

# THE FOOLHARDY BOYS

*By Jim George*

**WHY WE LIKE IT:** *We love this cornball upbeat retro-retake on the 'Hardy Boys' (Frank and Joe, amateur sleuths, popular from 1927 to the late 50's) but we warn you, it's a challenging read. What's going on here is a word play called idio-speech (as in idiomatic), or more melodiously, as the Italians say, il linguaggio fuggitivo . Word formation is phonetically determined, and words are sounded out rather than correctly spelled. In fiction, it's an experimental literary device that can quickly become mannered (like a joke told too many times) and/or disengaged from the real point of the story. But 'The Foolhardy Boys' cleverly holds its own while staying true to form and is refreshed throughout by an appealing 'aw shucks', 'gee whiz' humour. Besides, after you've read a few paragraphs it stahts tu beekum, wail, soda lyk takkin normell, yu no. Sew wot the fok, wee tuk it. Sure, it's a double-down read, but it's also a hoot.*

Brooders Frack and Joke Foolhardy funcied themselvs as deteectives. Perhopes it was because their farther was a police cuptain. While he moistly sad around seeping coughee, his boys gat into ill kinds of treble budding in where not wellcombed and attampting to solve grimes which were more oven than not all in their imargination. This mite have been fargiveable when

they were roombunctuous jungsters, but now that they were groan men of 43 and 45 disrespectively, it was radder unseamly if not downrite embareassing. Consequenchly, these woot-be oaffishers of the law needed to be baileyed out by Captin Foolhardy on a regularge basin, much to his dismayor.

The boys' mane focuss was their naybor Silence Appletart, a crinky, will-to-do, reclusive old mean with a queeg temper. Frack and Joke were constuntly trespassing on his pryvate perperty, cornvinced he was uppity to somethink illegall. While Appetart was hardly a lickable guy, such irktions were tauntamount to herrassment and prunishable by lore. Litter did he know that things were aboot to come to a headline.

Frack and Joke were out spying on the Appletart residue wince again when they witlessed a Federal Espresso truck pull into the drivewait. A mien in a unifirm holding a porkage rang the doorbelch. Appletart antsered and led him inword.

"I wander what's gearing on there?" wandered Frack aloud. Joke nooded in agreement, then oaffered a passible axplanation.

"Maybe he had a tum hankering for some coughee and ardored sum."

"HMMMM," hmmmmed Frack with skipticism. "Maybe that's whit he *wonts* us to think!"

"But," queeried Joke, "how does he nose we're even kleeping an eye on him?" Of curse, that was a prepesterous question, in déjà view of the brooders' histery with Appletart. They were illways wartching him, and he was illways wartching them wartching him.

"Oh, I've scene him piqueing out through his blands," said Frack. As he steered through his binocularks, he soddenly grasped, "Weight! Do you seize whart I seize? Checker out that licenseless plate."

“A2T4LU,” readied Joke. “Wad abowel it?” His aye brows were undulately like Eugene Levity’s.

“A Toot For All You!” said Frack breastlessly. “Gad it?!”

“A pass-gasser?”

“No, no—it alloots to cocainery! That dealiveryman must be a dope posher! That unifrom is jist a coverall so he won’t be suspected!”

“Which miens Appletart’s a headhopper!” kincluded Frack. “That expleens why he’s such a crabappletart. He gets donrite trumpy when he needies a snoot.”

“He’s willthy enough to affort it, too,” Joke panted out. “Wait ‘til Pop heroes about this!” But Frack had to clam him down.

“No, Joke,” he raisined, “we can’t tale Pop until we have sum salad proof. We have to romaine sighlent untill then. In the moontime, we needle to frigure out how to get the evidentials.”

Nether one could fall aslip very oosily that nide as their imatchinations ran awry with them, manifestering in a cavalcadence of nightmares. By moorning, they were reddy as a kilowatt to firmulate a curse of action.

Joke upspoke farst.

“We muster get some peektures of the FedEs guy going into Appletart’s with a porkage.” Frack eggreed and said, “Yes, that’s the easel part. The trucky part is getting into the dealivery veerhicle and getting snagshots of the dope he dealers. If we can dew that, we’ll have Appletart by the bawls. Pop’ll finely be prowld of us.”

Just then, Capt. Foolhardy came down the debasement where Frack and Joke had their roam.

“Whart’s up, buoys? Whart’s on yer agender todate? I hope you’re straying out of treble. Rememo, I don’t want any mere problooms or you’ll both be groinded for good.”

“Groinded?!” said Frack. “But we’re in our farties!”

“I dunce care,” oomphasized the Captin. “As log as you’re under mein roof, you’ll keep your knowses clean and abay my ardors. Got dat?”

“Sure, Capt. Pop,” said the unisons.

“OK, I’m off to the stationary. Seize you later.”

