

S6 E27 - The Man Who Never Was

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Final corrections by Helen.

GREENSLADE:

This is the BBC. Here is an impression of a British Embassy:

FX:

CRASH OF BREAKING GLASS

GREENSLADE:

Thank you.

SECOMBE:

And thank you, Wal. Here's your hat. Giddup!

FX:

HORSE GALLOPS OFF, SPEEDS UP

SECOMBE:

So much for horse lovers and theirs. Next week at your local cinemas they're showing:

SELLERS:

The Man Who Never Was.

FX:

FANFARE, THEN ANTHEM UNDER:

GREENSLADE:

April the first, 1944. For the Allies, the first hope of victory was almost in sight. North Africa has been won with the aid of Lance Bombardier Milligan and Gunner Secombe. And Burma was holding out with leading aircraftsman Peter Sellers. But the main problem: how to prevent the Germans from learning our intention of landing in Sicily? Let's go back to that fateful night in Jurn, Mammom.

SEAGOON:

It was that very night that I, Captain Neddie Seagoon, was sitting in the lounge of the House of Lords Yacht Club at Southend. Suddenly the footman came over and tapped me on the shoulder with his foot.

FOOTMAN:

[SELLERS]

Pardon me, sir, Colonel Minge would be pleased to see you out on the balcony, sir.

SEAGOON:

Oh. So he's out there, is he?

FOOTMAN:

No, sir, he's in here, that's why he'd be pleased to see you out there.

SEAGOON:

Well. I think I'll go for a breath of fresh air.

FOOTMAN:

Thank you very much, sir, it'll save us opening a window.

GREENSLADE:

Grabbing his flying jacket as it flew by him, Captain Seagoon strode swiftly up the wall, across the crowded ceiling, pushing aside the other members who were hurling themselves to the floor below with cries of...

SEAGOON:

Fools! You shouldn't be up here! And you!

BLUEBOTTLE:

No, do not throw me down! I'm... I'm always up here!

SEAGOON:

Are you a member?

BLUEBOTTLE:

No, I'm a Bluebottle.

SEAGOON:

What's that you're... (PAUSE FOR AUDIENCE APPLAUSE) What's that you're reading?

BLUEBOTTLE:

A flypaper. Ehee!

GREENSLADE:

Seagoon flung the interloper aside with a muttered oath. Donning his straw hat, raffia coat and deadly nightshade trousers, he ran casually down to the sea.

SEAGOON:

I followed behind. And there, on the beach, I saw - and this is where the story really starts - there, in the sand, was a pair of uncooked German army boots.

FX:

DRAMATIC CHORD

SELLERS:

Like any quick thinking Englishman, Seagoon hurriedly tried them on for size.

SEAGOON:

Curse! They're too tight. Then, dear listeners, I saw why. In each boot was a pair of human feet!

ECCLES:

They're mine!

SEAGOON:

What? What are you doing in uncooked German army boots?

ECCLES:

I was hungry.

SEAGOON:

But where did you find them?

ECCLES:

Aooeoh! Um, they were washed ashore.

SEAGOON:

Let me see them. (GASPS) This boot has a false bottom!

ECCLES:

Ooooooooooh!

SEAGOON:

Dear listeners, by inserting a skeleton saxophone under the welt, I managed to unlock the sole. And there, glistening in the light of my paraffin shilling, lay a roll of microfilm! There was only one thing to do - take it to the Chief of Military Intelligence himself!

FX:

BLOODNOK'S FANFARE, LEADING INTO A SWARM OF FLIES

BLOODNOK:

(OVER FLIES) Ooooh! Gah! Oooof!

GREENSLADE:

Yes, it was Major Denis Bloodnok, crack wartime layabout and consequently Head of the British International Intelligence Organisation, who, at this very moment, is interrogating a German prisoner for the sole purpose of lengthening the script and giving Seagoon a golden opportunity of displaying his histrionic abilities before a long-suffering public.

BLOODNOK:

Thank you. Have you finished? Thank you, thank you. Right. Now, march in that suspected German spy, would you?

SERGEANT:

[ELLINGTON]

Sir! Prisonerrrrrrr... Har!

FX:

SINGLE STOMP OF MASSED BOOTS

SERGEANT:

Quiiiiiiiiiick... Har!

FX:

MARCHING FOOTSTEPS

SERGEANT:

(OVER) Left, right, left, right, left, right, left, right, left, right, left, right, left, right, left, right, left, right! Prisonerrrrrrr... halt!

FX:

MARCHING RECORD COMICALLY SLOWS TO A STOP

BLOODNOK:

Now then, who's this?

