

The Pigeon Play

A play in one act by Dan Culberson.

For production, please contact the playwright.

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Characters.

Peter – Overweight male.

Patrick – A man pigeon

Patsy – A woman pigeon

Pamela – A woman pigeon

Set.

A park. A bench.

Play.

4

Music.

PATRICK is wandering the stage.

PETER enters. He is wearing the uniform of a police officer. He sits on bench, opens a lunch bag, and removes a sandwich. He eats.

PATRICK being ignored

Yo. Get a little piece of that bread down here, fat boy?

Some time. PETER continues eating.

PATRICK

Surely you are not going to eat all of that.

PETER finishes sandwich. Pulls out another.

PATRICK

C'mon, fat boy, share the love down here.

PATSY enters.

PATSY

Woah. Woah. Woah. You know the rules, Patrick. Someone starts throwing lunch around, you gotta alert the whole flock.

PATRICK

I've been sitting here watching this guy eat for 20 minutes. Pig hasn't dropped a crumb.

PATSY

He is a fat one. Maybe he needs the whole sandwich for his diabetes?

PATRICK

That's his 2nd!

PATSY to PETER

Selfish motherfucker. Share a little piece of that bread.

PATRICK

C'mon calorie hoarder, just a little crust for your feathered friends down here. Everyday it's the same thing with you. Massive lunch, none for your feathered friends.

PATSY

A little love for the residents. Surely you can spare a bit of bread?

PATRICK *getting whiny*

We're hungry, human.

PAMELA *enters in a rush*

PAMELA

Peter! Patsy! We have rules in this community. Remember the community pledge? When lunch is about, give a shout. Don't be rude. Share your food.

PATRICK

We know the rule.

PAMELA

Then why don't you follow the rules and let me know when there's sandwich flying?

PATRICK

There hasn't been any food thrown. *To Peter.* Yet.

PAMELA *suspicious*

Human eats the crusty parts at the end?

PATRICK

Yup.

PAMELA

Even with you two sorry birds standing around lookin' all hungry and stuff?

PATRICK

Yup.

PATSY

He's cold as ice.

PAMELA

Wow, man, that's just... really selfish. You know? Not cool.

PATRICK *to PETER*

Yo, man, throw me a little crust here.

PAMELA

Give us some bread, fatty.

PATSY

Bread.

PATRICK *with increasing intensity*

Bread!

PAMELA shrieking

BREAD!

PAMELA, PATSY, PATRICK *chanting and closing in on PETER*

Bread. Bread. Bread. Bread. Bread. Bread. Bread. Bread.

PETER *exasperated*

Yo, back-up.

PAMELA, PATSY, and PATRICK instantly fall silent.

PATSY coos.

PETER coos.

PAMELA

Wait.

PATSY

You can hear us?

PETER

Well, I'm not deaf.

PATRICK

He's a talker. I can't believe I didn't see it.

PAMELA

You come here every day and listen to us bitch about how we're starving and you won't throw down a few crumbs?

PETER

I throw the crusts. Sometimes.

PAMELA

You heard every word?

PETER

I'm trying very hard not to listen, believe me.

PATRICK

Why didn't you ever say anything before?

PETER

Thought it better to pretend you're just not here than acknowledge, but holy dognuts in gravy you guys can be relentless.

PAMELA

We're hungry.

PATRICK

Can everyone who comes down here to eat lunch hear us?

PETER

I dunno. Maybe. Probably. I don't interact a lot with other... people.

PAMELA

Two sandwiches, talker?

PATSY

Christ, what an asshole.

PETER

I'm hungry.

PATRICK

Yo, this is a public park...

PATSY jumping in

And that makes your sandwich public property.

PETER

This is America. I've got a right to eat a sandwich in peace.

PATRICK correcting

Sandwiches.

PAMELA

Throw us a crumb or I'm gonna jump up there and peck your peace right out from between your legs.

