorporated it into the nest. But do you think that's? Yeah, 100% that happens. And it does happen in owls as well. So the burrowing owl will try and put loads of really impressive stuff in his burrow. One to impress the females, but another one to say, I'm so great, I managed to get all this stuff. And so they'll get like corn stalks, corn cobs, moss, Andy. Lovely. The vertebrae of deer sometimes they'll put on the outside. This is like decorating the nests, but they will take like lots of things that humans have put like bits of cloth and stuff like that. Bits of concrete. And the idea and always the idea is that the more difficult it is for an owl to get it, the more impressive it is to the female and also to the other males that he doesn't want in his area. So if I got all these bits of concrete, you do not want to fuck with me. I need to move us on guys to our next fact. I have a fact, but it's a bit sad. Can I say anyway? I'm really sorry about this. Famous owl owners. Are you asking for them? Yeah, why not? Florence Nightingale. Well that was the one. Florence Nightingale. You said it's a sad fact, but I feel pretty happy. I was wondering if anyone might go anywhere else, but no, yeah. Florence Nightingale. Harry Potter. Yeah, everyone in Harry Potter's got an owl. Sting. Sting. Yeah, I'm taking a punt. Florence Nightingale. She had an owl called Athena, which she took from some little boys were kind of playing with this owl and maybe mistreating it. And she looked after it. She looked after it her whole, or its whole life. And because when war broke out in Crimea, she had to go to the war. She couldn't take the owl with her. And so she put her owl in the attic and she thought they would be able to just kill all the mice that lived there and stuff like that would be fine. But it was domesticated so much it didn't know how to catch. It's a sad fact. I should never have ended on this. And unfortunately, yeah. A medical owl fact. Oh, yeah, yeah. As a topper for that. So lots of medieval recipes last year were digitized by Cambridge University. And a cure for gout is a salting an owl, baking it until it be ground into

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a powder, mixing it with boar's grease to make a salve and rubbing it on the sufferers body to cure the gout. That's another sad fact. Every three seconds, another owl dies.

In 2005, an owl who lived at Warwick Castle was given L plates because he was so bad at flying.

That's a bit of a jackpot. Unfortunately, they were so heavy he crashed into the ground.

All right, we need to move on. It's time for fact number three. And that is James. Okay, my fact this week is that the poet William Blake's boss once visited him and his wife only to find them completely naked. It turns out they liked to cosplay as Adam and Eve.

It's great. It's brilliant. It's brilliant. He was a big fan of Milton, wasn't he, Blake?

Milton, yeah. So actually what they were doing, so just to say Milton Paradise Lost, they were reading some John Milton and they possibly William Blake, as well as being a poet, he was known artist and he might have wanted to illustrate Milton and they thought that maybe he persuaded his wife that they would both read it and pretend to be Adam and Eve so that maybe he'd be able to see the postures that they got into and he'd be able to do some good accurate drawings in his illustration of Milton. Very convoluted, isn't it? A way to get your wife pregnant.

Naked, yes. Same thing.

But yeah, this is Blake's patron who was called Thomas Butts.

Thomas Seymour Butts.

One day he went to visit Blake because he was his patron and was going to give him some money maybe

and he turned up, knocked on the door, someone let him in and it turned out that Blake and his wife were in the garden and Blake said, come on in, it's only Adam and Eve, you know, and they were trying out naked postures and this story comes from the first biography of William Blake by a guy called Alexander Gilchrist. It's what made Blake famous because he is a very famous poet now. He did what did he do? Tiger, tiger, burning dry and all that kind of stuff. But before this, he wasn't famous at all. This very, very well researched biography has this story. Some of Blake's friends or, you know, relatives of their friends said that it might not have been true, but most modern biographers, I think, pretty much believe it. The ODNB says that it does not seem out of character that this happened. That they would be naked. Yeah. He was a very visionary, imaginative, unusual guy. So in fact, he was constantly seeing angels and having visions and he was just like a full on inner life basically. And in fact, there's a thing about him that's connected to something one of us has. Oh, yeah. What, Blake? Yeah. Daddy issues.

Daddy issues. It's mummy issues.

No, it's so James has a fantasia. I do. And that's where you can't visualize things in your mind.

