

Miscellaneous Single Episodes

Alive in the Grave

Date: Nov 30 1964

The Creaking Door was a radio series of horror and suspense shows originating in South Africa, but based on the American Inner Sanctum show. Few websites have any information on the series, but <http://www.radiohorrorhosts.com/creakingdoor.html> states with some authority that the series was broadcast in the mid 1960s, and this sounds about right. This episode was transcribed by Kevin Rimney - March 2009
The Creaking Door: Alive in the Grave

MUSIC: Intro

ANNOUNCER: I have flown, I have sailed, I have moved about this world of ours and ever in search of the finest of its kind. We bring you the tops in spine chillers.

SFX: Creaking Door

ANNOUNCER: The Creaking Door

ADVERTISER: The manufacturers of State Express, Three Fives Filter King Cigarettes take pleasure in presenting.

ANNOUNCER: The Creaking Door

HOST: Good evening friends of the Creaking Door. The Creaking Door is open so do come in.

SFX: Creaking Door

HOST: Feeling the chill of these winter evenings? Wait until you're with us a little, you'll freeze with fear.

ADVERTISEMENT: Get Three Fives. Get the Taste. Three Fives by State Express. Get the taste of international success. The taste that's uniquely Three Fives. Only when no expense is spared in its making can a cigarette taste so light, so smooth, so satisfying. Three Fives. Get the taste. The taste that State Express has created for you. The taste that has made Three Fives the king size cigarette of international success. Get Three Fives. Get the taste.

MUSIC: START

NARRATOR: The cemetery caretaker and the ashen face, trembling young man make an odd pair as they stand by an open grave under the pale moon. In the grave itself is a coffin. The lid has been pryed open and inside, the corpse of a middle aged man. The caretaker warns -

SFX: Background noise of crickets/frogs throughout scene.

CARETAKER: Oh I've heard about blokes like you. Read about grave robbers. I never thought I'd come across one. Here, I've sent for the cops young man. Don't you try any rough stuff, I'm a match for you any day.

JOE: But you don't understand. I've tried to save his life and now its too late

CARETAKER: Now don't you give me that. This fellow was given a decent Christian burial. You've desecrated his...

JOE: Desecrated you say. Isn't it desecration to bury a man while he's still alive?

CARETAKER: Eh, eh. What's he talking about? You don't think people go around being buried alive these days do you? I don't know what to make of you. I watched you this afternoon; I thought you looked a bit, peculiar. I didn't know what you were doing at a pauper's burial.

JOE: He shouldn't have had a pauper's burial. He shouldn't have been buried at all. I could have saved him.

CARETAKER: You'd better think up a good story. Something told me that you were up to no good. Nah, don't you try any rough stuff, I already warned you. I watched you; the police are on their way. Breaking open a coffin like that. Eh, I knew you were up to something but I never thought...

JOE: It's because, because I let him get buried alive and I was ashamed. Let him get buried alive for a measly fifty pounds. Now he's dead.

CARETAKER: Hey, did you come out of a loony bin or something? Now that I get a better look at you, you don't look like no grave robber

JOE: I'm not, listen..

CARETAKER: What's he to you this fellow we buried today?

JOE: Nothing, except I'm responsible for his death. I touched him. He's cold... cold as death.

CARETAKER: He's only been in the ground a few hours; they don't stay cold like that. Sometimes we get an exhumation order, we have to dig 'em up. You'd be surprised how cold they get.

JOE: He is dead isn't he? I brought this mirror with me, there's no breath. Look.

CARETAKER: Hehehe, I don't have to look. He's been in the municipal morgue for two days; he's given a pauper's burial. Now then what's this all about young man. I want to go home. He was dead all right when they buried him.

JOE: But not when the ambulance took him to the morgue. You see I know.

CARETAKER: You know? Oh was he a relative of yours?

JOE: I didn't even know he existed until 2 days ago. I'd been trapped in the streets looking for work. I didn't want to go home. If you can call that one room Lil and I occupy a home. It was still ringing in my ears the things she shouted at me as I left there... (fade out)

LIL: I've come to the end of my tether. I've pawned everything. Look, look even the wedding ring you slipped on my finger in the church. What did he say, and all thy worldly goods. Ha that's a laugh, you were going to share all your worldly goods were you? Well if you don't get some money or a job I'm walking out on you. Do you hear? I'm walking out on you and I'll go and live with my sister. At least I'll get some warmth and three square meals a day.

