

17's Company - Series 999
"Open for Business"
Episode One: End of an Era...

Open Discussion Pub – Spadge is standing behind the bar. Worm Mad is sat at the bar, drinking. Various people are sat at tables, drinking and talking.

Spadge: Well, I'm off...

Worm Mad: (baffled) Eh? Off where?

Spadge: Oh, didn't I tell you?

Worm Mad: Tell me what?

Spadge: I'm retiring. (Pause) Today.

There is silence, everyone looks at Spadge in shock.

Spadge: (surprised) I didn't tell any of you? (laughing) Ha ha... what a memory
(Pause) I meant to tell you.

Worm Mad: But why?

Spadge: Otherwise you wouldn't know what was going on, would you?

Worm Mad: (annoyed) Not 'why did you mean to tell us you were retiring'? – Why are you retiring?

Spadge: Well... think about the old regulars. How many are still here? (Pause) Blinx is on the run, UnKnown X hasn't been seen in months, MtlAngelus is dead, Test Zero, Dart and Miguel went and started that farm. Betong's dead, Star Worms and mocoworm left the planet, KamikazeBananze hasn't been around since Blinx went on the run, Zero72's the Slayer. S-2k hasn't returned from repairs, Vader's in an asylum, APJ's in prison and wormsfreak hasn't been here since Paul.Power sacked him as his assistant. (Pause) Who's left for me, here?

Worm Mad: You've still got me, FatWhitey, thomasp, Sarge and Paul.

Spadge: Exactly! (he starts to walk to the door)

Paul.Power: Wait!

Spadge: What?

Paul.Power: Who's taking over the bar now?

Spadge: Oh...erm...Pickleworm.

Worm Mad screams.

Paul.Power: That incompetent waiter you sacked after one day of him working here?

Spadge: Yes, but I think you're being unfair. He's quite competent.

Paul.Power: You found him asleep in the kitchen.

Spadge: He'd had a late night!

Paul.Power: The kitchen was on fire!

Spadge: Hmm...yes. (Pause) I'm sorry, Paul, but he made me the highest offer.

Worm Mad: How much did he offer you? Maybe we could give you a better deal.

Spadge: He gave me two packets of crisps, some chewing gum, fifty pence and £1000 in Monopoly money.

Worm Mad: (despairing) Oh, it's hopeless! We can't compete with that!

Spadge: Sayonara, chaps! (he leaves with a suitcase)

Everyone looks sad. All of a sudden there is a loud yell and Pickleworm crashes through the roof with an unopened parachute on his back. He lands behind the bar.

Pickleworm: (grinning) Ooh, yeah. The Pickle has Landed!

Cut to titles.

Title Music Lyrics

*There's a pub - in your imagination,
There's a pub - where all your dreams come true,
There's a pub - that is a real sensation,
There's a pub - for me and for you.*

*But this isn't the pub.
But this isn't the pub.
This isn't the pub - you're - looking for.*

*This is a pub - of laughter and disaster,
This is a pub - where pickles are dispensed,
This is a pub - of crazy crazy people,
This is a pub - but of pubs it's the best.*

*Things aren't always in black and white,
Things aren't always simple,
Things aren't always wrong or right.
This is the pub.*

*Open the door if you dare,
Open the door if you care,
For we are here and we're going to win the war.
This is the pub.*

This is the pub.

Beer and grub.

This is the pub.

