

THE GOON SHOW:
THE GREAT STRING ROBBERIES

First broadcast on January 13, 1958. Script by Spike Milligan. Produced by Tom Ronald. Announced by Wallace Greenslade. Orchestra conducted by Wally Stott. Transcribed by Debby Stark and Kurt Adkins, corrections by Peter Olausson.

Greenslade:

This is the BBC Light Programme. By the power of electricity and microphone placed in the proximity of the protagonists, we present an all-wireless show with a brandy base.

FX:

[Dated music]

Secombe:

That music should give you a clue to the financial position of the BBC's music department.

Australian:

One moment, Mr. Secombe, you can't attack the Corporation from the back!

Secombe:

Can't I? Bend down!

FX:

[Slap]

Australian:

[Screams]

Secombe:

Now, read the name of the play.

Greenslade:

We present... The Great String Robberies.

FX:

[Dramatic music link]

Sellers:

The String Robbery started very simply with a man saying...

Eccles (Moriarty?):

My socks keep coming down.

Grytpype:

We must try and obtain a certain amount of cheap string.

Moriarty:

What, what'll I do till then?

Grytpype:

For the time being, keep your socks up with the famous Eccles method.

Moriarty:

Ah, what's that?

Grytpype:

Stand on your head.

Moriarty:

Hup!

FX:

[Music]

Seagoon:

Hello, folks! Hallo, folks! Through the power of megaphone, folks, three days later *[laughs]* three days later, I was called from Scotland Yard to Scotland. At Edinborough Station - than-cue, than-cue - at Edinborough Station I was met by a platform.

FX:

[Train arriving]

Flowerdew:

[Screams] There should be a law against trains letting off steam when people are wearing kilts..!

Seagoon:

Excuse me, porter, I'm a stranger here, could you tell me the way to walk?

Scots Porter:

Aye, yu'see yon ticket barrier? Well, head over there for that.

Seagoon:

Thank you.

Navy Red Kilt:

Hey, Inspector Seagoon?

Seagoon:

The voice came from underneath the navy red kilt.

Navy Red Kilt:

Aye, you see, I m a ventriloquist! I threw my voice. Sometimes from my knee, sometimes from my shin and sometimes from my nose, bing!

Seagoon:

Oh, jolly good, jolly good, ha-ha! *[Nose throw sound]* Now, where's the scene of the crime?

Navy Red Kilt:

This is the hoose.

Scot No.1:

Aye, welcome to the scene of the crime.

Seagoon:

Ah, wheres the front door?

Scot No.1:

It's in this brown paper parcel. *[Opens it]* We only use it for going in and out. Agh, there.

FX:

[Door opens]

Scot No.1:

The black-bearded criminal must have got in through the door or the windows. Everything else was locked.

Seagoon:

I see. Right. Now, who was killed?

Scot No.1:

No one's been killed.

Seagoon:

Then this is a job for the police.

Scot No.1:

You are a policeman.

Seagoon:

Oh, yes, yes, I wasted no time getting here, did I, eh? - Hands up! You're all under arrest!

FX:

[Door through which they enter]

Greenslade:

The String Robberies, Part Two.

Seagoon:

Part Two? That's us!

Scot No.1:

You see that piece of string on the table?

Seagoon:

Yes. What's that space in the middle?

Scot No.1:

That's the piece that's missing.

Seagoon:

So! So that's what a piece of missing string looks like, eh? Where's it gone? Ah! *[laughs]* But wait... can't you see, you, you poor Scottish fool!

Scot No.1:

[Gnashing teeth sounds]

Seagoon:

It's all, it's all a practical joke!

Scot No.1:

[Gnashing teeth sounds]

Seagoon:

Someone's cut that string in the center, pulled the two pieces in opposite directions, giving the impression that a piece had been removed from the middle.

Scot No.1:

Hairy gringlers, he's right! Och, it's true! If you put these two pieces together, the gap disappears!

Scot No.2:

Aye, but did you notice when you did that, the two outside ends got shorter?

Seagoon:

Gad... Gad, Chisolm's right! Now I see what happened. What cunning! *[laughs]* The criminal's cut a piece off each end, then cut across the middle pulled them apart, making the string look the original length.

Scot No.1:

Oh dear, this makes it a baffling case.

Scot No.2:

Aye.

Seagoon:

Ah yes. Instead of one piece we're looking for two separate ends... It's a good job I can count! *[laughs]* We must start investigations at once!