JOE: Aw don't say that Lil. Was it my fault I fell sick and couldn't work in the factory any more. I've tried dear I really have. Everywhere I go they look at me and say no vacancies.

LIL: Not my fault either. I warn you, I can't take much more of this.

JOE: I know honey I know, I'll get something today I promise.

MUSIC: Creepy Transition and continues

JOE: It was a promise I couldn't keep. Pounding the pavement. Watching the dislike and fear in the eyes of the world as I passed by. Fear that one day they might become like me. And then I see him. I was coming to Duke's Lane, nothing on either side except a huge brick wall. He was a short fat little man. Our steps blurred in the quiet thoroughfare.

SFX: Echo-y footsteps on pavement.

JOE: What was he stopping for? Was he taking caution? Did he think me a gangster or something? I suppose I looked like something that had crawled out of a piece of cheese.

SHORT FAT MAN: Gasps. Choking sounds.

SFX: running footsteps

JOE: Governor, are you all right? He can't be. He's conked out. There doesn't seem to be any breathing. I wonder who he is. He must have something in his pocket. Blimey, look at all this money. Must be fifty quid here at least. Poor swine, what good is his money now? I'd better call a cop.

LIL: (distant) Well if you don't get some money or a job I'm walking out on you. Do you hear? I'm walking out.

JOE: There's nothing anyone can do for this poor swine. They'll find him soon enough. What does a guy do in a case like this? Beat it you fool, beat it with the first decent money you've had in months. Somebody will find him. Run!

SFX: running footsteps
SFX: door opening

JOE: Lil.

LIL: Joe, Joe you got some money.

JOE: That's right Lil, two five pound notes, thirteen one pound notes and the rest in ten bob notes. It all adds up, adds up very nicely, fifty quid in all.

LIL: Oh Joe hunny. Aye, how did you get this money? You didn't go and do anything silly did you?

JOE: Just like what? Rob a bank? I wouldn't know where to start.

LIL: But, but how did you get it?

JOE: You'll never believe it. Remember I told you when I was in the sanatorium there was this fellow there with the same lung trouble by the name of Ted Brown.

LIL: Yes

JOE: Well I lent him a quid.

LIL: You lent him a quid? While I was...

JOE: Well I was still drawing my wages wasn't I? We didn't know that the doctor wouldn't let me go back to the factory. Wasn't so bad then.

LIL: All right, what about this Ted Brown?

JOE: Well I meet him in the street see; he says he's been looking for me everywhere, wanted to repay me the quid.

LIL: Go on.

JOE: Well we goes into a pub to have a drink, there was a bookie there and Ted says he has a hot tip, fifty to one. It won Lil, fifty smackers

LIL: Oh Joe, fifty smackers! Oh I love you!

MUSIC: Transition.

JOE: Lil went to get some groceries and a couple bottles of beer. I sat on the bed and had a further look at the wallet. Having taken the money out I thought it'd be empty. There were two pockets both with

plastic windows. The first held a card that said Harold Maxsted, Twenty Six Fairly Street, Ornsby. Then I looked at the second plastic window. There were strange words printed on a white card. It said: I am not dead, I a subject to a form of Cataleptic Illness which may appear to cause death. If I am found please inform Doctor Alfred Miller, Ornsby, 6641.

JOE: No, No it can't be. Not dead. Cataleptic. What have I done? What have I done? They'll think he's, I must telephone. But Lil, she'll wonder where I've gone. I've given her all my money.

SFX: door opens

LIL: Here all right, I got a bit. Take these bottles from me will you? Joe, what is it?

JOE: What time is it Lil?

LIL: I don't know, the pub's just opened. I'd say about sixish, why?

JOE: Give me ten bob. Do you have any change? I need some silver. I have to telephone. I won't be long.

LIL: What is it?

JOE: I just have to telephone someone.

LIL: You're not going gambling are you? You haven't got the bug? You're not betting on tomorrow's races or anything like that are you Joe? There are all those bills to be paid

JOE: I know Love, I know. No I'm not gambling but I need it please. I'll be back in a little while. It's just that. Please Lil.

LIL: All right. Here.

SFX: Banging noises, getting shoes on I believe.

