

S8 E16 - The Great String Robberies

Transcribed by Debby Stark and Kurt Adkins, Peter Olausson. Final corrections by Helen.

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.

GRAMS:

DATED MUSIC

SECOMBE:

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

AUSTRALIAN:

[SELLERS]

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

SECOMBE:

Can't I? Bend down!

FX:

SLAP

AUSTRALIAN:

Oh! Australian oh!

SECOMBE:

Now, read the name of the play.

GREENSLADE:

We present... The Great String Robberies.

ORCHESTRA:

DRAMATIC MUSIC LINK

SELLERS:

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

ECCLES:

My socks keep coming down.

GRYTPYPE:

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

MORIARTY:

But 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:

KNOCK ON HEAD

ORCHESTRA:

CHANGE OF SCENE 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 Edinburgh Station... Thankyew, thankyew. At Edinburgh Station I was met by a platform.

FX:

STEAM 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:

[SELLERS]

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

SEAGOON:

Thank you.

NAVY RED KILT:

[CHISHOLM]

Hey, Inspector Seagoon?

SEAGOON:

The voice came from underneath a 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... (NASALLY) from my nose, bing!

SEAGOON:

(NASALLY) Oh, jolly good, jolly good, ha-ha! (NOSE THROW SOUND) (NORMAL) Now, where's the scene of the crime?

NAVY RED KILT:

This is the hoose.

SCOT NO.1:

[SELLERS]

Aye, welcome to the scene of the crime.

SEAGOON:

Er... 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.

FX:

Door closes

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 centre, 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 cut a piece off each end, then cut across the middle and 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!

ORCHESTRA:

LINK MUSIC

GREENSLADE:

(ON RADIO 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 cancelled...

HENRY CRUN:

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

MINNIE:

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:

Ohhhhh. You got a... got a match, Henry?

HENRY CRUN:

Oh, oiiiiii.... You vixen! Not satisfied with making your own fags, now you want to smoke 'em!

HENRY CRUN & MINNIE:

(MAKE NERVOUS SOUNDS)

MINNIE:

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

HENRY CRUN:

Herbal?

MINNIE:

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:

(INHALES, EXHALES) Ah! (INHALES, EXHALES) Oh! These cigarettes are strong, Henry.

HENRY CRUN:

Oh.

MINNIE:

Better not light them.

HENRY CRUN:

No.

MINNIE:

Henry?

HENRY CRUN:

What?

MINNIE:

Henry, ohhhh.

HENRY CRUN:

Ohhhh.

MINNIE:

Heavens, you noticed, you naughty, naughty man.

HENRY CRUN:

What, what?

MINNIE:

How do you like my new frock?

HENRY CRUN:

Min!

MINNIE:

Oh!

HENRY CRUN:

Where did you get that modern sack dress!

MINNIE:

I got it off the coalman.

HENRY CRUN:

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

MINNIE:

But I didn't, Crun. [UNCLEAR], I tell you.

HENRY CRUN:

Oh, I will.

MINNIE:

You, you devil, you!

HENRY CRUN:

You...

MINNIE:

[UNCLEAR] clout you right on your conk, Henry!

HENRY CRUN:

You old cow, you, I'll have you! Now, not - let's get down to the fire station. (CORRECTS HIMSELF) To the police station!

MINNIE:

It... it... makes the same, Henry, because...

HENRY CRUN:

Yes.

MINNIE:

...the police station's on fire, I heard.

HENRY CRUN:

Ohhhh! Good. Good, good.

MINNIE:

Now... now, Henry, no, 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 sandpaper for bringing up the old knees' white! (LAUGHS)

CONSTABLE WILLIUM:

Er, pardon me, Inspector.

SEAGOON:

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

CONSTABLE WILLIUM:

I'm sorry, I... I won't... I won't look, Inspector. In any case, I'm a married man with shins o' 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. Meantime, Max Geldray will show what fun can be had. Brandy!!

FX:

RUNS OUT

MAX GELDRAY:

"DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME"

ORCHESTRA:

DRAMATIC LINK MUSIC

FX:

KNOCK ON DOOR

HENRY CRUN:

Coming, coming.

MINNIE:

Coming, coming , coming, oh...

HENRY CRUN:

Coming.

SEAGOON:

Good morning.

HENRY CRUN & MINNIE:

Good morning, good morning (ETC)...

SEAGOON:

I was told this...

ALL:

Good morning, good morning, 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:

String!

HENRY CRUN:

String!

SEAGOON:

There's some mistake. We only wanted people with *two* pieces.

MINNIE:

Oh.

HENRY CRUN:

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

MINNIE:

Yes.

SEAGOON:

Good! Now you're a suspect.

HENRY CRUN & MINNIE:

Oh!

MINNIE:

We're innocent.

SEAGOON:

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

HENRY CRUN:

No, sir, no!

MINNIE:

No.

SEAGOON:

Not so loud, he might hear.

MINNIE:

Henry?

HENRY CRUN:

What?

MINNIE:

Put your fingers in your ears, Henry.

HENRY CRUN:

Oh, all right, all right. Don't want the... Alright, sir.

SEAGOON:

The robbery's been done... ever will be so...

MINNIE:

The... much of a... and comes... I'm running... at the...

SEAGOON:

What I... can't get my... but I think...

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:

(SINGS)

SEAGOON:

Constable! Follow that house!

FX:

RUNNING

CONSTABLE WILLIUM:

Come back! Naughty house, come back! I arrest you in the name of the law... (FADE)

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 for people with two pieces of string!

