

"Tracey Takes On..." Season 2 Episode Guide, Review and Commentary

Part 2: Episodes 6 through 10

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This is a detailed episode guide to, review of, and commentary on episodes 6 through 10 of the award-winning second season of TRACEY TAKES ON ..., the HBO series starring Tracey Ullman. Sprinkled throughout the guide are my commentaries and reviews of the various episodes, sketches and bits.

OTHER EPISODE GUIDES

Episode guides to other seasons can be found at <http://www.rreini.com/tracey/>, as can a concise episode guide for all seasons (no commentary, one-line descriptions of sketches).

Episodes are listed in the order of their original airdate on HBO.

[Commentary on TTO Season 2, Episodes 1-5](#)

6. Childhood (Feb 24 1997)

OPENING: Tracey shows us a few mementos from her childhood - a portrait of her at age 6 (with a slightly botched haircut courtesy of Mother) and two of her old dolls, one of which was mangled by the family dog. She also shows us something she used to do as a kid - a handstand (but now that she's grown, she remembers to wear her panties).

COMMENT: Her last line had me ROFL (rolling on the floor laughing). Shortly thereafter, this thought crossed my mind: wait a minute, this is HBO - she doesn't have to remember to wear her panties <g>. Shame on me <g>...

SHORT BIT:

Chic: One of his most thrilling childhood memories is sailing into New York Harbor and seeing the Statue of Liberty. Of course, he was stuffed into a barrel with his sister at the time... He also has some fun with the leaf blower...

COMMENT: Hey, it's Chic. What needs to be said?

LONG SKETCH:

Rayleen Gibson is talking to a dingo, which she calls her cousin. That's because she was lost in the outback at age 2 and raised by a pack of wild dingoes. She lived with them for over 10 years,

so she grew up thinking that she was a dingo. We flashback to a time when she and her pack decide to raid the chicken coop at a farm. The farmer hears the commotion, gets his gun, fires some warning shots and scares the pack off. Imagine his surprise when he sees a young woman (Rayleen) with a chicken in her mouth, acting like a wild animal! He takes her inside the house, where she's cleaned up, fed, and loved. She trusts him and his daughter. They take her into town and give her to a vet, who proves to be unscrupulous; he wants to exhibit her in the circus! Rayleen is caged, her water dish just out of reach outside the cage. Suddenly, she sees a cat and gives chase. She's free! The cat goes in the trees and on the roof, but Rayleen is never far behind. The cat leaps to the ground and so does Rayleen - right into the path of an oncoming car! Fortunately, the car stops. It's Olivia Newton-John! She saw what Rayleen had done and asked if she wanted to be a stuntwoman. Rayleen might not have understood the words, but she knew she could trust this woman, so off she went. She was educated and brought back into the human world, where she became the Rayleen we know today. Still, she likes to keep in touch with her family...

COMMENT: An absolutely wonderful sketch! Here's another candidate for the "Best Of" special at the end of the season. How many other actors could give such a believable performance as a wild animal? It's all of the little things, like rolling over and allowing her belly to be scratched.

SHORT BIT:

Her Royal Highness meets her old nanny Blair. HRH is grateful to Nanny Blair for making her join the Brownies to mix with the common folk, even though the results were not as intended...

COMMENT: I still want to strangle her.

LONG SKETCH:

After the end of a long day at the donut shop, Mrs. Noh Nang Ning likes to soak her feet in donut batter. She reminisces about her childhood - how her parents were killed in a riot at a cockfight, and how she took up dance at the orphanage. Her implement of choice was a hoop - a circle. Seems the circle has been very important in her life. It was very important when Prince Pyss Pott paid a visit to the orphanage and she was selected to dance for him. Her traditional dancing put him to sleep, so she changed tactics and did a bump-and-grind routine. That got him up. She became his wife and lived in his palace. That life of comfort ended when the Communists took over. She fled the country in a boat but was knocked overboard. Her sole hold on life was courtesy of a life preserver - another circle. She was rescued, and the crew gave her coffee and a donut - yet another circle - to drink and eat. This was her destiny! When she got to America, she started a donut shop and saved enough money to bring over the whole family - even "Uncle" Pyss Pott!