PATSY

Yo! Diabetes Dave! Avoid a heart attack and throw me the damn sandwich.

PETER *less defiant*

My name is Peter. And you sound like my wife with that heart attack stuff.

PATRICK

Park tax. Feed the pigeons or listen to her beg.

PETER throws his sandwich on the ground.

PETER *exiting*

I gotta get back to work anyway.

PATSY pulls out a cow bell and rings it loudly

Supper's up!

PATSY grabs the entire sandwich and exits, ringing her bell loudly.

PATSY as she exits

Come and get some.

PATRICK

Follow her. Get a few nibbles in before the whole thing gets devoured.

PAMELA

I'm gonna, but can you believe this guy? Every day he hears you begging and still he throws nothing.

PATRICK

He's not so bad. He threw down some food didn't he? That's better than 99% of the bastards that come through here.

PAMELA

You're on his side? Mother warned me this would happen if I married you.

PATRICK

Go. Get some food.

PAMELA

You coming?

PATRICK

Nah. I can hold out until the tour buses come by.

PAMELA empty.

Great! Love you!

PAMELA exits.

PATRICK *to the now empty park*
I love you too.

PATRICK goes to the garbage can and pulls out a bottle of whiskey. He knocks it over. He drinks some of the whisky.

Music.

PATRICK singing. Drunk.
I'm so fancy...

PETER enters, interrupting PATRICK's drunken singing. PETER is also clearly drunk. He carries a full pizza in a box.

PATRICK
Oh shit. Don't fall on me.

PETER sits on bench.

He eats.

He throws a bit of pizza to PATRICK.

PATRICK
Now you're all benevolent. When night falls and the drink takes hold, huh?

More eating.

PETER
Hey.

PATRICK
What?

PETER
Your code or whatever?

PATRICK
Oh, sorry. Thank-you.

PETER
No.

PATRICK
No thank-you?

PETER

Aren't you supposed to tell the other pigeons when I'm throwing food?

PATRICK

Yeah. I should. I'm not going to.

PETER

You're not going to?

PATRICK

Fuck her.

PETER

Her? Trouble at home?

PATRICK

I dunno.

PETER

Huh?

PATRICK

Maybe.

PETER

Where are they?

PATRICK

Who?

PETER

Them two lady pigeons.

PATRICK

I don't know.

PETER

Really?

PATRICK

Fuck them.

PETER

They might be hungry. I had been made to understand there was a code. Shout when there's food about or something like that?

PATRICK

They're not hungry.

PETER

No?

PATRICK

Some drunk guy left a whole medium McDonald's French fry over by the statue of that guy with sword. They're over there eating.

PETER

There's a whole French fry over there and you're here?

PATRICK

I don't eat that shit.

PETER

McDonalds?

PATRICK

Yeah. Or Taco Bell or Burger King or KFC. Or any of that. Gross.

PETER

A picky park pigeon?

PATRICK

Hey, I got a physique to maintain. Besides, that stuff gives me the runs.

PETER

Yeah, it'll do that.

PATRICK

I don't even. How do they make food that makes you halfta poop so quick, y'know?

PETER

I dunno. Sometimes I barely get it swallowed and my colon quivers.

PATRICK

Makes a real mess of the park. And that threatens our habitat.

PETER

Habitat?

PATRICK

Indirectly.

PETER
Politicians?

PATRICK
Yup. Someone complains about park poop about once a year now, and then comes the big cleanup. They usually get the security guards to do it. Leave a bunch of bread or fries or something around with poison in it. No more pigeons. No more poop.

PETER
Cruel.

PATRICK
Humans. You can't avoid 'em.

PETER
How about just not shitting everywhere?

PATRICK
When you gotta poop you gotta poop.

PETER
Don't say that word.

PATRICK
What? Poop?

PETER
Yeah.

PATRICK
Why not?

PETER
It sounds so real. If you say "I just had a big shit", well ok, but if you say "I just had a big poop", I dunno.