Cast

1. Worm Mad (clip of Worm Mad dropping a Ming vase),
2. Paul.Power (three short clips of Paul.Power mixing various potions),
3. SargeMcCluck (clip of a shocked Sarge chin-driving down a hill),
4. thomasp (shot of a scared thomasp running as X-Boxes fall from the sky),
5. FatWhitey (shot of FatWhitey throwing a cake aside and eating a plate of crisps),
6. Pickleworm (shot of Pickleworm serving drinks from the bar),

7. Squirminator2k (shot of S-2k with half his face showing the robotics beneath)
8. Blinx (shot of Blinx levitating),
9. KamikazeBananze (joint shot with MtlAngelus, they stand next to each other looking out on the city, KamikazeBananze has detective clothes on)
10. MtlAngelus, Ghost of (see KamikazeBananze)
11. K^2, Ghost of (Shot of darkened room with creepy flickering computer)
12. PinkWorm (shot of PinkWorm playing ice hockey)
13. SomePerson (shot of SomePerson swimming under water with various fishes)
14. Ploegman (shot of Ploegman playing cards)
15. Star Worms?!? (Shot of a burnt out spaceship)
16. MonkeyforaHead (shot of an ape attacking MFAH)
17. tundraH (shot of an asleep tundraH)

Also Starring

The truly demonic, Neo-Casket (shot of furious flaming NC) and
The downright odd, Mischief (shot of Mischief holding a Viking hammer and grinning)

Cut to outside pub. Construction work is taking place on the pub and the locals are waiting eagerly to enter.

SargeMcCluck: Hmm, I have to admit that you're taking a rather professional approach to this, Pickleworm. (Pause) I only hope all this power doesn't go to your head.

Pickleworm: (laughing) Power go to my head? Ridiculous.

The camera moves up. A builder is putting a "Pickleworm's" sign into place before the "Open Discussion Pub" sign.

Pickleworm: (grinning, to the builder) Looking good, Barry!

Builder: I'm Paul.

Pickleworm: (still grinning) I don't care what your name is. You've only got one line.

Cut to Buddhist monastery. Blinx is standing with some monks.

Blinx: I must leave you now, my brothers, but I humbly thank you for the service you have done me.

Slightly Fat Buddhist Monk: Never fear, brother Blinx, we are honoured.

Blinx: No, I am honoured.

Slightly Fat Buddhist Monk: We are honoured that you are honoured.

Blinx: (shouting) NO! I'M HONOURED, DAMN IT! (There is silence, Pause) Well, I've overstayed my welcome.

Blinx leaves the shocked Buddhists. Cut to pub – Inside. People are crowded around talking excitedly. Pickleworm pushes past them and stands up on the bar.

Pickleworm: (loudly) Friends, Rummies, Drunken men! Put down your beers! (Pause, people stop to look at PW) I come here to re-open this pub, not to close it. We all know that Spadge did a lot of good for this pub... and for all of us... as Spadge was

an honourable man. (Pause) But, I had a dream! That one day... people would be able to drink and surf the net at the same time. I had a dream... that one day, people would be able to get pickles for free *whenever* they wanted them. (Pause) I had a dream that one day, people who were too lazy - or incompetent - to go home from the pub... should sleep in their very own bed cubicles and stay the whole night long. (Long Pause) Today, my friends... (loudly) That dream is a reality! (there is loud cheering) See the magnificence of the internet-accessible computers built into every table! Witness the marvel of the world's first ever official PickleTech™ Pickle Dispenser! And sit back and enjoy the wide range of bed cubicles, newly exported from Japan! (more cheering) Today is not the end of an era... It is the start of one! (applause)

Cut to audience.

FatWhitey: Where's all the applause coming from?

SargeMcCluck shrugs.

Pickleworm: (mid-speech) ...And with a new beginning, comes some new faces. (Pause) I'd like a round of applause for the Open Discussion Pub's newest clientele... Ploegman, SomePerson, PinkWorm and tundraH!

Cut to audience.

FatWhitey: Who?

SargeMcCluck shrugs.

Voice-Over: Ploegman... a master card player with a mysterious past. (Pause) SomePerson... marine biologist and owner of the local aquarium. (Pause) PinkWorm, renowned ice-hockey player and tundraH!...er, we're not sure exactly what he does. tundraH: I do a lot of things. Voice-Over: (patronising) That's just swell, folks! He does a lot of things. (Pause) Any particular thing? tundraH: Um... I know some magic tricks. Voice-Over: (still patronising) Could you show us one? tundraH: Sure (his head revolves fully round and some spoons fall out of his mouth) FatWhitey: What the hell?

