

[10.2]Enemy At The Gate

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Transcript {Mike Lee}

ACT ONE

Scene One - Street

Frasier is driving Niles in his BMW. They are in mid-conversation.

Frasier: When the phone company says they will be at your door between the hours of nine and noon, they have entered into a verbal contract. If they show up at 12:47 they are in breach of said contract.

Niles is shown to be carrying a birdcage on his lap. He is looking weary. Apparently he has been listening to Frasier rant for the entire drive.

Niles: [with irritation] Again, I agree.

Frasier: Well, I just shouldn't have waited for them, that's all. Now my entire day is thrown off.

Niles: Still, I appreciate your taking the time to give me a lift.

Frasier: Yes, well, when you informed me you had to get to the promenade shops posthaste, I assumed it was an actual emergency - not to return a cage for some silly lovebirds.

They round a corner and stop at a light.

Niles: It may not be on the order of a fallen pant cuff, but until I get home with something more secure, little Daphne and Niles are living under a colander.

Frasier: Dear God... don't tell me you actually named them after yourselves.

They start again.

Niles: Big mistake, I admit. This morning when Daphne escaped, I just kept thinking, What if she's hurt or lost or eaten by a cat? Or worse... what if she meets a bird who's more birdly than Niles but without the substance?

Frasier: [sardonically] Trust me. No one is more birdly than Niles.

Niles: Thanks.

They pull into a parking garage. Frasier takes a ticket.

Frasier: What is with all this traffic? I tell you, don't these people have jobs? Some of us have a radio show to do!

Niles: Frasier, relax, you're not on for another hour and a half.

Frasier: [looking at the car clock] That can't be right. [checks his watch] Oh, Dear God! My show's on in fifteen minutes!

They go through the garage entrance gate.

Niles: I had no idea it was so late. You can just drop me out front. I'll get a cab home.

Frasier: I'm afraid I'll have to. Damn it! Dad did this. I tell you, he gets in here, he wants to hear his favorite radio station and starts pushing buttons like a lab rat on amphetamines!

Frasier quickly turns around the gate post and toward the exit gate. He pulls up and speaks to George, the lot attendant.

Frasier: Excuse me, we've changed our minds. We won't be parking.

George: Two dollars.

Frasier: No, you see, we just came in for a second and decided not to park. Just check the time on the ticket.

George: It's two dollars for any portion of twenty minutes - one second, ten minutes, whatever. Unless you go over, then it's two more dollars.

Frasier: Forgive me, perhaps I'm not being clear. You see, I mistakenly pulled in here, decided not to park, and now I'd like to just get out.

George: Two dollars.

Niles: I have two dollars.

Frasier: Put that away!

George: Sorry. You come in, you pay. That's policy.

Frasier: Oh, really? It just so happens that I have a few policies of my own, and one of them is that I do not pay good money for nothing!

George: Well, not for nothing, but your car's taking up space on the property.

Frasier: That's not parking!

George: It looks parked to me.

Frasier: But it's been continually in motion!

George: It's stopped.

Frasier: But it's still running.

George: It's parked. Look, the fee is two dollars. There's nothing you can do.

At hearing those words, Frasier gets that look he always does when he fancies he's just had a brilliant idea.

Frasier: Is that so? [to Niles] Do you hear that?

Niles: [nervous upon seeing the look] Yes, and it makes sense to me.

Frasier: Fine. Have it your way.

He rolls up his window, puts the car in park, and turns off the engine.

Niles: [scared] What are we doing, Frasier?

Frasier: If I'm going to be paying for parking, we are going to get our twenty minutes' worth.

Behind Frasier, cars start to honk as they are stopped up in the exit lane.

FADE OUT

THE TERRIER PUZZLES

Scene Two - Apartment

Martin is sitting on the couch doing a jigsaw puzzle with Eddie beside him.

Martin: OK, what we need now is a side piece with some ear and a little bit of sky. Ear with sky... ear with sky...

Daphne comes out carrying a box.

Daphne: Well, this is it. Sorry it's taken me so long to pick up the last of my things.

Martin: Oh, no problem. Frasier's not having the carpet people here til Friday.

Daphne: Oh, really? When it was my room, he said the carpet's good for another twenty years.

Martin: Yeah, well, now it's going to be a reading sanctuary.

Daphne: He's turning my room into a library?

Martin: No, he made it very clear it was a "reading sanctuary." A library implies sharing. I think there are some pieces missing from this one.

Daphne: You always say that, keep looking.

