

THE GOON SHOW:
THE FEAR OF WAGES

First broadcast on March 6, 1956. Script by Spike Milligan and Larry Stephens. Produced by Pat Dixon. Announced by Wallace Greenslade. Orchestra conducted by Wally Stott. Transcribed by Debby Stark, corrections by Peter Olausson.

Greenslade:

This is the BBC. Enter a short idiot.

Secombe:

Good evening, folks. I commence by walking backward for Christmas.

Greenslade:

Why?

Secombe:

It's all the rage! *[Laughter]* Next, an excerpt from East Lynn: "Dead, dead, and never called me mother!"

Eccles:

But you were his father.

Secombe:

Shut up, the famous Eccles!

Eccles:

Shut up...

Greenslade:

[Impatiently] Mr. Secombe, Mr. Secombe,...

Eccles:

Mr. Secombe.

Greenslade:

Please remove that false bald woman's wig.

Secombe:

And leave myself naked in the mating season? Ha-ha! Never!

Greenslade:

Very well. I sentence you to the highly esteemed Goon Show!

FX:

[Sickly trumpet blare]

Secombe:

They can go home today – Presenting Wallace Greenslade and his daring announcement entitled:

Greenslade:

La saleur d'la peur

Secombe:

Meaning "The Wages of Fear", or in England:

William:

The Fear of Wages! Ohhhh!

FX:

[Musical crescendo]

Greenslade:

Part 1. The Missing Regiment.

FX:

[Gunfire]

Sellers:

Burma, sixth of March, 1956.

Seagoon:

These Japs can't hold out much longer.

Bloodnok:

Oh, I don't know, this is the 14th year we've been fighting 'em.

Seagoon:

Don't worry, Major, they can't stand much more of your drunken singing and bottle throwing.

Bloodnok:

I'm only doing my duty, sir! And they'd better surrender soon, we've had no food or pay since that silly telegram.

Seagoon:

Telegram? What...? Give it here! *[Opens note]* Um, "British 14th, Burma. Japan has surrendered, end of World War II. Book now for World War III." Dated: August, 1945?

Bloodnok:

Yes, yes, I, well, I've never shown it to you before because it was obviously the work of a practical joker.

Seagoon:

Well, I can – I can only hope it is!

Abdul:

Stop, stop, stop! A Japanese officer is attacking us with a white flag, hooray!

Seagoon:

Gad! And it's a new Mark III armor piercing-type white flag.

Throat:

Cor, blimey; I'm off.

Bloodnok:

Ah, look, look, look, don't panic! I'll show that Jap a thing or two. Help me up with my jodhpurs now.

Seagoon:

No, Major, please!

Bloodnok:

Out of my way! Just look at that!

Seagoon:

Dear Listener: From the waist onwards, Bloodnok was tattooed with a pair of false legs – facing the wrong way.

Bloodnok:

Yes, they're all the rage, you know.

Yakamoto:

[In fake Japanese accent throughout] Please do not shoot!

Seagoon:

Come forward, military Japanese gentleman, but keep your right leg raised.

Yakamoto:

Please, I am General Yakamoto, Commander of all Imperial Japanese troops in that tree.

Seagoon:

Well?

Yakamoto:

[Japanese mumble] Request, please: have unexpectedly run short of ammunition. Please, can we borrow two boxes until the end of the war?

Bloodnok:

These Japanese are always on the tap... You haven't returned our lawn mower yet!

Yakamoto:

I – yukabah – I am velly solly but have not finished mowing jungle.

Bloodnok:

No! No more credit! Clear off!

Yakamoto:

Then am forced to surrender.

Seagoon:

Surrender? This means war!

Yakamoto:

What? I'm solly, have no alternative. To whom do we surrender honorable Japanese military stores, please?

Bloodnok:

Stores? You've got stores?

Yakamoto:

Yes, I've got stores. 1,000 tons of nitroglycerin.

Bloodnok:

Oh.

Yakamoto:

And 2,000 cans of sake

Bloodnok:

Ehh!

Yakamoto:

*[Aside]*Sake being potent Japanese rice wine.

Bloodnok:

Sake being potent Japanese rice wine...?

Yakamoto:

Yes, sir!

Bloodnok:

Ohhhh! I am forced, forced to accept your 2,000-cans-of-sake surrender. Stack it under me bed, will you?

Yakamoto:

Which are your tents, please?

