

# WHEN GOOD SYNDICATION GOES BAD

By Bamboozlepig

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### **Author's Note And Disclaimer:**

Don't own 'em, just rent 'em for story purposes, they're the property of MarkVII/Universal. **All original characters and the content of this story are the sole property of Bamboozlepig and may not be used without permission.** Story may contain content not suitable for children, so reader discretion is advised. Reviews are welcome and thanks for reading this claptrap. And FYI? You MIGHT not want to be drinking anything while reading this, unless you feel like wiping Pepsi off of your monitor. And another FYI? This was all written with tongue FIRMLY in cheek, so it's not like I'm really being SERIOUS here...or AM I?...heh heh. Okay, so I'm a little bit mad (read: stompy mad...stompy STOMPY mad) that a local digital tv station (which shall remain nameless, but I'm lookin' right at you, RTN!-oops!) evidently can't get its collective heads out of its collective rumps and start airing my favorite shows in the proper chronological order. And if THAT isn't bad enough, they've taken to splicing entire scenes out of one episode, and inserting it into a completely DIFFERENT episode. It's enough to give one a migraine, what with all the switching back and forth between different seasons and the happy-go-lucky editing. So, I thought maybe I'd let Sergeant Friday know about the problem, just in case he might be able to do something about it...I mean, after all, the man pretty much created all of the series mentioned below (well, Jack Webb did, anyway), so maybe HE'D have some idea about how to solve this sticky little dilemma. It's my understanding that he called a meeting of all the Mark VII characters to discuss this, along with some of the other problems that occur in the shows. He opened up a veritable hornet's nest. Apparently, there is some dissension among the ranks in regards to their shows. While I was not privy to the meeting itself, I guess it went a little something like this...

## WHEN GOOD SYNDICATION GOES BAD

*OR*

### IT'S DÉJÀ VIEW, ALL OVER AGAIN...AND AGAIN...AND AGAIN...

"All right, all right, let's get this meeting underway!" says Sergeant Joe Friday as he pounds on the podium with a gavel. "Please, everyone take their seats!" The hubbub in the meeting room quiets down as the crowd of people take their seats. Familiar faces abound, ones oh so recognizable to television viewers who used to watch a lot prime-time tv in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Friday bangs the gavel again. "Okay, I'm calling this very first meeting of Mark VII Limited to order." He looks out over the crowd of people. "Are all the shows produced by Mark VII ably represented?" he asks. "When I call your show, give me an accounting of the personnel you have on hand." He looks down at his notes. "*Emergency!* who all do you have on hand?"

Captain Hank Stanley stands up. "From Station 51, we have ace paramedics John Gage and Roy DeSoto, along with Chief Engineer, Mike Stoker, and two hose jockeys, Marco Lopez and Chet Kelly. Of course, I'm here, too, as their Captain, and we've also brought along both mascots from the station, Boot and Henry."

"You brought the *dogs* to this meeting?" Friday asks.

Cap shrugs. "Well, we had to bring Gage and Kelly, so we figured we might as well include the dogs, too."

"Hey, I resent that!" Chet Kelly cries. "I'm much better than a stupid dog!" He glares at Cap. "And I don't appreciate being lumped in with Gage's class of human life form!"

Cap sighs. "Deal with it, Kelly."

"Are you saying I'm not human?" John Gage asks.

Chet Kelly flashes him the Vulcan sign. "Live long and prosper, pal. Live long and prosper."

"I am NOT Mr. Spock!" Gage yells.

"Hey, that haircut you had in the early seasons of the show sure made you look Vulcan, pal. Or maybe Romulan," Kelly says.

"Alright, that's enough out of you two!" Captain Stanley shouts. "If you don't behave, I'm gonna throw you two twits out on your ears!"

"On Gage's pointy little ears, you mean," Kelly smirks.

"Oh, you're one to TALK, you walking moustache!" Gage snaps.

Friday pounds the podium with the gavel. "Okay, let's move on. Is the Rampart staff here?"

Dr. Kelly Brackett stands up. "Yes, we're all here. I've brought along Dr. Joe Early, Dr. Mike Morton, and the ever-beautiful Head Nurse Dixie McCall."

Dixie blushes. "Aww, Kel, you shouldn't talk about me like that," she says bashfully.

Kel gives her a great big smile. "But I'm only speaking the truth, Dix," he says gallantly.

"Oh brother, are they dating again?" asks Mike Morton. "I thought they ended that shortly after the Wedsworth-Townsend act episode."

Joe Early shakes his head. "Well, they're back in the early season episodes again, so it's possible they might have relit the fire of romance, Mike."

Mike clears his throat. "Yes, well, I certainly hope I don't discover them snogging like little bunnies in the linen closet again. It's not a sight *I'd* like to see repeated, that's for sure."

"We were NOT snogging like little bunnies in the linen closet!" Dr. Brackett informs him. "I was just checking out Dixie's sore throat, that's all!"

"You can tell yourself that, Doc, but I don't think that was a tongue depressor you were using," Morton says.

Friday speaks. "Okay, okay, let's get on to the other shows. Now how about *Adam-12*? Who is representing that show?"

Sergeant MacDonald stands up. "Officers Pete Malloy and Jim Reed are here, along with Lieutenant Val Moore, Ed Wells, Bob Brinkman, and the two different versions of Jean Reed."

"Wait a sec, what do you mean 'the two different versions of Jean Reed'?" Friday asks in confusion.

Mac gestures. "Well, there's the early series Jean Reed, then there's the later series Jean Reed."

"What about the squad car?" Friday asks. "Did you bring it along, too? It needs to be represented, since it was the title of the show."

"Yeah, well, we had a little bit of trouble with that," Mac says. "We couldn't get it to fit through the doors to the meeting room."

"Oh, I see," Friday says. "So how is it going to be represented?"

Mac holds up the steering wheel. "I brought the steering wheel. That should be good enough."

"You took the STEERING WHEEL off of our CAR?" Pete Malloy asks in shock. "How the hell are we supposed to drive it?"

"The tow rig will haul you around," Mac tells him. "You know, the one that was specially made to tow the car so the cameras could get a good shot of the two of you inside the car."

"I hope they have the sound equipment fixed inside that car," Pete says. "In the first episode, we sound like hyperactive chipmunks talking." He grimaces. "I don't appreciate being mistaken for Alvin and the Chipmunks."

"ALLL-VIN!" Jim Reed yells. Everyone turns and looks at him. "Oh, sorry. Pete mentioned sounding like a chipmunk, so I thought I'd do my impression of David Seville."

"And it's not a very good one, either," Malloy comments.

"Hey, don't pick on my impressions!" Reed says. "I think they're pretty good."

Pete sighs and rolls his eyes. "Whatever."

Jim pouts. "Be glad I wore PANTS to this shindig," he says.

Mac looks at him, startled. "You mean you weren't going to wear pants today?" he asks.

Jim shrugs. "Well, when the tow rig hauls us around, I sometimes don't wear my uniform pants. I wear jeans instead." He gestures to Pete. "Pete does, too, Mac. Since we're only being filmed from about the chest on up, we figure we might as well be comfortable."

"That's a direct violation of uniform policy, Reed," Mac tells him.

"Well, the last time I wore uniform pants for an all-day shoot inside the car, they were starched too crisply and my butt itched," Jim says. "Pete kept asking me if I was going to go see a movie or something."

"What does that have to do with your pants?" Mac asks.

"He was picking his seat," Pete says with a smile. When Mac glares at him, he shrugs. "Hey, I gotta find my amusement somewhere. And it's pretty easy to find it at his expense." He points to Jim.

"Gee, *thanks*, Pete," Jim says.

Friday smacks his gavel again on the podium. "Okay, okay, so the *Adam-12* contingent is here. Now who's representing *Dragnet*, besides me?"

Officer Bill Gannon stands up. "I'm the only other one here, Joe."

"Frank Smith couldn't make it?" Friday asks. "I sent him the time and place of this meeting. He should be here."

"Well, he's not, Joe. He'd have to appear in black and white, while the rest of us appear in color. I think he might've felt a little bit odd, being the only non-technicolor character here."