COMMENT: Another pretty good sketch. Mrs. Noh has led an interesting life. Who would have known that she was a good dancer?

SHORT BITS:

Janie Pillsworth: Her childhood was very ordinary and rather plain - no addictions, no dysfunctions, no divorces, no nothing. And she'd like it very much if nobody ever found out the truth.

COMMENT: If you've ever seen the "Class Act" and "Takes On New York" specials, then you'll

know that this is one of Janie's lifelong fears - that her ordinary roots will be exposed.

Sydney Kross: She's been involved with the legal system all her life in one form or another. She sued the doctor who slapped her when she was born for sexual harassment (and won); she sued the hospital for serving too hot Similac (and won); and she sued her mother for custody of her bosom for feeding (she lost but got liberal visitation rights).

COMMENT: "Intense" is right!

LONG SKETCH:

Trevor recalls his childhood in the north of England and how he knew that he never fit in, that he was somehow different. Flashback to the Ayliss household, where a young Trevor is dressed up, ready to go to the football (soccer) game with his dad and brothers. But, as we see, he's not really the football fanatic. He's willing to try, but father (John Mahoney) says no, it could be rough, you'd better stay home. So while they go to the game, Trevor helps his mother (Judy Geeson) bake a cake. He's down in the dumps because of his feeling different from the other guys, but Mother cheers him up by saying he's sensitive and talented. Why else would he have seen "Calamity Jane" six times? Later, the guys return somewhat downhearted; seems their team lost. Mother has an announcement: Trevor would like to perform something for them. He performs a routine from "Calamity Jane". Father stops the record; he's a bit upset. Tension builds. One of Father's friends says that if Trevor were his son, he'd smack him one. Trevor, nearly in tears, runs to his room. Father comes up a short time later; no, he's not going to smack him. He just wants his son to grow up and be a man - to go to work in the mines and die at 40 from black lung disease. Now there's a man's life!

COMMENT: It may have been rough for the young Trevor, but he made it. He turned out fairly well-adjusted and seems to have made some inner peace with himself.

SHORT BIT:

Ruby Romaine is looking through old photos and remembering her youth. She went through puberty at a very early age and had to fight off the advances of Uncle Roscoe (he was told to join the Navy, where he died at Guam). One day, a film crew came to town. Ruby caught the eye of Errol Flynn, and they had a fling. But she was underage and threatened to tell, so he arranged for her to work as a makeup artist. And so began her career in Hollywood.

COMMENT: When Ruby doesn't say anything racist or bigoted, she can be an interesting human being.

OVERALL COMMENTS: Brilliant - simply brilliant! This episode was way too short; I'd like to see a sequel in future seasons. This is easily the best regular-format episode of the season to date (the Las Vegas episode was mainly one long interleaved sketch). It's also one of the best of the series to date. The makeup was excellent, not only for the regular characters but also for the younger versions of the characters. And the characters were superb, as always.

7. 1976 (Mar 05 1997)

OPENING SEQUENCE: Tracey appears to be limping. She's not hurt, but the same can't be said for one of her 20 year old platform shoes, obtained when she was sweet 16 (well, maybe not

sweet). The heel blew out then, and it's blown out again.
COMMENT: Can nostalgia be hazardous to your health?

SHORT BIT:

Mrs. Noh remembers that in 1976, a new and improved donut machine came onto the market, one that let you cook donuts with only half the grease. What a breakthrough! It allowed her to buy an old-fashioned machine at a cut-rate price. All the grease, and all the taste.

COMMENT: Just stay away from the garlic bagels! See last week's episode for the explanation.

LONG SKETCH:

Manhattan Review is doing a retrospective on 1976. The staff, which includes editor Janie Pillsworth and her new intern Hope Finch, is reviewing some of the cultural debris of 1976, including the season- ending cliffhanger of VIP Lounge (Linda Granger's character is at the controls of a plane where the crew's been incapacitated - does she fly or does she die?). Hope got her job as a favor to her father, a friend of the Pillsworths. Unfortunately for Hope, Janie's not happy with her performance (personally, the fault isn't Hope's).