SERGEANT:

A suspected German spy, sir. He was caught loitering off the coast of Britain.

BLOODNOK:

So what's your excuse?

SPY:

[SECOMBE]

(GERMAN ACCENT) I was waiting for a number 10-A submarine.

BLOODNOK:

At this time of night? A likely story. They stop running at eleven, you know, oh! Sergeant?

SERGEANT:

Yes?

BLOODNOK:

What's this German's name?

SERGEANT:

Herr Komezebriede.

SPY:

Permission to speak, Hairy Major.

BLOODNOK:

Permission granted, hairy prisoner.

SPY:

I would like to say...

BLOODNOK:

Silong! Volkeshere berebackter. Gablunden kaput siesiegeempire grung dang! Go gablunden hungun!

SPY:

Does your vife know zis?

BLOODNOK:

Achtung! Ger-shut up! Admit it, sir, you're a spy!

SPY:

I'm not a shpy!

BLOODNOK:

Oh? What's your name, then?

SPY:

Jim Furter.

BLOODNOK:

Jim Furter? I knew your brother Frank! Who said we Germans haven't got a corny old sense of humour? Oh, I'm out of condition tonight!

SPY:

I'll have a gin Tunic.

BLOODNOK:

That is a damned insult, sir! (ASIDE) But he's perfectly right, you know. (TO SPY) Now, are you married?

SPY:

Ja, two years.

BLOODNOK:

Any children?

SPY:

Nein.

BLOODNOK:

Nine in two years? You're a blaggard, sir! You, you... Hand me that shotgun.

SPY:

Nicht, nicht! Ve are just good friends.

BLOODNOK:

What!? Sergeant, march this scoundrel backwards for Christmas with a gas stove over his head.

SERGEANT:

Right, sir.

SPY:

Please, please! Bitte, believe! I'm not a shpy. I come here seeking political asylum.

BLOODNOK:

Take a bus to the House of Commons, that's the finest political asylum in the world! Ooohh, yes! They've got 'em all there you know! Aaaaooooowalalalalaaaaaaaaaaaaayeeaaahhhhhhaaa! Including Max Geldray, the well-known long playing record!! Thank you, Max.

MAX GELDRAY:

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

GREENSLADE:

And now, we have great pleasure in returning you to the Goon Show. And this is where the story really starts. Now showing at your local radio, disguised as The Was Who Never Man, part the ping, thank you.

ORCHESTRA:

FANFARE

FX:

DOOR OPENING

GLADYS:

[ELLINGTON]

Major Bloodnok, sir!

BLOODNOK:

What is it, Gladys?

GLADYS:

Captain Seagoon's coming up the stairs, sir.

BLOODNOK:

What? What? Quick! Quick! Burn this photograph!

GLADYS:

Who is it?

BLOODNOK:

Me and his wife. Hurry, man! (SINGS) In love with my...

FX:

DOOR OPENING

SEAGOON:

Major Bloodnok!

BLOODNOK:

It's a lie! We're just good friends, I tell you! I... I was just passing... Good heavens! What's that you've got in your hand?

SEAGOON:

It's a roll of microfilm, sir! Found in some German boots washed ashore at Southend.

BLOODNOK:

This is an important find. I'll just put this microfilm under this powerful magnifying glass. It'll keep it flat while I put my glasses on. Now, um... Oh, yes, yes, I... yes, oh, dear, yes. Some kind of secret plan!

SEAGOON:

Now supposing these are German invasion plans.

BLOODNOK:

Don't you worry about that. If the Germans every invade England, we war office chiefs have Plan B ready.

SEAGOON:

Plan B?

BLOODNOK:

Yes, fast plane to Dublin, submarine to South America.

SEAGOON:

Major, you're not going to run away from the enemy?

BLOODNOK:

Well, there's no point in running away from anyone else, is there? I mean... I mean... I mean...

SEAGOON:

Alright. Alright, Bloodnok, be it on your head as you wish. But... we all know what happened to Colonel Bentine.

BLOODNOK:

Ahhhh, yes.

SEAGOON:

He sat right where you're sitting, now. In that very spot. He was frightened of the enemy, too. Dead scared. He put a thousand pounds in gold in his kit bag, booked a fast plane to Dublin and had a submarine laid on to take him to South America. Poor fool, heh, heh, heh. He thought he'd get away with it. You know what happened to him, don't you?

BLOODNOK:

What?

SEAGOON:

(CRYING) He got away with it! (PAUSE) Bloodnok! None of that Plan B packing lark. And stop packing your kit! Put that gold back in my tooth!

BLOODNOK:

What about the Plan B, then?

