

S6 E05 - The Case of the Missing CD Plates

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Final corrections by Helen.

GREENSLADE:

This is the BBC Home Service and automatic steam laundry. A combination which is working out very nicely, thank you!

SECOMBE:

Enough of the ol' chat there, Greenslade. Back to your mangle and get John Snagge's shirt re-soled. Hahaha! And in the meantime...

SELLERS:

Yes, dear people, in the meantime we present the extraordinary talking-type wireless Goon Show!

FX:

PHONOGRAPH SOUNDING DANCE HALL-TYPE MUSIC

SECOMBE:

So much for the mysterious horn-equipped, hand-operated phonograph. And now, Greenslade, stop scraping that heavily soiled sheet and read the inscription thereon.

GREENSLADE:

Very good, sir. We present Baroness Orkesy's masterpiece, Baron Orkesy. Or "A Strange Case of Diplomatic Immunity", in which a strange case of diplomatic immunity is recounted. Chapter One, a Strange Diplomatic Case of Immunity. Or A Diplomatic Case of Strange Immunity. Or through hook, line and blizzard with Ava Gardner.

SECOMBE:

Chapter Two!

OMNES:

Hooray!

SEAGOON:

Chapter Three. Me. (BLOWS RASPBERRY) One morning in the year needle-nardle-noo I had decided to spend a holiday abroad. How I love Rome with all her fountains! Ah, Rome! There's no place like Rome! Hah-ha! (CLEARS THROAT SELF CONSCIOUSLY). So I thought as I sat eating a small string pie in Trafalgar Square. I spent the next hour pleasantly washing my overcoat in the fountain.

BLOODNOK:

(SINGS) The man from Laramie... He had an elbow on each arm... and one upon his shoulder...
(SPEAKS) I say. You with the zinc cardigan, are you English?

SEAGOON:

Only by descent.

BLOODNOK:

By descent?

SEAGOON:

I came down by parachute!

BLOODNOK:

Then you ought to be ashamed of yourself, here in the most...

SEAGOON:

I don't wish to know that sir!

BLOODNOK:

In the most beautiful fountain in Trafalgar Square you have the audacity - and the audacity - to wash an overcoat, thus fouling the water. You might have waited until I'd finished my bath!

SEAGOON:

To tell you the truth, sir, I thought you were a statue.

BLOODNOK:

I have enough decency, sir, not to move when I'm naked.

SEAGOON:

Haven't you got a bath where you're staying?

BLOODNOK:

Of course I have!

SEAGOON:

Where are you staying?

BLOODNOK:

Here!

SEAGOON:

What made you choose Trafalgar Square?

BLOODNOK:

Do you like pigeon pie?

SEAGOON:

Disgusted by his old-world courtesy, I strapped on my nickel-plated bagpipes and strode into Regent Street. A dreadful mistake!

FX:

SOUND OF MACHINERY

SEAGOON:

I had hardly lowered myself off the payment, when...

SELLERS:

Look out!

SEAGOON:

(SCREAMS)

FX:

BAGPIPES SCREAM, SLOW AS THEY RUN OUT OF AIR.

GREENSLADE:

Dear Listener: The sound that you've just heard was that of a 100-ton steamroller passing slowly over Neddie Seagoon and his nickel-plated bagpipes. Of course, to record this sound the BBC naturally did not actually run over Neddie Seagoon with a steamroller. Instead, the steamroller was driven over Eccles. Thank you.

ECCLES:

Fine, Fine, Fine.

WILLIUM:

Here here here, whatsa goin' on 'ere? Here, here, here, whatsa goin' on...

SEAGOON:

Ah, constabule! I demand that you arrest the driver of that hundred-ton, anthracite-filled, reciprocating engine steamroller!

WILLIUM:

Let's hear the charge.

SEAGOON:

I'll play it for you

FX:

TRUMPET CHARGE, MASS OF RUNNING FOOTSTEPS

WILLIUM:

Thank you.

SEAGOON:

Now I want you to arrest the driver of that steamroller!

WILLIUM:

Oh, well, well, righto, where's the driver?

MORIARTY:

Sapristi nyockos! Yaka-baka-boo! Who wants to know? I am the man.

WILLIUM:

Now then, this gentleman here says that you're the driver of the steamroller, sir.

MORIARTY:

So do I.

SEAGOON:

That makes two of us. Constable, arrest the driver, I have witnesses!

MORIARTY:

Who are they?

SEAGOON:

You and me.

MORIARTY:

You can't arrest me!

SEAGOON:

And why not?