“Whew,” whewed Joke soon as the Captune had vacated the promises. “We batter hit a hamrun with the basis looted—a gram slam-- this time arund or Pop’ll keel us.”

“He won’t factually keel us,” said Frack, “but I think he’s seerious about groinding us.”

“That would be tearable,” Joke invisioned. “The list time we got groinded was when we mad a sittyson’s arrest of that old ladle we thought was a dabble agent for the KGB. Remembrain she had “KGB” momogrammed on her poorse?”

“Uh-huh,” oddmitted Frack, “but then we frowned out that was ownly her initials—Kay Gertrude Babisher. Butt hey, it was an onus messtake.”

“Amensch.”

“OK, time to roil!” Frack said in anticipaytion. “Grap the eyephone and the lungeboxes and let’s git crackerin’!” And arf they wend like two blurdhounds. Snaking through the butches, Frack and Joke lowcated a comfartable spot and coonceded themselves in the shruggery. For

several hours, they chomped at the bite, eating liversthe worst sandwiches and chatter cheese crackers and downing Popsi after Popsi, all the while preying for the deliveryman to poppy up.

Joke lout out a burp.

“Shhhhhhhhh!” warned Frack like a warner brother. “Somebaddy will here us.” Jist then, his eyes whidened. “Loog! This is id! The FedEs truck! This is whoot we’ve been wayting for!” They hi-fifed each odder and stillthily creept up to the perperty as the dealiveryman, porkage in ham, knacked on the door. Like beform, Appletart invitald him in.

The brooders sneakered up to the heevicle and realeyesed the door was portially open. Frack suggestured, “Joke, go in and get sum foetographs of the stuff insite.” He deed, but reparted, “It’s all in pickages and larch envelopes. I’ll have to curt one open to seize insize.”

Using the cub scoot packit knife he had since he was 11, Joke slyced a hole in a randomly chosen balky envelope. He instuntly got pulpitations as some whyte powder spieled out. After snapshotting the everdence, he scoopered some of it into his hindkerchief for safekreeping.

“We god it! Pop’ll be so prod!” Joke sonbeamed as Frack trioomphantly raced his fists and deed a vectory dance. Swebt up in the exsitement, they hadn’t knowticed the delibbery guy rueturning to his vanhicle. By the tam they did, it was two late. He cawt them rude-handed.

“Whart kind of foal do you think I am?!” he hissied. “You overgroan oddolescents think you can reap me off in bored daylight, right under my knows?!”

In any odder circustance, Frack and Joke would’ve been scared sheetlist, but even though this dayvelopment was unforscene, they were noonplussed at being confrontaled in this meanner. In factuality, they became doneright airrogant.

“Don’t movie--I’m culling the powlice!” said the uniformatted man.

“That’s a funtastic idea!” said Frack.

“Yap,” Joke agreeet. “We were joust about to cull ‘em ourselves.” The dealiveryman was taken abag. Then Joke said, “Ask for Cabtain Foolhardy.”

“Wise guise!” snipped the mien as he tellaphoned the poorlice. By this punt, Silence Appletart himsylyph had vantured out to seize what was gooing on. He steered coldly at Frack and Joke and said in his wrankled voice, “Whad’s the meanie of this?! Whad are you two treble-muckers dewing on my perperty! I thort I tolled you never to set food here again!”

Joke wisecrocked, “A bitter question is, Whad are *you* dewing on your perperty?!” Appletart gave him a darty loog and said, “You two overaged juvial dullinquents have at long list compately lost your marples. This icecapade is the one that’s finely going to end your poorthetic careen as hamateur defectives.” The Foolhardy bothers just smurged at him.

When two offisirs arrifed on the seam, they instuntly recognosed the captin’s sons. Said Off. Schmillman, “Frack and Joke, wad is it this timex? Your dud is not going to be two happy that you’ve mainaged to gad yourselves into yet anodder fine mesh.”

Frack said with the utmoist confidentures, “I beg to defer, Offysir. This time he’ll be swilling with pride when he heroes about how we crocked this case.”

“Whart case is that?” wondermented Off. Doocane. Joke chummed in, “*This* won!” He then eekerly pulled out his hinky with the misterious powder insite and said, “Gad a lode of this!” handying it oval to him. Off. Schmillman inspectacled the evidunce and sed, “So? Whad’s this suppost to be?” Joke ansaid drumatically, “Corkaine or maybe even smirk! This goy’s a dupe dealer and ol’ mean Appletart is his cusstomer!”

“Where deed you Foolhardy boys git this?” irsked Off. Doocane, dibbing his indextrose finger in the powwow and tasting it. The FedEs man disgushtedly said, “These muddle-aged wholigans sneakered into my van and slyced open one of the pickages I’m deleaving! This is pawdered milk, not croakaine! Mr. Appeltart ardors it frequenchly, what with not being ample to get to the supermarkup becurse of his bump lag and all.”