FX:

[Link music]

Greenslade:

[As radio announcer] ...Finally, here is a police message: Will all people in possession of two pieces of string please report to their local police station. Now, sport: The boxing match between the Irish and Italian football teams has been canceled...

Henry Crun:

Oh, dear, dear. Oh, dear, dear, dear, dear, oh, dear. Min, Min! Oh-ow-ee. Miiiii! Min! Min!

Minnie Bannister:

Are you calling me, Henry?

Henry Crun:

Yes! Hurry up, I'm next! Oh, you sinful woman, you... Always at the cigarette rolling machine you.

Minnie Bannister:

Oh, you gotta, gotta match, Henry?

Henry Crun:

Oh, hey, you vixen, not satisfied with making your own fags, now you want to smoke 'em!

Henry Crun & Minnie Bannister:

[Make nervous sounds]

Minnie Bannister:

There's nothing to worry about, Henry, this is herbal tobacco.

Henry Crun:

Herbal?

Minnie Bannister:

Yes. Crazy herbal tobacco, made from dandelions.

Henry Crun:

Well, don't leave any in my bedroom, our water rates are high enough as it is.

Minnie Bannister:

[Inhales, exhales] Ah! *[Inhales, exhales]* Oh! These cigarettes are strong, Henry.

Henry Crun:

Oh...

Minnie Bannister:

Better not light them.

Henry Crun:

No.

Minnie Bannister:

Henry?

Henry Crun:

What?

Minnie Bannister:

You naughty, naughty man.

Henry Crun:

What, what?

Minnie Bannister:

How do you like my new frock?

Henry Crun:

Min!

Minnie Bannister:

Oh!

Henry Crun:

Where did you get that modern sack dress!

Minnie Bannister:

I got it off the coalman.

Henry Crun:

I'll talk to you later about this, Min Bannister.

Minnie Bannister:

[Inaudible]

Henry Crun:

Oh I will.

Minnie Bannister:

You, you devil, you! *[Inaudible]*

Henry Crun:

You...

Minnie Bannister:

Your conk, Henry!

Henry Crun:

You cow[?], you, all of you! Let's get down to the fire station *[corrects himself]* To the police station!

Minnie Bannister:

It's, it's makes the same, Henry, because the police station's on fire I heard...

Henry Crun:

Oh, good, good, good...

Minnie Bannister:

Now, Henry, now, you're not allowed out, Henry, so you sit by the fire, and I'll drive the house round to the...

Henry Crun:

All right, all right...

FX:

[Driving sounds. Minnie saying "Oh!"]

Greenslade:

As the house drives away, we arrive at the String Robberies, Part Three.

Seagoon:

Hello, folks! Calling all folks! Three weeks, folks, and still no fear of solving the crime. I think I'll have a bath.

FX:

[Bathing sounds]

Seagoon:

Ah! There's nothing like a bit of sand paper for bringing up the old knees' white! *[laughs]*

Constable Willium:

Eh, pardon me, Inspector?

Seagoon:

Constable Vritt! How dare you creep in here when my shins are exposed?

Constable Willium:

Oh, sorry, I, I won't, I won't look, Inspector. In any case, I'm a married man with shins of me own, you know.

Seagoon:

Constable, state your business!

Constable Willium:

I'm a policeman.

Seagoon:

I know you're a policeman, but what do you want?

Constable Willium:

Well, there's an 'ouse outside waiting to see you.

Seagoon:

House? I must go and inspect it. Meanwhile Max Geldray will show what fun can be had -- Brandy!?

FX:

[Runs out]

Max Geldray and Orchestra:

[Musical Interlude: "Don't Worry About Me"]

FX:

[Music. Knock on door.]

Henry Crun & Minnie Bannister:

Coming, coming, oh...

Seagoon:

Good morning.

Henry Crun & Minnie Bannister:

Good morning, good morning *[etc.]*

Seagoon:

It's late afternoon already. Good morning. I was told that this house wanted to see me.

Henry Crun:

Ah, sir, we have come to hand in our three pieces of string.

Minnie Bannister:

String, string!

Seagoon:

Well, there's some mistake. We only wanted people with two pieces.

Minnie Bannister:

Oh.

Henry Crun:

Oh, well, then we'll throw one piece away.

Seagoon:

Good. Now you're a suspect.

Henry Crun & Minnie Bannister:

Oh!

Minnie Bannister:

I'm innocent.

Seagoon:

Hello, folks! I wonder could this aged man be the string thief?

Henry Crun:

No, sir, no!

Minnie Bannister:

No.