Later that evening, Janie and Hope are supposed to be on their way to the former location of Stage 24, THE hot club of '76, but now a carpet store. But tonight, it's been restored to the look of its heyday for a 70's retro party. Unfortunately, the environmentally friendly cab Hope called for didn't arrive, and Janie is furious. She pushes Hope into the rain-soaked street and orders her to summon the first cab that comes along. That cab happens to be Chic's, but he's off duty. No matter; Janie climbs in, then locks the door so Hope can't get in. Fortunately for her, Chic lets her sit up front.

COMMENT: Fortunately? Knowing Chic's reputation? On the other hand, we know Hope can take care of herself.

Chic lets Janie off at the old Stage 24. He recognizes her from somewhere - but where? Ah! Now he remembers, and he proceeds to tell Hope the story. It was the summer of '76, and Stage 24 was in its glory... We see a young Janie, not long arrived from England, trying in vain to get inside the club for a story. We see Chic, who is not yet a cabbie but a small-time drug dealer making his last delivery before quitting for good and getting his hack license. His destination: Stage 24, back door. Janie sees him and grasps at this opportunity to get inside. The price of admission? She flashes her boobs at him (he remembers very well what they looked like) and gets inside.

COMMENT: Shame on Chic for getting into the drug scene - but congratulations for having enough sense to get out of it.

The scene inside is wild, just like you would expect from NYC's hottest nightclub. Beautiful people and celebrities are everywhere, and in the middle of it all are Janie, Chic, and a pre-collagen Linda Granger (notice how small her lips are). Linda's agent Candy is there, too, with some network executives trying to sign up Linda for next season. He's driving a hard bargain; too hard, perhaps. And a lot of that money is heading up Linda's nose. Yes, she's got a big-time coke habit. Janie overhears this and hides in the toilet while Linda sniffs her lines. What a story this will make! While Linda is having a terrific time on the dance floor, Janie is composing her story.

It hits the papers the next week and ruins Linda's career - but Janie's is just beginning. This disturbs Hope deeply. To think that her boss profited at the expense of another's misfortune - well!

The next morning, Hope takes the magazine staff to task for ignoring the other major events of 1976 (the year of her birth, by the way) in favor of glorifying a decadent nightclub where the editor got her start by ruining somebody else's life. She can prove that Janie was the one who wrote that uncredited article; she repeats Chic's description of Janie's boobs. That bit of backbone costs Hope her job (but it wasn't a job worth having, anyway).

POSTSCRIPT: Linda is getting ready for her next job - an informercial. She's not happy with the nostalgia slant of her writeup in Manhattan Review.

COMMENTS: A wonderful sketch, especially the sequence in the cab with Chic, Hope and Janie. Chic hitting on Hope and Hope resisting; Chic hitting on Janie and Janie *really* resisting, etc. Another highlight was the repartee among the magazine staffers. I also got a kick out of Chic's command of the English language in 1976, which amounted to two phrases: "Are you talking to me?" and "Show me your t*ts."

SHORT BIT:

Ruby Romaine used to work on "VIP Lounge". One time, she caught Linda trying to sniff some translucent powder from one of her makeup kits. She quits in protest and spreads the word about what happened to somebody at the network. "This girl's gonna die `cause she's flying too high." Just goes to show you, you don't cross Ruby Romaine!

COMMENT: No, I guess you don't!

OVERALL COMMENTS: Not a bad episode at all. We're starting to see Tracey's characters interact with each other more often. Last year, it was rare to see two or more of them in the same sketch; this year, it's been fairly common. This makes for a more complicated production, but the results are really worth it. Consider Janie's treatment of Hope. We've already seen that Janie can be a pretty snotty individual, but seeing her treat Hope the way she does gives a whole new definition to "snotty." Spitting her "Hope-uccino" into Hope's sleeve - harassing her at the cab and the next morning - we're seeing aspects of Janie that we might not otherwise be seeing.