LIL: Joe!

SFX: door opening

JOE: It's all right love.

SFX: door closing

MUSIC: Transition

JOE: Would I be too late with the phone call? Would they bury this poor guy without knowing he was a cataleptic? Thinking he was dead.

SFX: Change going into payphone and dialing.

JOE: This would be the number of the doctor in the wallet.

SFX ringing

MAN'S VOICE: Hello

JOE: Can I speak to Dr. Miller please?

MAN'S VOICE: Dr. Miller has gone abroad he's been away for the past six weeks.

JOE: Abroad, oh no. Have you taken over his practice sir?

MAN'S VOICE: No, no I'm not a medical man but if you're in need of a doctor there must be plenty...

JOE: No, No it isn't that. You don't know which hospital Dr. Miller was at?

MAN'S VOICE: I'm afraid I can't help you. I must go, my wife is shouting, dinner is on the table.

JOE: I'm sorry. Thank you.

MUSIC: Transition

JOE: And then another thought seeped into my brain. Under ground, a long wooden box and a man being buried, being buried alive and a shovel heaping earth on the wooden boards.

SFX: Flipping pages.

JOE: There must be a Maxsted in the telephone directory.

MUSIC:

JOE: There was, fourteen Maxsteds, everyone alive and bad tempered.

MAXSTED: No I have no relatives who suffer from a cataleptic illness. Perhaps there are a few other Maxsteds in the book, try them.

JOE: I have, you're Mr. Zacharia Maxsted, you're the last on the list.

MAXSTED: Well I can't help you.

MUSIC: Transistion

JOE: What now? Do I go along to the police and say, Look I stole a man's wallet, someone might be shoving him into six foot of earth. What do I do? I decided to sleep on it. Sleep? That's a laugh.

JOE:(in his sleep) Uh, buried alive. Love you Lil. Love. Please, pinching white..

HAROLD MAXSTED: They're putting me in a wooden box and its your fault Joe Alish. I'm struggling for breath. They're going to bury me, bury

me deep. Not deep enough Joe. Get me out of this or I will make you suffer, here on earth and in the beyond.

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MUSIC:

NARRATOR: Well, well, well. Joe Alish had better do something about it pretty soon. Otherwise the poor unfortunate cataleptic gentlemen will be stiff with the cold. But let us see what he does do.

JOE: Death. I didn't know what to do. It had been less than six hours since I saw that chap fall. Maybe he's still there. Maybe if I go back to Duke's lane he will still be lying there.

SFX: door opening.

LIL: Joe?

JOE: Oh, sorry hunny, I didn't want to wake you up.

LIL: It's the middle of the night, where are you going?

JOE: I won't be long.

LIL: No Joe, you're not going anywhere. I thought you've been acting strange. Oh Joe, I know I've nagged and threatened you but it was only because you were getting so down, so beaten. I love you Joe. Otherwise you

JOE: It isn't that at all. All right Lil, I'll tell you. Then you will see why I have to go.

MUSIC: Transition

JOE: And so I told her. Told her the whole story of how I robbed a man I thought was dead, a corpse that had no use for the fifty quid in his wallet.

JOE: So you see I have got to find him, or find out where they're taking him. They will think he's dead Lil.

LIL: Oh Joe, Joe. Someone will have found him by now. He's probably lying in bed fast asleep. People who have these sorts of fits, they recover.

JOE: No they don't. After I found all the Maxsteds I could I went to the library and I looked it up. Unless they get assistance they can

stay that way for days. By then they, will bury him and you know what that makes me? A murderer. I'm letting a man die for fifty quid.

LIL: Oh no Joe. What if you phone the police station, what if you call the Ornsby police station and tell them... Oh no Joe, you can't do that. They will call you a thief and pu you away. Look, I'm getting dressed and coming with you. Where did you say it was, Duke's Lane?
(fades away)

SFX: footsteps.

LIL: Joe, lets pray he's still there.

JOE: It might be worse. He might have died for lack of attention. Lets pray someone saw him and took him to the hospital and they realized he wasn't, wasn't dead.

LIL: Shh, a cop.

COP: It's a bit nippy this time of morning isn't it? You're up late aren't you?

JOE: Yeah that's right.

LIL: There was a little commotion in Duke's Lane a few hours ago so my friend Phylis told me. Something happened in Duke's lane.