PATRICK
Kinda makes you picture it, huh?

PETER
So you don't eat the human food?

PATRICK
Oh, I eat it. It's the only thing you can do here. What am I supposed to do, dig a worm out of the sidewalk? No, I eat human food, but only after I see a human eat it first.

PETER
Because it might be poison?

PATRICK

Nothing gets by you, fat guy. Some politician will decide they need to rid the park of the birds that poop, and the way they do it is to have some security guard just leave poisoned food around. It's cruel.

PETER

So... they're over there eating potentially poisonous French fries together and you're just letting them do it?

PATRICK

Yup.

A pause.

And making out.

PETER

Huh?

PETER

Patsy and Pamela. They're probably making out.

PETER

Woah. What? Birds make out?

PATRICK

Oh yeah. Notorious for pda.

PETER

Huh. I hadn't heard that.

PATRICK

She promised it was forever, you know?

PETER

Pamela?

PATRICK

Yeah.

PETER

Huh.

PATRICK

I loved her. I love her. I still do. I guess.

PETER

Pamela or Patsy?

PATRICK

Pamela. We've been married a year. We were gonna have squeakers together.

PETER

What happened?

PATRICK

She's a lesbian.

PETER

Was she a lesbian when you got married?

PATRICK

I dunno. I guess so.

PETER

How'd you find out?

PATRICK

Saw Pam and Patsy getting cozy over by that bench right there—where that homeless guy usually sits. They just seemed... weird... so I followed them.

PETER

And?

PATRICK

I'm not gonna say what I saw.

PETER

C'mon.

PATRICK

You're sick.

More eating.

PETER

Hey.

PATRICK

What?

PETER

I have a question.

PATRICK

Is this about how pigeons have sex?

PETER

No.

PATRICK

About what?

PETER

You guys are always starving all the time, right?

PATRICK

Right.

PETER

But don't they have like... programs? There was a thing on the radio about how the high schools were collecting money for bird seed.

PATRICK

The Feed 'n' Seeds not for profit? Shit. That's as crooked as the security guards with poison in their pants.

PETER

They poison the seeds?

PATRICK

No. They give out good seeds.

PETER

So? How come you're begging for bread?

PATRICK

It ain't about that. They put all the seeds in them feeders down by the powerlines, right?

PETER

So?

PATRICK

Pigeon goes down there he's likely to get himself killed.

PETER

Why?

PATRICK

All the crows. That's where they hang out. By the powerlines. Those jet black bastards eat all the seeds and would still peck a pigeon to death in no time if he tried to roost down that end of the park.

PETER

Can't catch a break, huh?

PATRICK

They don't want to save the pigeons. They just want us all away from the benches. If they could get us all corralled into one place they'd let us kill each other until there was only one bird left in this city.

PETER

And then they'd feed it a poisonous French fry.

PATRICK

Now you're getting it.

More eating.

PATRICK

Well what about you?

PETER

I get enough to eat.

PATRICK

I can see that.

PETER

What?

PATRICK

You gotta wife?

PETER

Yeah. Sort of. I guess.

PATRICK

It's not a trick question or anything.

PETER

No. Yeah. I'm married. Sharon. She's great. She's just... you know... she's riding my ass about my eating and drinking a lot.

PATRICK

You do eat a lot.

PETER
Obviously.

PATRICK
It's pretty clear.

PETER
I get it.

PATRICK
What I'm saying is that you're really fat.

PETER *annoyed*
No. Yeah. I get it.

PATRICK
Maybe try one sandwich from now on? Give the other whole one to your buddy, Mr. Pigeon on the ground begging?

A pause.
You might live longer. Both of us might live longer.

PETER
Now you too?

PATRICK
What?

PETER
Riding my ass.

PATRICK
If you died. That would suck.

PETER
What?

PATRICK
Like if you had a heart attack or, like, a diabetes attack or whatever.

PETER
Why do you care?

