

UNDER PRESSURE

Pat Moore

The characters

Leader	Cool.
Girlfriend	Quite easily hurt
Cool Dudes	Sunglasses, cap
Toughnut	Leather, challenges for leadership
Fashion-girl	Thinks she's a model
Pressure	Worried, pressured into everything!

A sign - "UNDER PRESSURE" is on display.

Want a really quick way to learn this sketch? For each character, find out what they say YES to – because every other suggestion is answered with NO!

The cast enter one by one crossing the stage with character walks and go to a position near the leader. The walk to positions gives the audience time to meet the characters.

(The leader enters, scowls his way across the stage and clicks his fingers to summon his girlfriend. She instantly appears. Dude one performs nifty footwork across the stage whilst making rap noises. Dude two, equally lost in music boogies across the stage to the sound of his own voice. Tough-nut saunters across the stage, stops, looks at the audience, adjusts his jacket and breathes out, carries on to his place. Fashion-girl arrives and poses. She watches as Pressure, with head down, slowly drags his feet along. He stops, raises his head to look at the leader, slowly drops it again. Tough-nut whistles the command and Pressure meekly makes his way to Tough-nut - to become his arm rest! Fashion-girl joins the rest. An interesting freeze of the characters has built up using different heights and directions.)

LEADER *(Points to the right) Yes! (Moves to the right)*

GIRL *Yes. (Follows him)*

TOUGHNUT *(Come forward) YES (Moves over.
(Pressure runs over to becomes the armrest again)*

FASHION *Yes. (Moves over)*

DUDE *(Boogies to centre with noises, pose.) Yes (Move over)*

(Once again an interesting freeze of characters has been created. As the sketch continues be aware of using the space to create interesting pictures)

(Girlfriend moves to the centre and picks up a new pair of jeans, She models them but a tag hanging down clearly says "X-BRAND")

LEADER *(Walks over and is not impressed) No. (Passes by)*

(Pressure walks by but Tough-nut pulls him back to look.)

TOUGH/PRESS *No (They walk by, laugh again and walk on)*

FASHION *(Picks up the label and shows it to the audience. She is disgusted) No. (Walks on.)*

DUDE *(Boogie forward. Puts glasses to end of nose and turn face to look at the jeans. Turn back. Replace glasses.)*

No (Gives the thumbs down sign and boogies on past)

GIRL *(Dejected. Puts the jeans down.) No. (Sits down, sad)*

(In their character walks they make their way to the chairs. The Dudes stay round the leader's chair and pose. The leader picks up a DVD with the words BLOOD & GORE on it. He reads the cover.)

LEADER *Yes. (Passes it to Dude)*

DUDE *Excited) YES!*

GIRL *(Nervous) Yes.*

PRESSURE *(Holds the DVD, looks very doubtful. All look at him and Tough-nut holds him up by his collar)*

Yes.

(Relief for all. Tough-nut lets go. Pressure sinks to the floor again, most unhappy)

TOUGHNUT *(Produces a cigarette and offers it to Pressure. Pressure is about to take it but Tough-nut holds it away.)*

No. (Passes it to Girl)

GIRL *No (Passes it to Dude)*

DUDE 1 *(Raps his way forward. Stops, takes a drag, stumbles with a coughing fit.)*

No. (Passes it to Dude 2)

DUDE 2 *No (Passes it to Dude 3. All look)*

DUDE 3 *(Looks at them)*

No. (They relax. Dude 3 moves aside and takes a drag. Quietly . . .) Yes.

LEADER *(Picks up "Don't Tell Mom!" mag. Passes it to Dude 1) No.*

DUDE 1 *No (Passes to Girl)*

GIRL *(Offended) No!*

(Swiftly passes it to Tough-nut who takes a glance then shows it to Fashion girl who stands up and moves away, disgusted. Tough-nut then passes it to Pressure. Pressure opens it and reads . . . his eyes are popping out and he stands up. Girl stands up next to him to warn him. He looks at her then moves away, still reading the Mag)

PRESSURE **YES!**

(Fashion girl pushes him into the path of Girlfriend who snatches the Mag from him, belts him with it then pulls him by the ear back to his spot in front of Tough-nut. He is near to tears. Everyone makes disgruntled and disgusted sounds at him. Tough-nut slowly places his hands on Pressure. Silence from everyone. Tough-nut slowly pushes Pressure onto the floor again. Pressure buries his face in his arms.)

DUDE 3 *(Produces a suspicious pill - drugs and passes it down the line. This is a real killer. Everyone is truly horrified at the yes this time. It must be a serious point in the sketch.)*

DUDE 3 *(Passes it to Dude 1)*

DUDE 1 *No (Passes to girl)*

GIRL *No (Passes to Tough-nut)*

TOUGHNUT *No*

(Passes it to Pressure who doesn't even look. He is practically in tears from the bullying. He momentarily raises his head)

PRESSURE *No (Drops head)*

(Tough-nut passes it to Fashion-girl)

FASHION *(Gets up and moves away. Puts the pill towards her mouth)*

Yes!

*(All go into a position of shock. Consider heights and direction.
Dude 3 comes forward and slowly sinks to the floor, horrified. Hold the silence for a while.)*

LEADER *(Shows a poster of the ride of terror – INTO THE ABYSS)*

Yes.

DUDES *(Thrilled) YES!*

GIRL & TOUGH YES!

(Girl passes it to Pressure. He holds the paper and begins to shake with worry. The sound of vibrating paper shows his fear.)

PRESSURE No.

(Tough-nut lifts him by the collar. All lean towards him)

PRESSURE Yes

(All relax. Tough-nut lets go. Pressure struggles with his will)

NO!

(All stand and threaten him)

ALL YES!

(They sit, disgruntled with him again. He slowly sinks to the ground)

(We now have a battle for leadership)

LEADER *(Stands defiant)* NO!

TOUGHNUT *(Moves to the other side and coolly, quietly vies for his own gang)*

TOUGHNUT No.

(Leader stares at him. Tough-nut takes a step towards Pressure. Pressure looks up in fear.)

PRESSURE NO! *(He scuttles to the shadow of the leader for safety)*

DUDE *(Move to the leader's side. Stamp and point)* YES.

FASHION *(Looks at the leader)*

No. *(Moves to Tough-nut)*

DUDE 1 *(Raps his way forward. Stops. Turns head to Leader, to Tough-nut, to Leader, then points to Tough-nut)*

Yes.

(Slaps palms and boogies to a new seat near Tough-nut)

GIRL

(Comes forward and simply looks to the leader, who turns aside. Silence!)

(They now create a freeze of positions with their chosen props. Remember to think of height and directions. Leader sulks and stares at Tough-nut. Tough-nut stares at Leader. Fashion-girl is about to take the drug. Pressure is on the floor reading DON'T TELL MOM mag, Dude 2 is leaning on the wall reading the GORE dvd. Girl is standing on a chair admiring the X BRAND jeans. Dude 3 sits on a chair and lights up his cigarette. He sighs then freezes. Girl begins to model the jeans again. Fashion-girl is so annoyed she comes over, pulls the jeans away and forcibly throws them down, glares at girl then moves back to her place. Girl watches her go, hurt. She begins to slowly survey the scene.)

GIRL

(After looking around she looks back at the smoker)

No

(She steps down and looks at the Magazine. Offended)

No!

(She looks to her leader. Pleads)

No. *(He turns away)*

(She turns to Tough-nut, even more desperate)

No! *(He turns away)*

(She is hurt and dismayed. She sinks to her knees and raises her arms to heaven. Life shouldn't be like this!)

No.