COP: Oh yes, yes just before I came on duty. Postman saw a bloke lying in the lane here. Drop dead.

LIL: Dead?

JOE: They're sure he's dead?

COP: So the police surgeon said. Why, know anything about it?

LIL: No, we don't know anything about it; it was just that, we wondered if it was anyone we knew is all.

COP: Oh, well I believe they've identified him all right. If you knit around to the station they may be able to tell you.

LIL: Oh I don't think it's anyone we know. Come on love, it's too cold to stand here chatting, lets go up to bed.

COP: You too married?

JOE: Yes.

COP: Hehe, you should have been in bed ages ago. Goodnight, or rather good morning.

JOE: Let's go to the police station.

LIL: No, no, no. You'll have to entertain about the wallet. Besides this policeman doesn't really know.

JOE: But Lil...

LIL: It's no good Joe we're going home. Come on.

MUSIC: Transition

LIL: Some more coffee Joe.

JOE: No thanks. Lil, its no good we've got to go to the police. We're committing murder. Its two days now. I didn't sleep a wink all night last night. Kept having nightmares, hearing Maxsted's voice pounding in my brain. Pounding in my brain. Telling me to save him before its too late.

MUSIC: short transition

MAXSTED: You're the only one who can save me Alish. They're burying me this afternoon. They are putting me in a coffin and covering me with dirt. If you allow this to happen you are a murderer Joe Alish. A murderer. Do you hear. You will be punished, punished, punished.

JOE: He kept saying I'll be punished.

LIL: But you said yourself, it's only a nightmare. All right don't you go I will. I'll say that I knew, what was his name?

JOE: Maxsted, Harold Maxsted.

LIL: I'll say I know him and that he's a cataleptic. That's it! I'll go and (fades away)

SFX: Silent Pause

LIL: Excuse me.

COP: Hello, aren't you the young lady I saw down Duke's Lane the other night.

LIL: That's right. Oh I'm so glad you're here. You know we were talking about someone who dropped dead that afternoon. Were you able to identify him?

COP: Yes we were able to identify him all right. Why?

LIL: He's a cataleptic; he's not really dead you know.

COP: Oh don't be funny. I've got the card here. They're burying him this afternoon, he's in the Ornsby mortuary. Cardiac failure. This is the release for the body, for it to be buried. Signed by the police surgeon Dr. Herbert Spencer. He may have been a cataleptic, I

don't know about that but he died of heart failure. Being buried in a pauper's grave at Ornsby cemetery this afternoon. Didn't die of heart failure indeed. Ha! Not dead.

LIL: Maybe I'm being a bit silly. Thank you constable. Goodbye. (fades out)

LIL: (fades in) Sure he's dead, the death certificate was signed by the police surgeon.

JOE: What does that copper know about cataleptics? If the doctor had known he was a cataleptic... I'm going to stop the burial.

LIL: You can't Joe, you can't! Once you tell the police about the wallet... where are you going Joe?

JOE: I don't know. To get drunk. I don't know anything anymore.

MUSIC: downbeat / sad jazz

JOE: Even my glass of beer went sour in my mouth. I had bought it with blood money, the blood of Harold Maxsted. I left the pub and walked. They were burying him in a pauper's grave were they? I didn't ask my feet to move towards the cemetery, it seemed they didn't belong to me. They were burying him as I got there, a minister, a gravedigger and an old man, obviously the caretaker and the police sergeant. I wanted to shout - Don't! Don't put him in that grave he's not a corpse he's alive. I couldn't. Those three stripes on the copper's sleeve seemed to represent the number of years I might get for stealing and withholding information. I ran from the cemetery as though I was running from the vengeance of Maxsted himself.

MUSIC: Dramatic Transition

SFX: door open

LIL: Hello Joe.

JOE: They buried him at last.

SFX: door closes

JOE: I saw them do it, in a cheap wooden coffin. Haha. Maybe it's a good thing the coffin was a cheap one. Maybe the coffin maker gutted it, maybe there are holes in it. Maybe the poor swine will be able to breathe. Fifty measly knicker, fifty rotten pounds and I've turned myself into a murderer. I've let you in on it too, they will say you're part of the conspiracy. What have I done to you? What have I done to us?

LIL: Nothing Joe. All right, so you pinched his wallet when we were both starving. No one can have you up for, for murder.