SargeMcCluck shrugs. Cut to KamikazeBananze's police office. There are magazine cuttings about Blinx littered around the place, dirty coffee mugs and surveillance photos. KamikazeBananze is looking worryingly tired and is scrambling over the various files.

Officer: (entering the room) Sir.

KamikazeBananze: Shhhh!

Officer: Sir, it's important!

KamikazeBananze: (looking up from the files) It had better be.

Officer: The government sent you this. (he throws down a piece of paper) They're ordering you to stop searching for Blinx.

KamikazeBananze: (screaming) I CAN'T! Don't you see - I'm so close...so close... I'll find him...yes...yes...I'll find him!

Officer: It'll cost you your job, sir, don't forget that. (he leaves)

Cut to bar. Pickleworm is standing behind the bar.

Pickleworm: Hmm... I need a waiter. (Pause) But who?

The door is thrown open and Neo-Casket (previously Evil-Demonic Casket in 72WTD:S2:E9) enters. He strides across to the bar, grabs Pickleworm by the scruff of his shirt and lifts him into the air.

Neo-Casket: (angrily) I am your worst nightmare, mortal. I am hell itself, the voices in your head that tell you that all is hopeless. I am unrelenting, unstoppable and I shall not rest until all fall dead beneath my feet!

Pickleworm: (grinning) I like your attitude, you're hired!

Neo-Casket: (calming down) Really? Cool!

Paul.Power: What happened to all that 'worst nightmare' stuff?

Neo-Casket: Hey! A job's a job! (Pause, to PW) When do I start?

Pickleworm: Right now! (he hands him an apron)

Cut to table. MFAH is messing around on a computer. On the screen, a Flash cartoon plays in which the first 20 seconds consist of strobe lighting and flashing imagery and the last five seconds consist of a worm with glasses saying "It's art" next to a dead worm with an axe in his head.

thomasp: (looking over his shoulder) Needs more strobe lighting.

MonkeyforaHead: (nodding) If it doesn't give you an epileptic fit then it hasn't done its job!

Cut to factory. A technician has finished construction on somebody's face (who is sitting in a chair).

Technician: (standing back) Brilliant!

The figure grabs a mirror from a shelf next to him and looks at himself. It is S-2k, half of his face shows the robotics underneath. S-2k laughs manically and smashes the mirror.

Squirminator2k: (Pausing) Am I fixed, now?

Technician: Well, we'd like to run a few more tests.

Squirminator2k: Yeah? (Pause) Test this! (he punches the Technician and runs out of the building)

Technician: Punch Score - 8/10! Remarkable!

Cut to bar – table. PinkWorm is surfing the net.

PinkWorm: IceHockeyAddicts.com, what would I do without you?

Computer: Get a proper job, perhaps.

PinkWorm: Huh?

Computer: K^2#FileManager is Installing PossessionPlus™, please close down all other programs and prepare for imminent desktop-invasion.

PinkWorm: K^2? What's that?

Worm Mad: (standing next to him) K^2 was a computer genius who used to visit this pub. When he turned into a vampire, me and Paul had to kill him.

Computer: Gee, thanks for reminding me.

Worm Mad: (looking at the computer screen) K^2? Is that you?
K^2: Nice work, Einstein. I had some trouble with Zero but I know that the regulars here are a pushover. (Pause) Oh, you do realise that I'll want revenge on you and Paul, don't you?
Worm Mad: Who doesn't?
PinkWorm: So, what? This guy's like a ghost, now?
Worm Mad: It would appear so.
K^2: PossesionPlus™ installed 100%. Introducing K^2, A.K.A – Ghost in the Machine.
Worm Mad: That's a catchy alias!
K^2: Hey, thanks!
PinkWorm: Ahhhh! I just wanted to check my e-mail!
Worm Mad: Quiet, you!

