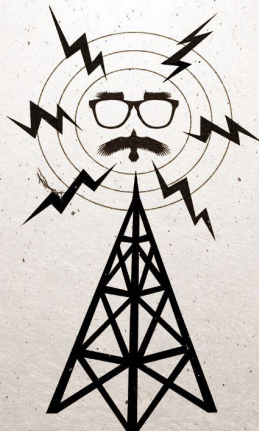


— THE CASE OF —
THE GREATER GATSBY
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THE CASE OF THE GREATER GATSBY
EPISODE 6 - JUMPER
TRANSCRIPT

[The Case of the Greater Gatsby opening credits music plays]

Announcer: Now presenting Fig and Ford in The Case of the Greater Gatsby. Episode 6: Jumper. Written and created by Sean Persaud and Sinéad Persaud. This episode is brought to you by Hunt A Killer.

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): Barnaby Nightingale had just rushed into the police station like one of the hundreds of kids he employed to hand out his newspapers across the city - shouting and waving around a paper like a lunatic. My instinct was to calm him down with one of the great proverbs of old: "I wish you would step back from that ledge, my friend." Seems even the head of the biggest rag in town wasn't immune to the strange series of threatening letters we had been investigating. Claudette and I grilled him in her office.

Claudette Knickerbocker: You're sure nothing came to the newspaper?

Barnaby Nightingale: Nothing. This was hand delivered to my house in Los Feliz. (*he pronounces it "Los Fel-EEZ"*) I assume. There's no stamp and no return address.

Claudette Knickerbocker: Well, we'll need to get a list of everyone who knows where you live. Also, isn't it "Los Feliz?" (*"Los FEEL-iz"*)

Barnaby Nightingale: That's what people say, but I'm a journalist and the truth of language is important to me.

Claudette Knickerbocker: Well. La di da. Ok, the list?

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): As Barnaby gave Claudette a rundown of acquaintances, I read the letter again to myself. "Dear Mr. Nightingale. If you want to remain a free bird, you will be our parrot. No more Section Four. And keep a lid on it. If you do not comply, your paper will be printed in red." An asterisk at the bottom read "The red is your blood." Another asterisk under that read, "From killing you." I can see how it might have been confusing.

Barnaby Nightingale: And Mr. Phillips? You think it's the same person who's been sending your friends letters?

Ford Phillips: It's threatening but vague -

Barnaby Nightingale & Claudette Knickerbocker: Until the asterisks.

Ford Phillips: Until the asterisks, yes. And it's pasted together from cutout newspapers and magazines. Can't know for sure, but it would be quite a coincidence.

Claudette Knickerbocker: There's no such thing as coincidences, but what connects Wilhelmina and Cliff to someone like Barnaby?

Ford Phillips: You got any big enemies? Any secrets you're trying to hide at any cost? Any trouble in Section Four?

Barnaby Nightingale: That's just the thing. Section Four is everyone's favorite. Sports, arts, comics and puzzles. It's the only reason anyone really reads the paper.

Claudette Knickerbocker: True, although I must admit, the crosswords are getting sloppy.

Barnaby Nightingale: Dammit, George!

Ford Phillips: The letter also says to keep a lid on it. I'm sure the urge to sic a reporter or two on this and make it a news story is immense. But the less people know, the better.

Claudette Knickerbocker: Ford is right. It will make it much easier to follow leads and exploit any mistakes the suspect makes.

Barnaby Nightingale: Of course. Mums the word. And I'll have a talk with George. Thanks. You two sure are a couple of Lemony Lima Beans. I'll be in touch.

[FOOTSTEPS AND A DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING.]

Claudette Knickerbocker: Lemony what?

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Back on set the next day, we were trying to get a particularly dramatic scene in the can. Leery'd been badgering Whitley and wunderkind screenwriter Darby Farnsworth about getting a song he's written shoehorned into the first act. Thusly, Willy and I hadn't even gotten into hair and makeup yet. I do not think anyone knows what they are doing here.

Whitley Trufflehaus: I'm sorry but Mel made the final decision. The song is going in. Darby, if you'd just LISTEN to the lyrics maybe-

Darby Farnsworth: It's out of the question! Why would Pa Joad sing a song when his farm was just repossessed?

Penny Nickelpenny: As long as we're bringing up stuff that don't make no sense, why would any of these morons be tap dancing at literally any point in this picture? And in a shirtloada DUST no less.

Whitley Trufflehaus: Because we are bringing magical realism into the world of this realist novel!

Darby Farnsworth: You haven't even read the novel.

Whitley Trufflehaus: I'm keeping my mind clear of influences!

Leery O'Shaughnessey: I just think a song would be a nice respite from all the dourness and depression we've experienced in the film up to this point. Liven things up.