SEAGOON:

These plans have to be analysed. England's future is at stake.

BLOODNOK:

Look here, Seagoon...

FX:

CHORDS OVER...

BLOODNOK:

I must tell you, Seagoon, I won't have any of it!

SEAGOON:

It must go through, it has to go through, Sir John!

GREENSLADE:

And all through the night - and this is where the story really starts - all through the night, with an intelligence officer, Seagoon and Bloodnok pored over the plans. Sometimes they'd pored on the floor. Sometimes they poured in the glass, but mostly they pored over the plans.

OFFICER:

[MILLIGAN]

Gentlemen, I have every reason to believe that these gin soaked plans of a secret German weapon are really the *brandy* soaked plans of a secret German weapon.

SEAGOON:

Gad! Is there no end to their fiendish ingenuity?

OFFICER:

I fear not.

SEAGOON:

Dear listeners. Bloodnok, realising the significance of the discovery, leapt to his feet and shouted for a messenger with a voice like thunder.

BLOODNOK:

Send in a messenger with a voice like thunder!

THROAT:

Right, mate.

BLOODNOK:

Thund, tell my ATS driver to put the car away, I shall be needing her later. Seagoon... Now, then. Take the microfilm at once to the Woolwich Arsenal and get the experts there to build this secret German weapon.

SEAGOON:

I'll do my best, gentlemen.

MILLIGAN:

But we can't afford failures!

BLOODNOK:

Rubbish! You've been paying me for years and that singing layabout, Seagoon.

SEAGOON:

Despite that insult, I left the building with my head held high. And my feet held higher.

BLOODNOK:

In that position, we threw him out.

SEAGOON:

Soon, I was speeding through the sleeping streets, crouched over my brass pogo-stick. Ere long, I was at the gates of the Woolwich Arsenal, where I was challenged by a sentry.

FX:

BANG, BANG-BANG. BANG BANG BANG BANG, BANG-BANG

WILLIUM:

'Aaaalt! Oo goes there?

SEAGOON:

Friend!

WILLIUM:

Oh, thank 'eavens for that. Advance and be shot at, mate.

SEAGOON:

I was, mate.

WILLIUM:

'Ere, I recognise you.

SEAGOON:

Do you?

WILLIUM:

You're the bloke I was just shooting at, wun't you?

SEAGOON:

What makes you so sure?

WILLIUM:

All them 'oles in your nut.

SEAGOON:

Silly man! They're *old* bullet holes!

WILLIUM:

I know, I was using old bullets!

SEAGOON:

Fool of fools, you might've killed me! Now, where's the – your officer in charge?

WILLIUM:

(CALLING) Captain General, mate!

MORIARTY:

Oisabayageea, mate?

SEAGOON:

Good Heavens! It's the valiant Comte Fredrique Jim Moriarty of the House of Reeks! I thought you were at the front?

MORIARTY:

I (INCOMPREHENSIBLE MORIARTISH FRENCH-TYPE WORDS) you at the front.

SEAGOON:

Then... why did you come all the way back here?

MORIARTY:

Je suis [UNCLEAR] civilian Francais. Non? Je suis [UNCLEAR] saxophon in la café. Je. [UNCLEAR] (HUMS) Do dedoo dedootdooooo, do dedoo, dedooooooooooo! (SPEAKS) Alors. Bonjour. Comment c'est la guerre? Je suis Capitain Jim Moriarty. Somebody in charge [UNCLEAR]. C'est un deux Charlies in the army. Alors, comment [UNCLEAR]? Advance! Attack le Germans! (HUMS MARSEILLESE) (MAKES MARCHING NOISE) Aieeee! Vive les soldat de la patrie. Alors! Apres deux heurs sur la kippers. [UNCLEAR] sur la tres fatigue. Alors. Halt! C'est sur le grand last push! Shhh! Silence! Attention! Listen! (WHISTLE OF BOMB. EXPLOSION) OOOOOOH! Right turn! Detach! Dans le [UNCLEAR]. Je toute de suite pour l'Angleterre. Je non Charlie sur le front.

SEAGOON:

Yes. Very interesting, but... what made you come back to England so quickly?

MORIARTY:

My braces were caught on a bollard at Southend Pier!

SEAGOON:

Just the man we want! A man with a pier tied to his braces. A perfect disguise.

MORIARTY:

Ah!

SEAGOON:

Now then, here are sealed orders from Whitehall. I shall contact you later. Until then, here is an unsealed envelope containing Ray Ellington and his Quartet.

RAY ELLINGTON QUARTET:

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

GREENSLADE:

And so the Woolwich Arsenal set about building a full scale model of the secret German weapon. And soon the Arsenal rang to the sound of British workmen at top pressure.