Friday frowns. "Well, I guess I'll have to accept that." He scans the crowd. "Now, are there any characters that I haven't noted?"

Al Porter stands up. "Sergeant, I'm here on behalf of the minor bit-part characters that play in various episodes of all three shows."

"And you are?" Friday asks.

"Al Porter. I was that character on *Adam-12*, but I've also played two roles on *Emergency!* One was as a man who got a case of severe hiccups before he was due to give an important speech, and the other was as a man who wanted his little boy to die at home because he thought the kid had Tay-Sachs disease."

"Did he have Tay-Sachs?" Mac asks.

Porter shakes his head. "Nope, it was just anemia."

Jim Reed rubs his chin. "Tay-Sachs. It sounds like a department store."

"You're thinking of Goldman-Sachs," Porter tells him.

"So why would anyone name a disease after a department store?" Jim asks. "Is there such diseases as Bloomingdale Bursitis or Macy Malaria?"

"Oh, JIIIMMM," says the second version of Jean Reed. "Speaking of department stores, I need your credit card to go buy some new clothes."

Jim looks at her. "What's wrong with the ones you've got?"

"They're getting a little too tight," she says.

"Well, if you'd quit eating everything that passed in front of your face, you wouldn't have that problem," says the first Jean Reed.

"Are you calling me FAT?" snaps the second Jean.

The first Jean smirks. "All I'm saying is the circus called and they'd like their tent back, honey."

"I am NOT FAT!" the second Jean tells her with a haughty sniff. "I'm just matronly!"

"Is that what you call it?" the first Jean asks.

"Ladies, please, let's not quarrel here!" Friday says. "We have some very important issues to cover in this meeting!"

Ed Wells raises his hand. "Hey, if this is going to be a long meeting, I'd like to go hit the snack machine and get a couple of Snickers bars and a can of Pepsi."

"Ooh, if you're going to the snack machine, get me a bag of Cool Ranch Doritos and a Mountain Dew," says Bob Brinkman.

The first Jean Reed raises her hand. "Oh, Sergeant Friday? I'd like to go to the bathroom first, before we get this meeting underway." She leans forward toward Dixie McCall. "I swear, carrying Jimmy Reed Jr. those long months between seasons one and two just *wrecked* my bladder."

"How long did you have to carry him?" Dixie asks.

"Oh, it was well over a year," the first Jean groans. "Believe me, I was never so glad to finally get to the episode where I popped that kid out in all my life! Talk about relief!"

"Hey, have you ever considered entering your pregnancy into Ripley's Believe It Or Not?" Chet Kelly asks. "That'd be much more interesting to see than some stupid two-headed cow from Iowa, or a rare eighteen-toed pink tree frog that is only found in the wilds of Central Park."

"You ARE a two-headed cow, Chet," Johnny Gage says snidely.

"Shut up, Spock!" Chet snaps.

"If you two twits don't *both* shut up, I'm gonna smack you!" Captain Stanley warns. "And Chet, just for calling Gage 'Spock', you get another month's worth of latrine duty."

"Aww, Cap, what do I look like?" Chet whines. "The Tidy Bowl man?"

"Hey, your moustache could pass for a toilet brush, Chet," Gage remarks. "Not to mention your HEAD!"

"Chet, Johnny, pipe down!" Friday orders. "Now, I think we're missing a few characters, aren't we?" he asks. "Like the three Jerrys from *Adam-12*? Walters, Woods, and Miller? Why aren't they here? They should be representing the Jerry contingent."

Mac speaks. "They feared there might be some name confusion. It wasn't like they all had original names."

"Yeah, what was up with THAT?" Pete Malloy asks. "Were the writers hooked on the name Jerry or something?"

"Well, in the first few episodes, Jerry Walters was also called Bill," says Mac. "And THAT'S what he should have remained. We have too many Jerrys in the show."

"So *none* of the Jerrys are here?" Friday asks.

"Afraid not, Sergeant," Mac says.

Friday shakes his head. "Okay, we'll have to proceed without them." He frowns. "*Emergency!*, why isn't Captain Dick Hammer here?"

Captain Stanley clears his throat. "He, uh, couldn't make it, Sergeant. He was worried his name sounds a little like a porn star's name."

"Bow-ca-chica-bow-bow," sings Johnny Gage. Captain Stanley shoots him a dirty look. "What? I was just doing porn music," he asks innocently.

Friday rubs his head. "Speaking of music, I understand some of you have a problem with the soundtracks to the shows. Anyone care to comment?"

Malloy speaks. "Yeah, that stupid sixties go-go music that plays every time we get a loud party or disturbance call...well, it gets pretty annoying after a listen or two."

"I agree," says Jim Reed. "It's pretty bad, Sergeant. What was wrong with contracting a few recording artists and having them lay down some better songs?"

"The producers didn't want to do that," Friday says. "It cost too much, plus they would've had to pay royalties."

"Well, I can tell you *this* much, Sergeant. I cringe every time we get sent to a loud party call," Pete Malloy says.

"Hey, at least your music is pretty upbeat," says John Gage. "Ours in the later series sounds like it belongs on a porn movie soundtrack."

"Bow-ca-chica-bow-bow," says Chet Kelly.

"Shut up, Chet, that's *my* line!" Gage hisses. "I mean, have you ever LISTENED to some of the backround music? It's truly hideous! It's like a cross between cheesy seventies music and 'Debbie Does Dallas'."

"Ooh, I saw that movie!" Kelly says. "Debbie doesn't do ALL of Dallas, let me tell you that much!"

"Let's get our minds out of the gutter, folks," Friday says. "Okay, so the music sucks. I'll admit. But what can we do about it?"

Johnny shrugs. "Well, I suppose there's not much we CAN do about it, is there? I mean, it's already on the soundtrack, so it's stuck there. But I hate it. When it starts playing, I don't know if I should be responding to an emergency or performing a strip-tease in my turnout gear."

"You know, didn't you tell me you had a female fan that wanted you to do that?" Mike Stoker says.

Johnny grins lasciviously. "I had more than a few, Mike. I had female fans writing me all the time, wanting me to send them tokens, like locks of my hair, toenail clippings, and even my underwear!"

"Eww!" Stoker says. "So what did you do?"

"I usually sent them a pair of Chet's tighty-whiteys instead," Johnny says.

"So THAT'S where my Love-Me-Tender boxers went!" Chet exclaims. "I knew you were behind their disappearance, Gage!"

"Hey, when you wear boxers with Elvis Presley plastered all over them, you'd better prepare to have them mysteriously disappear," Johnny says. "Besides, you were driving us all nuts, what with your singing of 'It's Now Or Never,' and your stupid 'thank ya, thank ya veruh much.'"

"Was that the package that was sent back to the station, the one marked 'Return to sender'?" asks Marco Lopez. "It had underwear in it. I used them for a rag."

Chet gasps in horror. "You used my Elvis undies for a RAG?"

"Well, I had to have SOMETHING to dust with," Marco says.

"I sure hope you washed them before you used them, pal," Captain Stanley says.

"All I ever got were requests for autographs," Roy DeSoto says dejectedly.

"That's because you were married to Joanne," John says. "You were out of the playing field, pally."

"And you were also going a little bald there, too, Roy," Captain Stanley says. "The rest of us had rather nice heads of hair."

Roy gasps. "Wait a minute, you guys KNEW about that?" he asks in shock.

"You could see it fairly well, Roy," John tells him gently. "Everytime a good breeze would come along, it would lift your comb-over up."

"Not to mention every time you got wet," remarks Mike Stoker. "Or you had your helmet on for any lengthy period of time."

"Roy, it's just too bad hair plugs weren't invented yet," John says. "You'd have made a prime candidate."

"Hmph," says Roy, slouching in his seat, his arms folded across his chest. "Some friends YOU guys are."

"I never had that problem," Dr. Kelly Brackett says. "I had a nice head of hair, myself."

"Yeah, and you used gallons of Grecian Formula to cover up the grey," Mike Morton says.

"Oh, Kel, say that isn't true!" Dixie McCall wails.

Kelly Brackett shrugs. "I had to stay young and virile for the female viewers."