Seagoon:

Not so loud, he might hear.

Minnie Bannister:

Henry?

Henry Crun:

What?

Minnie Bannister:

Put your fingers in your ears, Henry.

Henry Crun:

Oh, all right, all right... All right, sir.

Seagoon:

...Robbery's been done... Ever will be so...

Minnie Bannister:

Ba... Mucka ba... A comes... Come rory aba...

Seagoon:

...What do I... *[etc.]*

Greenslade:

Dear listeners: This disjointed conversation is being caused by Mr. Crun moving his fingers in out of his ears, thereby causing an intermittent break-in sound.

Henry Crun & Minnie Bannister:

[Sing] [inaudible]

Seagoon:

Constable! Follow that house!

FX:

[Running]

Constable Willium:

Come back! Naughty house. come back! I arrest you in the name of the law...

Seagoon:

Throw a cordon around England! No one must leave the island!

Throat:

Right.

FX:

[Music]

Greenslade:

The String Robberies, Part Thrun. The scene: The Cliffs of Dover.

FX:

[Sea-side sounds]

Moriarty:

It says in the paper on page ten here... There is a nationwide search or people with two pieces of string!

Grytpype:

What? We must leave England! Brlng the brown paper pudding and follow ne!

FX:

[Moriarty lifts; splashes of water]

Moriarty:

Ohhhh!

Greenslade:

Meantime, a hundred miles away, Seagoon springs from a foreign bed.

Seagoon:

Hup!

FX:

[Spring] Ahh!

Seagoon:

As I jumped out of bed I, I thought I heard two splashes.

Jim Spriggs:

Two splashes, Jee-em! Oh, Jeem, are your feet wet, Jeem? Are your feet wet, Jeee-m?

Seagoon:

Yes, I've been sitting with damp socks on.

Jim Spriggs:

Oh, Jeem, can't you afford a clothesline, Jeem?

Seagoon:

Yes, but I found a bed more comfortable.

Jim Spriggs:

Oh, oh, Jeem, oh, Jeem, oh, Jeem! We must take action, Jeem - we must take action, Jee-em!

Seagoon:

Right, Jee-em!

Jim Spriggs:

You taking the...

Seagoon:

Send a signal...

FX:

[Code]

Seagoon:

Send a signal to all coast guards!

Jim Spriggs:

All right!

Seagoon:

Especially those on the coast. Arrest the owners of those splashes!

FX:

[Major Bloodnok theme. Rain, gales, splashing music.]

Bloodnok:

Oh, oh, oh I've never had it as bad as this before! Oh, dear, oh, oh, the wind must be 40 knots at least! Well, I hope we don't have to launch the lifeboat tonight. Just in case they ask me, I'll put one arm in a sling and lie down in a mock faint.

FX:

[Knock on door]

Bloodnok:

Who is that there, who is it? Who is, who is out of there? Only a lunatic would be out on such a storm!

FX:

[Door opens]

Bloodnok:

Yes?

Eccles Choir:

[With multiple overdubs: "Good King Wenceslas"]

Bloodnok:

Thank you.

FX:

[Slams door. Knock. Opens.]

Bloodnok:

Yes?

Eccles:

Merry Christmas?

Bloodnok:

You crazy, mixed-up Eccleses, you. Christmas is gone!

Eccles:

Oh, which way'd it go?

Bloodnok:

It's finished!

Eccles:

Finished? Oh, I better talk with my friends here. *[Mumbles]* Penny for the guy?

Bloodnok:

That's not til next November!

Eccles:

Can we come in and wait then?

FX:

[Major beats them off]

Bloodnok:

Well, that's got rid of those idiots.

FX:

[Knock on door]

Bloodnok:

Where's me club? Take that, you...

FX:

[Beating sounds]

Jim Spriggs:

I don't like clubbing, Jeem, I never liked clubbing. I have a message for you, Jeem.

Bloodnok:

Well, play it on the gramophone.

Jim Spriggs:

All right, Jeem.

FX:

[Typewriter sounds]

Bloodnok:

Curse, it's written in typewriter, and I can't speak a word of it. What's on the other side?

Constable Willium:

Turn it over.

Eccles Choir:

[With multiple overdubs: "Good King Wenceslas"]

Bloodnok:

Oh, this is too much! Ellington, attack the hit parade with a melody, poo-wee-hoy! A brandy, oh, oh, a brandy

Ray Ellington Quartet:

[Musical interlude: "Living Doll"]

Greenslade:

Ah, that was Ray Ellington. We all wish him a speedy recovery. Now, by, ah, clenching my fists, gritting my teeth, and contracting my abdomen, I find myself in an ideal position to hear Part Three of The String Robberies.