Yeah. So if I close my eyes, I can't imagine what things look like. Yeah. Yeah. So Blake, we reckon, or historians reckon, might have had hyper fantasia, which is where you see lots and lots and lots of things that often aren't there. So it's sort of an opposite thing there. But yeah,

a lot of people think it's really interesting that because like if I close my eyes, I can just see nothing. It's just dark. I can't imagine things. Can't imagine what Square looks like.

Can't imagine what my wife looks like. Just can't imagine anything. Can't imagine what Dan's mum looks like. Obviously, I can imagine that. Yeah. But it goes through different sort of phases. So there are some people who can just kind of make out slight images. There are some people who can almost see an entire movie that goes on in their head. Like they can imagine their first day at school and they'll see it happening in their head. And then there are some people like Blake, who is a hyper fantasi, who you can just imagine almost anything and things almost come into him



and he's not sure if they're real or not real. Yeah. It sounds like a mad life he had. Yeah. Well, I mean, there's lots of people who were like, he was just quite mentally ill, but thought he was seeing visions. But it started from when he was really, really young. So when he was four years old, he first saw God's head in a window. And they described it as the first of many visions he would recount in the ordinary unempathetic tone in which we speak of trivial matters.

So he was just kind of completely out. It was like God's heads in the window.

Well, that's yeah, because they came so much to him. It wasn't just angels and gods. It was the past people of the world. So kings and famous artists and stuff like that to the point where he would be sitting there, say, have a conversation with William Wallace. You know, he's just having a chat in his head. And then he'd get pissed off because King Edward the first would suddenly just blunder in and he'd be like, Edward, we're trying to have a chat here. What are you doing? Like he would get pissed off with the visions as well, because there were too many going on in terrain. Yeah. Interrupting. Incredible. Oh, that's weird because he painted the body of Edward the first, the embalmed body of Edward the first who died 400, 500 years before they opened up the tomb and he got to have a go at painting it. That is so weird, isn't it? The idea that they would just open up the tomb of a dead monarch and just say, oh, you can paint them for an hour and then we'll close it again. It was one hour. It was like a supermarket sweep thing. And you had one hour to paint Edward the first. And it was literally the king. It was the king. It was the Edward the first. It was so weird. Has that ever been done since? 1774, they did it. Do you know how old he was when he did that? He would have been quite young. No, he was young. He was young. Is he still around then? Is he in barked bodies? No, all these people are dead. Wait, no, no, no. If he was in barked, will he still be there? Yes, I mean, they sealed up the tomb again. We could bring Edward the first up. Damien Hirst has him this year, you know, kind of. Don't give him to Hirst. If you were going to open up the tomb of Edward, you should just slip into his arms, a little mummified

sex doll. Speaking of sex dolls, no, speaking of Catherine, Eve in this cosplay scenario, this roleplay, sexy roleplay they were having, apparently Catherine was great crack. She was like joke. She was like a great cook. And one of the things that she used to do, despite being a great cook, was to serve up Blake empty plates as a reminder that he needed to start bringing some money home. Pointless when you're serving it to someone who has constant visions. He's like, hamburgers again. Apparently Blake really loved to eat cold mutton and drink pints of porter from the local pub, but he didn't like wine glasses, which he considered an absurd affectation. So from someone who cosplays as Adam and Eve. And once he accepted a gift from admire, which was a whole bottle of walnut oil, he didn't know what to do with it. So he drank it all in one go. Oh, my God. And his wife seemed to have had a very nice relationship almost all the time. There was no evidence he was unfaithful to her ever. There was a bit of gossip, but they loved talking. They loved walking. They ran their whole business together because he was a printer basically. And she and he together worked out the printing process. And they designed, they engraved, they printed, they made their own ink. They had this idea that if we can control every element of the production process, everything except printing their own paper, then we'll control all of it, we'll make a load of money. And they did not do that. It's tragic because he was obviously seen as one of the greatest geniuses ever produced. And yet his poems sold, I think songs of innocence

and experience sold something like 20 copies in 30 years. It was really bad. Jerusalem sold nothing,

did no business. Just absolutely nothing at all. So why was he allowed to paint a king? Like what was the lead? I don't know. I think he was really quite young at that time. So I think he might have been studying or whatever. But he also, I'm very envious of his death because he is someone who did not think death was scary. I'm someone who does get scared of death and the idea of no more consciousness. And I know a lot of people aren't, but he particularly believed in the afterlife so much that on his deathbed, he was literally singing with excitement on the day he died going, you know,

I'm going to the next place. Yeah, yeah, whatever the song was. Those kind of sound like the words he would have used as an amazing poet. But and so his wife was upset. But also at the same time, she was like, cool, I'll catch you, I'll catch you soon. And on her death day, she was calling to him as if he was in the next room going, I'll be with you in a minute, William, I'm on my way.