Darby Farnsworth: This scene is five minutes into the movie.

Leery O'Shaughnessey: Darling, a lot of overwhelming sadness can fit into five minutes. My first divorce happened in five minutes. You're only 'bout five minutes old so you wouldn't understand.

Darby Farnsworth: I am SIXTEEN YEARS OLD. And I know more than you all do!

Penny Nickelpenny: Is that right? And is that maybe because your daddy got you this job? Nepo baby!

Darby Farnsworth: I am here because I won a playwriting competition with my gripping and gritty one-act play about President Harding's inescapable destruction of the American dream! My father had nothing to do with it!

Leery O'Shaughnessey: Don't tell me you're Farnsworth Farnsworth's daughter? That old rascalion!

Darby Farnsworth: UGHH!

Leery O'Shaughnessey: That fella and me had some goood times back in the day. Never heard the man speak. He took his role as a silent film star very seriously. "Method acting," they're calling it now, I think.

Whitley Trufflehaus: Darby, we'll do one take with the song and one without, ok?

Darby Farnsworth: Whatever you say, boss!!

[She STOMPS OFF.]

Darby Farnsworth: (muttering as she goes) Why bother hiring a professional screenwriter if they are just going to let the over-the-hill actors write it all! Why are we even adapting this stupid book?...

Whitley Trufflehaus: Leery, let me hear the song.

Leery O'Shaughnessey (strumming and singing) *Goodbye little farm. Never wanted to do you no harm! That's what the doctor says in his medical oath. I've been around the world a lot and find you can do both.*

Whitley Trufflehaus: Both of what?

Leery O'Shaughnessey: Both of everything!

Whitley Trufflehaus: Everything of what?

Leery O'Shaughnessey: Hey, let me ask you something. Are you smoking the reefer?

[As they talk, we focus on WILLY and FIG, watching from the wings.]

Fig Wineshine: This a typical day?

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: More or less! Usually Mel would have nipped this argument in the bud by now but she's been so distracted lately.

Fig Wineshine: Whattaya say we head to the commissary and get ourselves an early lunch?

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: What an idea! I *have* been craving salmon in a jello mold!

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): We headed to the studio cafeteria. The heartbeat of the lot. The place where everyone was on equal footing as they ate their canned green beans and roast beef sandos. I was taken aback when we walked in the joint as the usual low murmur of quiet crew conversations had been replaced with uproarious laughter. A crowd had formed around a center table. I pushed my way through to see what the hullaboo was hulla-about. Two performers danced on the table dressed in matching pinstriped suits. The woman blew kisses to the crowd while the man pulled a live dove from his jacket sleeve and let it fly away.

[A ROWDY CROWD CLAPS.]

Lex Punchwhistle: Can I get a heyyyyy-ohhhhhh from the crowd?

Crowd: HEY-OHHHHHH!

Lex Punchwhistle: Now can I get a WHEEEE-WOOOO!?

Crowd: WHEEEEE-WOOOO!

Lex Punchwhistle: Wow, I can make you boys do anything! Next time I'll ask for a down payment on a house instead!

[The crowd LAUGHS.]

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: They're here! They're finally here!

Fig Wineshine: Lemme guess, they're the-

Rex Punchwhistle: Thank you folks! We're the Punchwhistle Twins. We'll be here 'til Thursday. And then for longer after that.

Lex Punchwhistle: Then why'd you say 'til Thursday, Rex?

Rex Punchwhistle: Well it ain't a lie is it?

Lex Punchwhistle: Suppose not. Neither is this! I'm *not* gonna hit you in the face with a pie!

[Lex throws a CAKE IN HIS FACE. The crowd cheers!]

Rex Punchwhistle: Ho-ho! Dangit Lex! You said you *weren't* gonna hit me in the face with a pie!

Lex Punchwhistle: This ain't a pie, it's a cake!

[The crowd LOVES THIS and disperses.]

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): The twins hopped down from their makeshift stage and Lex stole a plate of meatloaf from a passing grip.

Lex Punchwhistle: (through a mouthful) Sorry, I need the energy!

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: I can't believe I'm finally meeting the infamous Punchwhistle Twins!

Rex Punchwhistle: Wilhelmina Vanderjetski's excited to meet us, Lex? Well pancake me under a steamroller, ain't that just the bees knees.

Lex Punchwhistle: Well throw me in a beehive, that's amazing!

Rex Punchwhistle: Drop a house on me, I'll be darned!

Lex Punchwhistle: Just give me the Scarlet Fever and take me to the seaside, that's fantastic!

Rex Punchwhistle: Howsabout you woo me real thoughtfully, see, then steal my identity and leave me to die since you've been poisoning me slowly with trace amounts of arsenic for months now, isn't that swell?