FX:

[Music; sea storm sounds]

Milligan:

[Distant, unintelligible sailor-type shouting of commands]

Seagoon:

It was very brave of you to put the lifeboat out in the storm.

Bloodnok:

Yes. It's amazing what a man'll do at pistol point, isn't it?

Seagoon:

What's our position?

Bloodnok:

I don't know, I'm a stranger around here.

Seagoon:

What does the label on this wave say? "Made in Birmingham for the English Channel"? Hmmmm.

Moriarty:

HEEEELLLLLPPPPP!!!

Seagoon:

Look! I can see the word "Help" coming out of that big striped bubble.

Bloodnok:

It must be a drowning cartoonist. Here! Catch this pencil paper!

Moriarty:

Thank you! I'll draw the life boat! There! Saved! Now I'll draw myself on board! Touché! On board.

Seagoon:

First, I must ask you to empty your pockets.

Moriarty:

Alright.

FX:

[Many items land on floor]

Seagoon:

Quit stalling. Empty your pockets!

Grytpype:

Sir, that is our entire worldly wealth.

Seagoon:

What's the ominous bulge in the seat of your trowsers?

Moriarty:

Ah! Nothing, I tell! Just some old clothes!

Seagoon:

This we'll see, Blocknok, hand me that stick there.

FX:

[Slap]

Bluebottle:

Oh! My lugoles! Thank you, friends of mine.

Seagoon:

Gad, a stowaway! Come on out!

Bluebottle:

All right, I'll come out. Lowers flap of Moriarity's trowsers. Steps out, waits for audience applause.... Not enough, I say! Puts on record of own clapping.

FX:

[Wild applause]

Seagoon:

Stop! Who are you?

Bluebottle:

I'm young Timmy Bluebottle, Ace Private Detective! Own catapult, own scooter, own legs. Will go anywhere... In Finchley.

Seagoon:

Lad, lad, little looney lad, who are you trailing?

Bluebottle:

I'm after the string criminals. I suspect the Moranarty man.

Moriarty:

Arrgghhh...

Bluebottle:

Points finger at him, point, point, pointy pointy point.

Moriarty:

That's [*grumbles*] quiet! The child is lieing!

Bluebottle:

Keep him away from me!

Moriarty:

The child is lieing!

Bluebottle:

Lets fly with catapult: Bing!

FX:

[*Breaking glass*]

Moriarty:

Ah! My spectacles!

Seagoon:

All right, gentlemen, a final question: Are you the owner of these splashes?

FX:

[*Two splashes*]

Grytpype:

No, I've never seen those splashes in my life before.

Seagoon:

Would you care to try them on?

Moriarty:

If you wish.

FX:

[*Two splashes being tried on*]

Bluebottle:

There! They fit them perfectly! Arrest them in the name of the lee!

Moriarty:

Run for it, Grytpype! Run for it!

FX:

[Running, two splashes]

Seagoon:

After them!

FX:

[Two splashes]

Little Jim:

They've fallen in the water

FX:

[Music]

Seagoon:

Hello, folks! I've lost my megaphone - Hello, folks! It's coming to you via cupped hand. Folks! This is the position of it. Moriarity and Grytpype have landed at Dover disguised as splashes and are making inland. They've thumbed a lift from a passing house.

FX:

[Broken car/house sounds, Minnie and Henry "Oh!"ing. Crowd sounds.]

Seagoon:

Ah! Breathless, breathless, breathless. Curse! They drove away in that house!

Bluebottle:

Don't worry, Captain, I took a photograph of the number.

Seagoon:

Good lad!

Seagoon:

And what luck. Here comes a Hindu photographers darkroom.

FX:

[Loud knocking on door]

Lalkaka:

Abrada. You are knocking on the door? Is that correct sir?

Seagoon:

We want this camera developed.

Lalkaka:

...Ready in a few moments. If you'll accomodate yourself in the European-type chair over there.

FX:

[Door slams]

Lalkaka:

Mr Bannerjee?

Bannerjee:

What are you calling my name for, Mr Lalkaka?

Lalkaka:

I thought it might be attached to you man.

Bannerjee:

Oh oh butut.

Lalkaka:

Listen, we have had sudden employment in the nature of developing a European-typa film.

Bannerjee:

Oh, this has come at a most update sense moment. I was in the entrepid process of wrapping up the curry powder you understand.