MORIARTY:

(LAUGHS)

SEAGOON:

(LAUGHS)

MORIARTY:

See that plate on the steamroller? See the letters on it? C.D.

WILLIUM:

Cor blimey!

MORIARTY:

No, Corp Diplomatie! I have diplomatic immunity!

WILLIUM:

Get me out of here, call a doctor!

MORIARTY:

Sapristi yakamacaca. Diplomatic immunity means I cannot be arrested, sued, disfranchised, blackballed, guillotined, run out, left in bulk, charged, hung, drawn or quartered, or needle-nardle-noo! You see, I happen to be the deputy vice pomfrit of the Titicacan delegation.

SEAGOON:

Then why are you driving a steamroller?

MORIARTY:

My feet hurt me.

FX:

SAD CONTEMPLATIVE MUSIC OVER...

SEAGOON:

And so, here I was, freshly run over with my bagpipes irreparably flattened and without a remedy. The weight of the steamroller has made a lasting impression on me. I was now 2 inches thick and 24 feet wide. This... this was very awkward. People kept opening and shutting me. But what I needed most... was a kind word.

ECCLES:

Hallo.

SEAGOON:

And that wasn't it! As I lay on the road, I looked down through a lidless top hat at an up-turned face.

ECCLES:

Here, sit down on the pavement and rest a while. Hey! What's that sailing out of a sixth-floor window up there? It's a piano.

SEAGOON:

A piano? (CHUCKLES) Bird-brained idiot! What would a piano be doing falling from...

FX:

SOUNDS OF A DESTROYED PIANO LANDING.

SEAGOON:

Help! I'm under the piano!

ECCLES:

Give us a tune!

SEAGOON:

I can't find my music.

ECCLES:

Okay, then, it's time for Max Geldray

MAX GELDRAI:

MUSICAL INTERLUDE - "THE LADY IS A TRAMP"

GREENSLADE:

That was Mr. Max Geldray playing a harmonica. We thought you ought to know what it was, anyhow.

ECCLES:

Fine, fine...

GREENSLADE:

And now...

ECCLES:

...fine.

GREENSLADE:

Thank you. And now, a word from Neddie Seagoon.

SEAGOON:

Help! Get this piano off me! Send for the fire brigade!

ECCLES:

Why, are you on fire?

SEAGOON:

No!

ECCLES:

Okay, we've gotta have a reason for sending for 'em. I'll start one.

GREENSLADE:

And so, while Eccles set fire to nearby Craven Hotel, the East Acton Volunteer Auxiliary Civilian Fire Force came dashing up.

FX:

SOUNDS OF HORSE DRAWN WAGON AT VARIOUS SPEEDS.

HENRY CRUN:

Come on, Min. Load the water pistols and fill that wicker basket at the fountain.

FX:

WAGON SPEEDS UP SUDDENLY

MINNIE:

Ohhh!

HENRY CRUN:

Steady, Lightning!

MINNIE:

Ohhh! Oh, dear, dear, oh. There's a naughty, naughty man bathing in the fountain!

BLOODNOK:

Madam, put away that spy glass and stop using my bath water!

SEAGOON:

Help!

HENRY CRUN:

Don't you worry young man, we shall have that heavy piano off you before you can say Jack Robinson. But don't say it for the next seven hours.

ECCLES:

Here! That big hotel over there is on fire!

FX:

FIRE CRACKLING, DISTANT SCREAMS.

HENRY CRUN:

Where? Oh, yes, yes. Minnie, make a note that that hotel over there is on fire.

MINNIE:

Okay, Fire chief Crun, buddy, yeah.

SEAGOON:

Help!

ECCLES:

Hey! Where are all the other firemen?

HENRY CRUN:

They're all at the Fire Safety Week Dinner.

ECCLES:

Where's that?

HENRY CRUN:

In that hotel over there. Now then, Min, get that leather crane into position over the piano.

MINNIE:

Okay, buddy, okay (MUMBLES AWAY)

FX:

CRANE MOVES

HENRY CRUN:

Did you sign for the crane before we left, Min? Did you sign for it?

MINNIE:

Yes, yes.

SEAGOON:

Help!

HENRY CRUN:

Good, good. Well, I'm glad you signed because we've got to have the documents to prove it, you know? You must have the documents.

MINNIE:

What? What documents, Henry?

HENRY CRUN:

For the crane, Min.

MINNIE:

Oh.

HENRY CRUN:

The documents for the crane, you must have them, you know, you...

SEAGOON:

Never mind about the blasted documents!

HENRY CRUN:

Oh, I'm sorry, you must have the documents, you must have them, you... Where... are... Where are they, Min?

