The Perils Of Peter And Peanut

#2

This week’s episode:
The Danger of A Madman!

WALTER WINCHELL

There is terror in the land! Famine!
Pestilence! The threat of all-out war!
Six years ago, the good people of
Puppula sent forth a ship to cross the
great distance that divides their
world from ours! They sent us their
greatest gift! A hero! No, two! The
unlikeliest pair of heroes -- Peter
and Peanut!

"The city is Los Angeles. The year is 1962. It's nearly
midnight. Out in Malibu, Frank Sinatra stands over a shattered
heli-pad, wondering again why the Leader of the Free World
stayed with Bing Crosby that night back in '61. Down south in
El Segundo, a tired security guard watches a rail-thin man in
tattered khakis and a stained white shirt creep among the
planes being assembled by Hughes Aircraft, wondering again why
the richest man in the world can't visit his own factory except
like a ghost in the night.

"Here on the streets, there is an unusual cloudiness -- the
Great Puppeteer has left the fog machine on overnight perhaps.
Those shattered beams of light must be flashlights. No. They
signify headlights.

"A taxi cab approaches."

PETER (V.O.)
Six years. Six long years. And what
do Peanut and I have to show for it..."
STING!

PETER (V.O.)
I drive a cab!

"Peter exaggerates. Exaggeration is one of the gifts of the people of Puppula. It comes, hand and hand, with their gifts of laughter, of timing, and the tremendously uncommon ability of occasionally pulling the strings from the hands of the Great Puppeteer himself.

"It has, in fact, been five years, eight and one-half months, since Peter and Peanut made their disastrous debut as an ALL-SINGING, ALL-DANCING DUO. They fled France shortly after the opening of Martin and Lewis' last film together, "Pardners", perhaps the last film ever made."

PETER
I drive a God-puppin’ cab!

"This much is true. And ahead is the last fare of the night. Lenny Bruce, in his typical nightclub attire: denim jeans, denim jacket, a mock turtleneck and black boots."

LENNY BRUCE
Taxi! Yo, Taxi!

"Peter drops the flag before the bewildered comic can drop himself into the back-seat. C'mon, Peter! Are you trying to cheat this man?! Have you dropped so low, so fast?!"

PETER
Where to, Bub?

LENNY BRUCE
Bub? "Where to, Bub?" Where'd you get that, man, the moo-ovies? (George Raft)
Yada yada, Warden! Yada yada! We ain't
comin' out 'til we get them vii-brators!

PETER
Where to!

LENNY BRUCE
(sighing)
8825 Hollywood Boulevard. Up in the hills. It's a split-level, you can't miss it...

THE SOUND OF GEARS AND A CAR PULLING AWAY.

"Silence. Silence? Silence! Has Peter grown so blind in his years away from Puppula that he can't see greatness in the back of his own taxi-cab? Has he grown so deaf that he can't hear the faint tinkle-tinkle of genius? Can't he see or hear or even recognize an angel, even one falling percariously past this world and into another?"

LENNY BRUCE
Can I ask you something, man?

PETER
Ask away, Bu...
(catching himself)
...sir.

LENNY BRUCE
You're a puppet, right? I mean, I don't see the strings, but I can catch that thing! If you can dig what this bearded cat in back is singing!

PETER
I dig. Man.

LENNY BRUCE
I admire you puppets, no I ENVY you puppets! Cuz' you see, you can do your thing with-OUT the WORDS!

PETER
I don't get it. Do you get it, Peanut?

LENNY BRUCE
I didn't catch that last...

"And neither did Peanut, slumbering in Peter's breast pocket, just as he has for the half a decade since their arrival from the distant shores of Puppula."

LENNY BRUCE
What I'm saying is that...shit, what am I saying?

PETER
(eager now)
What are you saying?

LENNY BRUCE
I'm saying that...look at me, okay, look, I've been busted five times in this town for obscenity. Count with me? Two at the Troubadour, ya know, Doug Weston's place? Two for the same act, same night, over at the Unicorn on Melrose. And one more at the Trolley Ho in the Valley. For all I know, there's some cats in Blue waiting for me right now out at the dear old Trolley Ho. Waiting for "Dirty Lenny", waiting for "Sick Lenny" to say some words.