JOE: That's beside the point now isn't it Lil? He's down there struggling for breath isn't he? He won't be struggling for long. I

don't know anything about cataleptics but you can't be nailed inside a coffin underneath six feet of earth long. Look out the window Lil, it's got dark already.

LIL: It's winter Joe.

JOE: I know the grave Lil, I'm going back.

LIL: Joe.

JOE: You're not going to stop me Lil. I'm going back and I'm going to get him out of that grave. Please Lil, I've got to.

LIL: All right Joe, I'll come with you.

JOE: No, I couldn't bear that. I've got to do this on my own.

LIL: Suppose, supposing he's too heavy for you. You're not strong Joe.

JOE: It's a pauper's grave Lil, they didn't take much trouble with him.

LIL: Why a pauper all that money in his wallet?

JOE: That makes it worse doesn't it? Maybe they couldn't raise his relatives, what with his doctor gone away and everything. Here Lil, get my hammer out of the drawer, its got that thing on the end for pulling nails out. And that piece of mirror.

LIL: All right.

SFX: drawer opening, noise of getting hammer out of drawer and then soft footsteps.

LIL: Here. I hope you're right. That you know what you're doing.

JOE: It's the only way Lil, the only way.

JOE: And here I am in it and it's too late. He'd dead all right.

CARETAKER: Blimey young man. I wouldn't want to be in your shoes not for nothing.

Just a minute, what did you say this blokes name was?

JOE: Maxsted, Harold Masted.

CARETAKER: Oh no it's not.

JOE: Huh?

CARETAKER: This blokes name is Sidney Frasier. Are you sure its the same bloke?

JOE: Positive. I know it's the same bloke, his accusing face follows me around, sleeping and waking.

CARETAKER: Ah well young man, come and have a look with me. We don't give them much of a tombstone these paupers. There you are. Sidney Frasier, born February the 6 1920 died December the 5 1967.

JOE: I've told you everything, they've given him the wrong name.

CARETAKER: You better tell that to the police constable. I'm sorry about this young man, I warned you. I thought I was too old to take you on my own, when you started opening that grave I ran to the cemetery office and phoned the police.

JOE: Oh well, its almost a relief in a way.

COP: Hello, whats going on here. Oh its you again. Your missus was in the police station this morning with some nonsense about... Eh? Digging up a grave are you? There's something fishy going on. When I told my sargeant that your wife came in and we were burying someone who's a cataleptic and who's not dead he nearly strangled me. Said I should have taken full particulars, said I ought to charge you both with causing a public nuisance. This fella Sidney Frasier has had heart trouble for years. Sometimes an ordinary hospital had the pleasure of his company, more often than not it was a prison hospital. Our policesargant warned him he hadn't had long to live. Your wife comes in with a cockabull story we're burying him alive. As if we didn't know him. Sidney Frasier. In his day he was the finest pick pocket in Ornsby.

JOE: Pickpocket?

COP: Yeah, Why only the other day we had a complaint from Mr. Maxsted that someone had stolen his wallet. Bloke accosted him at a bus stop and started running. From his description we knew it was Sid.

JOE: Hahahahahaha. He picked Max's pocket. He wasn't a cataleptic. He was a pickpocet. hahah

COP: You'd better pull yourself together. Ah now what are you doing here and why is this grave open?

CARETAKER: Oh that's all right constable. Our young friend here got a bit mixed up, I opened the grave to show him he was mistaken.

COP: Then why did you ring the police and say there was a suspicious character lurking in the cemetery?

CARETAKER: Well it seems I was mistaken, thats all constable. In fact we were both mistaken. Weren't we young man? Haha, Pickpocket hoho Cataleptics.

JOE: Hahahaha

MUSIC: story close

MUSIC: Creepy

HOST: Well, well, well. Someone should have told Joe Alish that lifting wallets off cataleptic gentlemen is a most grave offense. In fact it is likely to incur a most stiff penalty.

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MUSIC: Dramatic

HOST: This is your host back again. Just a reminder of our rendezvous next week. Where are we going? Through the Creaking Door of course.

SFX: creaking door.

HOST: Hehehe

ANNOUNCER: The manufacturers of State Express Three Five filter king cigarettes invite you to listen again next Saturday at 9 o'clock when they will again present..... The Creaking Door.