8. Food (Mar 12 1997)

OPENING: We see Tracey in the kitchen preparing some toad in the hole, or pigs in a blanket, or the equivalent names in French and Italian. But she's doing it the good ol' British way: seven hours on high heat, and make sure to cook those veggies overnight!

COMMENT: No matter what the dish is called, it's still just as unappetizing. At least she wasn't preparing spotted dick...

SHORT BITS:

Mrs. Noh is talking about the different products she bakes, following the demands of the marketplace (donuts, muffins, bagels, etc.) - but they're all just different forms of the same thing

(batter). While she's telling us this, she's preparing her lunch - batter-fried eels, cooked live, like lobster. They've never been trendy; they've never caught on.

COMMENT: Gee, I wonder why? And if there's a society for the prevention of cruelty to eels, Mrs. Noh would make a great target. Her preparation techniques are not what you would call humane. I know the eels think so...

Ruby Romaine misses the glory days of TV dinners, when they were so colorful. Now, all those chemicals have been removed `cause they're bad for you. But she's saved some old dinners from the bad ol' days. Recently, she and son Buddy had some vintage 1974 turkey dinners. What color those beans and beets had! And the turkey was "turkier."

COMMENT: Collecting vintage TV dinners like vintage wine - now there's an original idea. I can see it now - TV dinner tasting parties; a case of 1979 Banquet salisbury steak dinners commanding record prices at Christie's; you get the idea.

LONG SKETCH:

Janie Pillsworth is supposed to meet a client at her favorite restaurant. But her favorite table is taken. No other table has such status as hers; nothing else will do. She's there to have lunch, not to eat (i.e., she's there to be seen). So she walks out in disgust. Is this a plot? Is she on her way out? Is she losing her status? Her friend Paige invites her to lunch the next day at *her* table at the same restaurant. Jamie balks at first but swallows her pride and agrees. At the restaurant the next day, the manager sees Janie and explains that yesterday's mixup was due to a misunderstanding: she was to be lunching in the private room yesterday (Helmut Newton's birthday party), but she never got told. Her regular table is available today. So she takes her usual table and ditches Paige. Her parting comment: "If I'd wanted to eat in Siberia, I would have worn a fur hat."

COMMENT: That last comment was cold, cruel and heartless. Janie Pillsworth is not a likable person. We've seen plenty of examples of that this season. Her comment about going to the restaurant to have lunch rather than to eat is very telling; she's going to the restaurant because she wants to be *seen* at the highest profile table at the restaurant. It's the outward status that matters for her. What's going to happen to her when she finally is "out" (out of favor, out of influence)? It won't be pleasant.

SHORT BIT: Fern Rosenthal tells us about her multiple gastrointestinal difficulties... but they won't stop her from enjoying her meals, even though she may regret it later on.

COMMENT: I can sympathize with that.

LONG SKETCH:

Two Manhattan businessmen (one of them played by Timothy Busfield) hail a cab. It just so happens that they end up in Chic's cab. Traffic is snarled, so it looks like they'll be late for their meeting. And they haven't had lunch yet. It's Chic to the rescue! Welcome to Chic's Cab Cafe. Yes, he's running a small restaurant out of his cab. Note the fold-down tables in the back and the condiments in the ashtray. He recommends coffee and shish kebob. The coffee comes from the coffee pot up front; the kebab comes from under the hood of the cab (it's wrapped in aluminum foil, so it's clean). The meal is quite tasty. Chic points with pride to the 2-star review he received; it would have been 3 stars but for his limited seating capacity. The businessmen are quite happy

with their meal, and the price seems reasonable. There go two more happy customers. As Chic gets ready to leave, a bird flies or falls onto his cab. It's the new special of the day: Manhattan squab!

COMMENT: I've heard of heating your meals by sticking them under the hood of your car, but this takes it one step further. What an interesting concept: a combination taxicab and restaurant. It may be unbelievable, but it's not too unbelievable. All in all, a pretty good sketch.