"Hey, at least you guys got fan letters addressed to *you*," Mike Stoker remarks. "All I ever got were letters asking me questions about the fire engine. And sometimes I got even worse ones, like those addressed to the engine itself, or simply addressed to 'the dude who drives that big honkin' red truck that shoots water out of it'. I really didn't get much fan mail myself."

"That's because you never had that many lines to speak, Mike," John says. "You were like Marco. You were kind of a background character. You were there, but you weren't all that important."

"I wasn't *important*?" Mike snaps. "Who the hell would've driven that fire engine if it wasn't for me?"

"And I resent being called a background character," says Marco Lopez. "I'm not that, John! I had some good lines!"

"Yeah, but the show focused mainly on Roy and I," Johnny says.

"But it wasn't called 'A Show About Two Idiot Paramedics'," says Captain Stanley. "It was called *Emergency!*"

"Yeah, and there were the scenes dealing with the Rampart folks, too," says Stoker. "So it wasn't *all* about you and Roy, Gage."

"Eh, but we were the big draws," Gage says.

"Maybe *you* were, but I probably wasn't," grumbles Roy. "I was going *bald*. Who gets a crush on a bald guy?"

"Hey, Kojak probably gets a lot of fan mail," Johnny soothes. "He's as bald as a cue ball, and women still write him."

"Only because he has a lollipop," grumps Roy.

"So you need a gimmick, pally. We'll think of something," Johnny tells him.

"Oh no, I don't need you thinking of a gimmick for me, John," Roy warns. "Knowing you, it'd be something truly hideous, like an ear-flap hat."

"Ear-flap hat?" asks Dr. Morton. "What's that?"

"You know, those kind of hats you see old men wearing?" Roy asks.

"Doc, think of Elmer Fudd's hunting hat," Johnny says. "Ooh, you wascally wabbit!" he laughs.

"Oh, I get it," says Morton.

Friday raps the gavel. "Okay, we've gotten a little off-topic here. Let's get back to the music problem."

"You never had that kind of trouble on *Dragnet*," says Pete Malloy. "All you ever had was the 'dum-de-dum-dum' theme, and that was pretty much it."

"What about that rousing little march tune that used to play over the end credits sometimes?" Friday asks. "I thought that was pretty neat."

"And completely out of place," says Malloy. "It was too cheery for a cop show."

"What was I supposed to do?" Friday asks. "I couldn't get a kick-ass theme like the one from 'S.W.A.T', you know. We just didn't have it in our budget."

"All I'm saying is it doesn't go well with the show, just like the sixties go-go music doesn't fit in ours," Malloy says.

"Music is music, Pete," Friday says. "Who's gonna notice?"

"Anyone who watches the show on a regular basis," Pete says.

"You know, I don't have that problem," Jim Reed says. "Every time that music starts playing on our show, I think of another tune to play in my head."

"What's it called? 'Echoes Of My Mind'?" Pete asks.

"No, it's usually 'The Little White Duck'." Jim notices everyone looking at him strangely. "You know how the song goes...there's a little white duck, sittin' in the water, a little white duck, doin' what he oughta..."

"And you, partner, oughta zip it," Pete warns.

"Why? It's a cute song," Jim says.

"Okay, let's move on," Friday says. "It's agreed we all have dopey songs on our shows, but there's nothing we can do about it."

"Well, we could start bringing i-Pods to work," says Ed Wells.

"What the hell is an i-Pod?" Friday asks.

"It's a little device that you can download music onto. It sure beats taping music onto a cassette," Ed says. "It virtually replaced vinyl albums, cassette tapes, and 8-tracks."

"You...you...you mean 8-tracks are no longer fashionable?" gasps John Gage. "What am I supposed to do with my huge collection of Engelbert Humperdinck recordings?"

"You mean there was more than one of them?" asks Roy DeSoto. "I thought that one was bad enough!"

"I've got them all!" Johnny wails. "And what about my Blue Swede 8-track? I LOVE their version of 'Hooked On A Feeling!'"

"Ooh, is that the one where they go 'oooga-chucka-oooga-chucka' in the beginning of the song?" asks Chet Kelly.

Johnny nods. "And my Lawrence Welk 8-tracks...and my 101 Strings tapes..." He moans, putting his head in his hands. "Oh, what am I gonna do?"

Roy DeSoto looks at him, a mixture of dismay and pity on his face. "I'd say burn 'em, Johnny." He pokes Gage in the shoulder. "You know, I had you pegged as more of a Three Dog Night fan, or a John Denver fan. Never would I have imagined you liked Lawrence Welk."

"I'm a closet polka fan," Johnny sighs.

"You're a closet something," Chet remarks.

"Oh, you're one to talk, Chet!" Johnny snaps. "How'd you know how the beginning of Blue Swede's 'Hooked On A Feeling' goes in the first place?"

Chet shrugs. "Heard it on the radio, I guess. Anyway, Gage, you can donate those tapes to Goodwill, I think they have a special section set aside for crappy music."

"So does this mean my 45rpms are no longer playable?" asks Jim Reed.

"If you still have a turntable that works, you should be fine," Ed Wells says. "You can continue to listen to your albums and 45s."

"Whew," says Reed, wiping his forehead with the back of his hand. "I thought I'd have to give up listening to 'Sunshine, Lollipops And Rainbows,' by Lesley Gore." He catches Pete looking at him. "What? Sunshine, lollipops and rainbows and lemon drops...*mmph mmph*." He yanks Pete's hand away from his mouth. "Pete, I can't sing with your hand over my mouth," he complains.

"Precisely the point," says Pete.

Friday pounds his gavel. "The music discussion is over, folks. We're moving on. The next item on the agenda to discuss is the cross-overs that occur in our shows." He points to Captain Stanley, who has raised his hand. "Yes, Captain, go ahead."

"Well, I'd like to say that the cross-overs confuse us, especially those of us who are rather easily confused." He shoots a look at both Chet and John. "While I wasn't Captain of Station 51 when this

occurred, I understand that there was quite a mix-up when Gage here got hooked on an *Adam-12* episode and wouldn't let up until he figured out what happened at the end. He was making a nuisance of himself, calling his friends well into the night, trying to see if any of them had watched the show. It wasn't until a rather healthy dose of radiation brought him to his senses."

"Yeah, I still glow green in the dark," Gage says. "I don't hafta worry about saving electricity, since I can use my aura to see in the dark. On the other hand, I can't say that chicks really dig making out with a glowing green guy."

"Is it that or is it your crappy 8-tracks?" asks Chet. "Nothing gets a chick more in the mood than 'oooga-chucka-oooga-chucka' blaring from the hi-fi."

"Chet, shut up!" Johnny snaps. "Hey, so how did that episode end anyway?" he asks Malloy and Reed.

"Which one was it?" Pete asks.

"Ambush," Johnny says.

"Oh, we obviously got out of it," Pete says. "Of course, Reed here had a few more lumps on his head than usual, but we caught the bad guys in the end."

"Hey, I do NOT have a lumpy head!" Reed exclaims, feeling his head with his hands. "Oh, wait, yeah I do."

Dixie raises her hand. "Well, I have to admit, the cross-overs confuse me, too. In the two-hour season premiere of *Emergency!*, Pete and Jim are at the nurses' station. Pete's flirting with me."

"What do you mean, Pete's flirting with you?" Dr. Brackett demands. He turns around and gives Pete a dirty look. "Are you trying to move in on my girl?" he asks angrily.

"Whoa, Doc, settle down," Pete says. "It wasn't flirting, honest. It was more of a...of a...mutual friendship," he says with a definitive nod.

"That's not what you called it in the linen closet," Dixie remarks.

"The LINEN CLOSET?" Brackett snarls. "Dixie, that's our private tickle area!" He points to Pete. "How could you share our love shack with HIM?"

Dixie shrugs. "I wanted someone who didn't turn my pillowcases black with Grecian Formula," she says. "Oh, Kel, it was such a long time ago! It didn't mean anything to either of us, I swear!"

"So you mean I went and got 'Dixie' tattooed on my ass for nothing?" Pete asks in dismay.

"I predict some laser surgery in your future to remove that, partner," Reed whispers. "Especially if you stick with Judy."

