

‘‘Annoying Habits of Men, Part XCII: Scratching’’

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Inspired by a Transactors’ prompt

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*FIRST DRAFT*  
7-OCT-2015

Comments: Steve said with the men's backs to the audience, you couldn't tell if they were scratching or masturbating. He didn't find much humour in it. I guess he hasn't had problems scratching.

At the Feb 2015 Transactors "Love" show, they asked for a suggestion of an annoying habit of men. A woman called out loudly "scratching their balls!". I don't remember that Transactors did anything much with this, but yesterday when I was on a walk, before Daphne's party, I thought of stuff to do with it.

FRED AND BILL standing in the yard

ELSIE AND MARCY Fred and Bill's wives. They're initially inside.

Comic Perspective: The audience will be embarrassed about men scratching their balls on-stage. The piece is designed to maximize the amount of space they use their brains to think about men scratching themselves.

Flaw: People deny they need to scratch, or deny that they do it.

Humanity: Everyone needs to scratch.

Situation: An afternoon social gathering. Not a place you can scratch yourself.

## ACT ONE

FADE IN

1. EXT. BACK YARD --- DAY

Fred and Bill on stage. Bill looks agitated

FRED

What's the problem Bill?

BILL

Ahhh! My balls are itchy. I've got to scratch them.

FRED

Well why don't you just go ahead?

BILL

The women inside will see me! All Marcy has to do is look out the window. She'll kill me on the way home. She thinks it's gross and disgusting. She caught me doing it early on when we were dating; she said if she ever, ever caught me doing it again, she'd never have anything to do with me anymore. I still have to do it of course; now I just hide all the time. Fortunately I've managed to figure out how to keep it from her; she thinks I don't do it anymore. If I do it here, out in the middle of the yard, she'll see me straight away and I'll never hear the end of it.

FRED

Oh come on, relax Bill. Elsie thinks it's gross and disgusting too. I just make sure she never sees me. Now I can scratch just about any time I want. You don't see me walking around with my face all screwed up and trying desperately to cross my legs, just like you are now, and expecting no-one to notice, now do you?

BILL

Well no. How come women don't have  
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BILL (CONT'D)

this problem? You never see women doing this.

FRED

Nope, you never do. I guess it must be because they're built differently.

BILL

But surely they must have their own version of the problem?

FRED

Apparently not, or they'd be scratching themselves in the check-out lines just like we do.

BILL

OK then, tell me, what's the secret to not getting caught?

FRED

Careful preparation and observation. Look through the window there. The women aren't in the kitchen. That means they're in the living room. They can't see us from there; you're safe. Listen, just to show you that I'm not having you on, I'll do it too. I haven't scratched my balls since just before we came out here. I'm due for a good scratch, just about right now anyhow. Let's turn our backs to the window, just to be sure.

BILL

Wow! Who ever thought it would be this easy?

Both face away from the audience. Both go into a paroxysm of scratching, grimacing, exclaiming "that's better", and making loud noises of relief, till the audience starts to slow down laughing. I'm hoping for a reaction similar to the campfire scene in Blazing Saddles.

Elsie bursts onto the stage

ELSIE

What the hell do you two think you're doing?!

Fred and Bill act surprised and recover, looking down at their hands which they pull away, as if they were doing

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something normal with them.

FRED

Oh hi, sweetie.

BILL

Hello Elsie, nice day isn't it?

FRED

What do you mean "what are we doing?". We were just out in the yard looking around. Nothing wrong with that, is there?

ELSIE

We watched you for about 5 minutes through the kitchen window, till I couldn't stand it anymore. It was gross and disgusting. It's the first time Marcy has come over to see us and there she had to watch this exhibition from you. I was so embarrassed. She must wonder what sort of person I married.

FRED

All right. I was just doing it because Bill here needed a bit of relief. I didn't want him to have to do it by himself.

BILL

Thanks a lot!

ELSIE

That's right! Blame it on Bill. A fine friend you are.

FRED

Well OK. It was my first time. I never do this.

ELSIE

Are you kidding me? You do it all the time. You did it just before you stepped out into the yard. Fortunately Marcy didn't see you doing it.

FRED

Well, I won't do it again.

ELSIE

The only way you're going to stop is if your cock and balls fall off. And another thing - Tommy is

(MORE)

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ELSIE (CONT'D)  
growing up and I don't want him  
getting any ideas from you.

FRED  
I expect he figure it out by  
himself.

ELSIE  
I don't want you encouraging bad  
public behaviour in our son.

Fred looks beaten.

silence

FRED  
Doesn't this ever happen to you?  
Surely you must have something  
similar ...

ELSIE  
I'd rather die than do what you  
just did.

FRED  
well sorry I asked.

Men walk to side of stage and stage-talk to themselves.  
Elsie in center stage. Marcy walks on.

MARCY  
Listen don't worry about what we  
just saw. Bill does it all the  
time too. I know it's gross and  
disgusting. He practically did it  
on our first date. I told him to  
stop, but all he does instead is  
try to hide it. He's absolutely  
hopeless at hiding it of course.  
He thinks I don't know, but I know  
just about every time he does it.

ELSIE  
Yes Fred is just the same and he's  
doing it all the time. I don't  
know how he thinks I can miss it.

Marcy grimaces

ELSIE (CONT'D)  
What's wrong Marcy, are you OK?

MARCY  
I'm itchy.

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ELSIE

Oh no! not ... there?!

MARCY

Yes ... there! Listen don't worry. Bill never notices when I scratch myself. I can practically be standing in front of him and he won't notice.

ELSIE

Yes Fred is like that too. I can be in a frenzy of scratching and he won't even look up. It must be something about being a man. I don't think any of them ever see us doing it.

MARCY

I'm just going to turn my back to them. They'll never notice. Do you want to join me? I notice you haven't scratched yourself since we left the kitchen. That's quite a while.

Elsie checks in the direction of the men.

ELSIE

Sure, they're busy. There's no way they'll notice.

Marcy and Elsie go into a frenzy of scratching. Eventually the men notice, try to pretend that nothing is happening, look away, hold their hands up to their face to block what they're seeing. Eventually they dash over to the women

FRED

What the hell do you two think you're doing?!

ELSIE

Oh hi, Fred, Bill.

MARCY

Nice day isn't it?

ELSIE

Marcy and I were just having a chat ... about personal things, you know ... girl talk.

FRED

I thought you'd rather die than do that.

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1. CONTINUED

7.

Somehow, I have to find a way to get all four people on stage scratching themselves, to maximize audience embarrassment.

FADE OUT

*THE END*