SHORT BITS:

How does Sydney Kross prepare for court! By eating meat - lots of meat. And some of it's raw! Hamburgers the size of Arnold Schwarzenegger's "equipment" - sides of beef, you name it!

COMMENT: Now we know why she has that killer instinct!

Linda Granger observes that ladies' rooms remind her of food because of all the time she spent throwing up (her bulimia). She tells us what her cure for it was; unfortunately for her, it was speed and cocaine.

COMMENT: Not a doctor-approved treatment, I'm sure.

Our favorite (only by default) politician's wife Virginia Bugge compares a person's diet to his or her social class. Lower classes eat one thing, middle classes another, same with upwardly mobile and the upper classes. There are exceptions; take Timmy's brother, who insists on eating only apricots. But he's been a bit odd ever since he had a bad fall as a child...

COMMENT: The class system rears its ugly head again.

LONG SKETCH:

Trevor and Barry (Michael McKean) are enjoying a meal which Barry prepared. Trevor thinks the casserole has too much salt. This strikes a raw nerve with Barry, who's feeling unloved and underappreciated. Trevor gets to go all over the world as part of his job, while it's rare for Barry to go anywhere. Barry does have his bridge, but it's a poor substitute. This develops into a lover's spat, with Trevor pointing out the possibility of infidelity between Barry and his bridge partner, and Barry reminding Trevor of his affair with a chorus boy from "Kiss of the Spider Woman." Both threaten to move out, but they come to their senses before anything happens. Argument over - and Barry agrees: the casserole does have too much salt.

COMMENT: A nice little sketch, this. This was more of a "feel-good" sketch, not unlike last season's Midge and Chris sketch. Both sketches concentrated on the relationship between the characters; both featured a lover's quarrel, and both had a reconciliation at the end. Humor was definitely present in both, but it wasn't the main reason for the sketches.

SHORT BITS:

Normally, Birdie Godsen watches very carefully what she and her family eat. But this week, the maid brought some breakfast cereal that just wouldn't do. Contained within the artwork, she says, is the secret map showing the location of the concentration camps the government's built for fundamentalist Christians who oppose the New World Order. And the sugar frosting on the cereal just has to be a plot of Satan!

COMMENT: It shames me to know that there are real people out there who hold these views. A

thought - I'd like to see Birdie take a ride in Chic's cab one of these days. If Chic acts like he usually does, Birdie will be in for quite a shock...

Her Royal Highness meets Paul Newman. She tells him she's considered marketing some foodstuffs for gourmets under her own name (fiscal opportunities in the wake of Princess Diana's divorce, you know). Her advisors questioned the dignity of such a venture, but she pointed to Paul Newman's products as an example; he won an Oscar, and his picture's on the side of a jar of sauce!

COMMENT: She still irritates me.

OVERALL COMMENTS: This was a short episode, the shortest of the season so far. But it was still pretty decent.

9. Crime (Mar 19 1997)

OPENING: Every week, there's a drawing for the office pool (\$10 to play). Unfortunately, the authorities frown on that sort of thing, so the police take Tracey away. But she doesn't go quietly...

COMMENT: Guess you could say the police took on Tracey <g>. By the way, if you want to contribute to the "Free Tracey" fund, please send any contributions to me at... <g>... just kidding. Did you happen to notice her promise to move production to Nevada -- \$1000 pots - hookers as prizes, that sort of thing <g>?

SHORT BITS:

Her Royal Highness meets O.J. Simpson. She mentions that she was a big follower of his series from last season (i.e., The Trial), but she didn't care for the last episode. Was he inspired by her illustrious ancestor, Henry VIII, perhaps? Oh look, he dropped a glove...

COMMENT: A lot of people didn't care for that "last episode". Then again, a lot of people thought it was the best one of the "series". On another matter, I wouldn't mind seeing more interaction between HRH and the people she's meeting. We've only seen one instance of that so far, which was when HRH met Tracey. HRH's monologues are good, but having an actual conversation would open up new possibilities.

