

WHAT'S UP, PETER FUDDY?

Written by

Erik Moe

Characters developed by Erik Moe and Jay Kogen

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INT. THE FUDDY BATHROOM - DAY

PETER FUDDY is showering in slow motion. This scene has the feel of those "Investigative Reports" recreations. Very dramatic, stylized. We hear Peter's voice and that of JARETT RICHARDS, as they discuss the action.

PETER VO

It was last Thursday. I was getting ready to go out for a nice dinner with Samantha. I was washing my feet.

JARETT VO

Washing your feet?

PETER VO

That's right and I was supporting myself with one hand on the shower door. Suddenly...

In slow-motion we see the glass shower door give way under the strain. It pops off its moorings and shatters on the tile floor. There is glass everywhere. Close-up of Peter's reaction, his surprised face dripping with shampoo.

PETER VO (cont'd)

I was trapped. Thousands of pointy glass shards stood between me and the safety of the hallway.

JARETT VO

Sounds like a pretty dangerous situation.

PETER VO

You're not kidding. I called to my wife.

PETER

(slo-mo) Saaamaaanthaaaa!

We see Samantha enter. She looks from the glass to her naked, frightened husband. She bolts for the linen closet.

PETER VO

Thinking quickly, she created an ingenious towel bridge over the glass. Slowly, carefully, I was able to make my way to freedom.

We see Peter gingerly cross the towel bridge. He and Samantha embrace as he reaches the hallway.

JARETT VO

You must've been relieved.

PETER VO

Only for a moment.

CONTINUED:

He and Samantha pull back from their embrace. Peter is wincing.

PETER VO (cont'd)

You see, what I hadn't noticed was that the glass had also become lodged in my body hair.

JARETT VO

No!

PETER VO

Samantha was calm. She led me out onto the back patio. Her plan was to use our new high-pressure hose to flush the offending shards.

JARETT VO

Sounds reasonable.

PETER VO

I thought so too. Until that cold water hit my pale, naked flesh.

JARETT VO

And what happened?

PETER

What do you think? I shrieked like a schoolgirl.

In regular speed now we see Peter screaming.

Cut to the alarmed faces of TRAVIS AND SHEILA MONCRIEF, the next door neighbors, as they peer over the fence.

Cut to Peter's son WAYNE FUDDY, and six cub scout friends as they race around the corner.

Freeze frame on Peter as he shivers in shame.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

INT. "WHAT'S UP, PETER FUDDY?" STUDIO - DAY

Peter Fuddy and Jarett Richards are on a talk show set. Peter is seated on a couch, Jarett, wearing coat and tie, is at a desk. Behind them is the monitor and a "What's Up, Peter Fuddy?" sign.

JARETT

And the point of this story?

PETER

Well, the point is, Jarett, when you're in a marriage, you see your spouse at their absolute weakest moments.

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

PETER (cont'd)

Sometimes it's sort of hard to keep the romance alive.

JARETT

You didn't exactly feel like a romantic ideal shivering on the back patio, did you?

PETER

No. And when you know that you're not always your wife's dream man, well, maybe sometimes you can get a little paranoid about what you perceive as an "external threat."

JARETT

And this week, you came to regard Naperville Learning Annex instructor Martin Birk, pictured here, as an "external threat"?

We see a picture of a handsome, rugged man superimposed on the monitor over the unflattering freeze-frame of Peter. The contrast is striking.

PETER

I guess.

JARETT

We'll be back.

END OF COLD OPENING

INT. "WHAT'S UP, PETER FUDDY? STUDIO - DAY

The "What's Up, Peter Fuddy?" theme song is being played by an orchestra led by bandleader BILLY PERKINS as we push into the set.

JARETT

(clapping) The "What's Up, Peter Fuddy?" orchestra. Aren't they great? Thank you, Billy. (he turns to Peter) Peter, take us back to where this situation began to develop.

PETER

I guess that would be last Friday night, in the the break room at work. We were having another ping pong tournament.

INT. THE BREAK ROOM AT TRI-STATE INSURANCE - TUESDAY NIGHT

A group of people are watching an intense ping-pong match. Peter's friend TRAVIS MONCRIEF, is laying waste to another opponent.

TRAVIS

Boo-yaa! Next victim please.

Travis does a little gloating hip-gyration move. His opponent, the just-vanquished STAN FERNSTEN, takes the chair next to Peter. Peter is keeping score and tabulating rankings.

STAN

Dude, what's with your friend?

PETER

You have to give Travis his due. He's really moving up the rankings.

STAN

Getting mighty sick of that "Boo-yaa" crap though. It wouldn't bother me so much but the guy doesn't even work here.

Travis wins another point.

TRAVIS

Who's your daddy? I ask you, who is your daddy?!

PETER

I'll talk to him, okay? You're up on table three.

STAN

I gotta get goin', my wife's waiting for me.

CONTINUED:

PETER

Okay.

STAN

Hey, how is it you've been able to stay for all the tournaments, lately? Isn't Samantha riding you?

PETER

She's got a class over at the Learning Annex on Friday nights. Really been getting into it.

STAN

Lucky bastard. My wife was into a pottery for a while last year. Three nights a week! I was living the high life. Poker, basketball...

PETER

Wow, guess she lost interest though, huh?

STAN

(matter of fact) Nah, I found out she was sleeping with the instructor. Well, see you tomorrow.

Stan leaves. Push in on Peter's face as he watches him go. A ping-pong ball flies past him.

TRAVIS (O.S.)

Boo-yaa!

INT. "WHAT'S UP, PETER FUDDY?" STUDIO - DAY

JARETT

And thus the seed was planted?

PETER

It just got me thinking. It's not like I don't trust Samantha. We have a great relationship.