PATRICK
I want your sandwiches. It's not like it used to be, you know? When old people would come to the park

and feed us. Used to be great a few years back. Old retired guys would show up with a whole loaf and just sit here for like 2 hours feeding us and chatting.

PETER
Not anymore?

PATRICK
No, not anymore.

PETER
Why not?

PATRICK
Facebook.

PETER
Facebook?

PATRICK
Old people. When they're bored now they go on Facebook.

PETER
Shit.

PATRICK
Yeah.

PETER getting up to go. Leaving half eaten pizza behind.
Share that with the lesbos.

PATRICK
You leaving?

PETER
Gotta get home before Sharon's book club is over.

A pause.
Might be the last time you see me here.

PATRICK
What? We were just getting to know each other.

PETER
Lost my job today.

PATRICK

You're... you... no more sandwiches?

PETER

No more sandwiches.

PATRICK

What happened?

PETER

Technology.

PATRICK

I thought you were a cop.

PETER

I am. I was. I used to do parking meters, but I put my back out trying to reach the wiper on a jacked up Hummer. I had to take a desk job.

PATRICK

Huh?

PETER

Lost persons. Whenever someone reported a lost person I used to fill out the forms. Then I'd fax them over to the east precinct, so they'd know to be on the lookout for the missing person. It wasn't as exciting as parking, but it was a good job.

PATRICK

And now?

PETER

They're moving to an automated telephone system. If you need to report a missing person you just call it in and the prompts get all your information. You know? Press 1 for a missing child and 2 for a missing elderly person and stuff.

PATRICK

What about the faxing? I suppose they automated that too.

PETER

They haven't figured that part out yet, but they're thinking of putting a fax machine in every car.

PATRICK

Why not just send each officer a text or an email or something?

PETER

Never work. Most of them only read at a 3rd or 4th grade level, and they're only allowed to use the computer to fill out their run sheets the last hour of their shift.

PATRICK

And this will work? No need to actually give a description or anything?

PETER

Doesn't matter. In the eleven years I was in missing persons we never found anybody.

PATRICK

You never found anybody?

PETER

They were never lost.

PATRICK

What do you mean?

PETER

They all come back on their own. And if they don't come back on their own, they're dead somewhere. Some hiker'll find the body in the woods and call us all panicked and worked up. Don't know what the panic is for. They're usually really, really definitely dead. We just cross reference with the missing person faxes and close the case.

PATRICK

Huh.

PETER

Yup. And now they're just gonna phone 'em in. For real.

PATRICK

Technology.

PETER

You got it. Those suits down at headquarters don't care. You know what they had the balls to do?

PATRICK

No.

PETER

They've gave us all severance right? The ones that got laid off, but then we gotta pay this \$20 fee to take part in their resume review program.

PATRICK

No.

PETER

Oh yeah. And it's all bullshit, right? They don't want us going back to work. They want us to stay around, unemployed, so they can put us on the temp list for when they go on vacation. We're just another resource they can call on when it's convenient and shove under the desk the rest of the time. Like a stapler.

PATRICK

Damn. I hope you find a new job. Really show those pricks. And I hope it's close enough by that you'll still come here for lunch.

PETER

You're gonna miss me?

PATRICK

I'll miss your sandwiches.

PETER *friendly*

Bastard.

PETER exits.

PATRICK *sadly.*

Gonna be a hungry winter 'round here without you, fat boy.

Music.

PATRICK is pacing the park. PAMELA enters.

PAMELA

You gotta do something.

PATRICK

About what?

PAMELA

We're starving.

PATRICK

I know. It's those damn police. Laid off half their workers and now no one's coming by for lunch at all.

PAMELA

I gotta eat something, Patrick. I need to eat.

PATRICK

We all need to eat. It's not just you.

PAMELA

But me especially. You need to look after me because...

PATRICK *interrupting*.

I need to look after you?

PAMELA

You promised. At the wedding. 'Til death do us part?