Mrs. Noh Nang Ning describes justice in her homeland: they chop off your hands, then they hope they got the right person!

COMMENT: Ouch!

LONG SKETCH:

There's been another robbery at the Van Nuys Savings & Loan, the third one in the last few weeks. Every time, Kay's been out of the office. Might there be a connection? It seems absurd. Kay a bank robber? But all leads have to be checked. One day, while Kay's running her errands, she notices somebody (John Spencer, "LA Law") following her. It isn't long before they meet. They meet at a cafe, where he introduces himself (Ray Wegerly, private eye) and explains that he's been hired by the S&L to check her out. She is very knowledgeable about espionage procedure (avid reader, you know), and he's very embarrassed that she found him out. He's

convinced that he was sent on a dumb assignment, for she's no threat at all. But he still has to keep her under observation, so they agree to go to a movie after his shift tomorrow. At the movie, we learn that he's divorced and that he's on leave from the police force. We can also see them getting very close. But the assignment's almost up, and Ray will soon be on another case. But he could stretch it out to Friday. Good thing he does, because while he's on duty, the robbers strike again! This time, Kay IS there! It's Wegerly, P.I. to the rescue! He's back on the force, working in homicide; the head office apologized to Kay for suspecting her; and customer Sydney Kross suggested that Kay sue for big bucks. But she'd rather have Off. Wegerly back

COMMENT: A nice sketch, somewhat bittersweet. This is the first time we've ever seen Kay get close to a man. I felt rather sad for Kay when it wrapped up. Is there anyone more deserving of a warm, close relationship than she?

SHORT BITS:

Whenever Fern Rosenthal hears about a major crime, she immediately thinks about what it means to the Jews. When Jack Ruby killed Lee Harvey Oswald - when David Berkowitz was convicted of the Son of Sam killings (but he was adopted) - when Robert Shapiro defended O.J...

COMMENT: Notice how Fern could remember a lot about that weekend in November but is having problems with short-term memory (must be the hormone treatments, she says).

Chic describes another of his sidelines: international arms merchant. You want some missiles? Plutonium for half-price?

COMMENT: Cabbie - cafe owner - arms dealer - and stud. How does Chic find time to do it all?

MEDIUM SKETCH:

Linda's visiting someone in prison. It's the man who tried to stalk her last year. Seems he survived that fall into the dry swimming pool. He's up for parole, and he needs a good reference from her. He tells her that he's overcome his obsession with her. Now he's obsessed with Tori Spelling (Tori Spelling?!?). Can she get him Tori's number?

COMMENT: Tori Spelling?!?

SHORT BIT:

Ruby tells of the time she was taken downtown for questioning in regards to a drug bust on the set of a film she was working on. She never did any of that stuff, but some serious stuff was found in the makeup trailer. Turns out a black girl was the only one arrested ("It figures", says Ruby).

COMMENT: Whose prejudice is showing here: Ruby's or the police's? I can't tell.

LONG SKETCH:

Virginia and Timmy Bugge (Tim McInnerney) are arriving at the airport and picking up their luggage. Timmy reaches for a tan and brown bag which he thinks is Virginia's. She's haranguing him about being sure to get the right bag. He opens it to check inside - and it's filled with several thousand dollars! Perhaps millions! Obviously, he's got the wrong bag. In the background, we see a large man who looks like a thug reaching for an identical bag. Clearly, the bag with the

money was his. What does Timmy do? He takes the bag as though nothing's gone wrong. At the hotel, Timmy reveals the contents of the bag to Virginia. He is fearful about what could happen when the real owners of the bag find out. But that's the farthest thing from Virginia's mind. They've got a jackpot! There's a knock at the door - Room Service. But they didn't order room service... It's the thug and his companion. They want the bag back. Timmy obliges. Then the thug says he can't take any chances. He pulls out a gun with a silencer on it and ...

Back to the airport. All this had flashed through Timmy's mind in an instant. Virginia's still haranguing him about the bag. Timmy says to the thug, "I believe you have our bag". They swap bags, and everybody's happy - and alive.