PETER
Why are you in town, why are you even here?
LENNY BRUCE
Why? Why? To get high!

"The ensuing cackles from the back-seat might have un-nerved Peter on any other night. Under any other circumstances, he might have pulled the cab over and ushered his fare out into the night, even forgone the fare.

"But tonight, feeling the faint stirring in his breast pocket, the unfamiliar pulse of his awakening partner, he could only grip the wheel and ask the big question:"

PETER
What are “words”?

LENNY BRUCE
What are...man, you are a puppet!
       (settling back)
How to...okay, dig! I'm up in Chicago right now, that's where I am right now actually if anyone asks. I'm out on bail up there, I'm mid-trial, man, I'm a wanted fugitive, Fourth Ammendment, Free Speech, I'm a wanted man! This is Cloak and Dagger shit, flying out under a fictitious name, I'm the "Masked Man" himself, I'm high-ho-silver, cuz,if you can dig this, it is dry up there and windy and I don't just mean the weather, dig? And I'm due back in court on Monday, and this is Friday, and I got to get my thing on, my thing done with, before then, but that's not what you asked me, is it?
       (cocking his head)
What did you ask me?
PETER
Words!

LENNY BRUCE
Power! That's words. You can give them all this power. Or you can just take it all away. I try to take away the power of words...but...that's all I have...
(faltering)
...I only have words...

"How can I describe the shock of finding Peter, so far from Puppula, so sad and lonely, turning in his seat. To find Peter, so close to bitterness, chased by the dreams that sent him to this world, turning in his seat, a fire in his eyes, staring at this falling angel..."

PETER
Words have no power, Lenny.

LENNY BRUCE
I know you...

PETER
You can't know me.

LENNY BRUCE
I'm telling you, I know you...

PETER
No one knows me. Not here!

"The wail of sirens split the night! The flash of red lights illuminate the interior of the cab -- Peter's flabbergasted face, Lenny's frightened, and the one gram of heroin, three broken syringes on the floor, and a briefcase on the seat containing forty of methydrine capsules!

"The rough hands of the Police pull Lenny from the car. But
not before he locks eyes with the young puppet and half-whispers..."

LENNY BRUCE
I'm been there, you know. I'm been to Puppula.

"Peter. Oh Peter, where are you, Peter?"

POLICE (O.S.)
Here we go again, Bruce. Don't you know you ain't welcome 'round here?
Don't you know who's waiting for you downtown?

LENNY BRUCE (O.S.)
Don't finish me off in show business.
Don't lock up these six thousand words. That's what you're doing, taking away my words, locking them up.

POLICE (O.S.)
Tell it to the Judge...again.

"What are you thinking, Peter? Where are you? You can hear the police digging around in your back-seat, right, Peter? You can hear them dragging away this brave, flawed, hopeless man, can't you, Peter? You can hear them banging his head as they push him into their cruiser, right? This man who has been known to exaggerate, to make people laugh. This man with the timing of a God. If only he could grasp away the strings from the hands that have decided he must be silenced..."

PETER
Silence! No more words.

THE GRINDING OF GEARS AND THE REV OF A CAR.

"What's that, Peter? And why are you now driving? Where are you headed?"
PETER
We're going to the Trolley Ho, Peanut.
To the Trolley Ho.

MUSIC STING!

WALTER WINCHELL
Can Peter complete Lenny's final L.A. gig? Will he walk into the Trolley Ho, into the lion's den? Where the young Johnny Cochran, prosecutor, waits? Where the never-young Sherman Block waits, with his bullies in Blue? Will he take the stage? And risk everything?

MUSIC STING!

WALTER WINCHELL
Where will the ceaseless waterfall of our world take these brave puppets next? Can they survive?

TUNE IN NEXT WEEK:

AS THE PERILS OF PETER AND PEANUT CONTINUE WITH:

"Bobby At The Ambassador."