

I was driving around London last week playing with the search function on my radio when a voice jumped out at me, literally! As I nearly knocked down a poor old lady whilst not driving carefully (note to self, don't search and drive) I turned in to Piccadilly, the area not the station! My radio picked up a voice. I recognised, so I fine tuned and laughed along with the great banter that was coming from LBC, so as soon as I got to a phone I arranged for the hot seat to be flown down from Newcastle and into the LBC studio to have a chat with the lady of comedy, banter and all a around media thespian Jeni Barnett.

Jeni it was a real laugh tuning in to your show, you're a presenter that's done everything from TV and acting to comedy and writing, which one do you love the most?

I love writing because it's something I have to do, if I don't write I go faintly potty, I'm not a comic, although it's flattering you think I am, and I can't really call myself an actress since I haven't done any acting for years and even when I was acting you couldn't really call me an actress. I am the only person in the world who got a laugh out of playing the cymbals in Carmina Brana, as our Yankee cousins would say 'Go Figure'.

You have done so many jobs in your career and before we explore your work, can I just bring up a skill you seem to have mastered, the skill of getting "sacked"! Can you tell us

which one stands out the most and if you were the boss would you have sacked yourself?

Getting sacked for wearing dungarees was a goodun but TVAM takes the biscuit. If I had known that taking my breast out would get me a rollicking I wouldn't have done it. She was hungry, I had food on tap, and it felt like the most natural thing in the world. Well it is the most natural thing in the world apart from defecating, but I wouldn't do that on air. If I were the boss would I have sacked me? Of course not! They got rid of me because I was anarchic, left of centre, unrepentant and most of all unafraid. The work force at TVAM was prepared to come out on strike for what they deemed to be unfair dismissal. I sued and won. TVAM settled out of court. I rest my case, quite literally.

Good for you girl (clicking fingers and doing a very girly hand movement like Rue Paul) normally at this point I would say something snooty like yep more boobles on telly is good and all that kind of stuff but as my wife's reading this I'll just ask you for the rundown on the career of Jeni Barnett?

I have been working since 1970. Started out as an actress, did ten years, or more, treading the boards, skipping the light fantastic and trying to bring down the Government with a clenched fist and a left wind political theatre group called 'Belt and Braces' I wrote lots of songs and sung them with our band. I had the khutspan of Bette Midler and the passion of Benizir Bhutto, who is of

course dead... I left the stage, in 1980 after my performance in ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF AN ANARCHIST at The Wyndhams Theatre was un-favourably compared to Jane Fonda in 'The China Syndrome'. I stepped down and let Ms Fonda take the accolades. I went into telly instead to join a feminist company at the BBC in the worst ever telly programme called REVOLTING WOMEN. After one series we were not re-commissioned. Then after various TV stepping stones I left the sit-com I was working on to do TVAM. Got sacked for breast feeding my daughter on air, she was 25 at the time JOKE, and went to LWT. Got sacked for being insubordinate on air and went to the BBC. Got sacked for being bored, ended up taking time out to be with my daughter and husband and worked in a kitchen cutting up apples and making them into crumbles. I also taught piano and singing and started a few choirs. Was contacted by UKTV to do a new food show called GOOD FOOD LIVE! When that came to an end I was contacted by Chris Lowrie at LBC to try out for radio. The rest is recent history."

Any plans on getting sacked from LBC, hope not! So what do you like most about the media known as

radio?
What do I like most about radio? The freebies! Getting recognized in Clapham and the kindness of the callers.

During your time in TV and radio you've turned into a female version of Parkinson you're your interviewing skills, so I take it you like doing them?

Do I like doing interviews? Does the Pope wear a funny hat? That's always my favorite part of any of my broadcasting jobs. I LOVE doing interviews. There is no secret to interviewing, do the research and listen. If I have a little of their personal data I let the subject loose and go with their flow.

You come across a very funny, happy and sweet lady! But if I asked your family what would they say you were really like?

My family would say I am bossy, impetuous, completely unabashed by what people think of me and noisy, nothing new then.

Its been a lot of fun sitting with you today and I'm glad I was driving round Piccadilly, mind you I was lost, I only went out for a pint of milk to my

local shop in Newcastle and ended up there, damn that sat-nav! By the way I've been told you're quite good at nicking other peoples jokes is this true?

Am I known for pinching other peoples funny lines and gags, I didn't know that....How very dare you!

Oops! Sorry, OK Jeni let us have it, one in the eye to all your ex-bosses, give us your shameless plug!

Jeni@bbc.co.uk is my radio e-mail address. www.jenibarnett.com is my own website. You can download pictures from there. Go to audio books and listen to ALL BY MOUTH and RISK IT FOR BISCUIT. I am currently recording a third called TAKING THE MIC. And do listen to me every day 1-4 on LBC 97.3. If you talk I don't have to...

What a great sign off line as I'm bundled out of the building and chucked onto the pavement with a cardboard box and some personal belongings, apparently this is how Jeni says good bye to every one, it's a habit from her old jobs. If you think you're going to get the sack soon, then get into the hot seat as soon as you can by sending you details direct to editor@theradiomagazine.co.uk and well speak soon.

Next Week:

Hallam FM's Becky Hayes takes her turn in the hot seat...