COMMENT: What WOULD you do in a situation like that?

SHORT BITS:

Hope describes how some friends of hers spotted a nice rug in a dumpster, too nice to throw out. So they salvage it and bring it back to the dorm. It's very heavy. When they get home and unroll it, they find a dead man! Well, this actually happened to a friend of a friend - honest!

COMMENT: No doubt, the man was killed for sending one too many Craig Shergold or Goodtimes Virus e-mails <g>!

Birdie says that she's been counseling Death Row inmates. But unlike that nun in Louisiana, she counsels them to accept the inevitability of their situation, to drop the appeals and get it over with.

COMMENT: I'm not surprised by this.

OVERALL COMMENTS: I consider this an average episode for TTO - which means it's still pretty good. The Kay sketch was clearly the best one this week; I think it's an excellent candidate for the "best-of" special at the end of the season.

10. Movies (Mar 26 1997)

OPENING: Tracey tells us one of her favorite things to do is to spend wet Sunday afternoons seeing old movies. Since there are lots of wet Sunday afternoons in England, well.... And her favorite old movies are the black-and-white British WWII pictures ("Wings over Blighty", that sort of thing). She then does a scene from a typical picture. They don't make movies like that anymore - thank God!!

COMMENT: That last comment was a gem!

SHORT BITS:

Her Royal Highness meets Demi Moore and admires her courage for being so vulgar as to pose pregnant and nude on the cover of Vanity Fair. She then asks Demi to arrange for some discounted Planet Hollywood merchandise.

COMMENT: I got a chuckle when HRH thought that Bruce Willis was a waiter at Planet Hollywood (he's a co-owner).

Fern Rosenthal remembers her dates with the boys at the theater, and how they used to hide their

you-know-whats in their boxes of popcorn and invite their girls to grab some. That happened to her once; she dragged the guy out into the lobby by his you-know-what, then returned to the show ("An Affair to Remember"). She's a helpless romantic.

COMMENT: She can't be **that** helpless, not if she dragged that guy by his (insert your favorite synonym here)! That must have been some scene....

LONG SKETCH:

Ruby Romaine is going to the local Monsterplex movie theater. She doesn't care which movie she sees; she just wants to get out of the heat. She qualifies for the senior discount, but the ticket seller wants to see some ID. Ruby thinks it's not necessary and offers to cut her hand off so the seller can count the rings; fortunately, the seller declines. Now it's off to find the theater (number 33, which is showing "Satan's Playground"). But it's very hard to find. Go up the stairs, take the tram, take some more stairs - the theater needs its own mass transit system. Once she finds the theater, it's time for some concessions. Since this is trendy LA, you don't have ordinary candies and soft drinks. Oh no! You get trendy food and special fruit drinks in sizes ranging from small to "Bladder Kill." Finally, Ruby takes her seat. She then proceeds to top off the drink with her "medicine" and then lights up a cigarette. The usher comes in screaming bloody murder - no smoking or liquor allowed! Ruby is ejected. As she leaves, she misses the days when movie theaters were movie theaters, not the sterile places they've turned into. When she encounters a polltaker who wants to survey her theater experience, she says she enjoyed it as much as her hysterectomy.

COMMENT: This was a nice sketch about how the theaters have changed. With so many screens under one roof, the experience is bound to be diminished. It's turned into something sterile and remote. One line that got a chuckle was when Ruby said (paraphrased), is there a tram for the toilet, or would it be faster to go to Long Beach?

SHORT BITS:

Mrs. Noh tells us she learned all about America from the movies. They were banned in her homeland. Instead, the people entertained themselves by singing. It may not have been much, but at least it brought the dogs home.

COMMENT: Mrs. Noh's singing sounds like Yoko Ono on a bad day!