What a great way out. Yeah, he was a good husband, I think. He once wrote that the female vulva is a little model of a chapel of God that husbands must daily worship.

Okay. Wow. Yeah, it's nice. It is nice, isn't it? Like an eternal chamber, you might say.

And he's popular culture wise. You can see his footprint everywhere in ways you might not recognize. I'm like your sister's Barbie. So okay, the band, The Doors, The Doors of Perception, that was a Blake poem that that's where Jim Morrison and the band got that line from. So that's down to Blake. Allen Ginsberg, one of the great American beat poets, read a poem of his and he felt the presence of God. He said he said immediately afterwards, oh my God, I've just experienced I've never something I've never experienced before. This poem and the LSD I took. I don't know if there was LSD, but he, yeah. So presence of God stuff. Do people sort of know what Jerusalem's about? Because it's a series of weird interlinked questions. I thought it was like that Jerusalem comes to England or something like maybe Joseph of Arimathea is going to come to England or something. That's it. And did those feet in ancient times walk up on England's mountains green? It's about the myth that Jesus went to Glastonbury. That's literally what there was a myth that Jesus attended Glastonbury. So Jesus had a great uncle who was Joseph of Arimathea, like James says, and he was a sailor and maybe he came to Cornwall to buy some tin and then maybe they walked around Glastonbury for a bit. And this is when Jesus was tiny. And that was the idea behind that. That was the idea that Blake was writing about. In fact, it turns out Jesus didn't go to Glastonbury, obviously. The story was made up by monks in the 12th century to boost the tourism industry of the area. It's such a good scam. Okay, great.

1184, you're a monk, your abbeys burned down, nightmare, you need to rebuild it, need to raise some cash. So all you do is you just say, King Arthur came from here, you know, and no one can prove you wrong because it's the 12th century, they're not fact-checkers. And then King Arthur, you just add Jesus into that and say, oh, Jesus came here too, actually. And the monks, this was the great bit of the con. They built a wooden church in a style that would have been built centuries before to make it look like their monastery was way older and might have hosted King Arthur and Jesus. At the same time, I don't know if there was a kind of supergroup element to it, but it was kind of like, it was just like, oh, this is a very, very old place. That was their claim. And it was nonsense from start to finish, but it worked because Glastonbury became the second richest abbey in the entire country, partly because of this myth of, oh, yeah, Jesus, he was here. I've always said it, you can't trust bugs. Well, they got their comeuppance, you'll be glad to hear, Sophie, just 400 years later. What was the comeuppance? They had to say 12 Hail Marys. That was the dissolution of the monasteries. The dissolution of the monasteries.

I admit, that's a pretty neat reference to make. Sorry.

Okay, it is time for our final fact of the show. And that is my fact. My fact this week is that ladybird orgasms last for 30 minutes. Pretty astonishing, 30 minutes. Yeah. So their sex can last up to nine hours. So hence that's proportional orgasm, possibly to the amount of sex time that they're having. Well, yeah, what's that? What did you say? Half an hour. There's one 18th of the total time having sex. So that's a full second orgasm, two minutes. Yep. Yeah.

Check that, carry on. Wait, did you say two minutes? No, my numbers are all off then.

So yeah, so they, yeah, nine hours. Nine hours. And actually, during that time, the female might often get a bit bored and go around looking for food while the male is attached to the back of her. Well, that's the weird thing. They've seen sometimes, this is how clueless the male ladybird is during the sex, that sometimes they'll get four hours into the sex and they'll be like, oh, she's dead. They don't even know that for four hours, they were sleeping with a dead ladybird. Well, it's not incredible. Males are very, what's the one I'm looking for?

Necrophilic? No, they're just sort of, they're very inattentive, male ladybirds. They're very...

Are you being an apologist for necrophilia, male ladybirds? I cannot stress enough that I don't think our puny human judgment supply in this universe. No, so if a male ladybird meets another ladybird, he will climb on top of it no matter what. Oh, regardless. Regardless. And it might not be a female. So Warwick University wrote an amazing study about the love lives of ladybirds and they reported that if a male meets another, he will immediately make a full-hearted attempt to climb on top of the other one. If he discovers that he has mounted another male, he will retreat immediately. But if he was lucky to have met a female, he will try to sleep with her. So they don't notice anything really. They just bump into another ladybird and start climbing up it. Yeah, because they can only see two centimetres ahead of them. So if there's something that looks a little bit like a ladybird there, you might as well have a go.