GRYTPYPE:

What? We must leave England! Brng 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

SEAGOON:

Ahh! As I jumped out of bed I... I thought I heard two splashes.

SPRIGGS:

Two splashes, Jii-im! Oh, Jiim, are your feet wet, Jim? Are your feet wet, Jiii-iiiiim?

SEAGOON:

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

SPRIGGS:

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

SEAGOON:

Yes, but I found a bed more comfortable.

SPRIGGS:

Oh... oh, Jim, oh, Jim, oh, Jim! We must take action, Jim. We must take action, Ji-iiiiim!

SEAGOON:

Right, Ji-iiiiim!

SPRIGGS:

Are you taking the...

SEAGOON:

Send a signal...

FX:

MORSE CODE

SEAGOON:

Send a signal to all coast guards!

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". SURPRISINGLY GOOD, THE AUDIENCE APPLAUDES.

BLOODNOK:

Thank you.

FX:

SLAMS DOOR. KNOCK. OPENS

BLOODNOK:

Yes?

ECCLES:

Merry Christmas?

FX:

COIN BOX RATTLES

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?

FX:

COIN BOX RATTLES

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

SPRIGGS:

I don't like clubbing, Jim. I never like clubbing. I have a message for you, Jiim.

BLOODNOK:

Well, play it on the gramophone.

SPRIGGS:

All right, Jim.

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?

SPRIGGS:

I'll 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...

RAY ELLINGTON QUARTET:

"LIVING DOLL"

GREENSLADE:

Er, 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.

SECOMBE:

(OFF) Good old Wal, there.

ORCHESTRA:

DRAMATIC LINK MUSIC

GRAMS:

MUSIC; SEA STORM SOUNDS

OMNES:

DISTANT, UNINTELLIGIBLE SAILOR-TYPE SHOUTING OF COMMANDS

SEAGOON:

It was very brave of you to put the lifeboat out in this 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 round 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 belt! 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 trousers?

MORIARTY:

Nothing, I tell you! Just some old clothes!

SEAGOON:

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

FX:

SLAP

BLUEBOTTLE:

Oh! My lug 'ole! Thank you, friends of mine.

SEAGOON:

Gad, a stowaway! Come on out!

BLUEBOTTLE:

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

GRAMS:

WILD APPLAUSE

SEAGOON:

Stop! (GRAMS STOPS) 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:

(GRUMBLES) Quiet! It's all lies, the child is lying!

BLUEBOTTLE:

Keep him away from me!

MORIARTY:

The child is lying!

BLUEBOTTLE:

Lets fly with catapult: Bing!

FX:

BREAKING GLASS

MORIARTY:

Oh! 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, Gryptype! Run for it!

FX:

RUNNING, TWO SPLASHES

SEAGOON:

Escaped with the two splashes. After them!

FX:

TWO SPLASHES

LITTLE JIM:

They've fallen in the wa-tah.

ORCHESTRA:

LINK MUSIC

SEAGOON:

Hello, folks! I've lost my megaphone - Hello, folks! This is coming to you via cupped hand. Folks! This is the position to date. Moriarity and Gryptype have landed at Dover disguised as splashes and are making inland. They thumb 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! And what luck. Here comes a Hindu photographer's darkroom.

FX:

ENGINE, CAR SCREECHING TO HALT. LOUD KNOCKING ON DOOR

LALKAKA:

Abrada. You are knocking on that door, is that correct, sir?

SEAGOON:

We want this camera developed.

LALKAKA:

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

FX:

DOOR SLAMS

LALKAKA:

Mr Banerjee?

BANERJEE:

What are you calling my name for, Mr Lalkaka?

LALKAKA:

I thought it might be attached to you, man.

BANERJEE:

What? What?

LALKAKA:

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

BANERJEE:

Oh! This has come at a most tense 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.

BANERJEE:

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.

BANERJEE:

Digeeye digeye.

LALKAKA:

Orchabas.

BANERJEE:

Digeeye.

LALKAKA:

Ahkabastan. Now then, listen. Will you please...

BANERJEE:

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

LALKAKA:

Letting me explain, then.

BANERJEE:

Alright, then.

LALKAKA:

I will place the european-type-a film in the, er, in the Hindu-type developer tray for preparation.

BANERJEE:

Alright. Digeeye digeye. What do you do now?

LALKAKA:

I get it straight, now.

BANERJEE:

We are waiting for the London European Hendon developer...

LALKAKA:

Oh, dear.

BANERJEE:

...to work... work on this type of film.

LALKAKA:

I... but I tell you what I've got, I've got... I've got a revolutionary-type darkroom

BANERJEE:

What have you got?

LALKAKA:

No light in it.

BANERJEE:

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 then, we mysterious orientals...

FX:

KNOCK KNOCK ON DOOR

BANERJEE:

What... what is that?

SEAGOON:

Hurry up in there, you baboons.

BANERJEE:

What... I... what is that?

LALKAKA:

Coming, sir.

BANERJEE:

What are you calling us, man?

LALKAKA:

What are you...? How dare you.

BANERJEE:

I am not...

LALKAKA:

Here is your developed-type film, sir.

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:

MASS RUNNING AWAY, FADES. PHONE RINGS. SINGLE STEPS RUNNING BACK. PICKS UP

SEAGOON:

(OUT OF BREATH) Hello, yes? Major Bloodnok? Hold on, I'll... 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 Light Programme on 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, he's on his way.

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.

GRYTPYPE:

Yes.

MORIARTY:

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 trousers! 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:

GRAMS:

STRANGE SOUNDS/VOICES

SEAGOON:

Moriarty? 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 on this script! Help! Get us out! Help! Heeeeelp! 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