PATRICK

Yeah, clearly that wedding meant a lot to you.

PAMELA

What?

PATRICK

I saw.

PAMELA

Saw what?

PATRICK

You.

PAMELA

Me?

PATRICK

And Patsy.

PAMELA

What?

PATRICK

I saw.

PAMELA

Patrick. I. We.

PATRICK

I saw.

PAMELA

She found French fries. I needed to eat.

PATRICK

The sandwich I shared wasn't good enough?

PAMELA

It's not that.

PATRICK

Don't tell me what it is. I don't want to know.

PAMELA

Oh, I think you do.

PATRICK

What?

PAMELA

It's going to be your problem too.

PATRICK

What do you mean?

PAMELA

I'm not just eating for me anymore. I laid some eggs.

PATRICK

What?

PAMELA

Eggs, Patrick. We're gonna have squeakers!

PATRICK

We are?

PAMELA

Me and you.

PATRICK

Oh, Pamela. Is now a good time?

PAMELA

I know food is tight, but... I think so... I'm... I'm ready.

PATRICK *getting excited*

Squeakers?

PAMELA

Squeakers.

PATRICK *excited*

I... I gotta go find food. You wait here. Or with your eggs. Or... just... get some rest. Squeakers!

PATRICK exits.

Music.

Lights up. PETER enters. He is wearing a brand new security guard's uniform. He carries his usual lunch bag with sandwiches, but also a back pack.

PATRICK enters.

PATRICK

You're back!

PETER

I'm back.

PATRICK

Look at that shiny new uniform.

PETER

Pretty great, huh?

PATRICK

It looks a little tight.

PETER

Oh. Do you think? I've lost a little weight.

PATRICK

You what?

PETER

A little bit. 4 pounds. It's a start.

PATRICK

It ain't shit, Peter.

PETER

Sharon says every pound you lose adds 2-3 months of life expectancy to your heart.

PATRICK

We'll see.

PETER

And every 10 pounds makes your schlong look 1 inch bigger.

PATRICK

Huh. On with the sandwiches.

PETER

Can't. Can't spare a crumb. I only brought one.

PATRICK

You only brought one sandwich?

PETER

Spinach and avocado. Sharon packed my lunch. I'm on a diet. Counting calories. 4 pounds, remember?

PATRICK

Yeah, and almost half an inch on your pecker. I remember.

PETER

It's good for my marriage. Speaking of, where's Pam and Patsy?

PATRICK

Pam's resting.

PETER

Resting?

PATRICK *excited to share his news*

She's having squeakers. Soon.

PETER

No shit.

PATRICK

I'm gonna be a dad.

PETER

Wow. Congratulations.

PATRICK

Thank-you.

PETER

And that thing with Pam and Patsy?

PATRICK

I dunno.

PETER

A dad. Wow.

PATRICK

Yeah, so I need to find some sandwiches. She's gonna need the energy. You know?

PETER

Yeah.

PATRICK

It's like a new sense of purpose.

PETER

I know what you mean. It's how I feel with this job. Like... like now I've got something to get up in the morning for. Something new. A change is good. I think it's what's inspired me to change my eating.

PATRICK

That's great, but I'm gonna miss the extra sandwiches you used to pack, y'know.

PETER

I know. Listen though, there's something else I need to talk to you about...

PETER is interrupted by the crackle of his radio. "Uh, yeah, Peter? We've got a report of 2 kids beating up another kid for his FUBU hat. Sector 7 by the beaver fountain."

PETER into his radio

I'm on my way!

PETER runs off. He takes his sandwich bag with him, but leaves his back pack.

PAMELA enters just as PETER is running off.

PAMELA

Was that Peter?

PATRICK

Yeah, he's back. New job. He's a security guard for the park.

PAMELA

Oh, that's great. Sandwiches again!

PATRICK

Well, I dunno. He's on a diet.

PAMELA

Bullshit he is.

PATRICK

I dunno. He sounded serious. Real worried about his heart, I guess.