Mac speaks. "I've gotta admit, too, the cross-overs are confusing to me. I mean, we show Rampart Hospital and the staff in our episode of 'Lost And Found'. And yet we're supposed to be the object of Gage's obsession in *Emergency!*'s episode of 'Hang-Up'? It doesn't make sense."

"Well, logistically no, it doesn't. But I think that the producers were thinking that no one would notice it that much and call attention to the inconsistencies," Friday says.

"Why? Didn't they credit the average television viewer with intelligence?" asks Bill Gannon.

"Well, yes, they did, but it was quite a time period between the various episodes, so they hoped no one would notice. It wasn't until the advent of videocassettes and later on, dvd's, that anyone really caught it."

"And BOY have they caught it," Ed Wells says. "Every time they show one of the episodes with the cross-overs, the Internet chat rooms just light up."

"Um...what's an internet chat room, Ed?" asks Jim Reed.

"It's a place where you can go into on your computer and discuss mutual topics of interest, like sports or hobbies," Ed explains. "I know, because my kids got me into computers."

Chet smirks at Johnny. "There ya go, pal. You can get on the ol' computer and chat away with OTHER Engelbert Humperdinck fans!"

"Chet, stuff a sock in it!" Johnny snaps.

"Okay, so you mean to tell me our shows are topics of discussion?" asks Captain Stanley.

"Oh, sure, there's a whole world of fans out there," Ed says. "Some are dedicated to just one show, while others like all three of them. And there's even fanfiction sites devoted to continuing stories about their favorite characters from the shows."

"Um...what's fanfiction?" Jim asks.

Ed sighs. "Jeez, Reed, don't you know *anything*? Fanfiction is an area that deals with different realms of tv and movies. Fans write stories about their favorite shows or movies, and they post them for other fans to read and enjoy."

"Ooh, like *Star Trek*?" Reed asks.

"Oh yeah, *Star Trek* has a HUGE fan following," Ed says.

"Do we?" asks Mac.

"Well...the *Adam-12* fanfiction is a little bit on the sparse side, there's only a few websites devoted to our stories, but *Emergency!* has quite a few fanfiction sites."

"What about *Dragnet*?" asks Bill Gannon.

"Not so much," Ed says. "Don't know if you two were too old to appeal to many of the younger fans or what." He points a finger at Mac. "Oh, but if you hit the fanfic sites, I'd definitely stay away from the slash ones."

Mac's eyebrow goes up. "Slash? What the hell's that?"

Ed coughs, his face turning crimson with embarrassment. "It's um...well, it's ah..."

"C'mon, Ed, spit it out!" Pete says.

"It's stories dedicated to homoerotic fictional pairings of our characters," Ed blurts out. "You know, male on male, female on female?" He studies his hands. "It's not something I'd really recommend," he says.

"Have you READ any of these stories?" Mac demands.

Ed rubs the back of his neck. "Well...uh...er...yeah, maybe one or two," he mutters. He looks up to see everyone staring at him in shock. "Hey, I landed on one of the sites by complete accident!" he says defensively. "Before I knew it, I was reading a story about Pete...um...doing...um...things to Jim."

"Oh, brother," Malloy says, slapping his forehead. "Like I'd even entertain such thoughts about Jim," he says.

Ed shrugs. "It's a free country, Pete. They can write what they want." He points to the others. "None of you are immune to it. There's pairings dealing with all of you, too."

"How about us, Ed?" asks Bob Brinkman. "Are we paired up? Because quite frankly? I do NOT find you all that attractive."

"Nah, we're usually relegated to playing background characters, like we do on the show," Ed tells him. "We're there just to scoot the storyline along."

Captain Stanley clears his throat. "Getting back to the cross-overs, is there anything we can do about it?"

Friday shakes his head. "What's been filmed has been filmed. I realize it's enough to give anyone a migraine, but we can't stop it."

Marco Lopez raises his hand. "Speaking of cross-overs, Sergeant, I'd like to bring up a related topic, if I may."

"Go ahead, Lopez," Friday says.

"Well, before I got my big break on *Emergency!*, I was a bit-part player on both *Adam-12* and *Dragnet*. How do I explain to my fans that in addition to playing Marco, I also played the roles of police officers and detectives on those other two shows?"

"Do you have that many fans?" Friday asks.

"Yeah, a few," Marco says. "It gets confusing for them. Am I a firefighter, a cop, a detective, what?"

"You're a background character in *Dragnet* and *Adam-12*," Friday says. "Then you play a little bit bigger role in *Emergency!* Does that help? Try explaining it that way to your fans."

"Well, I guess I could," Marco says.

"WOOF WOOF, ARF ARF ARF!" barks Station 51's first mascot, Boot. "Whoonooga," groans the second mascot, Henry.

Friday points to them with his gavel. "The dogs have the floor," he says.

"ARF ARF WOOF WOOF ARF!" barks Boot.

"What's that, boy?" says Jim Reed. "You say Timmy has fallen down a well?"

"Wrong show, doofus," Pete says. "You're thinking of 'Lassie'."

"Does anyone here speak dog?" asks Friday.

Johnny Gage points to Chet Kelly. "Chet does. He speaks fluent dog."

"Only because I have to know what to say when I'm talking with your girlfriends, Gage," Kelly tells him. "Otherwise, it'd be a pretty dull conversation."

"My girlfriends were HOT!" Gage cries. "I never dated an ugly chick, not even once!"

"That's because you're shallow, Junior," Roy tells him. "Just like Pete Malloy."

"I'm not shallow, DeSoto," Pete tells him angrily. "Have you seen some of the chicks I dated in the past? I dated that one woman who had a 1970s mullet going on with her hair. And what about Judy? She's not the most attractive woman in the world!"

"PETE!" Judy cries in shock. "How can you say that about me?"

"It's not that you're ugly, Judy, but you look...well, overprocessed." Pete tells her. "Kinda like you were a human version of Dame Edna."

"WAAHHH!" Judy sobs, putting her hands up to her face. "You're so mean, Pete! I'm going to take David and leave you!"

Jim nudges Pete. "You know, you'd better apologize to her, Pete. It's not like you haven't lost a little bit of your edge either, looks-wise."

"I'm still as handsome as I was when I was first hired!" Pete tells him.

Jim smirks. "Yeah? Well, the Pillsbury Doughboy called, he'd like his stomach back." He pokes Pete in the gut. "Hoo-HOO!"

"Will you STOP THAT?" Pete says, swatting at Jim. "I haven't gotten THAT fat, Reed!"

"Oh yeah?" asks the second Jean. "Judy told me the other day it nearly takes a crane to lift you out of bed every morning!"

"And this is coming from the same lady who could pass for Miss Piggy in a heartbeat!" Pete snaps. He glares at Judy. "And why would you tell Jean something like that? You know it's not true!"

"I am NOT Miss Piggy!" says the second Jean.

"Ooh, Kermie!" singsongs the first Jean. "If the snout fits, honey, wear it." She cups her hands over her mouth. "And tune in next week for another exciting episode of Pigs...In...SPACE!" she intones.

"You know, I always liked Mr. Snoofalooopagoose," Jim muses. "Or is it Sniffleipigis?" He looks at Pete. "What is that big brown elephanty-creature's name, Pete?"

"Jim Reed," Pete tells him icily. "Its name is Jim Reed."

Jim scratches his head. "No, I don't think that's right, Pete. It's a funny-sounding name..." He frowns as the meaning of Pete's words dawn on him. "Oh now, that's just plain mean, Pete. I am NOT Mr. Snuffleupagus."

"Yay, Jim, you got it right!" the first Jean claps.

"If I'm that, then Pete's Oscar the Grouch," Jim pouts.

"Hey, it could be worse, you know," Bob Brinkman says. "You two could be Bert and Ernie."

"Pete's Bert, then. He's pretty anal about everything," Jim says.

"I am NOT Bert!" Pete snaps.

"I dunno, Pete, you are pretty anal about things," Sergeant MacDonald tells him.

"Yeah, like driving the squad car!" Jim says. "I touch the steering wheel and he threatens to rip my fingers off."