Bloodnok:

The white one with the red cross on it and the, ah, three dummy nurses outside. Go on, don't say you don't trust me.

Yakamoto:

I don't trust you.

Bloodnok:

Swine, I told you not to say it! Hand me my Royal Engineers saxophone, issue type. Quick, march! *[Plays, fading away]*

Seagoon:

Gad, what a day this has been! A triumph for British arms! Now I must inform the War Office that after 14 years of fighting, the Japanese army in that tree has finally surrendered!

FX:

[Coins falling into callbox. Dialing, Land of Hope and Glory plays in background]

Seagoon:

Dial on, brave telephone! Send those triumphant, electric-type pulses athwart the sleeping continent to the automatic-type exchanges in London and list^[en]...

FX:

[Phone rings]

Seagoon:

Even now sounds the tintinnabulation of the phone bell that will arouse the helmsmen of England to whom I carry the victorious news!

Answer:

Battersea Dog's Home, mate.

Seagoon:

Curse, wrong number. I shall have hurry through to *The Fear of Wages*, part...

Greenslade:

Do you mind? Do you mind? *[Seacombe gives Greenslade a raspberry]* I'll make this announcement.

Seagoon:

Thank you, Wal.

Greenslade:

The Fear of Wages, part II. The same day, four hours later.

FX:

[Music]

Moriarty:

Ooooh! Money! Money-money-money! Little money, money, money, money! Oheooheeeoh!
Lovely money! It's all the rage!

Grytpype-Thynne:

Moriarty, shhh... pull that transparent blind down, you fool! Now, have you sewn that £10,000
into the lining of your socks?

Moriarty:

Yes.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Then help me get this £100 in fivers under my wig.

Moriarty:

Right! *[Sounds of lifting]* Down on your right hand... Back a bit... Ah... Right... Ah, there.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Good man. Any more left?

Moriarty:

Only this £50,000 in loose silver.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Oh. Now where can I hide that? *[Snaps fingers]* I've got it! Moriarty? Say "Ahhh"...

Moriarty:

Ahhh...

FX:

[Shovelling, swallowing]

Grytpype-Thynne:

Now, Moriarty, keep your mouth shut, I don't want... *[Phone rings]* Army Pay Corps here, Chief
Cashier speaking... Yes... What? Moriarty!

Moriarty:

What? *[Silver spills]* I – I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I...

Grytpype-Thynne:

Yes, never mind about that. Moriarty, we're, we're in the grit cart now. Remember the 3rd
Armored Thunderboxes who vanished in Burma 10 years ago?

Moriarty:

Yes, yes, yes, yes?

Grytpype-Thynne:

Well, they're still alive.

Moriarty:

Ohhh!

Grytpype-Thynne:

And that was their commander, Seagoon.

Moriarty:

Oheeeoh!-type Oh! But we spent all their back pay!

Grytpype-Thynne:

Yes.

Moriarty:

£40,000! It's a prissy court marshal, cashiered, shot at dawn, take aim, fire, bang [*Hums Taps*]

Grytpype-Thynne:

Now, don't panic,...

Moriarty:

Tff tff tff [*indistinct noises*]

Grytpype-Thynne:

...Don't panic, my malodorous Gaelic charlie, we'll have to think of something else. Meanwhile, Max Geldry and his chromatic clinge... [*Fades*]

Moriarty:

Oh, the horrors of [*inaudible*]

Max Geldry and Orchestra

[*Music interlude: "Side by Side"*]

Orchestra

[*Dramatic chord*]

Greenslade:

Night in the jungle encampment of the 4th Armored Thunderboxes.

FX:

[*Jungle sounds*]

Bloodnok:

[*Writing*] Dear Sirs: I am a keen art student over the age of 21. Please forward me your selection of continental art studies in the plain wrapper, care of C. N. Stokes...

Seagoon:

[*Distant*] Major Bloodnok!

Bloodnok:

What? Oh, don't come in for a minute, don't come in. Abdul, quick, put screens round my bed. Ohhh. Come in, Seagoon.

Seagoon:

Thank you. Major. I was just walking backwards for Christmas and I thought – Oh, ah [*clears throat*], ha-ha, I beg your pardon, madam, I –

Bloodnok:

Get behind that screen, Gladys! Judy, Judy, Judy, my wife, you know, yes... We're just good friends of course...

Seagoon:

Major...