Cut to another table. SomePerson is sitting reading a book called 'Le Poisson de Mort'. All of a sudden, a young woman of about twenty who is dressed in Viking garments creeps up on him (Mischief).

Mischief: So, I heard you like fish, huh?
SomePerson: Er, yeah. (Pause) Who are you?
Mischief: Not important. (Pause) Do you want to see my hammer?
SomePerson: Not really.
Mischief: Tough. (she hits him over the head with the hammer)
SomePerson: OW!
Mischief: Ah, you're a big baby. I'm going to find someone else to mess around with. (she drops a lump of sugar in SP's drink) Enjoy! (she disappears)
SomePerson: (to Neo-Casket who is walking around, serving drinks) Do all bars have psychotic demons for waiters and weird Viking-girls for customers?
Neo-Casket: Only the best ones.

Move to door. S-2k enters.

Squirminator2k: Whoa! What happened to this place? Where's Spadge?
FatWhitey: Um...he retired.
Squirminator2k: So who's the new pub owner?
FatWhitey: Pickleworm.
Squirminator2k: (he laughs, Pause) You're serious? (FW nods. Annoyed) Did I just step into some weird-parallel universe or something?
Ploegman: (grinning, playing cards) If you did, then it's one where I'm the god of the card table!
Squirminator2k: And who's he?
FatWhitey: (shrugging) It's the end of an era.
Squirminator2k: (grabbing a bottle of beer from Neo-Casket) Yeah... Well, bottoms up. (he swigs it down)

Cut to outside - grassy hill. Zoom in – Star Worms is lying unconscious on the ground with his head in bandages and various wounds on him.

Star Worms: (regaining consciousness) Dude! Where's my spaceship?

Cut to credits.

Outtakes

No.1: Worm Mad: (annoyed) Not 'why did you mean to tell us you were retiring'! – Why are you retiring?

Spadge: Well... think about the old regulars. How many are still here? (Pause) Blinx is on the run, UnKnown X hasn't been seen in months, MtlAngelus is red...

Worm Mad: Red, eh? I hadn't noticed.

Spadge: Oh, damn it! (Pause) Cut!

No.2: Blinx: I must leave you now, my brothers, but I humbly thank you for the service you have done me.

Slightly Fat Buddhist Monk: Never fear, brother Blinx, we are honoured.

Blinx: No, I am hoonered.

Director: Er, Blinx, you're not supposed to make a spelling mistake.

Blinx: I didn't.

Director: You said 'hoonered'

Blinx: No, I didn't. I said 'honoured'

Director: You said 'hoonered'!

Blinx: I SAID HONOURED!

Director: (laughing) Cut!

No.3: tundraH: Um... I know some magic tricks.

Voice-Over: (patronising) Could you show us one?

tundraH: Sure (his head starts to revolve and gets stuck) Ow... (Pause) Little help! (various people run to tundraH's aid)

Director: Cut!

No.4: Neo-Casket: (angrily) I am your worst nightmare, mortal. I am hell itself, the voices in your head that tell you... (he bursts into laughter)

Pickleworm: (smiling) What?

Neo-Casket: Voices in your head...ha ha ha...ooh, scary!

Pickleworm: Ha ha ha...Cut!

No.5: PinkWorm: So, what? This guy's like a ghost, now?

Worm Mad: Er... (Pause) Line!

Director: 'It would appear so.'

PinkWorm: So, what? This guy's like a ghost, now?

Worm Mad: I'm expecting snow. (he bursts into laughter) Sorry, sorry!

PinkWorm: (laughing) At this time of year?

Director: Cut!

No.6: Squirminator2k: So who's the new pub owner?

FatWhitey: Pick..pick...Pickleman.

Squirminator2k: (he laughs) Pickleman?

FatWhitey: What? What's wrong?

Squirminator2k: It's Pickleworm!!!

FatWhitey: Oh...whoops, sorry.

Director: Cut!