PAMELA

I'll believe it when I see it. That fat boy would eat through the back end out of a hobo if he thought there was a sandwich in there.

PATRICK

I dunno. Maybe he's really changing.

PAMELA looks into the bookbag left behind.

PAMELA

Bingo! There's like 3 more sandwiches in here.

PATRICK

What? For real.

PAMELA

Yup. 2 baloney and a peanut butter.

PATRICK looks for himself.

PATRICK

Holy. He talks a good game. I really thought he was changing.

PAMELA

Fat boy can't change his stretch marks, Patrick. I'm taking the peanut butter.

PATRICK

Alright. But just one. I'm not a fan of stealing, but for the squeakers...

PAMELA

And Patsy. I'm gonna share this one with Patsy. She loves peanut butter.

PATRICK turns away. Angry.

PAMELA

What?

PATRICK

Just go.

PAMELA

Patrick? It's not that. It's just the code. When foods about...

PATRICK finishing her sentence

Give a shout. I get it. Fine.

PAMELA *exiting*

PATSY!

PETER re-enters. Out of breath.

PETER

Oh, man. You would've loved that. I just clocked some kid upside his skull. Left a mark, I think. It was awesome. Felt like a real police again.

PATRICK

Yeah?

PETER still out of breath. Breathing heavy.

Oh yeah. That'll show that little rat. Trying to steal a hat from some other kid.

PATRICK

Well good for you.

PETER

Woah. Really wore me out though running all the way over there. Wish I had another sandwich. I probably burned enough calories to justify it too.

PATRICK

You ain't fooling me.

PETER

Huh?

PATRICK

Your wife might buy that you're only packing 1 sandwich, but I know better.

PATRICK motions to the book bag.

PATRICK

I peeked.

PETER

Oh, those. That's what I wanted to talk to you about. Don't eat any sandwiches you see just lying around here for a few days. Stick to your rule of seeing the human eat it first.

PATRICK

What?

PETER

They're poisoned. Word from the mayor is to clean up the birds from the park again.

PATRICK

Oh. Oh no.

PATRICK yells for PAMELA off stage.

PATRICK exiting the way PAMELA exited

PAM! STOP! PAMELA! PAM! DON'T EAT THE SANDWICH.

PETER check his bag, realizing what's happening.

PETER exits after PATRICK

Oh no. Shit. PATRICK! WHICH WAY DID SHE GO?

PAMELA and PATSY enter.

PAMELA

Patsy! Fat cop with the sandwiches is back.

PATSY

Oh yeah? Did he bring the kind with harvarti?

PAMELA

Not quite. Peanut butter and jam.

PATSY squealing

My favorite!

PATSY grabs the sandwich and is just about to take a bite.

PAMELA

So that's it?

PATSY

What?

PAMELA

I bring you you're favorite sandwich and I don't even get a little bit of loving?

PATSY

I dunno, Pam. Doesn't feel right now that you and Patrick are having squeakers.

PAMELA

What do you mean?

PATSY

Just doesn't feel right.

PATSY eats. PAMELA eats. They die.

PATRICK shouting from off

PAM! Don't eat the sandwich.

PATRICK and PETER enter. PETER is very out of breath. Breathing heavy.

PATRICK running to check PAMELA's pulse.

PATRICK

Oh, God. Pamela.

PETER gasping

Patrick. I tried to warn you. I tried.

PETER collapses

PATRICK

You fat mother fucker.

PETER clutches his heart and gasps even heavier.

Patrick. It hurts. I think this is it.

PATRICK suddenly concerned for PETER as well

Your heart attack?

PETER throws a cellphone down on the ground

Peck out 9-1-1 for me.

PATRICK

What? I don't know numbers.

PETER dies slowly, dramatically.

PATRICK crosses and takes the bookbag from PETER's lifeless body. He removes a sandwich. He begins to eat it.

PATRICK

I hate baloney.

Music.