Gosh. Really? And sometimes female ladybirds get mounted by male ladybirds, which are not even the same species of ladybird. Yeah. And they say, what are you doing? We're not even the same...

We're not even the same thing. I think this... I mean, it's hard to tell the gender of a ladybird from two centimetres' sight. But if you're a ladybird... But you're all ladybirds. It's not ladybirds and laddiebirds. It's all ladybirds. Yeah. They're all ladybirds. You all look basically the same even though you can have different colours of ladybird. You can have red ladybirds, orange ladybirds, black ladybirds, blue ladybirds. Wait, maybe I'll make that one up.

Orange, black, brown and red. Those are the main types. There have been reports of purple ladybirds,

but those are unreliable. One thing that I really like to my ladybird research is that there are not a lot of ladybirds in popular culture, but there is one ladybird who is possibly Pixar's first transgender character, which is Francis from A Bugs Life. Oh. If Francis from A Bugs Life is constantly being misgendered as a lady, which he gets very upset about, but if the Pixar forums, people have... I suppose that maybe Francis is a delusion to a trans character. You're all taking that very seriously. Pixar did not do that. I don't know.

But it is a constantly misgendered ladybird in A Bugs Life. It's hard to tell the species of ladybird because in the UK we have a seven-spot ladybird, which is the most common, but you might get a 22-spot ladybird, a 13-spot ladybird, 10-spot ladybird, two-spot ladybird, 18-spot ladybird. These are all different species. And you know how you can tell which is which? Oh, number of spots. Nope. This is the amazing thing. Some seven-spot ladybirds can have anywhere between about five

and nine spots. And 11-spot ladybirds can have something like nine to maybe 15, something like that. Well, what's the point of anything then? What's the point of science? Most of them do have the number of spots that their name says, but the problem is that some of them don't, and like some of the spots sort of merge into each other, so you can have a seven-spot, but actually five of the spots have all molded into one spot, so it's like just three spots. I'm coming around to the point of view of the male ladybird here. If you don't even have the decency to have the number of spots that your literal name is, that's crazy. Yeah, that's another crazy thing is that when they're, if they're mating, because obviously, as I said, it can go up to nine hours, if they're mating and it gets to sundown and the temperature drops, they become immobilized and they're just kind of stuck there. Yeah. Oh my god. So if you're going to do nine hours, you pretty much have to start quite early in the morning, don't you? There's no point starting at midday because it's going to be. Yeah, you've got to time it right, but you know, another argument in my favor for the solar-powered arms to give you nighttime energy. Six arms. Six arms. Six arms, yeah. I've got quite a cute ladybird fact. Do you know who the ladybird's named after? A German cool girl. No, she's named

She's Lashine. They, the ladybirds are named after people think in lots of languages, our lady, the Virgin Mary, who was often depicted wearing a red cloak and like lots of lots of things, but the word ladybird in other languages in Irish, it's, I can't say it, it's boy day. Okay. It means God's little cow. God's little cow. That's so sweet. I feel like the Virgin Mary in heaven is like. Yeah, yeah. So the German word for ladybird is Marian Kaffa, which is Mary Beatles. It's using the surname of Virgin Mary in that instance.

And her first name was Virgin.

Mum, dad, why did you name me that?

Can we talk a bit about the ladybird explosion of 1976? Yes, please. This is great. Okay.

So Dan's mum was just a teenager. This is a thing that happened in 1976. The weather conditions for some reason were right. So 1975 was quite a good summer, then the winter was mild, then the spring was warm, right? So what you had, you had this, you had all the preconditions for this amazing

number of ladybirds. Apparently during the summer of 1976, 400 miles of tide line on the south and east coast of England were nothing but ladybirds. Really? They were just solid ladybirds. What? They think there might have been something like 23 billion ladybirds in the tide line at any one time, which is more than double the number of humans was. It's more than double the number of humans there have ever been. This is 1976. This is 1976. This is for one particular day in 1976, that 23 billion number. Does anyone, someone here must have been of age in 1976. Does anyone remember

that? There were a lot of ladybirds. There were a lot of ladybirds.