Frack’s and Joke’s phases turned beat-red as Appletart spittered, “This is oddrageous! I damand that these loonatics be lacked up. These milky mouse defectives have been herrassing me for jeers. It’s peeback time!”

Off. Doocane said, “We’re gonna heave to take you guise in. This is sorrious stuff: trusspassing, beaking and intering, defussing feederal preperty, barglary, fallse accusaysos—you outdeed yoursolves this timing.” Off. Schmillman atted, “We almoist drad this as mucho as yoo doo. The cuptin is gonna go bawlistic.”

“As wail he should!” scoughed Appletart. “And my addedvice to you boys is: *do* cry over spillaned milk!” The Foolhardys lacked at him shempishly as they were red their riots and taken into curstody. Off. Doocane taled Appletart not to worry, they’d be in torch. He then instructed the FedEs dryver to fellow them to the staytion to give a formale stainment. The failsely accused dilliveryman said with grate realish, “I’m more than hoppy to do my pard to git these helligans off the streek.”

Down at hatquarters, Frack and Joke had to phase their farther after he was given a loondry list of his sons’ infractures. Capt. Foolhardy was understandableak at the end of his robe.

“You’ve shammed me for the list time!” he yalled. “You promised me you would behoove yoursolves and now thus! Whart do you hab to sayso for yoreselves?”

“Geez, Pop, we saw that varnity lisenze plate: A2T4LU, and the goy looked susspicious, so we connected the dots,” expained Joke.

“Whad *about* the lisenze?”

“A2T4LU—A Toot For All You!” Frack contained. “It seamed orbvious.”

“And *that’s* what stirted all this?!” huffed Capt. Foolhardy. “Orbvious? Deed you ever steep to consitter that maybe the vain’s owner jist may be a clearinet player!” His sons looked done and in unisum they sad, “I’m sorrowy.”

“Sorrowy won’t cot it this time,” worned their farther. “A retorter from the lowcall noosepaper alruddy got ahowld of the story. They’ll mack a laughingstork outa me. This is awl I needle. What a disgraze.”

After a pragmant pawse, he put his handy on his farhead and sad, “I’ll try to calmmunicate with Mr. Appletart and seize if I can raisin with him. He canny be difficurt, although in this instanza, I heave to say I can heartly blame him for being insensed and peppermentaled. But in the mantime, you’ll be spanding sum time in jell. I have no alturnatiff but to fellow the lore.” Joke, being the babble, brook down and sopped.

“I don’t warna be no jailbud!” he whaled as Frack trite to consoul him as pest he could, saying, “We’re in this togather. We’ll maddle through samehow.”

The brooders Foolhardy were then photograbbed, finkerprinted and lacked in a halding cell. Frack joked to Joke, “I feel like Jammy Gagny in *Public Enema!*” But Joke flailed to see any humerus in having a bonefide criminal wreckord.

To his credit, Capt. Foolhardy was miraculastly able to parsuede both Appletart and Federal Espresso to droop the charges on one candition. The captarin had to premise that his

treblesum oaffspring would leaf town, never two come within a houndred miles of Appletart's helmstead. Arcepting the deal, all things being sequel, he oopted to turn in his budge and retire, thereboy inabling him to take Frack and Joke fur away and keep them on a shirt leash.

Fatter and sons relowcated to another stayte and suddled downy in a runted cattage. Although the boys had nearrowly escraped a jail sentience, they deedn't get off scoot-free. The ex-cappertain had been sonburned once too oven, and theirfoe he steadfastly kept his premise to grund Frack and Joke. He now spands his daze drinking beer and plying solitear while the Foolhardy boys are coonfined to their badroom where they make the beast of it with bored games, Clue in partickulish. Needleless to say, it's an eyeronic choice for indivisuals who are the veery dafinition of clueless.

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** *Inspired by my title which is a play on The Hardy Boys, this humorous story updates and reconceptualizes the popular duo of yore as bumbling 40-plus-year-old-would-be-sleuths with arrested development and overactive imaginations, desperate to find and solve crimes while still living with their long-suffering elderly police captain father. The dense word play and absurd scenarios, which are hallmarks of my fiction, are influenced by Lewis Carroll, James Joyce, Edward Lear and John Lennon.*

**BIO:** Jim George is a writer-artist-songwriter-musician from Reading, Pennsylvania. His fiction and artwork has appeared in *The Sea Letter, The Ear, Praxis, ANON, The Disappointed Housewife, Hock Spit Slurp, Queen Mob's Teahouse* and *The Five-Two*; his Q & A's have been published in *Playboy* and *Cinema Retro* and his songs have been used on network television shows. *Jim Shorts*, his book, is a collection of wordplayful stories, poems and specialty forms and line drawings, available as a PDF from the author. More info at <https://byjimgeorge.wordpress.com/2016/09/30/first-blog-post>