Lalkaka:

You will have to postpone the making of the curry for the temporary type moment.

Bannerjee:

It will be difficult, but I, but I am understanding the necessary of gainful employment. There I am willing to concur you understand.

Lalkaka:

Alright, alright man.

Bannerjee:

Digeye digeye.

Lalkaka:

Orchabas.

Bannerjee:

Digeye.

Lalkaka:

Ahkabastan, now listen. Will you please...

Bannerjee:

I'm waiting, I'm waiting. What are you, what are going to say to me?

Lalkaka:

Letting me explain then.

Bannerjee:

Alright then.

Lalkaka:

Place the european-typa film in the Hindu-type developer tray for preparation.

Bannerjee:

Alright. Digeye digeye, wadda we do now? We are waiting for the London european-type developer to work on the type of film.

Lalkaka:

I tell you what I got, I got a revolutionary-type darkroom

Bannerjee:

What have you got?

Lalkaka:

No light in it.

Bannerjee:

Ohhh.

Lalkaka:

I meant to say it's got a light in it, but I killed the joke by saying "no light in it", but we mysterious orientals...

FX:

[Knock knock on door]

Bannerjee:

What is that what is that?

Seagoon:

Hurry up in there you sabus?

Bannerjee:

What are you calling us man?

Lalkaka:

What is, what is... Here is your developed-type film.

Seagoon:

Let's see.

Lalkaka:

That's 14 rupees.

Seagoon:

Look! The number of the house is 66 Fairy Cake Lane.

Sellers:

That's been changed!

Seagoon:

[Laughs] Arrest all houses with that address!

Bloodnok:

Wait! 66 Fairy Cake Lane? That's where Henry Crun lives!

Seagoon:

Men, this is the plan: We go to the empty space on the street where Crun's house lives, we go down in the cellar and wait for Crun's house to arrive.

Bloodnok:

We must hurry, the audience is leaving!

FX:

[Running, fades. Phone rings. Running, returns. Picks up.]

Seagoon:

[Out of breath] Hello, yes? Major Bloodnok? Hold on, I'll.. get him.

FX:

[Running, fades. Pause. Running, returns.]

Bloodnok:

Oh, oh. *[Out of breath]* Yes? Hello? Bloodnok here.

Seagoon:

[On phone] Hurry up, Major, we're all waiting up the street for you!

Bloodnok:

Cor blimey, I...

FX:

[Rings off, runs away]

Greenslade:

Those running boots are a repeat of the running boots you heard in "Those Were The Days" on the night program of March the 2nd and was taken from the BBC great sound library of 9,000 scratchy records. I should, at this juncture, like to thank the Wallace Greenslade Fan Club whose, um, 39,000 members clubbed together and sent me a copy of last year's birthday honors. How nice to have such nice, sweet friends.

Grytpype:

He's a bit of a crawler, Moriarity.

Moriarty:

Ah, *[inaudible]*

Henry Crun:

Well, this is as far as my house goes, gentlemen.

Moriarty:

Ah, no, listen, Mr. Crunge. Can we stay here until it gets dark?

Henry Crun:

Well, if you shut your eyes it'll get dark right away.

Moriarty:

Oh? I'll try that... He's right, Grytpype!

Seagoon:

Hands up, you two men in the dark there!

Moriarty:

Oh!

Grytpype:

Where are you?

Seagoon:

Under the floorboards in the cellar. Don't move or I'll fire!

Bluebottle:

Captain! From where I'm lying, I can see up Moriarty's trowsers! E-he!

Moriarty:

What do you want?

Seagoon:

Hand down the two pieces of string tied around your socks!

Grytpype:

Dear listeners, as there is no audible sound for a piece of string, we substitute this:

FX:

[Strange sounds/voices]

Seagoon:

Moriarity? You're under arrest! Mr. Crun, how do we get up out of this cellar?

Henry Crun:

There's no cellar in this house.

Seagoon:

No cellar? Then... Where are we?

Henry Crun:

You're all in your mind *[laughs]*

Seagoon:

Help! Help! Hold up this script! Get us out! Help!

Orchestra:

[End theme]

Greenslade:

That was the Goon Show, a BBC recorded program featuring Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe, and Spike Milligan, and George Chisholm, with the Ray Ellington Quartet, Max Geldray, and the orchestra conducted by Wally Stott. Script by Spike Milligan. Announcer Wallace Greenslade. The program produced by Tom Ronald.

Orchestra:

['Crazy Rhythm' outro]