Bloodnok:

What, what?

Seagoon:

Grave-type news. I've spoken to Whitehall...

Bloodnok:

Um-hmm?

Seagoon:

...And Pay Corps deny that we're alive!

Bloodnok:

What! I've never had a day's death in my life! And what about our ten-year's back pay? Did you tell them we've been fighting all this time?

Seagoon:

I did. But they said these Japs we are fighting must be forgeries!

Bloodnok:

You mean... They're worthless?

Seagoon:

They said no bank would cash them.

Bloodnok:

Well, there's only one way to get our back pay: We must return to England with the entire Japanese army in that tree there.

Seagoon:

Gad, yes. Sergeant Goldberg?

Goldberg [*Irish accent*]:

Yes, sir! What is it, sir?

Seagoon:

Uproot that tree and replant it in the back of the lorry, and try not to shake any Japs down.

Goldberg:

Wills you be taking all that Japanese liquor and wine with you?

Bloodnok:

The sake, oh, yes, of course, yes, and don't forget those screens around my bed, it's all the rage, you know, I must have the old screens... Oh, the old screens...

Seagoon:

You know, Bloodnok, I think we'd better leave all that nitroglycerin behind.

FX:

[*Phone rings*]

Seagoon:

Yes?

Grytpype-Thynne:

You can't leave all that nitroglycerine behind, Seagoon.

Seagoon:

I wasn't going to. I'm going to leave it behind Bloodnok. *[Laughs, clears throat]*

Grytpype-Thynne:

Naughty Neddy, no ad libbing now. Now listen, nurk – and this, dear listeners, is where we sew the seeds of Neddy's demese. *[Clears throat]* Neddy? Stand at... Ease!

FX:

[Sound of troops standing at ease]

Grytpype-Thynne:

Now, Neddy: There's no question of you leaving that naughty unexploded nitroglycerin behind. If you want your back pay, all Japanese stores must be surrendered to the War Office.

Seagoon:

But... It's so dangerous. Nitroglycerin in a lorry?

Grytpype-Thynne:

Yes! *[Evil laughter]*

FX:

[Evil musical notes; scene-change music]

Greenslade:

Dawn, and the 4th Armored Thunderboxes prepare for the long journey home.

Seagoon:

Are the lorries warmed up?

Bloodnok:

Yes, we've had them in the oven all night. How do you like yours?

Seagoon:

Medium rare.

Bloodnok:

Splendid, splendid! Then you'd better drive the medium rare lorry carrying the nitro.

Seagoon:

[Gulps] I, ah, I... *[laughs]* I'd rather drive the lorry with the sake.

Bloodnok:

Oh, but you're a teetotaler. No, I insist on driving with the sake.

Seagoon:

Why?

Bloodnok:

Well, it's a long, long story, er, I mean, I... Well, ah... There's a little yellow idol to the north of Kath –

Seagoon:

Yes, I know.

Bloodnok:

What?

Seagoon:

But I refuse to drive the nitro lorry.

Bloodnok:

Why not?

Seagoon:

Well, it's a long story. You see, there's a little yellow idol to the north of Kathmandu –

Bloodnok:

Shut up, Seagoon. And here's a record of me saying it.

Recording of Bloodnok:

Shut up, Seagoon.

Recording of Eccles:

Shut up, Seagoon.

Recording of Bloodnok:

And shut up, the Famous Eccles.

Recording of Eccles:

Shut up, the Famous Eccles.

Recording of Bloodnok:

Shut up.

Recording of Eccles:

Shut up.

Recording of Bloodnok:

Get off this record at once!

Recording of Eccles:

Okay. *[Running closer]*

Eccles:

[Live] Hallo!

Seagoon:

Private Eccles! Just the man! You see that lorry that everybody's keeping clear of?

Eccles:

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Seagoon:

Good, good, goodgoodgood *[etc.]*

Eccles:

Yeah?

Seagoon:

Well, drive it back to London – gently.

Eccles:

Okay! Okay! Goodbye!

FX:

[Lorry drives away. then, terrific explosion]

Eccles:

[Quietly] A good job I wasn't on it.

Seagoon:

What? Then who was driving it?

Bluebottle:

You rotten swine, you... *[Applause]* Eheeheehee! I was kipping in the bed of that lorry, like a happy boy traveler, when Blungee! I was blown backwards out of my boots.

Seagoon:

Little blackened, hairless, singed goon.