It's good. Corroboration. Corroboration. There were a lot of ladybirds. You weren't wrong. There were a lot of ladybirds. That's the best, that's the happiest I've ever been. That's how we do our fact checking. Yeah. The author who was writing about this, who was, said, was Majeris, said, I was walking in Brighton in late July. I tried a little experiment, walking along the almost deserted beach with a cone of yellowish vanilla ice cream held inside my jacket. I then held it out and timed how long it took to become completely submerged in ladybirds. Oh my God, like hundreds and thousands. Yeah. Well, probably only 40 or 50, but no, the point is 28 seconds. 28 seconds after he got the ice cream out of his coat, it was covered in ladybirds. That's how many there were just

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around. Oh, wow. It was huge. Oh my God. Yeah. They fly so fast as well. They fly as fast as like a fast horse runs. That's how fast. That's fast. That's fast, yeah. That's what, like, yeah. And yet the plans for the Ladybird Grand National seem never, ever to get going. So sad. What's that, 40 miles an

hour? They can't go 40 miles an hour. They go really fast. If it's windy. Yeah, yeah. This is timing a ladybird. There is a Norse legend that a ladybird, the ladybird came to Earth on a bolt of lightning. So it's probably just someone watching a real, yeah. That's cool. They were like, that's like a fast horse. That's amazing. They get pubic lice as well, ladybirds. Are they? Yeah. It's the equivalent. So it's pubic lice. I'm doing air quotes here. Ectoparasitic mites is what they get. But they, so they, ladybirds are just absolutely riddled with STDs because they shag so much and they spread it. So the mites hide underneath the shell. So you would never see you in the mites. Although I've seen photos of STD riddled ladybirds and it's... Those spots are natural, Dan. Well, I started off as a seven spot, but I don't know what's going on here.

But it's hard to hide when you see like a really riddled, so like, because they get like funky and stuff like that. So they come in and they look like they're wearing greenery on them. The funky one is interesting because that has become a real problem over the last few years. Yeah. Pretty much most of the ladybirds you get in this country and around the world are starting to get this fungi. But we don't know for sure that it's harmful. So we know that they're all getting it and they all seem to get it from sex or actually in a nice way. Sometimes they like to cuddle together and they can catch the fungus that way. So it's not always an STD. But we don't know for sure that it's harmful. It could be just like getting athlete's foot. So it could be just like we all have a big cuddle. We all get athlete's foot and we're kind of fine. Might be a little bit uncomfortable. Darling, it's fine. We were cuddling and then I came home and that was it. They're just pubic lice in air quotes. It's fine. I feel like we've got quite personal with the ladybirds.

Well, can I say something about orgasms then very quickly?

Yeah. Yes. Clean it up.

So psychologists at Madrid University collected a lot of images of the faces of people when they orgasmed and they noted that 92% had their eyes closed, 79% had a drooping of the jaw and 64% were frowning. So if you're having sex and your partner is eyes shut, slack jawed with a frown on their face, then it means you're doing it right. I've never been more conscious of the muscles of my face. Not wanting to do anything with them. Oh, that's so interesting, James. Thank you. It's just science then. No, I know. I love science. I've got orgasm fat. Oh, yeah. Go for it.

So if we imagine if we've got the fantasy of the two ladybirds having sex, they reach climates, the sun goes down and they're frozen like that forever. You think what an amazing way to go? Yes. And so I was like, have there any people who were famously or allegedly died during sex? Yeah, that's good. And there is a list of people who've allegedly died at the point of climates and it's got one president and four popes. Four popes. Wow. Pope Leo VII, Pope John XII, Pope John XIII, Pope Paul II. They all apparently died while shagging. Oh, my God.

Funny fact, they all died on the same day. There was a lot of white smoke.

Well, that's it. That's all of our facts. Thank you so much for listening. If you'd like to get in contact with any of us about the things that we've said over the course of this podcast, we can be found on our Twitter accounts. I'm on at Shriverland. James. At James Harkin. Andy. At Andrew Hunter M. And Sophie. At Sophie Duke Box. Yep. Or you can go to our group account, which is at no such thing or our website, nosuchthingasafish.com. All of our previous

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episodes are up there. You can check them out. Thank you so much, everyone, for being here at this very late hour here in Soho Theatre. Thank you so much, Sophie, for being with us on stage. We'll see you all again next time. Thank you so much. Good night!