MINNIE:

Where are what?

SEAGOON:

Help!

HENRY CRUN:

You must have the documents, you can't...

MINNIE:

Got the documents, have you?

HENRY CRUN:

...can't get the wood, you know.

GREENSLADE:

Meanwhile, in a teahouse in Saigon:

FX:

CABARET MUSIC WITH HIGH PITCHED ORIENTAL SONG

GREENSLADE:

We just thought you'd be interested. We return you now to our story.

MINNIE:

Oh!

HENRY CRUN:

All right, Minnie.

SEAGOON:

Help!

HENRY CRUN:

He's returned us to the story. Lower the crane.

FX:

CRANE LOWERING SOUNDS

HENRY CRUN:

All right, hook it on.

FX:

THUDS, CHAIN RATTLING

HENRY CRUN:

Take the left tension.

FX:

CRANKING NOISE

MINNIE:

Left tension, buddy.

HENRY CRUN:

Now the right tension, right...

FX:

CRANKING NOISE

MINNIE:

Right tension, Henry.

HENRY CRUN:

Attach the grappling claws...

SEAGOON:

Help!

FX:

CRANKING NOISE

HENRY CRUN:

Take up the slack. Are you ready?

MINNIE:

Yes!

FX:

FACTORY WHISTLE

HENRY CRUN:

Lunch!

FX:

HORSE DRAWN FIRE ENGINE DISAPPEARS, SPEEDING UP AS IT GOES.

SEAGOON:

I never saw them again. I finally extricated myself from under the piano. Foaming with rage at the perpetrators of this outrage, I knocked at the door of the window from which the piano had been thrown.

FX:

KNOCKING, DOOR OPENS

GRYTPYPE:

Oh, yes, we've been expecting you. Give me your hat and coat. Thank you. Now, get out.

FX:

DOOR SLAMS; FURIOUS KNOCKING; DOOR OPENS

GRYTPYPE:

Oh, yes, we've been expecting you. You left your hat and coat. Here. Now, get out!

FX:

DOOR SLAMS; FURIOUS KNOCKING; DOOR OPENS

GRYTPYPE:

I'm sorry, everyone's out.

SEAGOON:

Wait! I have a question. Are you a piano short?

GRYTPYPE:

Only one.

SEAGOON:

And... where is that?

GRYTPYPE:

I really couldn't say. I threw it out of the window one night and the next morning it was gone!

SEAGOON:

You careless, lackadaisical piano waster!

GRYTPYPE:

Needle-nardle-noo!

SEAGOON:

To name but a few!

GRYTPYPE:

Of course.

SEAGOON:

Do you realize that it struck me on the bagpipes?

GRYTPYPE:

What?

SEAGOON:

I'm going to sue you for wanton piano hurling and £50,000.

GRYTPYPE:

You can't have both.

SEAGOON:

Very well, I shall take the money.

MORIARTY:

You will have neither!

SEAGOON:

Great heavens, it's Count Foreign Fred Moriarty!

MORIARTY:

Ah-ho!

SEAGOON:

The fiendish steamroller driver of Regent Street.

MORIARTY:

Yes, likewise we claim diplomatic immunity from charges that you have been struck by a piano.

SEAGOON:

Why?

GRYTPYPE:

This is a Titicacan legation and that piano carries a Corp Diplomatic plate.

SEAGOON:

It does not! And, what is more, I had the bits stored in a secret bonded warehouse in Bond Street until I produce it as evidence in the forthcoming legal proceedings!

MORIARTY:

Sapristi piano! Unless we can get a Corp Diplomatique plate secretly screwed on that piano, we are psstt, tick, vounq!

GRYTPYPE:

Unless we can get a Corp Diplomatic plate securely screwed to that piano we are psstt, tick, vounq!

SEAGOON:

Sapristi piano! Unless they can get a Corp Diplomatic plate secretly screwed to that piano, they are psstt, tick, vounq!

GREENSLADE:

Meanwhile, in a stench-packing factory in Saigon.

FX:

CABARET MUSIC WITH HIGH PITCHED ORIENTAL SONG, ENDING "PSSTT, TICK, VOUNG!"

GREENSLADE:

We return you now to where we left off. Pist, tick, vung!

ECCLES:

Fine, fine, fine.

OMNES:

CAST CRACK UP BACKSTAGE

SEAGOON:

Dear listener, I realised I had them! Without that CD plate on the piano their cook was goosed! So I went to see the most astute legal mind in Trafalgar Square.

