



FOREVER FERNWOOD



EPISODE #416

by

MITCH MARKOWITZ

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PRODUCTION

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

TOM	GREG MULLAVEY
CATHY	DEBRALEE SCOTT
GEORGE	PHIL BRUNS
MERLE	DABNEY COLEMAN
WANDA	MARIAN MERCER
PENNY	JUDY KAHAN
ELEANOR	SHELLEY FABARES
TRUSS	BEN PIAZZA
JEFFREY	RANDALL CARVER
PIERSALL	RONNIE SCHELL

SETS

<u>ACT I</u> (Page 1)	<u>INT. CABIN - DAY</u> (Tom, Penny, George, and Truss)
<u>ACT II</u> (Page 13)	<u>INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT</u> (Cathy and Piersall)
<u>ACT III</u> (Page 21)	<u>INT. MAJOR LIVING ROOM - NIGHT</u> (Merle, Wanda and Eleanor)
<u>ACT IV</u> (Page 27)	<u>INT. CABIN - NIGHT</u> (Truss and Jeffrey)

ACT ONE

INT. CABIN DAY

PENNY IS SITTING IN A CHAIR ATTENTIVELY. TRUSS IS TALKING TO HER. HE STARTS GOING FOR THE TOWEL. A CLOSER LOOK REVEALS IT CONCEALING A HYPODERMIC NEEDLE.

TRUSS

Now, Penny dear, you are about to go into outer space and meet some alien beings. Do you have any questions?

PENNY

Will I need shots?

TRUSS DROPS HIS HYPODERMIC NEEDLE. AT THIS POINT PENNY SWINGS AROUND. TRUSS, STARTLED, IS IN THE ACT OF REACHING FOR THE NEEDLE, PULLS HIS HAND BACK, AND COVERS THE NEEDLE WITH HIS FOOT.

TRUSS

Excuse me, I get a little nervous when someone watches me.

PENNY

What are you doing?

TRUSS

Making preparations for the trip.

PENNY

Think it'll be a long one?

TRUSS

Yes and no.

PENNY

What does yes and no mean?

TRUSS

For you, yes. For me, no.

PENNY

Oh. (TURNS AWAY FROM TRUSS) Mel told me you people really liked Earthlings.

TRUSS TAKES THIS OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE THE NEEDLE OUT OF THE TOWEL.

TRUSS

(DISTRACTED) Well...

PENNY

(TURNING ABRUPTLY) You do, don't you?

I mean, you don't have any anti-Earth prejudices, do you?

TRUSS STICKS THE NEEDLE UNDER HIS JACKET, AGAIN THWARTED AND GETTIN ANNOYED.

TRUSS

(REPRESSED) Uh... no... I enjoy Earthlings.

PENNY

I guess it's mostly Earthlings that don't enjoy each other. (TURNS AWAY, AGAIN)

TRUSS

(PREOCCUPIED) True, true, Ms. Major.

PENNY

I'm gonna finally get to meet people from another planet! Interestingly enough, though, that's a fantasy I've never had.

TRUSS

This is going to be just wonderful. Hands across the cosmos, as it were. You should be honored that you've been chosen to be seen by them.

PENNY

Chosen? Like a raffle?

TRUSS

(PLACATING) Yes, you can use that metaphor if you insist.

PENNY

Gee, I wonder why I was chosen. You're sure they didn't want to meet Eleanor Major?

TRUSS

No, no, it was "Penny Major" all right. They signalled it to me by playing "Penny Lane" in C Major.

PENNY

That's it, all right. I guess there was no mistake.

TRUSS

Oh! Look there they are now! (POINTS
TO WINDOW)

PENNY

(JUMPING UP) Where?!

TRUSS

Out there! Near the lake. If you look
carefully you can see an alien vehicle
gathering specimens of... woodchucks!

PENNY MOVES TO WINDOW AND STRAINS
TO LOOK. TRUSS PULLS THE NEEDLE
OUT OF HIS JACKET. BUT THERE IS:

SFX: SWIFT KNOCK ON DOOR

PENNY TURNS. TRUSS FRANTICALLY
BURIES THE NEEDLE UNDER THE
TOWEL AGAIN AND STICKS IT UNDER
HIS JACKET.

TRUSS (CONT'D)

(VERY SWEETLY) Come in...