Bluebottle:

Ehee!

Seagoon:

What were you doing in that lorry?

Bluebottle:

Well, it's a long story, Captain. You see, there's a little cardboard idol to the north of East Finchley and the smoke was –

Seagoon:

Shh, here's Ray Ellington

Bluebottle:

Oh, imagine that...

Ray Ellington Quartet

[Musical interlude: "Pink champagne"]

Greenslade:

That was Ray Ellington, the demon plaster, but then you'll have guessed. And now, *The Fear of Wages* part the scand. Five weeks of travel saw the lorries well on their way.

FX:

[Lorry sounds]

Bloodnok:

[Drinking]

Seagoon:

Bloodnok, Bloodnok, you must stop drinking that sake. Without it, no back pay.

Bloodnok:

Oh, just this one. It's thirsty work this drinking, you know.

Yakamoto:

[Aside] Little do English fool know that it are not sake he are drinking but nitroglycerine that I substitute, ha-ha-ha in Japanese.

Bloodnok:

Keep quiet up that tree there!

Yakamoto:

Sorry, was just giving listeners story of plot.

Greenslade:

Meanwhile, in England at Number 10 Thrif Street.

Voices:

[People mulling about as in Parliament – rhubarb, rhubarb, custard, and rhubarb]

Secombe:

Custard

Moriarty:

Grytpype, you say the nitro exploded when they were in the lorry?

Grytpype-Thynne:

Yes, Fred. Our little plan went for a bust. That's why I've arranged this meeting.

Chancellor of the Exchequer:

I say, are you positive that this missing regiment has reappeared, and is even now on its way back to England?

Grytpype-Thynne:

Yes, Mister Chancellor of the Exchequer. And, according to our records, their combined back pay and accrued interest amounts to £33 million.

Chancellor of the Exchequer:

Oh, dear dear dear dear, this will ruin my budget.

MP:

You have already ruined it yourself.

Chancellor of the Exchequer:

Stop it you sinful people! That regiment must be stopped before it reaches England!

Grytpype-Thynne:

Yes, we'll declare war on them.

Chancellor of the Exchequer:

What? England can't declare war on English troops!

Grytpype-Thynne:

Why not? Everyone else does.

Chancellor of the Exchequer:

No, no, no, no, we must get a foreign power to do it.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Well, chose one.

Chancellor of the Exchequer:

Well, Japan isn't doing anything at the moment.

Grytpype-Thynne:

I'll inform Tokyo at once.

Chancellor of the Exchequer:

Right.

Grytpype-Thynne:

[Yells to Tokyo] Hello, Tokyo!

Tokyo (Seacombe):

[Blather] Ing-tong itle-eye-po! Needle-nodle-noo!

Grytpype-Thynne:

Declare war on the 4th Armored Thunderboxes, now in Burma.

Tokyo:

I do that – Hello, Commander of the Imperial Japanese forces in that tree on back of lorry in Burma.

Yakamoto:

Yes, sir?

Tokyo:

Declare war on 4th Armored Thunderboxes.

Yakamoto:

I do. Very good. Fire!

FX:

[Shout, gunfire]

Seagoon:

Bloodnok, stop the lorry! Those Japs are firing at us!

Bloodnok:

Those treacherous devils! Help me off with me jodhpurs!

Seagoon:

No, Major, please! They know that tattooed leg trick now.

Bloodnok:

Well, there you are, it's done the trick, they've stopped firing.

Yakamoto:

Yes, I've run out of ammunition.

Bloodnok:

Well, there's no dice here, you've had enough on tic for a month already.

Yakamoto:

Wait a minute. Please tell me how much we owe.

Bloodnok:

Seagoon, play him back his account.

Seagoon:

Right-O *[something short on Japanese-sounding harp]* and six pence ha'penny.

Yakamoto:

Please, *[inaudible]*, please, I promise I pay you back at rate of *[something else short on Japanese-sounding harp]* a week.

Bloodnok:

Seagoon, how much is *[Yakamoto's harp music]* in English money?

Seagoon:

It's about *[English calliope music]*, sir.

Bloodnok:

It's not enough, you hear. Here, hold me trowsers. I'll...

Seagoon:

No!

Bloodnok:

I'll get him out of that tree... *[Sawing, gun fire]* The treacherous devils! They've found more ammunition! They must have had a Red Cross parcel from home!