FX:

WATER RUSHING

BLOODNOK:

(SINGING)... the man from yiddle-ong-pong...

SEAGOON:

Bloodnok! Bloodnok! Bloodnok! I need your help!

BLOODNOK:

I'm sorry, it's her day off.

SEAGOON:

I want you to sue the Titicacan legation for striking me with a piano.

BLOODNOK:

How much for?

SEAGOON:

They did it for nothing.

BLOODNOK:

No wonder we get so many overseas visitors.

SEAGOON:

I want you to sue them for £50,000.

BLOODNOK:

I accept the case, but first the man from Illiing-tong! Demonstrate with that mad banjo and split mackerel head!

RAY ELLINGTON QUARTET:

"CLOUDBURST"

ORCHESTRA:

DRAMATIC LINK

GREENSLADE:

The Case of the Missing CD Plates, Part the Two.

SEAGOON:

Dear Listener, my legal advisor, Major Bloodnok, demands a salary of £40,000 before he will proceed with my case against the Titicacan legation and thus see justice done.

GRYTPYPE:

Ah, Neddie?

SEAGOON:

You!

GRYTPYPE:

Neddie, how would you like £40,000?

SEAGOON:

In money.

GRYTPYPE:

Gad, you drive a hard bargain.

SEAGOON:

Name the task.

GRYTPYPE:

It's very simple, dear boy, very simple. All you have to do is to go to a certain bonded warehouse in Bond Street, effect an entry and blindfolded, screw a small, white, metal plate to a certain object in the dark, which for the time being will remain incognito.

SEAGOON:

Wait. What's on this small plate?

GRYTPYPE:

Well, if I promise to tell you, will you promise not to tell anybody?

SEAGOON:

Yes.

GRYTPYPE:

Good. Then it'll be a secret between us.

SEAGOON:

Right.

GRYTPYPE:

You'll do it?

SEAGOON:

Yes. Stop! What is this object I am to screw this plate to?

GRYTPYPE:

I can't tell unless I keep completely silent about it.

SEAGOON:

Right. Tell me in silence then.

GRYTPYPE:

Very well.

FX:

LENGTHY SILENCE

SEAGOON:

I can't believe my ears!

GRYTPYPE:

Good. Then here's a screwdriver, a blindfold and a cucumber.

SEAGOON:

Cucumber?

GRYTPYPE:

You've got to eat, haven't you? Now then, off you go. (ASIDE) Little does this poor idiot know that inside the cucumber is a powerful infernal machine timed to explode the moment it detonates and to blow him to perdition when he has completed his task. Exits, humming. (HUMS INTO DISTANCE)

GREENSLADE:

By the magic of wireless we now take you to a tar barrel in Yokohama.

FX:

CABARET MUSIC WITH HIGH PITCHED ORIENTAL SONG, ENDING "PSSTT, TICK, VOUNG!"

GREENSLADE:

Thank you. The Diplomatic Case of Strange Immunity, Chapter Eight. A Case of Strange Diplomatic Immunity. Or, with Igloo, Jack Knife and Saxophone Along the Appian Way. Chapter Ten. It is midnight in a certain bonded warehouse in Bond Street.

ORCHESTRA:

MYSTERY MOOD MUSIC

BLUEBOTTLE:

Eccles?

ECCLES:

Eh?

BLUEBOTTLE:

Eccles? It is nice sitting on this glowing brazier being a night watchman, in't it, Eccles?

ECCLES:

Yeah, fine, fine.

BLUEBOTTLE:

Yes, it is fine being a night watchman.

ECCLES:

Yeah.

BLUEBOTTLE:

Eccles? Do you like being a night watchman?

ECCLES:

Yeah, fine, fine.

BLUEBOTTLE:

Yes, I like being a night watchman. It is like being a day watchman only it's in the dark.

ECCLES:

Yeah, that's fine.

BLUEBOTTLE:

Yes, it is fine to be a night watchman, in't it?

ECCLES:

Yeah fine, fine. (SINGS QUIETLY) "That man from Laramie".

BLUEBOTTLE:

You are a brave night watchman, aren't you, Eccles?

ECCLES:

Yeah, sure, fine, fine.

BLUEBOTTLE:

And I am a brave night watchman.

ECCLES:

Yeah.

BLUEBOTTLE:

I like being a brave night watchman.

BLUEBOTTLE AND ECCLES:

We are both brave night watchmen.

BLUEBOTTLE:

(SCREAMS)

ECCLES:

What?

BLUEBOTTLE:

There's something crawling up my trowsies!

SEAGOON:

Ah, never fear! It's only me, little wooden-socked night watchman.