Lex Punchwhistle: Just grab me by my stupid face and drown me in a flaming vat of-

Fig Wineshine: OK! Great, we're all so glad Willy's excited. Good to meet you two. I'm Fig Wineshine, PI and temporary actress in the picture. It'll be great having some comedic blood on set, this story seems like it needs some levity. And...

Lex Punchwhistle: It's a gas to get out of New York City for a bit. I mean I love it, but I gotta give these LA boys a chance to disappoint me, ya heard?

Rex Punchwhistle: Mm-hmm! Even got ourselves a gig playing at Bixby's Lounge downtown on our off nights. Ya know the place?

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: Oh we love Bixby! He makes the best straws.

Fig Wineshine: Willy, he buys the straws.

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: He has great taste in them then.

Rex Punchwhistle: Consider this an invite to our show this evening! We'd hate to have an empty bar our first night.

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: We'll absolutely be there!

Lex Punchwhistle: See you birdies later!

Fig Wineshine: Pleasure.

[They walk away.]

Fig Wineshine: Alright Willy, let's get in line for some grub.

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: You know, since we're the stars, we can have food delivered to our dressing rooms right?

Fig Wineshine: Sure. But that feels elitist. And also I'm on the clock. Gotta be out in the open looking for suspicious behaviors.

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: Like that?

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Willy pointed to the corner of the room, where Penny and Darby were engaged in some kind of argument. Darby was shoveling a chocolate bar into her mouth like a petulant child. Which she was. Penny was pleading with her. I crept closer to them under the pretense of selecting an ice cold apple juice from the cooler.

Penny Nickelpenny: Whitley needs you on set today! What if the actors don't know how to pronounce certain words?

Darby Farnsworth: Just attribute any mispronounced words to that darn Oklahoma dust lodged in their throat. Or have Leery write a song about it! Then he can write a book about it and Whitley can adapt it into another awful movie! Outta my way Nickelpenny, I have a meeting to get to!

Penny Nickelpenny: With who?!

Darby Farnsworth: That's none of your business!

[She STOMPS OFF.]

Penny Nickelpenny: Jesus, you'd think after I sent my youngest off to Clown Academy I wouldn't have to parent no more.

Fig Wineshine: Hey Pen, trouble with the whippersnapper wordsmith?

Penny Nickelpenny: Never have children, Wineshmutz.

Fig Wineshine: Motherhood's not exactly where I see my journey taking me.

Penny Nickelpenny: If you're gonna hire children, be prepared for tantrums. I tried to tell Whitley, but he insisted that she was the only one for the job. Now she's sneaking off at all hours for 'meetins.' And what's that on the ground over there? A pie used for comedic effect?! Now I gotta clean that up.

Fig Wineshine: It's cake. And don't tell me you're the janitor too?

Penny Nickelpenny: Nah, I just don't trust him. He'll leave the frosting in the linoleum crevices and then ya get ants.

Fig Wineshine: Well you can blame that mess on the Punchwhistle Twins.

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: (eating) They were hilarious.

Fig Wineshine: Willy, don't eat cake off the ground.

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: Ok!

Penny Nickelpenny: Punchwhistle Twins my ass. You know those twos is actually threese?

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: I'm not great at math but even I know that's not true, silly!

Penny Nickelpenny: It is true. They're triplets! Eugene was the third, but he disappeared mysteriously when they were just getting started. No one's heard from him since 1933.

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: That's terrible! I can't imagine their pain.

Penny Nickelpenny: Rumor has it they took the gig on the film so that they could try and find him out here.

Fig Wineshine: I'll be honest with you Penny, I've got enough mysteries and plotlines rattling around in this noggin right now. That information is going on the backburner and honestly might never resurface.

Penny Nickelpenny: Well, in that case it's a fun bit of color for the episode.

Fig Wineshine: Agreed.

Penny Nickelpenny: Go get in hair and makeup. And tell them to try and make your hair a little less...

Fig Wineshine: Less what?

Penny Nickelpenny: Just less.

Fig Wineshine: Fair enough.

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): After a half day caked in thick, albeit FDA approved, makeup and only getting one shot in before our day was up, Willy and I headed to Bixby's to see the Punchwhistles' act. I wasn't at all surprised to find Ford there, already three sheets to the wind. The thing about Ford is, you'd never be able to tell he was drunk. Only thing that changes about him is he starts adding a word in French here or there.

Ford Phillips: No I don't.

Fig Wineshine: Ok then. Bixby! Two of whatever's easiest for your favorite gals.

Bixby Crane: Two waters, coming right up.

[Bixby gets to work making the drinks.]

Fig Wineshine: Fill me in, bubs.