GEORGE AND TOM ENTER IN A HUFF.
GEORGE EYES THE PLACE SUSPICIOUSLY
AND, AFTER A BEAT:

GEORGE

(ANGRY) What's going on here, Truss?

TRUSS

"ON"? Something going "on"?

TOM

Yeah, that's right. My daughter is
missing, for one thing!

GEORGE

And how about all this UFO stuff?

TRUSS

U.F.O.? "Ufo"? I don't get it.

PENNY LOOKS AT TRUSS FOR GUIDANCE.
TRUSS GIVES HER A QUICK SIGN TO
"DUMMY UP."

GEORGE

Don't play dumb, Truss. Mel told Penny
who told him, who just told me that you
said you were from outer space.

TRUSS

(THINKS) Nooo... I'm from Pittsburgh.

TOM

(TO GEORGE) I told you he was from
Pennsylvania. (TO TRUSS) They said
the missing Fernwoodians were receiving
some kind of special space information
or something.

TRUSS

(POLITELY) Sounds like the stuff of
rumors, boys.

TOM

See, that's what I thought.

TRUSS NODS. GEORGE IS NOT
CONVINCED.

TOM (CONT'D)

(TO GEORGE) I told you that space stuff
is bunk. Heather's not on any planet.

GEORGE

Let's just say -- that remains to be seen.

TOM

What remains is for us to use our energies to look for Heather somewhere where she is.

TRUSS

(WHISPERS, ASIDE) Do you or don't you want to accomplish our mission?

PENNY

I do.

TRUSS

These men will thank us keeping them in the dark.

GEORGE

I don't care what anybody says. I smell an old rotting fish here. Where's Hartman's daughter, Truss?!

TRUSS

I don't know, Mr. Shumway.

GEORGE

(SHOWING BADGE) I'm in the citizens militia now, Truss, so we're talking possible police brutality here -- now where is Heather Hartman, and where are those UFO's!?

PENNY

(SOTTO VOCE, TURNS TO TRUSS) We should tell them. Why can't we tell them?

TRUSS SHRUGS. A BEAT. PENNY DOESN'T KNOW WHICH WAY TO TURN.

TOM

I don't think there are any, George.

TRUSS

That's what I say. Surely, we'd see them if they were here, gentlemen.

TOM

That makes sense...

GEORGE

Then I suppose Mel Beach was lying?

TRUSS

Friends. Emotionally, we all know that Mel Beach is a bowl of jellatin. Now, I suppose his motives were honorable, and he is a good man. So let's forgive him this one sin, and I'll pray God does the same.

TOM

(TO GEORGE) Look, let's try to find Heather, okay? There's no point in staying and arguing. There's no sign of outer space here anyway.

GEORGE

I'm not leaving without checking.
(THREATENING) I'm scouring the premises, Truss!

TRUSS

(CONFIDENT) Scour... if it makes you happy.

GEORGE HAS ALREADY STARTED OPENING
DRAWERS, THROWING THINGS OUT.
PENNY STARTS AFTER HIM.

PENNY

You're going to be sorry you did this.

GEORGE

Are you threatening me, Penny?

PENNY

Oh no, really I'm not. Just advice,
that's all.

GEORGE

Ah hah! (PULLS OUT GADGET) I suppose
this item comes from the planet Earth --
huh?!

TRUSS

(SHRUGS) It's a Norelco.

GEORGE TURNS RAZOR ON.

GEORGE

Yeah? And I suppose earth razors run
without electricity!

TRUSS

It's a rechargeable cordless, George.

TOM CROSSES TO GEORGE, CHECKS
RAZOR.

TOM

Yup, it's got floating heads.

GEORGE PUTS RAZOR BACK AND CONTINUES
SEARCHING AROUND THE HOUSE.
DISCARDING THINGS, FINALLY PICKS UP
AN ELECTRIC PENCIL SHARPENER.

TOM (CONT'D)

C'mon, George, even if outer space people were here, they wouldn't be stupid enough to leave their toilet stuff around...

GEORGE

No? Well, what the hell is this supposed to be?!

TOM SHRUGS.

TRUSS

A pencil sharpener.

GEORGE

(KNOWS HE'S WRONG)

Oh yeah...!?!

TOM

Look, Truss, we're sorry about this. It's been a tough few days.

TRUSS

(JOVIAL) Gentlemen, it's been a rare pleasure. You can feel free to search and seize my house any time you like... provided that you are looking for something.