"That's only because you put a DENT in it when you DID drive it, partner," Pete says through clenched teeth. "And I had to listen to you whine about it the entire shift!" He jabs a finger at Mac. "And that steering wheel had better be put back on Adam-12 properly when we get done here!"

"See? Anal, I tell you," Jim says, shaking his head.

"Okay, I have a question," says Val Moore. "I appeared in the first couple of seasons as the Lieutenant for Central Division in *Adam-12*. What happened to my character after that? I just sorta faded from view."

"Hmm," says Friday. "I always figured you had gotten promoted or something."

"And another thing, I agree with Lopez on the roles we play on the different shows," Val continues. "I've shown up as a Battalion Chief on *Emergency!* and the boss of you and Gannon on *Dragnet*." Val frowns. "And what do you mean 'you figured I'd gotten promoted'? Don't you know? You were one of the producers of *Adam-12*."

Friday shrugs. "Yeah, well, I'm also dead. Have been for 27 years. You tend to forget things after you're dead."

Reed shrieks in fear, his hands flying to his face. "You...you...you mean you're a G-G-GHOST, Sergeant Friday?" he asks, a quiver in his voice.

"Well, no, not really," Friday assures him. "You see, we're all in syndication, so that's the beauty of it. We can appear long after we're dead, as long as there's tv stations that will air our shows. They buy the syndication rights to show them."

Reed scratches his head. "Soo...if a bowl of tomato soup bought the syndication rights to our shows, we'd have to appear in the soup, right?"

"JIIIIIMMM," the second incarnation of Jean Reed whines. "That's a silly question to ask. Why would soup buy syndication rights to a tv show?"

"I dunno," Jim says with a frown. "You know, the other day, my bowl of alphabet soup called me a REALLY nasty name." He catches the other members of the audience staring at him. "What? It's true! It called me a..." he leans over and whispers the name to his partner, Pete.

"That's not a nasty name, Reed," Pete says with a roll of his eyes. "It's just another term for a female dog."

"But with the words 'you son-of-a' right in front of it?" Reed asks. "I swear, my soup is out to get me, I'm telling you Pete!"

"And last week you saw the face of Jesus in your grilled cheese sandwich," Pete tells him. "I wouldn't be too concerned about it, Jim."

"See, JIIIIIMMM?" the second incarnation of Jean Reed whines. "If you'd quit the police force, you wouldn't be receiving death threats in your lunch."

"It's a conspiracy from Campbell's, I know it is," Jim says firmly. "They heard me say that one time that a batch of their vegetable beef soup was only M-M-so-so."

"Hey, Mac, can I trade partners next shift?" Pete asks. "He gets crazier all the time."

Mac shakes his head. "Nope, sorry Pete. You're stuck with him throughout syndication. It's in the contracts."

"I have a question, Sergeant," says Chet Kelly. "I appeared as a bit player, too, on both *Adam-12* and *Dragnet*. On *Adam-12*, I was a pizza delivery guy mistaken for a burglar. On *Dragnet*, I was a superhero-wannabe who kept stealing old movie posters. I had to wear tights and everything in that episode! It was humiliating!"

"A superhero-wannabe?" Gage snorts. "What was your name, oh great caped crusader? The Stupendous Idiot? No, no, let me guess: Captain Clueless, right?" He leans over, howling with laughter. "In...in...in TIGHTS, no less! I hope you have pictures, Chet!"

"Oh, SHUT UP!" Chet snaps. "At least I wasn't an accused thief on *Adam-12*!"

"Yeah, but they cleared me of those charges, Chet. It was the poor little rich bitch that was stealing stuff at the riding stable."

"Now how come he gets to say a bad word like that, and I don't?" asks Jim Reed with dismay.

"JIIIMMM," whines the second Jean Reed. "Is that the kind of language you want your son to learn?"

Jim turns around to face her. "Hey, listen lady. I never liked you as the second Jean Reed. You were WAAAYYY too whiny and bitchy!" He claps his hands over his mouth. "Oh no, I said a bad word! My alphabet soup was right! I'm a son-of-a..."

Pete tugs on his sleeve. "Look, Jim. None of us liked the second Jean all that much either. But she was your wife and you were stuck with her."

Jim pouts. "I liked the first Jean better...much MUCH better."

"Aww, aren't you sweet?" the first Jean says to Jim. "I'm glad I carried Jimmy Jr. for over a year, after all." She shoots the second Jean a dirty look. "See? I *told* you he liked me better than you!"

"Yeah, well, you weren't the one who had to put up with him dumping you out of the car to pursue an armed robber, while we were supposed to be on our way to a date with Pete and Judy," the second Jean says. She glares at Jim. "That was SOO not cool, Jim. Leaving me to call the police station from a pay phone, all by myself. And then, I had to take a taxi to the restaurant, where Pete and Judy were already there. You showed up very late AND you ripped your sports jacket besides. Not to mention you smelled pretty bad, too."

"Oh, be grateful I didn't boot you out of the car when you were trying to put the make on me while I was driving," Jim tells her. "Have you ever tried to shift the gear of a Corvette with an elephant sitting on it?" he asks the audience.

"Why, I NEVER!" the second Jean gasps. "I told you before, I'm not fat, Jim Reed! I'm matronly!"

"Yeah, if you call the Goodyear Blimp matronly," Jim snorts.

"Oh, and I suppose you prefer the first Jean over me in that area, too?" she snaps. She eyes the first Jean with a squint. "Look at her. You'd never think she carried a baby for nine months, would you?"

"It was for well over a year," the first Jean hisses. "Not nine months, you fat cow! And I stayed skinny because I didn't eat everything that looked at me cross-eyed!"

"Why you little BITCH! I'll give you cross-eyed!" the second Jean snarls. She reaches out and grabs a handful of the first Jean's hair and gives it a good yank. "Take that!"

"Ouch!" the first Jean yelps. She claws at the second Jean's hand. "Let go of me!"

"Ooh, let's throw 'em in a vat of Jello and watch!" says Ed Wells. "My bet's on the chubby Jean!"

"I dunno, the skinny Jean is pretty wiry," says Brinkman. "My money's on her."

"Whoever wins gets me as the prize!" Jim exclaims. "The most cutest, bestest, sweetest husband in the world!"

Friday pounds the podium with his gavel. "Ladies, PLEASE! Exercise some decorum!" he admonishes them. "If you wish to fight, wait until after this meeting is over and take it outside to the alley behind the building!" The two Jeans settle back into their seats with a huff, and Friday looks at the audience. "So, are there any further questions about the cross-overs that need to be addressed before we move on?"

Wells nods. "Yeah, you know, I'm usually a cop on *Adam-12*, but for some reason, I found myself being the director of an animal shelter on *Emergency!* What gives?"

"Oh yeah, the '905-Wild' episode," Roy DeSoto says. "Not one of our better episodes, that's for sure."

"You know, I never thought I'd see the day when I had to operate on a GOAT in my emergency room," Dr. Brackett says with dismay. "Were they desperate for ratings or something in that episode?"

"No, it was supposed to be a possible spin-off," Sergeant Friday says with a glare. "Just like *Adam-12*'s episode 'A Clinic On 18th Street' was supposed to be a spin-off into a new series called 'Fraud'."

"And that wasn't one of OUR better episodes," Malloy says. "Jim and I only appeared for a minute or so in the whole episode. The rest was Sharon Gless and Frank Sinatra, Jr." He turns to Jim. "And speaking of that episode, what was up with your HAIR that day?" he asks. "You looked like Robert Reed's hairstyle from 'The Brady Bunch' had hijacked your head and taken your scalp hostage."

"That?" Jim asks. "Oh, our poodle got stuck to my head that day."

"JIIMM," says the second Jean. "We never had a poodle!"

"Well, what do you want me to say? I had a mousse explosion that day?" he snaps.

Mac raises his eyebrow. "You use mousse in your hair?" he asks. "What's wrong with Brylcreem?"

"Ugh," Jim says, shuddering. "Too greasy."

"I prefer Dippity-Do myself," says Ed Wells.

"Ooh, I just thought of something!" Bob Brinkman says, snapping his fingers. "Why is it that my character in the first season isn't always called Brinkman? And the one that IS called Brinkman, isn't me?"