Ford Phillips: Barnaby got a letter. Seems to be the same person who threatened Willy and Cliff. This thing's gonna encompass the whole damn town pretty soon.

Wilhelmina Vanderjetski: Well I certainly feel like I'm part of something special.

Ford Phillips: Willy, you're a real pantalon vert, ya know?

Fig Wineshine (Voice Over): Oh, that was the other thing about Ford. He didn't actually speak French.

Fig Wineshine: Hey bud, that means "green pants". Bix! Let's cut Ford off.

[A DRUMROLL from the stage.]

The Emcee: And now! From all the way across the country... here for only a short time... they're the Twins from Times Square, the Geminis of Gotham City, the Brother and Sister from the Big Apple... it's the Punchwhistle Twins!

Lex Punchwhistle: Hello Los Angeles! I'm Lex and this is Rex. And we're so happy to be here in the city of angels. Haven't seen an angel yet, but I did meet a man on the street today who told me he could take me to heaven.

Rex Punchwhistle: And did he?

Lex Punchwhistle: Turns out heaven was the name of his hot dog stand on the corner of Hollywood and Vine. And no, that's not a euphemism and yes, I did eat seven!

[The audience laughs.]

Rex Punchwhistle: Hoo-ey! And now it's time for the miming portion of our show!

[SFX: Vaudeville piano music as they mime.]

Fig Wineshine: Bixby, tell me you let Vivian go to make room for these two.

Bixby Crane: Oh goodness, I didn't have to let her go. She's allowed to leave the building on her own accord.

Fig Wineshine: Yeah... I just meant... nevermind.

Ford Phillips: Speak of the devil.

Vivian Nightingale: Well, well, well, look at my private eyes, drinking on the clock, I presume?

Ford Phillips: If the clock is running, I'm drinking.

Fig Wineshine: You came in on your night off? Wow, you must love the Punchwhistle Twins.

Vivian Nightingale: Mmm, not really my kind of act, I had to pick up my check. But give the people what they want. Which I guess right now is... pretending to be in a glass box.

Fig Wineshine: Elevator going to the moon. Also, I think one of them is a dinosaur.

Ford Phillips: Sorry to hear about Barnaby's troubles.

Vivian Nightingale: Oh, it's fine.

Fig Wineshine: You don't seem too bothered by it.

Vivian Nightingale: He wanted to be big and important, he'll simply have to accept the consequences. Plus, now he'll have some help.

Ford Phillips: What do you mean?

Vivian Nightingale: Oh, look at this. I just happen to have an early edition of tomorrow's paper.

[Vivian PULLS OUT A NEWSPAPER and PLOPS IT ON THE BAR.]

Ford Phillips (Voice Over): There it was, on the front page of tomorrow's Nightingale Gazette: "THREATENING LETTERS TARGET ACTORS; HOLLYWOOD IN PERIL".

Vivian Nightingale: Fear sells. And I think someone just got what they wanted. Not you though.
(beat) Alright, what are they trying to do now?

[Some LIGHT APPLAUSE.]

Lex Punchwhistle: Thank you all! That was Charlie Chaplin being thrown out of the Pyramids of Giza. And now? A reenactment of our birth. Rex, fetch the placenta.

[The Case of the Greater Gatsby closing theme music plays]

Mary Kate Wiles: Shipwrecked Comedy resents The Case of the Greater Gatsby

Written and created by Sean Persaud and Sinead Persaud

Directed by William Joseph Stribling

Featuring:

Sean Persaud as Ford Phillips

Joanna Sotomura as Claudette Knickerbocker

Tommy Hobson as Barnaby Nightingale

Sinead Persaud as Fig Wineshine

Parvesh Cheena as Whitley Trufflehaus

Ginny Di as Darby Farnsworth

Carlos Alazraqui as Leery O'Shaughnessey

Sarah Grace Hart as Wilhelmina Vanderjetski

Lauren Lopez as Penny Nickelpenny

Esther Fallick as Lex Punchwhistle

Brian Rosenthal as Rex Punchwhistle

Christopher Higgins as the Emcee

Dante Swain as Bixby Crane

And Mary Kate Wiles as Vivian Nightingale

Original music by Dylan Glatthorn

Audio recording by Ears Up Studio and Noah Hunt Audio

Mixing and Sound Design by Lizzie Goldsmith

Executive Producers Paul Komoroski & Michael Walsh

Produced by Sean Persaud, Sinead Persaud, and Mary Kate Wiles

Special thanks to Kickstarter backers Katie Adamczyk, Ally Bertz Brown, Zainab Khan, Shao Chih Kuo, Jane Leach, Avalee Long, Lisel Perrine, Halsea Root, The Rude Mechanicals, Heather Tennant, and Justin Waterman.

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