TOM AND GEORGE PREPARE TO LEAVE.

TOM

Penny, you coming?

THERE IS A BEAT OF SILENCE. TRUSS STARES WORRIEDLY AT PENNY.

PENNY

Well, I thought I might stay for a
few moments...

TRUSS SMILES.

TOM

What for? Haven't we bothered this poor
guy enough as it is?

TRUSS

Actually, Penny wasn't bothering me at
all.

GEORGE

Come on, Tom. Let's hit the trail.

TOM

(STARTS TO GO) Okay. See you later,
Penny. Sorry about all this, Bob.

GEORGE

Don't be sorry so fast, Tom. I still
think something smells like a rat in
this cabin. (EXITS)

TOM

(INDICATING GEORGE) He's a little
emotional today. (EXITS)

TRUSS

And now, Penny, shall we pick up where
we left off?

PENNY

I'm not sure. I'd like to, but then
again, I should be with them.

TRUSS

But they're on nothing more than a wild goose chase, or a "wild little-girl chase," to be more precise.

PENNY

I know. That's why I've got to go with them, keep them calm. (STARTS FOR DOOR)
And I do so want to meet some beings from another planet. Guess I'll just have to take a rain check.

TRUSS

(GOES FOR NEEDLE) This isn't a ball game, dear, it's a close encounter.
You can't just take a 'rain check'...

PENNY

Sorry. (OPENS THE DOOR, SHOUTS OFF)

Tom! George!

TOM AND GEORGE, O.S., AD LIB
"PENNY," "YOU COMING, PEN!"

PENNY (CONT'D)

Be right with you guys!

TRUSS PUTS HIS NEEDLE BACK DOWN.

PENNY

(TO TRUSS) And don't worry, I won't tell anyone anything. (EXITS)

TRUSS

She will. How am I supposed to know where Heather Hartman is?

(MORE)

TRUSS (CONT'D)

An underworld figure like myself can be
responsible for some disappearances,
but not for every, little one!

TIME TO LEAVE TOWN. TRUSS PULLS
OUT A SUITCASE, STARTS THROWING
SOME CLOTHES AND THE RAZOR INTO
THE SUITCASE, AS WE:

FADE OUT.

ACT TWOINT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

UP ON EMPTY ROOM. A KEY IS UNLOCKING THE DOOR, PAN TO DOOR. CATHY ENTERS. AFTER A BEAT, FLASH-BULBS AND SHUTTERS FLASH RELENTLESSLY. CATHY SCREAMS, STARTLED AS PIERSALL ENTERS FROM THE BATHROOM.

PIERSALL

(EMBARRASSED) A little obvious, huh?

CATHY

What the hell are you doing in my house, Piersall?

PIERSALL

Setting up surveillance equipment. You thought it should be more subtle, right?

CATHY

No. I thought you should be out of my apartment!

PIERSALL

Look, this is the way we work. If we had to wait for dinner invitations every time we wanted to catch somebody, the Justice Department would be honest but ineffectual.

CATHY

(FRUSTRATED) Listen, maybe you don't realize it, but you're screwing up my life!

PIERSALL

That's not my intention... The Department actually prefers not to screw up lives unless it's absolutely essential.

(THINKS) Or, at least fairly important, anyway.

CATHY

That's very reassuring.

CATHY BEGINS REMOVING SOME OF PIERSALL'S EQUIPMENT FROM THE ROOM. PIERSALL RUNS AFTER HER.

PIERSALL

Wait, wait!

SHE STOPS.

PIERSALL (CONT'D)

(LEVELING WITH HER) How do you expect me to get enough dirt on your husband to convict him if we don't at least use some equipment.

CATHY

I don't know and I don't care! This stuff is... illegal, Piersall.

PIERSALL

Do you want this thing to drag on for months?! I get frustrated, too. I want bigger and better things. Mobs in Brooklyn, in New Jersey!

CATHY

I want you out!

PIERSALL

Okay, I just need a little time to think.

CATHY

Out!

PIERSALL

Look, I'll tell you what. I promise I'll be out of here in no time at all if you'll just leave the secret surveillance set-up as is, okay?

CATHY

Secret?! It's like walking into a press conference.

PIERSALL

Yes, I've heard that criticism before. It's the damn lights! Next time the lights won't flash, okay?

CATHY

No!