"Whoa, that's pretty deep," says John Gage. "Did you happen to drink some bong water or something?"

"No, I haven't!" Brinkman snaps. "Sergeant? Is there an answer?"

"Well, the writers hadn't decided what to call you yet," Friday answers.

"Are those the same writers that gave us the three Jerrys?" Mac asks.

"Maybe we shoulda gotten them a baby name book or something," Jim Reed offers. "Then they'd have tons of names to choose from."

"Are you KIDDING?" Pete Malloy asks in astonishment. "We'd all end up with dumb-ass names, like RainingFlowerTigerLily or...or...Fartblossom!"

Jim looks at him warily. "Uh...Fartblossom, Pete?"

"Oh, NEVER MIND!" Pete snaps. "Forget I said anything, Reed!"

"No, now I'm curious," Jim says. "Is it a family name or something?" He begins to giggle. "Maybe passed down through the generations or something?"

"It was my grandfather's nickname for my grandmother," Pete says through clenched teeth.

"Okay, let's move on to the biggest issue here," Friday says, rapping the gavel. "Now, as you all know, a digital television station has bought the syndicated rights to all three of our shows."

"Yes, it's called Wacky Nostalgia TV, or WNTV," says Bill Gannon.

"Wacky Nostalgia TV has been airing our shows on its broadcast slate since last year," Friday continues. "Which is fine. Our shows are being introduced to two areas of demographics. One area is the fans who remember us from when we first aired, and the other area is fans who weren't even born yet when our shows aired, but have been introduced to them through the syndication rights." He clears his throat. "And therein lies the problem. It has come to my attention that this new channel has a slight difficulty with getting the shows to air properly and in the correct chronological order." At that announcement, the room erupts in a cacaphony of voices. Friday pounds the gavel. "Okay, let's settle down here. This is the major issue I want to discuss. First of all, are there any problems any of you would like to report?"

Roy DeSoto nods. "Sure is, Sergeant. One week Johnny and I are in season five, then in the next, POOF! We're back in season one. Do you KNOW how hard that is on my character?"

"On YOUR character?" says John Gage. "Roy, in the early seasons, I have my hair cut short. In the later seasons, I have my hair grown out long. Do you KNOW how difficult it is to get your hair to grow in just a week's time? Sometimes it's even actually less, like when they show a couple of episodes from later seasons in the beginning of the week, then switch back to first or second season episodes in the last part of the week." He rubs his head and scalp with a groan. "I swear, my hair is turning schizophrenic on me."

"You guys think it's difficult on you?" Pete Malloy says. "What about Reed and I? Half the time I don't know if I'm still going to be teaching him in his rookie year, or if I'm just being his regular partner in the rest of the seasons."

"Oh, and don't forget the complete screw-up they did just a few weeks ago," Sergeant MacDonald reminds Pete. "You know, the one where they neatly sliced one entire set of scenes out of one episode, and put them into a completely separate episode?"

"You mean when they took the slanty pedal scene out of 'Grand Theft, Horse?' and put in the criminal mischief scene with the Nazi kids out of 'A Jumper: Code Two' in instead?" Pete asks.

"Yeah, that's the one," Sergeant MacDonald says with a sigh.

"I never understood why you called it the slanty pedal anyway, Pete," Jim Reed says, a puzzled frown on his face. "What was wrong with the term 'gas pedal'?"

Pete shrugs. "It was the way it was written into the script." He snaps his fingers as he suddenly remembers something else. "Oh, and let's not forget when they tacked the end of 'A Dead Cop Can't

Help Anyone' right in the middle of the show, airing the credits over the scenes where we have the run-in with Ed Wells."

"What about the fact that they seem to keep re-running the same episodes over and over again, in a never-ending loop?" asks Captain Stanley. "We're fluctuating between seasons one and two right now, along with season five."

"Yeah," says Roy DeSoto dejectedly. "I got fried TWICE in one single week, simply because they ran the same episode two times in a five-day period."

"Ooh, the Karen episode," Johnny muses. "Yeah, whatever happened to her?"

Roy shrugs. "I think she went on to become a stripper in a bar in San Diego."

"NO!" exclaims Johnny. "You're kidding me!"

"Yeah, I think she goes by the stage name of Boom-Boom ChaCha Pants, or something like that," Roy says.

"Huh, I had her pegged as being pretty frigid," Johnny says. "Guess you never can tell about people."

Mike Stoker raises his hand. "Okay, if we're addressing the issue of the schizophrenic schedules, I'd like to point out that it's pretty confusing to me, too."

"Why?" asks Jim Reed. "All you do is drive the fire engine. You don't often have very many lines to say."

Mike sighs. "But the problem IS with the fire engine, Reed. Some episodes I have to drive the open-cab engine, in other episodes, I have to drive the closed-cab engine. It gets a bit frustrating, especially when one day, it's the first engine, then the next day, the second one. I get used to shifting the gears on one of them, then I have to go back to shifting the gears on the other. And the pickup and speed of those trucks? The newer engine is a little faster than the older engine. Just the other day, I nearly ran over Squad 51 on our way to a fire."

"I *thought* you were getting a little close there in the rearview mirror," Roy says. "I was worried Johnny and I might have to bail out in order to escape."

"No, you'd just have to push the slanty pedal and the squad would go faster," Pete says. "It's what I'd do." When Jim Reed frowns at him, he shrugs. "What? I've been wanting to use that line again for a long time."

"And it makes no sense the second time around, either," Reed tells him.

"Well, it can't be any worse than you telling that stupid dog and alligator joke for the fiftieth time," Pete tells him.

"I told him that joke!" Ed Wells cries. "I thought it was funny!"

"Hey, so did I!" says Bob Brinkman. "I thought it was hysterical!"

"Yeah, well, you know what they say...funny is in the eye of the beholder," Pete says.

"Don't you mean 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder', Pete?" Jim asks.

"What was the joke anyway?" Mike Morton asks.

"Don't ask!" Pete tells him.

"This little guy walks into a *mmph mmph mmph*..." Jim frowns. "Pete, I can't tell the joke with your hand over my mouth."

"Now you're learning something," Pete says. "Ouch! Don't bite me, Reed!" he snaps, yanking his hand away.

"This little guy walks into a bar with a funny looking little yellow dog on a leash," Reed says in a rush. "OW! Pete, don't pinch me!"

"Oh, wait, is this the one where the little dog is an alligator?" Morton asks.

"Yeah, why? Have you heard it?" Jim asks.

"Only every time that episode airs," Morton says dryly. "And no, I don't think it's very funny, either."

"See?" Pete asks snidely. "Great minds think alike." He yelps as Jim pinches him. "STOP THAT!" He quickly reaches over and pinches Jim back. "No backsies!" he says, pointing to Jim. "Touch me again and I'll whack you upside the head with my nightstick!"

"PEEETTE!" the second Jean whines. "Don't brain-damage my husband. He's already brain-damaged as it is."

"Gee, thanks!" Jim snaps. "Yet another reason why I like the first Jean better!"

"Ha!" exclaims the first Jean. "I told you I was better!"

"WOOF!" barks Boot in dismay.

Friday points his gavel. "You had your turn to bark, mutt. You spent it licking yourself instead. And FYI? That's a LITTLE more of you than I'd really like to see."

Boot whines and covers his furry head with his paws.

"Well, it seems to me that you were the one who gave the okay for syndication, Sergeant," points out Dr. Early. "The fault really lies with you, doesn't it?"

"No, not necessarily," Friday tells him. "And by the way, you make a much better doctor than you do a bartender," Friday says.

"Or even a singer," Johnny grumbles. "That was the birthday from hell, I tell ya."

"At least the viewers got to see my wife," Roy says. "In that two-hour premiere. The rest of the series she existed only in telephone calls and conversations."

"Yeah, I always thought you were a little less enthusiastic about her," Johnny says. "Maybe that's why she never showed up again."

Roy shrugs. "Eh, maybe."

"So what are we going to do about this syndication problem?" Sergeant MacDonald asks. "Is there any kind of a plan?"

"Well, the viewers could petition the station, asking them to please stop showing the same episodes over and over again, and air some that have never been seen," Friday says.