WORKMAN:

(SOMEONE WHISTLING)

FX:

THUMP

WORKMAN:

(SOMEONE WHISTLING)

FX:

THUMP

WORKMAN:

(SOMEONE WHISTLING)

FX:

THUMP

WORKMAN:

(SOMEONE WHISTLING)

FX:

LUNCH WHISTLE, TOOL DROPPED, MANY PEOPLE RUNNING AWAY

SEAGOON:

Gad! They were away rather smartish, weren't they? Don't those workmen know there's a war on?

BLOODNOK:

I haven't had the heart to tell them. It'd be madness. If they knew they'd rush off and join the army. Anything rather than work, you know.

SEAGOON:

Haha... Ahem, yes. Well, I'll tell you why I called this meeting. It is essential that we fool the Germans into thinking that we haven't got the plans of their secret weapon. Isn't that so, Captain Hugh Jympton?

JYMPTON:

[MILLIGAN]

Er, yes, yes, ah, er, perfectly correct, sir. Yes, I... I... I... I... I suppose it is, yes, sir. Ah... yes, you're perfectly correct, sir. Yes, sir, I... It is, yes.

FX:

GUNSHOT

JYMPTON:

Ow!

FX:

THUD

SEAGOON:

Well done, Bloodnok!

BLOODNOK:

I... I hated to see him suffer, you know.

SPRIGGS:

Gentlemen! Gentlemen, I think we're wasting time! I have here a man who claims that he has the perfect plan to hoodwink these naughty Germans with regard to their secret weapon.

SEAGOON:

Oh! How do you do sir?

CRUN:

Ahhhh... Mnk, mnk, mnk, mnk, mnk.

MINNIE:

Ooooh! He's... he's... he's going to say "how do you do".

SEAGOON:

Well, tell him not to bother.

MINNIE:

The man... the man... the man says not to bother to say "how do you do", Henry.

CRUN:

How do you do, Henry?

MINNIE:

Very well, Henry.

SEAGOON:

Sir, please. Would you care to give us a brief resume of your plan?

MINNIE:

Give him the...

CRUN:

What?

MINNIE:

...the resume. Give him the remisine.

CRUN:

I got the whole idea... from a Sunday newspaper.

SEAGOON:

You get some wonderful ideas from those, can't you?

MINNIE:

Ohhh, naughty, naughty Seagoon!

CRUN:

Naughty Seagoon.

MINNIE:

Oh, the vapours! You... we don't spend our Sunday mornings reading that kind of sinful Sunday newspaper.

CRUN:

No, we just sleep on 'til teatime.

MINNIE:

Then we read the sinful Sunday newspapers. Ohhhhhh, that naughty-type music! (SINGS) Yim-bolla-bakka... (ETC)

FX:

MINNIE DANCING

CRUN:

Min!

MINNIE:

Ohhhh!

CRUN:

Stop that sinful gyrating the lower portion of the torso-type dancing!

MINNIE:

It's all the rage, buddy.

SEAGOON:

Please, please! Explain this plan!

LEW:

[SELLERS]

Yes, wait a minute, I got this all 'ere. I know all about, I'm his agent.

MINNIE:

He's our agent.

LEW:

I know... I know what it's all about, let me speak for them cos they can't chat, y'see, they can't do the spiel, alright? You see, we put a copy of a German microfilm into the pocket of a man dressed up as a German Naval officer and float him ashore from a submarine onto the enemy coast. And then, for an encore...

SEAGOON:

We don't need an encore! I have my own piano.

LEW:

Oh.

SEAGOON:

Commander Ginsberg, you'll get an OBE for this.

LEW:

What have I done? I'm living a good life, 'ain't I? Ain't I Leslie?

LESLIE:

[MILLIGAN]

Yes, yes.

SEAGOON:

Commander, who would be idiot enough to be dressed up as a German Admiral and thrown overboard from a submarine? Tell me.

LEW:

Don't worry, don't worry. I have in this box 'ere an idiot who's been specially drowned for the job. Leslie, take the lid off.

LESLIE:

Yes, yes, I'll... I'll take it off.

FX:

WOODEN BOX BEING PRIZED APART TYPE NOISE AND SOMETHING LUMPY FALLING OUT

LEW:

That'll do, it'll be good enough. There you are gentlemen, meet the man who never was!

ECCLES:

'Aaaallo!

SEAGOON:

Wait a moment. This man is damp.

ECCLES:

Ooh!

LEW:

Of course he's damp. We damped him down for the night, I told you! He's the only Field Marshal with a private's baton in his knapsack.