CATHY CROSSES TOWARD THE BATHROOM,
PEERS IN.

CATHY (CONT'D)

A remote control unit in the shower!!!
Piersall, my husband rarely spills mob secrets to me from the bathtub.

PIERSALL

(ANNOYED) Now listen here, young lady. You'd best change that off-color attitude of yours. The Justice Department hates a snotty attitude.

CATHY

And I hate your Justice Department.

PIERSALL

Shh! Don't say anything else. I'm recording all this.

CATHY

You stink, Piersall!

PIERSALL

(TO FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS) She means I need more deodorant. (TO CATHY) Listen, Cathy, just let's get your husband on tape with a few key statements about his current and past criminal activities and I'll be on my way, okay?

CATHY

Why don't you go make a tape of Wayne Newton or Elton John or somebody.

PIERSALL

Humorous. Humorous hi-jinks at the expense of your country's welfare. (TO FLOWERS) She's a sick girl, she needs treatment...

CATHY

(TO FLOWERS) Go take a hike!

PIERSALL COVERS FLOWERS TO STOP
THEM FROM HEARING, AS IF THEY
WERE A PAIR OF EARS. THEN:

PIERSALL

Listen, Cathy, forget for a minute I'm a
government agent. Just think of me as
a guy.

CATHY

As a guy, you're worse than as a
government agent.

PIERSALL

How about as your pal?

CATHY

My pal?

PIERSALL

Listen, have I ever asked you for
anything?

CATHY

Plenty.

PIERSALL

(YET ANOTHER SWITCH) Cathy, I find you
very attractive...

CATHY

No dice.

PIERSALL

(LOST) I think I'm fresh out of ploys.

CATHY

Tell you what, Piersall. I'll let you do your thing here. Not because of America, not because I like you, but because you're just the kind of boring person who never gives up, and just once I'd like to look forward to opening up a closet and not seeing your crummy face.

PIERSALL

I'm touched, Cathy.

PIERSALL CROSSES INTO THE BATHROOM AND PULLS OUT A LARGE FLOUR SACK, PLACES IT ON THE TABLE. HE TAKES OUT A STRANGE LOOKING MACHINE.

CATHY

Another secret eavesdropping device.

PIERSALL

No... a pasta maker.

CATHY

What for?

PIERSALL

(SURPRISED AT QUESTION) What for?? To make pasta. It's an old anti-mafia trick.

CATHY

How am I supposed to use that to make Jeffrey talk?

PIERSALL

As the F.B.I. often says, "make him a good pasta. He'll talk."

(PIERSALL GESTURES TO SWITCH ON WALL.

PIERSALL (CONT'D)

As soon as he gets comfortable, flip this switch.

CATHY

Really. And how am I supposed to get him that comfortable?

PIERSALL

A good white clam sauce, some reassuring words, maybe a little foot massage...

CATHY

And that's it, huh?

PIERSALL

Yes. And when the time is right, flip the switch and ask him what he's doing out at that cabin in the woods with Mr. Bob Truss. You do this one right and the Justice Department won't ever bother you again. For years, maybe. That, my dear, is true justice. And you're a sweet girl for doing this.

PIERSALL GOES FOR HIS COAT. EXITS.
CATHY STARTS TAKING GROCERIES OUT OF THE SACK, RELUCTANTLY PREPARING THE START OF THE MEAL.

CATHY

(TO HERSELF) I really don't think it's
a good idea to marry someone the
government is after. I'll have to make
a mental note of that.

CATHY POURS SOME FLOUR ON TO THE
TABLE IN A HEAP AS WE:

FADE OUT.

ACT FOURINT. CABIN - NIGHT

TRUSS SCAMPERS ABOUT THE ROOM
PACKING HIS VALISE. HE SLAMS DOWN
THE TOP OF HIS ICE CHEST, LEAVING
THE FREEZER DOOR AJAR. HE CLOSES
VALISE, SNAPS. STOPS, TRIES TO
THINK IF HE'S LEFT ANYTHING BEHIND.
REMEMBERS.

TRUSS

Ah!

TRUSS RUNS BACK, PICKS UP A TOOTH-
BRUSH AND IS ABOUT TO PACK IT WHEN
THERE IS:

SFX: KNOCK ON DOOR

TRUSS HESITATES, THEN NERVOUSLY
CROSSES TO AND OPENS THE DOOR.
JEFFREY DEVITO STANDS THERE,
PURPOSEFULLY.