"Wouldn't emailing be better?" asks Ed Wells.

Friday nods. "Sure, if the viewers have computers, they can."

"I've got an idea!" says Jim Reed brightly. "Maybe if we all clap our hands and believe hard enough, the station will change its ways!" He begins clapping his hands. "I don't hear anyone clapping their hands and believing," he says. "If you don't clap and believe, the station will die away!"

"You're thinking of Peter Pan and Tinkerbell," Pete sighs. "Totally different show. Totally different parent company."

"Oh yeah, you don't wanna screw with Disney," Chet Kelly warns. "They'll sue you for copyright infringement."

Jim sits back down. "Well, FINE!" he says. "See if I care!"

"Heh heh, you *will* care when they fail to air your 'Princess And The Pig' episode, Reed," Pete chuckles. "You know, the one where the attractive female singer kisses you?" He grins. "Didn't seem to me like you minded all that much."

"Hey, you wouldn't either if you were married to THAT!" Jim says, pointing to the second Jean.

"What do you MEAN that attractive female singer kissed you?" the second Jean demands. "And why didn't you tell her you were married?"

"Pigs...In...Space!" intones the first Jean. "If he was married to me, he wouldn't have been macking on some strange chick."

"Mmm," Jim says dreamily. "She tasted like Bonne Bell Dr. Pepper Lipsmackers."

"And what exactly do I taste like?" the second Jean snaps.

"Bacon," says the first Jean.

The second Jean hits the first one over the head with her purse. Then she smacks Jim on the head with her purse, too.

"Ow!" he says, rubbing the spot she hit. "What was that for?"

"For not thinking I tasted like Dr. Pepper!" she says. She sits down and begins to sob. "I don't know why I put up with this," she cries. "I definitely want a D-I-V-O-R-C-E. And you can just take that Medal of Valor, Mr. James Reed, and stuff it where the sun don't shine!"

"Oh, so now you're Tammy Wynette?" asks the first Jean. "More like Tammy Whinette, I think."

"There, there, dear," Judy comforts her. "At least you're married to a hero. Look at me, I'm dating the Michelin Man."

Pete stands up. "I am NOT FAT!" he snaps. "I only weigh 180 pounds!"

"Is that just in your big toe, Pete?" Jim asks. "Or is it just your head that weighs that much?"

"I'm not the one who let his hair look like a poodle was glued to it, Reed!" Pete snarls. "Here, Fifi...here girl!" he says. He begins whistling. Boot promptly hops down from his seat and trots over to Pete. "No, not you, Boot," Pete tells him. "Go back to your seat."

"You know, Malloy, I have just the diet for you," Chet Kelly says. "It's dried figs and toast!"

"I don't NEED a DIET!" Pete growls.

"If you get any fatter, Pete, the Oompa-Loompas will have to come roll you away," Jim tells him. "Let's face it, pal. Any more weight and you'll have to have your gunbelt specially made for you by a saddle and leather shop."

Ed Wells whinnies like a horse. "Hi-yo, Malloy, AWAY!"

"You shut up, Ed, or I'll take your niece out again!" Pete threatens.

Ed snorts. "Not in THOSE pants you won't." He nudges Brinkman. "Hey, remember when Pete went out with Marilyn that night, and he wore those AWFUL striped pants?"

"Oh, you wanna talk pants, you should get a load of those windowpane pants that Johnny wears," Roy says. "I swear, it looks like he's wearing several different breeds of cows on his legs."

"I'll have you know those are very chic!" Johnny says. "The women seem to dig them!"

Roy puts a hand on Johnny's shoulder. "I wouldn't mistake guffaws of laughter for interest, Johnny."

"Well, I wasn't the one who wore Birkenstocks to the station one day!" Johnny snaps, shaking Roy's hand off. "You? In SANDALS? And pretty nifty threads? Who were you kidding?" Johnny pouts. "Mister Ooh, Look At ME! I'm so HEP!"

"Actually, I believe it's hip, Johnny. The correct term is hip," Dr. Morton advises.

"Hip, hep, whatever," Johnny grumbles. "And it's not like YOU didn't show up at the station dressed in that funky lime-green suit, Doc. So you don't exactly have room to talk."

"This is not a fashion show discussion, people," Friday says, banging his gavel.

"Oh, you have it easy, Sergeant!" Johnny grouses. "You wear the same suit, day in and day out!"

"I do not!" Friday snaps. "I have other suits I wear!"

"All I've ever seen you in is that shiny grey suit jacket and dark pants, Sergeant!" Johnny tells him. "And that same white shirt and tie, too!" He smirks. "Even when you relax, you're still dressed up. You just take off the tie and unbutton the shirt a little bit."

"Okay, wardrobes are not the topic of discussion!" Friday says sharply. "The problem with the tv station is the topic!"

"They showed the monkey virus episode today," says Chet Kelly. "You know, the one where you and Dr. Brackett nearly die from..." Kelly begins chuckling wickedly. "Playing with your monkeys?"

"Hey, I was not playing with my monkey, Chet!" Johnny snaps. "I don't have a monkey!" Roy leans over and whispers something to Gage. Johnny's eyes widen. "Oh, that's nasty, Chet! Your mind is in the gutter!"

"What about me?" asks Brackett. "I wasn't playing with MY monkey and I still got the virus!"

"No, Kel, I was usually the one playing with your monkey," Dixie says with a blush.

"Can I get a monkey, Pete?" Jim asks.

"NO!" Pete snaps.

Jim snaps his fingers. "Hey, I've got it! Why don't we stage a sit-in at Wacky Nostalgic Television's headquarters? We could all gather 'round and sing!" He closes his eyes and begins to sing. "All we are saying...is give peas a chance."

"PEACE, Jim, it's PEACE!" Malloy hisses. "Not peas!"

"Oh," Jim says with a shrug. "Well, then that would explain a lot. I never could figure out why you wouldn't give peas a chance, unless you didn't particularly like vegetables."

"No, no, a sit-in wouldn't work anyway," Friday says. "We're the Establishment. We're supposed to be square...too square for a sit-in."

"How about a stand-up?" Jim asks. When Friday shakes his head, Jim frowns. "A walk-by? A glance-at? A slight wink?"

"None of those will work," Friday says.

"Well, it seems to me that it's not really much of our problem, per se, Joe," says Bill Gannon. "They don't seem to screw that much with our show as much as they do the other two."

"Yeah, just last week they showed the first half of 'Clear With A Civilian', but not the second half," Mac says.

"And they keep re-running that same episode where Reed's trying to give away Queenie's puppies," says Pete. "And lemme tell ya. It's getting annoying."

"Yeah, those dogs are probably old and grey now," Jim says.

"Or dead," says Pete.

Reed gasps. "Dead, Pete? They can't be dead!"

"Oh, yeah, I forget, they're syndicated, too," Pete says. "I've heard of purebred puppies, but *syndicated* puppies?"

"Well, it's a problem for us, too," says Al Porter. "Especially if they decide to show episodes of all three shows that we've made appearances on."

"Madras plaid!" exclaims Marco. "I hear ya, Al. Just last week, I was a firefighter, a cop, and a detective, all on the same day! Talk about your wardrobe changes!"

"You know, it's funny," says Dr. Brackett. "*Adam-12* has had the opportunity to appear on both *Dragnet* and *Emergency!*, but yet *Emergency!* never crossed over onto *Dragnet*. Why was that?"

"You guys were more of an ensemble piece," Friday says. "I doubted we could've fit all of you onto the show." He smiles. "But at least several of you did get to play other characters on *Dragnet*. That's something right there, isn't it?"

Mac raises his hand. "Is it true that Wacky Nostalgia TV has the right to skip episodes?" he asks.

Friday nods. "Unfortunately, yes. And they have. Several of the *Adam-12* episodes have been skipped, especially the crucial ones."

"Like what?" asks Pete.

"Well, like the series finale, for one. And 'Killing Ground'. And 'X-Force'. There seems to be no rhyme or reason to why they skip episodes. They just do it, much to the viewers' dismay." Friday shakes his head. "I'm open to suggestions as to what we can do, folks."