JARETT

And yet?

PETER

Well, it's just that she talks about this teacher all the time at home. And she seems different lately.

JARETT

Inspired maybe? Intellectually engaged? What's wrong with that?

CONTINUED:

PETER

Nothing. I want her to be happy. (then)
Just not that happy.

INT. THE FUDDY LIVING ROOM - SATURDAY MORNING

Peter and Wayne are on the couch eating Fruit Loops and laughing at cartoons.

WAYNE

Ha, ha. The coyote got squished!

PETER

Ha! (enthusiastically) Never trust the
Acme corporation, son.

Samantha enters breezily..

Peter switches the channel.

WAYNE

Hey!

PETER

Morning, hon.

SAMANTHA

Hey, guys.

She kisses them.

SAMANTHA (cont'd)

Watching a little...(puzzled)... C-Span,
huh?

PETER

Just broadening the boy.

Wayne wrestles the remote away from his father and flips it back to the cartoons. Peter follows Samantha into the kitchen.

PETER (cont'd)

So, how was class last night?

SAMANTHA

Oh, it was great. Martin was on fire.
We were breaking down this Voltaire
sonnet and he was drawing all these
parallels to some of the existential beat
poets and..(she realizes she's rambling)
Anyway, it was fun.

PETER

Yeah, Voltaire, he's, he's really
something.

CONTINUED:

SAMANTHA

How was ping-pong?

PETER

Good. Hey, you're really getting into this class, huh?

SAMANTHA

Honey, I can't even tell you how inspired I am. It's so nice to be challenged again, you know? I mean, you can only take so much Barney and Roadrunner.

PETER

Yeah. And this teacher's good?

SAMANTHA

Oh. Martin is just so passionate about the material. It's infectious.

PETER

Infectious.

SAMANTHA

Well, I gotta go to the bookstore. You and Wayne have fun.

PETER

Yeah. Have an...existential morning, heh-heh.

SAMANTHA

That's a good one. The class'll get a kick out of that. Bye.

She leaves.

INT. "WHAT'S UP, PETER FUDDY?" STUDIO - DAY

The band is wrapping up another tune. Jarett is tapping along with his pencils ala Johnny Carson.

JARETT

(to bandleader) Yowza! Good stuff, Billy. So whattya think? Does Peter have anything to worry about here?

BILLY PERKINS

Mmmm, tough one. I'd say there are danger signs.

PETER

See!

CONTINUED:

BILLY PERKINS

I mean I trust Samantha too, but the wild card here is that this Martin guy is a writer. And women get weird around any sort of artist.

PETER

They get crazy.

BILLY PERKINS

Not to the level they do with musicians of course--I could tell you some stories--but there is reason for concern.

PETER

That's all I'm saying. I was justified.

JARETT

Well, let's take a look at how your paranoia grew.

PETER

I don't know if I was being paranoid.

JARETT

Then let's just call you curious when you immediately loaded up Wayne and headed down to the Naperville Learning Annex.

INT. NAPERVILLE LEARNING ANNEX - DAY

A furtive Peter strolls around the lobby with Wayne. A perky RECEPTIONIST mans the counter.

WAYNE

I thought you said we were going to Burger King.

PETER

In a minute.

RECEPTIONIST

Hidy-ho. Can I help you with something?

PETER

What? No, no, I'm just looking around.

RECEPTIONIST

Okay.

PETER

Thinking about maybe taking a class.

RECEPTIONIST

Well, as you can see on the board there, we've got a lot to offer.

CONTINUED:

Peter looks at the board..

PETER

Do a lot of people take this class about spore collecting?

RECEPTIONIST

Oh, we've got everything here at the NLA. What are you interested in?

PETER

I don't know. Literature maybe.

RECEPTIONIST

Well, you're in luck. We have the most wonderful teacher on staff now. Martin Birk. He's a real published author and everything.

PETER

Really? Published author? Must be kind of a nerdy, bookwormy type, huh?

RECEPTIONIST

Hardly. He also teaches our Tai Bo class. There's a picture of him on the brochure there.

Peter picks up the brochure and takes a hard look at Martin Birk. Wayne looks at it too.

WAYNE

Is that a movie star, dad?

INT. "WHAT'S UP, PETER FUDDY?" STUDIO - DAY

JARETT

Did you feel threatened by Martin Birk?

PETER

Well, maybe on some level when a guy like this is around...

JARETT

It forces you to take stock in yourself?

PETER

Maybe. I mean what do I bring to the table? Sure, I have a steady if unglamorous job at an insurance company, sure I don't drink that much anymore...

JARETT

But maybe Samantha's getting tired of you? Maybe you don't challenge her enough?

CONTINUED:

PETER

All I know is that this guy was getting
in my head. I started acting goofy.

INT. THE FUDDY HOME - FRIDAY NIGHT

Peter is sitting at the kitchen table eating some chicken.
Travis enters.

TRAVIS

The Fud-man.

PETER

Oh, hey, Travis.

Travis brandishes a new ping-pong paddle.

TRAVIS

I got a new ax. Vulcanized Teflon, baby.
A whole new world of whup-ass for your
insurance boys. You ready to roll?

PETER

I don't think I'm going.

TRAVIS

What do you mean?

PETER

Nothing, I just thought maybe I'd tag
along to Samantha's class tonight.

TRAVIS

What? No. C'mon I can't go there by
myself.

PETER

Why not?

TRAVIS

I think some of your co-workers might be
starting to resent my complete domination
of them.

PETER

Well, sorry, but I'm not going.

Travis pulls up a chair.

TRAVIS

Alright, what's this about, Fuds? Share.

PETER

Travis, man, I'm losing it.

TRAVIS

C'mon.