TRUSS (CONT'D)

Jeffrey DeVito. My friend. To what do
I owe this pleasant visit?

JEFFREY

Mind if I come in?

TRUSS

(NERVOUS; SWEET) Nooo... Nooo... please
do. Take a load off!

TRUSS RUNS FOR A CHAIR. TRIES
TO KICK SUITCASE OUT OF VIEW.

JEFFREY

(SUSPICIOUS) You planning a little trip
or something?

TRUSS

Who me? No... no trips...

JEFFREY

Then why the suitcase? And the toothbrush.
And the ice box.

TRUSS

(LOOKING AT BRUSH) The toothbrush is
just... a moustache brush. The ice box...
is for a picnic.

JEFFREY

Oh yeah? It's the dead of winter.

TRUSS

That's what the suitcase is for. To try
to find a warm spot. (LAUGHS)

TRUSS LOOKS TO JEFFREY FOR A LAUGH.
JEFFREY LOOKS AROUND THE CABIN.

JEFFREY

(TURNS AROUND FAST, POINTS ACCUSATORILY)
Listen, I'm no idiot, Truss. I know when
something weird is going on.

TRUSS

Is that a personal slight against me?

JEFFREY

I don't know what the heck is going on
and I'm afraid to find out.

TRUSS

(REASSURING) Oh, really, Jeffrey,
nothing's going on. You have my word.

JEFFREY

But unfortunately my grandfather doesn't
take "words" as collateral.

TRUSS

(PLAYFULLY) Sure, but what do grandfathers
know.

JEFFREY

Mine knows he wants to be involved with
whatever you're doing out here. And when
he wants to be involved he just says,
"Ay, let's get involved." And we're
involved.

TRUSS NODS, TRYING NOT TO LET ON
THAT HE IS NERVOUS.

TRUSS

(BRINGING MOOD UP) Hey, can I offer you
a little something to drink? A Coke,
perhaps?

JEFFREY

You got any water?

TRUSS

I'll check.

TRUSS POURS SOME WATER INTO A
GLASS, THINKING ALL THE WAY.
JEFFREY PUZZLES OVER THE OPEN
FREEZER.

JEFFREY

Truss, let's level with each other.

What do you do out here?

TRUSS

I... sell.

JEFFREY

Sell what?

TRUSS

(MATTER OF FACTLY) Sell personal merchandise.

JEFFREY

Yeah, but what kind?

TRUSS

Oh, the usual.

TRUSS HANDS JEFFREY THE WATER.
JEFFREY SNIFFS, SIPS, THEN PUTS
IT DOWN, PACES, TURNS.

JEFFREY

(DIRECT) Truss, I'm here to find out exactly what you do.

TRUSS

I give people things, and they pay me money. It's a nice arrangement.

JEFFREY

I mean the operation, specifically.

TRUSS

Specifically? Specifics can get so general, these days. Jeffrey. (TAKES JEFFREY AROUND) We live in difficult, complex times. Let me get back to you on that, okay?

JEFFREY

Look, I've got orders from my grandfather to understand the workings of your operation by tonight -- at the latest.

TRUSS

Well, you may have to be a bit tardy. See, I'd love to teach you tonight, but these things require time, and you didn't even make an appointment.

TRUSS OPENS THE DOOR FOR JEFFREY TO LEAVE.

JEFFREY

(CONFUSED) Listen, Mr. Truss...

TRUSS

Give me a call tomorrow, and we'll set something up.

JEFFREY

And you'll tell me everything?

TRUSS

Everything.

JEFFREY

And you'll be back from your trip by then?

TRUSS

(OPENING SUITCASE AND TAKING OUT CONTENTS)

You mean my picnic? I'm not even going.

JEFFREY

(HEADS FOR DOOR) Okay, I'll trust you.

TRUSS

I won't regret it.

JEFFREY

I hope not. (EXITS)

TRUSS

(LOCKS DOOR) Organized crime people can
be such pests!

TRUSS PICKS UP HIS TOOTHBRUSH,
TAPS IT AGAINST HIS CHIN, THINKING.

TRUSS (CONT'D)

Oh, I'll show him how the business works.
And from a different perspective than he's
used to. I'm going to transform this
pest into some pretty useful merchandise.
TRUSS SMILES, AS WE:

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE #416

