

PEOPLE WATCHING

A Ten-Minute Comedy Duet

by
DJ Sanders



Brooklyn Publishers, LLC

Toll-Free 888-473-8521

Fax 319-368-8011

Web www.brookpub.com

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CAST: APW and PPW

TIME: Now

PLACE: Anywhere

(There are two chairs sitting on the stage. APW is sitting in one of the chairs. APW looks out at the audience and focuses on one person)

APW: Twenty-eight, married, one child named Susan, works in a supermarket, and rents comedies from the video club every Tuesday night. ***(PPW enters and notices APW. PPW goes closer to APW and observes. APW looks around the audience more and stops on another person)*** Seventy-nine; three children; ten grandchildren all having names beginning with vowels like Ann, Evelyn, Isaac, Opal, and Ukulele...worked as a flight attendant for fifteen years and then worked as a merry-go-round ticket taker for twenty years... ***(PPW clears throat, drawing attention. APW looks over for a moment but decides to ignore PPW. APW looks around the audience choosing another person.)*** Sixteen days shy of turning thirty-nine, no children... ***(PPW laughs. APW ignores PPW.)*** Has a dog named Sparky and two cats, one named Macavity and the other Rum-tum-tigger... ***(PPW laughs louder)***...and has a certain liking for strawberries smothered in peanut butter.

PPW: You're doing it all wrong.

APW: Excuse me?

PPW: You're doing it all wrong.

APW: I heard you the first time. How do you even know what I'm doing?

PPW: It looks like you're attempting to people watch. But that's not how you do it. You come across looking like an amateur.

APW: And what are you? A Professional People Watcher? ***(PPW pulls out a card and hands it to APW) (reading card)*** "P.P.W." What does that stand for?

PPW: "Professional People Watcher."

APW: You have got to be kidding.

PPW: Right now you are showing all the signs of an Amateur People Watcher. But if you like...I could share with you a few pointers and maybe with a little hard work and imagination you too could become a professional people watcher, like me.

APW: What. Do you have a PhD in people watching? Or I guess not, otherwise your card would say: "P.P.W., P.H.D." Right? **(PPW stands and looks at APW with a blank face)** Seriously. What makes you a Professional People Watcher? Is there some course you take? Or some secret technique that's passed down through the generations? No. I got it! You ordered a "teach yourself" kit from one of those late-night infomercials, right? **(PPW makes no response)** Okay, now I understand. The game's up. Where's the hidden camera? Can I at least say "Hi Mom" before you shut it off?

PPW: I'm obviously wasting my time on a mere amateur.

(PPW goes to leave)

APW: Wait a minute. Where are you going?

PPW: I do not appreciate being mocked for my profession.

APW: You mean...you're serious?

PPW: You take care, amateur.

(PPW goes to leave)

APW: Wait a minute... I *do* want to learn how to become a Professional People Watcher.

PPW: You do?

APW: Yes.

PPW: Tell me *why* you want to learn to be a Professional People Watcher.

APW: Uh...because...sometimes when I'm people watching, I get bored. And maybe if you teach me some new techniques, I won't get bored as quickly.

PPW: People watching is *never* boring! Not if you do it correctly.

APW: All right, then I'll never get bored.

PPW: Hmm... I'm still not convinced that you're worth my time.

APW: Please? **(PPW stands and looks at APW)** Please, please, pretty please with chocolate-covered espresso beans on top!

PPW: **(sighing)** All right. How much time do you have?

APW: **(checking watch)** About seven minutes, give or take a few seconds. Is that enough?

PPW: Perhaps not enough to get you up to professional status, but we can definitely get you to a novice level.

APW: Great! Then let's start. Who do we start with? What about that woman over there?

PPW: This is where you are going all wrong. It's "people watching" not "person watching." "People" is plural even though it lacks a final "s," but that's beside the point. You can't just watch one person, but rather watch—

APW: People!

PPW: Exactly! Now you're beginning to understand.

APW: Then let's start with those two *people* over there.

PPW: They're right next to each other.

APW: Exactly.

PPW: (**yawning**) Amateur...

APW: What's wrong?

PPW: The Professional People Watcher doesn't take the easy route, but rather the more creative one.

APW: Fine! Two people not next to each other. We'll start with...her.

PPW: Who her?

APW: Her her.

PPW: Hmm, her, yeah, her.

APW: And him.

PPW: Who?

APW: Him.

PPW: Him him?

APW: No, him him.

PPW: Ah, him.

APW: Yeah, her and him. Huh?

PPW: Perfect. Now let's start with some basic information.

APW: Basic info... I'll start with her, okay? Let's say she's thirty-two, dating a cotton candy salesman—

PPW: No, no, no. You're doing it all wrong.

APW: You said basic information.

PPW: People watching. We're *people* watching. People *interact*, with each other. We need these people to interact. We need information that will help us figure out how they interact.

APW: Right... People...interacting...

PPW: When you meet someone who you think might be interesting, what is the first thing you ask that person to find out how well you two might interact.

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