SEAGOON:

But can we spare a Field Marshall?

LEW:

This Field Marshall don't count.

SEAGOON:

He doesn't count?

LEW:

No! He don't read or write, either! That's why he's working at the Romford this week. He might get out with a bit of luck, I dunno.

SEAGOON:

But we can't float him ashore, he's not dead!

ECCLES:

Wanna bet?

SEAGOON:

Shut up, Eccles!

ECCLES:

Shut up, Eccles! Shut up, Eccles! Shut up! Shut up, Eccles! You shut up when you say shut up to me! (SINGS) Young and foolish. (SPEAKS) Shut up, Eccles!

SEAGOON:

Oh, dear. This man is completely S-T-U-P-I-D.

ECCLES:

I... I 'eard that! Oooooow! I 'eard that! Soooo, you think that I'm S-T-U-P-I-D?

SEAGOON:

Candidly? Yes I do.

ECCLES:

Ohhhhhh. Well, it's a good thing for you that I can't spell. Good thing! It's a good thing for you I'm (SINGS) young and foolish... (SPEAKS) Shut up, Eccles! Shut up, Eccles! Shut up when I'm (SINGS) young and foolish... (SPEAKS) S-T-U-I-P... A-hum! (SINGS) Young and foolish... (ETC) (SPEAKS) Shut up! What? Shut up, Eccles! (SINGS) Young and foolish...

BLOODNOK:

Look here, let's forget about this idiot.

BLUEBOTTLE:

Captain, they have gotted ready the secret German weapon which they have builded from the microfilm plan.

SEAGOON:

Great news, little cardboard grenadier!

BLUEBOTTLE:

Eheehee!

SEAGOON:

Here's an orange.

BLUEBOTTLE:

Oh. Can I come with you to the testings of diss weapon, Captain?

SEAGOON:

I'm sorry, Bluebottle, it's too dangerous. We can't afford to risk the lives of a young idiot like you.

BLUEBOTTLE:

Is that why they're sending an old idiot like you?

SEAGOON:

Exactly.

BLUEBOTTLE:

Oh.

SEAGOON:

Taxi!

ORCHESTRA:

MUSICAL LINK

OMNES:

VARIOUS MUTTERINGS AND RHUBARBS

SELLERS:

(OFF) Rhubarb, rhubarb, rhubarb.

SEAGOON:

It... It was an exciting moment as I stood amongst the high ranking officers. In the centre of the testing area stood the sinister outline of the mysterious German secret weapon.

OFFICER 1:

[MILLIGAN]

Gentlemen, before we remove the cover from the V-3, I'd like to say that we're not quite sure what it's potential is. It might well be the most devastating weapon we've ever tested in the Woolwich Arsenal, I assure you.

OFFICER 2:

[SELLERS]

Yes. We've, ah, taken great care to construct an exact replica of the plans found in the uncooked German boot.

SEAGOON:

Hear, hear! Well done! Good show. Well done!

OFFICER 2:

Oh, dear. Charlie's here. Now then, as I remove the covers, you will note that the weapon is mounted on a pair of wheels. At one end we have two shafts which are obviously used for manipulating the weapon into position. Now, the rather ominous part. The only operating mechanism is this small metal handle slotted high up in body. Before we turn it, gentlemen, we must take precautions. Sergeant?

SERGEANT:

[SECOMBE]

Yes, sir? Gentlmen, will you all please take up positions behind that forty inch, anti-gamma-ray, lead-lined wall.

OFFICER 2:

Right, Sergeant. Close main protection doors and put on warning lights.

OFFICER 1:

(OFF) Warning light on, sir!

FX:

MACHINERY NOISE

SEAGOON:

I trembled with excitement as the moment drew nigh. Here we had a German weapon which they did not know we possessed. With it, we could well turn the tables on the Bosh!

OFFICER 2:

Right, gentlemen. I shall be turning the handle five seconds from now.

OFFICER 1:

Ready now, sir!

OFFICER 2:

Five, four, three, two, one. Turn.

FX:

JET ENGINE POWERING UP, TURNING INTO BARREL ORGAN TYPE MUSIC

BLOODNOK:

Gentlemen... Plan B!

FX:

RUSH OF FEET, PANICKED YELLING

ORCHESTRA:

END MUSIC

GREENSLADE:

That was the Goon Show, a BBC recorded programme, featuring Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe, Spike Milligan, with the Ray Ellington Quartet and Max Geldray. The orchestra was conducted by Wally Stott. Script by Spike Milligan and Larry Stevens. Announcer Wallace Greenslade. The programme produced by Pat Dixon.