LONG SKETCH:

The scene: somewhere in England in the 1600's. Two gentlemen are quarreling. One challenges the other to a duel. Suddenly, the door opens - it's Timmy Bugge! (Tim McInnerney). We've been watching a film crew at work inside the Bugge house; they'll be there for the next two weeks. It was Virginia's idea, and she's enjoying it - plus, they could use the money. In fact, she's becoming friends with the director and the American star Rob Trasker (John Stamos). But Timmy's not enjoying it. He's put out by having strangers taking over the house and effectively kicking them out, trampling the begonias, etc. And besides, the house was built some 80 years after the period when the movie takes place (that irks him). When filming resumes, the Timmy problem's been resolved; he's locked in an upstairs room. But he can see outside the window, and what does he see? He sees Virginia and Trasker become **very** friendly (she was giving him elocution lessons). This leads to some tension in the bedroom - a lot of tension, in fact. Has the

spark gone out of their marriage? Sure looks like it tonight; no howling like a banshee here. Finally, filming wraps, and the crew leaves. Virginia's a bit disappointed to see them go. We see her reading in bed. Suddenly, someone appears at the door! It's Timmy. He's dressed as swashbuckler Jeremy Pinkstaff, and he wants his woman. He gets his woman! The banshee will be howling tonight!

COMMENT: Another great sketch. This might be an outside contender for the best-of special (as might Ruby at the movies). This also happens to be the first time I could sympathize with Virginia, who up till now has not been all that likable. And Timmy was - Timmy. He had a couple of nice comments about Rob Trasker (he made Charles I sound like Barney Rubble) and Californians (they have 12 words in their vocabulary, two of them being "surf" and "board"). At this point, I find that I like Tim McInnerney's portrayal of Timmy.

SHORT BIT:

Trevor has a low tear threshold, but he's never cared for "Gone With the Wind." While straight people cry at the final parting of Rhett and Scarlett, Trevor sees it as Rhett coming to his senses, dumping her for some cavalry officer, heading off to San Francisco and opening a leather shop which doesn't make anything for horses.

COMMENT: OK....

LONG SKETCH:

It's the world premiere of "The President is a Babe", starring Pamela Sue Amsterdam. Attending the premiere are Rayleen Gibson and husband Mitch, who both did stunt work on the film (she was Pamela's double). She's interviewed by a crew from Australia's Outback TV, where she reveals that Pamela has ditched her husband for a rock star, and the ex-husband is very jealous. When the star arrives, all eyes turn to her. Mitch gets up on Rayleen's shoulders for a good view. He sees Pamela wearing a skirt so short it would fit him; he sees her new man, and he sees her ex - and he's got a gun! The ex grabs Pamela and holds a gun to her, threatening to kill both her and himself. Meanwhile, Rayleen's taken a position just above the couple. She jumps down, knocks the gun away (Mitch recovers), and roughs up the ex. Rayleen's saved the day! But she's very modest about it ("just doin' my job").

COMMENT: I could almost see Rayleen and Mitch as a private-eye team.

SHORT BITS:

Kay remembers the first time she went to the movies on her own. But her enjoyment was short-lived, as she got a message to go home at once; Mother had taken another turn. Nowadays, when Mother takes another turn, it's easy to stop the tape and tend to her. What kinds of films does Kay like? FX films, and films with fighting and kickboxing.

COMMENT: Somehow, I wouldn't have associated these types of films with Kay.

Chic rented the video "S.O.B." recently, which (as you may know) featured Julie Andrews in a topless scene. But he's seen them already, in the back of his cab... But seeing them on a big screen - whoa!

COMMENT: Shame on you, Chic <g>!

Sydney Kross wonders who might play her in a film about her life. Sandra Bullock? No, her hair's too straight. Elizabeth Shue? Not pretty enough. Anna Nicole Smith?!? Just shoot me in the heart right now, OK?

COMMENT: There's only one actress who can do Sydney, and that's Tracey herself. Remember, in the series, she co-exists alongside the other characters, and they co-exist with each other. Now there's a scene I wouldn't mind seeing - Sydney encountering Tracey as Sydney.

OVERALL COMMENTS: A fine episode. Not quite as good as the Childhood and Las Vegas episodes, but not too far behind them.

[Commentary on TTO Season 2, Episodes 11-15 and the "Best Of" special](#)

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