"I know, let's get them a monkey!" Jim Reed exclaims. "Better yet, get ME a monkey!"

"I told you, NO MONKEY!" Pete says. "Will you get off of it?"

Reed frowns. "But, Pete, I'm not even ON it!"

The first Jean Reed leans forward and pats Jim on the head. "There, there, you poor sweet dumb Jim. I'll take you home and get you a monkey."

"Hands off, sister!" snaps the second Jean. "He's MY husband!"

"Only for the second half of the series!" smirks the first Jean. "I was the cute-as-a-button one...while you were the Miss Piggy look-alike!" she says.

"You two do realize you're arguing over HIM, don't you?" Pete asks in annoyance.

"Well, it's better than arguing over YOU!" Judy huffs. "Mr. Staypuff Marshmallow Man!"

"For the last time, I AM NOT FAT!" Pete roars. "And YOU!" he snaps, pointing to Judy. "You can just go right back to Mayberry!"

"Well, I WILL!" snaps Judy.

Reed looks puzzled. "What's wrong with fighting over me?" he asks. "I think it's kinda neat to have two chicks fighting over me."

Pete rolls his eyes. "You WOULD, Reed. You'd better hope the one you want wins this match."

"Ooh, I'm betting on the skinny Jean," Reed says. "If she can carry our kid for over a year, she can take on PigZilla."

"No one's fighting over me," John Gage whines. "That's not right. I'm just as cute as Reed is, if not cuter."

"You're also a walking advertisement for Band-Aids, Junior," Roy tells him. "Not to mention Blue Cross Blue Shield."

"Yeah, Gage, we don't call you the Walking Disaster Magnet for nothing, you know!" Chet Kelly says.

"Well at least I don't call myself the Phantom, Chet!" Johnny says. "What kind of lame-o name is that anyway?"

"It's better than the first one he came up with," says Marco. "He was originally gonna call himself the Blue Menace."

Captain Stanley stares at Chet. "The Blue Menace? Why?"

"I wear blue, and I'm a menace," Chet explains. "Especially to Gage."

"You're not really a menace, Chet, you're more of an annoyance, kind of like a hemorrhoid." He smirks. "There's a name for ya, Chet. The Human Hemorrhoid!"

Friday pounds the podium with the gavel. "Alright, let's settle down here! So no one has any suggestions on what to do about Wacky Nostalgia TV's screwing around of our shows?"

"Outside of asking the fans to email or write to the station, no," says Kelly Brackett. "And if they complain too much, the station is liable to just stop airing the shows period."

"How about coming back from the dead and giving us one of your rousing speeches, Sergeant?" asks Ed Wells. "Maybe that would rally the troops."

"Unfortunately, that's not an option," Friday says. "I'm permanently interred at Forest Lawn Cemetery."

"Ooh, do you ever get to talk with Marilyn Monroe?" asks Jim Reed. "Now there's somebody I'd like to bow-ca-chicka-bow-bow!"

Bill Gannon stands up. "Well, I'd like to stay longer, Joe, but I've gotta get going. Eileen is expecting me home for supper."

"Me too," says Roy DeSoto. "I've gotta get home and take my kid to Indian Guides."

"Isn't your kid too old for Indian Guides?" Johnny asks.

"In syndication, no," Roy says. "Don't you have a hot date with some chick named Twinkie?"

"TWINKIE?" asks Chet Kelly. "You're dating a chick named TWINKIE?" He nudges Marco. "Oh, this I gotta hear about."

"Well, you're gonna hafta wait until we get back to the station, Chet," Johnny tells him.

"Yeah, I think we might've left the fire engine parked in a no parking zone," Captain Stanley says. "We'd better go move it before it gets a boot put on one of the wheels."

Mac stands up. "I've gotta get the steering wheel back on Adam-12 so Pete and Jim can drive it back to the station," he says.

"I'm gonna make sure you put it on right, too!" Pete snaps.

"How's that sore throat, Dix?" asks Dr. Brackett. "What say we head back to Rampart and play with my monkey?"

"How come he gets a monkey and I don't?" Jim Reed asks.

"Reed? Do me a favor and SHUT UP!" Pete says.

"So who's riding back with me?" asks Judy. "I've got Pete's car."

"Which one? The cool kick-ass Mustang, or that crappy yellow piece of junk?" asks the first Jean.

"Crappy yellow piece of junk," says Judy.

"Oh, in that case, I'll drive myself home," the first Jean says.

"And Pete, when you get home, I won't be there," Judy says. "I'm leaving you."

"And will you take the crappy yellow piece of junk car with you when you go?" Pete asks. "I'd like to get back to driving Mustangs again."

"You're more likely to need an eighteen-wheeler there, Pete, with that gut," says Ed Wells.

Pete leans forward and smacks Ed's hat down over his face. "There, you jerk. See if you can see out of that."

"Ow, I tink you hurd my node," Ed says nasally.

Brinkman grabs him by the arm. "C'mon, Ed. I'll drive you back to the station."

"Who's gonna drive ME home?" whines the second Jean.

Mac sighs. "Val and I will, second version Jean."

Friday looks out over the departing crowd with dismay. "So no one is going to stay and help think of ideas for this Wacky Nostalgia TV problem we've got?" he asks.

"Sorry, Joe. We've all got other things to do," Bill Gannon tells him.

"Yeah, Joe. It was a great meeting, though," says Dr. Brackett. "Maybe we should consider getting together again sometime, all of us."

"And, we got a lot of problems aired," says Captain Stanley. "Now maybe the network will take notice."

"And who knows?" says Roy DeSoto. "They might even do something about it."

"You'd better hope they don't decide to cancel us," Gage whispers. "Not all of the seasons have been released on DVD yet. The fans might go into withdrawal."

"Well, as long as they keep watching, I don't think that'll be a problem," says Pete.

Sergeant Friday watches all of them file out the door...the characters from *Emergency!*, from *Adam-12*, and his friend, Bill Gannon from *Dragnet*. Soon, he is completely alone in the meeting room. He looks down at the gavel he still holds in his hand, an expression of sorrow on his face. "Well, I tried," he says softly. "I honestly gave it my best shot." He taps the gavel lightly on the podium.

"Hey, are you done in here?" asks a janitor as he sticks his head around the door. "When you leave, you need to turn the lights off."

"Yeah, sure, I'm done," says Friday sadly, still staring at the gavel in his hands. "I've been done for awhile now. I just haven't been able to accept it."

"Do tell," remarks the janitor. "I'd like to hear the rest of your story, pally, but I gotta get some cleaning done. Don't forget to turn off the lights, okay?" The janitor pushes his cart loaded with cleaning supplies down the hall.

"Yeah, I won't," says Friday. He looks out across the empty room. "You know, it was such a simpler time then," he says to himself. "We didn't glorify sex, drugs, or graphic violence. Our shows were clean and wholesome, shows you wouldn't be ashamed to sit down with your grandparents and watch. Oh, sure, sometimes the moralizing got a little heavy-handed, but it still got the messages across." He slowly trudges across the room to the door. He pauses, his hand on the light switch. "I'm glad we're enjoying a revival of our different series, for without the loyal fans, we'd all be nothing, just pieces of television history." he says. "And hopefully, the revival will go on for a long, long time." He casts one final glance across the room, then he flicks the light off, plunging the room into darkness. He smiles a small smile. "A long, *long* time," he says, then he turns and walks down the hallway, his shoes clicking on the tile floor.

The janitor, standing by his cart, pauses to watch Sergeant Friday's exit. As Friday reaches the outside door, he walks right through the glass doors, his image fading slowly into the darkness outside. The janitor grins and tips his fedora at the doors. "So long, Joe, I hope you got something accomplished tonight," says Officer Frank Smith. He resumes pushing his cart down the hallway, an image of black and white against glorious technicolor.

And you know what? It didn't even matter...not one single bit. For like Sergeant Friday said, without the fans, the shows would be forgotten. So we must take care to see that that never happens. Because who knows? It may be YOUR favorite show that soon becomes nothing more than a piece of nostalgic television history.

*So, thus endeth the heavy-handed moral of the story. And, in the words of the immortal Ed Sullivan: "It was a really. really good shew."*