BLUEBOTTLE:

Ah, my captain! Springs smartly to attention putting left toe into rat trap.

FX:

TRAP SHUTS

BLUEBOTTLE:

(SCREAMS) Writhes in agony on floor. Thinks: What shall I thinks? Thinks: I can't think of a thinks. Unthinks.

SEAGOON:

Listen, tiny nerk!

BLUEBOTTLE:

Oh.

SEAGOON:

I have a job for you. Now, take this plate and screwdriver and screw it into the object which I am told is in the far left-hand corner of this warehouse.

BLUEBOTTLE:

What is the reward, Capitain?

SEAGOON:

This lovely, green, succulent, prize-winning cucumber!

BLUEBOTTLE:

Ooh, goody!

SEAGOON:

Now, off you go and do your task. Come, Eccles. We must watch without to see that little nerk shall not disturb-ed be! Exunt Tucket and Treeze, fighting...

BLUEBOTTLE:

There. I have screwed the plate onto the piano. Now for a nice, succulent meal of luskious cucumber. Thinks: I wonder what it would be like to be a manmade salad-tite, 120 miles above the earth?

FX:

EXPLOSION, HOWLING WIND

BLUEBOTTLE:

Oh, so this is what it's like! Ahhh!

ORCHESTRA:

MUSICAL LINK

FX:

GAVEL RAPPING

JUDGE SCHNORRER:

[SELLERS]

The case of Seagoon versus the Titicacan Embassy. We award Count Morrisarty and Hercules... and Hercules Grytpype-Thynne, Consule of no fixed address, the sum of 50,000 nicker for wrongful accusations. Thank you.

SEAGOON:

50,000 nicker! How will I get it? Wait! I know! (LAUGHS) I'll get even with them! I'll go to Titicaca!

GREENSLADE:

And so, Seagoon took a ship for Titicaca. Meanwhile, in a notorious fish shop in Baryschool in Yoshiwara... (VERY LONG SILENCE) By Jove, I do believe they're closed!

SEAGOON:

And so I arrived in Titicaca with my bagpipes, bent on revenge. All I had to do was to find a steamroller, throw myself under it and sue for damages. I hadn't long to wait. See! Here comes one now.

FX:

STEAMROLLER APPROACHES

BLOODNOK:

Look out!

FX:

NED SCREAMING, BAGPIPES DYING

GREENSLADE:

Dear Listener, the sound of Seagoon and his bagpipes being run over is the second sound in the series "These we have loved" as broadcast in the program, "David Whitfield Sings Again and again and again"

TITCACAN 1:

[MILLIGAN]

Oh! All right, lift him out gently, lads, and now, unroll him.

TITCACAN 2:

[SELLERS]

He keeps curling up like a blinder, matey.

TITCACAN 1:

Are you all right, Chum?

SEAGOON:

Arrest that man!

TITCACAN 2:

What man?

SEAGOON:

The driver of that steamroller! I demand £50,000 compensation!

TITCACAN 2:

Driver, did you hear that?

BLOODNOK:

Yes and I won't pay it!

SEAGOON:

You can't get out of it!

BLOODNOK:

Yes, I can! See these CD plates on the steamroller? Diplomatic Immunity, you see!

SEAGOON:

You're not...

BLOODNOK:

Yes, I am! Major Bloodnok, British Ambassador to the Court of Titican!

SEAGOON:

You mean...

BLOODNOK:

Yes, I have diplomatic immunity! Keep away from me. And what is more, I shall charge you!

SEAGOON:

Indeed? And may I hear the charge?

BLOODNOK:

Certainly!

FX:

TRUMPET CHARGE, RUMBLE OF FEET RUNNING

SEAGOON:

Oh, no! Stop! You can't do this to me...!

ORCHESTRA:

End theme...

GREENSLADE:

And that was the Goon Show, a BBC recorded program featuring Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe and Spike Milligan, with the Ray Ellington Quartet and Max Geldray. The Orchestra was conducted by Wally Stott, script by Spike Milligan, announcer Wallace Greenslade, the program was produced by Peter Eton.

ORCHESTRA:

OUTRO... "ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STREET"

Notes:

John Snagge was a BBC announcer.

Ava Gardner was a movie star and sex symbol, most popular in the forties and fifties.

'The man from Laramie' is a western movie released in 1955 and starring James Stewart. The theme song was also released by Jimmy Young and reached number 1 for 4 weeks.

The Appian Way was the most important ancient Roman road. It is also known for the 6000 slaves who were crucified along it after fighting for Spartacus, eventually losing to the Romans.