Seagoon:

Quick! Quick, onto the driving cab, it's bullet proof.

Bloodnok:

Splendid! We can drive on and continue engaging the enemy in that tree in the back of the lorry all at the same time!

Seagoon:

A magnificent exposition of the plot, Bloodnok!

Bloodnok:

Thank you!

Seagoon:

And under enemy fire, too!

Bloodnok:

Of course!

Seagoon:

Have a knighthood.

Bloodnok:

Oh, ta, mate.

Seagoon:

Right, then. Drive on, Sir Dennis!

Bloodnok:

Beep beep! Oooh!

FX:

[Sounds of driving, gunfire, fighting; Seagoon: "You..." Major: "Careful, don't antagonize them, Seagoon." Seagoon: "Take your hands off Bloodnok." etc, all the way to Parliament, where people are milling around. Land of Hope and Glory, followed by more rhubarb, rhubarb, custard and rhubarb, cabinet meeting, rhubarb...]

Grytpype-Thynne:

Well, thank you for your cabinet meeting rhubarbs. Now, gentlemen, our plan to stop the 4th Armored Thunderboxes has failed.

MP 1:

Oh!

Grytpype-Thynne:

We shall probably have to give them all their back pay.

MPs:

What,what,whawhawhawhat?

MP 2:

I said it first.

MP 1:

Custard.

MP 2:

Watch it.

Chancellor of the Exchequer:

Even if the Japanese declare World War III on them?

Grytpype-Thynne:

Yes, but Seagoon has managed to get the war on the back of the lorry and is driving it here.

Chancellor of the Exchequer:

Horrors!

FX:

[General pandemonium]

Grytpype-Thynne:

Moriarty, Moriarty.

Moriarty:

Yes?

Grytpype-Thynne:

I must get in touch with them. What is the number of that lorry?

Moriarty:

Ah, GXX-639

Grytpype-Thynne:

[Dialing] G.. X.. K.. 6.. 3.. 9...

FX:

[At the war, a phone rings]

Seagoon:

Take the wheel, Bloodnok. *[On phone]* Hallo, World War III speaking.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Where are you speaking from?

Seagoon:

We're just rolling up outside Number 10 Thrif Street. *[Knocks on door]* That's us at the door now.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Moriarty, answer it.

FX:

[Opens door]

Seagoon:

Now, where's our back pay?

Moriarty:

Back pay? *[Makes worried sounds]* Saprستي *[etc]*

Grytpype-Thynne:

Moriarty, stop shaving your head. Welcome, Col. Seagoon, welcome. Now, before you get your back pay, there is a little matter of handing over the enemy stores.

Seagoon:

There's the lorry, the captured Japanese force is up that tree, but the nitroglycerine exploded.

Grytpype-Thynne:

And the thousand cans of sake?

Seagoon:

[Gulps] Ah, I'm afraid... Bloodnok drank it.

Grytpype-Thynne:

Well, I'm sorry, Seagoon. No sake, no back pay.

Seagoon:

What! Eccles? Get an empty bucket, quick! Now, grab Bloodnok's ankles. *[Grabs Bloodnok]*

Bloodnok:

What's going on here –

Seagoon:

Hold his head over the bucket. Now, shake him, come on.

Bloodnok:

[Makes being shaken sounds]

Seagoon:

No sake, no pay...

Greenslade:

Listeners will recall that Bloodnok has not been-drinking sake, but nitroglycerine. Therefore...

FX:

[Terrific explosion and building pieces falling all about]

Greenslade:

And so ended World War III. Book now for World War IV.

Bluebottle:

Mr. Greenslinge? Would you mind telling the nice people that I have not been deaded this week?

Greenslade:

Certainly. Ladies and Gentlemen *[Bluebottle mimics him quietly from here]*, it is both a privilege and a pleasure to announce that – shut up, Bluebottle!

Bluebottle:

Shut up, Bluebottle!

Greenslade:

Shut up!

Bluebottle:

Shut up!

Greenslade:

A privilege and a pleasure [*Bluebottle reads along again in background*] to announce that the lad, Bluebottle, was not deaded this week.

Bluebottle:

...This week... Gee, and that was a good game, that was, wasn't it? I like that! Hee-hee-hee!

Orchestra:

[End theme]

Greenslade:

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 and Larry Stevens, announcer Wallace Greenslade, the program produced by Pat Dickson.