Martin: Why do I even do this stupid thing? Some puzzle, there's a picture of what's it's going to look like right on the box!

Daphne: You always say that, too.

She starts to go out the door with her box, but Eddie jumps down and starts barking at her.

Daphne: What's wrong, Eddie?

Martin: Come, boy! [*Eddie keeps barking*] He must know you're moving. He gets this way whenever I bring out my suitcase. He knows I'm going away and he starts raising hell. Boy, come! [*Eddie keeps barking*] Yeah, that's what it looks like.

Daphne: [*puts the box down*] Well, there's nothing to get upset about. I'll be here every day for your physical therapy.

Martin: You hear that, boy? She'll be here every day to torture your master.

Eddie keeps barking.

Daphne: What should I do?

Martin: Maybe it'd distract him if you made me lunch.

Daphne gives him a look.

FADE OUT

Scene Three - Parking Garage

Frasier and Niles are still encamped before the exit gate. A line of cars is stopped behind Frasier, honking. George is directing them one by one out through the entrance lane.

George: [*as another car tries to enter*] Hold it, man!

The car stops, allowing one of the trapped cars to get out.

Woman in Car: [*as she's passing, to Frasier*] Dumbass!

Niles: Other motorists are getting angry.

Frasier: If they weren't so shortsighted, they'd see that I'm doing this for their own good. It's like correcting people's grammar - I don't do it to be popular.

Niles: And I support that, but in this case I strongly feel we should pay the money and get out of here before there's violence.

Frasier: Niles, they can get around us if they want to. So what, it takes them an extra two seconds!

Niles: OK, but we're also inconveniencing ourselves.

Frasier: Niles, you'll get home to your stupid, filthy bird soon enough!

Niles: I meant that your radio show is about to start... dumbass.

A chorus of horns behind them accompanies this point.

Frasier: Right.

Cut to - KACL

Roz is waiting in her booth. Kenny rushes in.

Kenny: Where the hell's the doc?

Roz: He still isn't here.

Kenny: It's almost showtime! I swear to God, nobody here has any discipline! I'm starting to think, I've been too loose with the leash! I mean, gee whiz, I try to make everyone happy and all it gets me is a twisted gut. Well, no

more! This Saturday, we're gonna have a staff meeting, we're gonna hash out some rules!

Roz: I'm busy Saturday!

Kenny: [pause] Well, it's not mandatory.

The phone on Roz's console rings, she answers.

Roz: Roz Doyle. Frasier! Where are you? What? [to Kenny] He's at some mall, he's still got ten minutes of parking left. [into phone] You know, you don't have to use the full twenty minutes.

She jerks the phone away from her ear as Frasier yells into it.

Roz: [to Kenny] He knows that. [into phone] What are you doing? [beat] What?! You lost me after "Gandhi."

Cut to - Garage

Frasier: Just stall. I don't know, read some fan mail if you have to. There must be! Check in my Inbox! Oh, never mind! I'll be there when I get there, and when I do, I will have a little speech for my listeners about the Power of One! [hangs up]

Niles: [sarcastic] Sounds like everybody's a winner today.

Frasier: Are you being snide? Because that's not healthy.

Niles: [fed up] Well, I'll just go return my birdcage. [opens car door]

Frasier: Niles! You shut that door! [he does] You can't desert me in the middle of a fight!

Niles: I'm not deserting you.

Frasier: It would appear to others that you are, thereby weakening my position. Please, you must stay.

A man knocks on Frasier's window. He rolls it down.

Man: What the hell is going on here?

Frasier: I'm glad you asked me that question. I am making a stand against this garage that holds me, my passenger, and my automobile hostage for a parking fee which I do not owe.

George: [to Man] He don't want to pay two dollars.

Frasier: Look, I already told you, it's not about the money. In fact, to prove it's not about the money, I will donate two dollars to the charity of your choice.

Man: Only rich people have time for this kind of crap! Just pay the two bucks, Mr.-BMW!

Frasier: My income, and the style of car which I drive, are irrelevant! Isn't that so, Niles?

Niles: Yes, I drive a Mercedes, and I would have paid ten minutes ago.

The man goes back to his car. George steps forward.

George: I told my boss I have a non-pay.

Frasier: Oh! You see, Niles, this happens so often they actually have a name for us.

Niles: More than one, I bet.

George: [holds out a clipboard] Just sign the form that says, "unable to pay," and send us a check.

Frasier: Well, I'm certainly not going to send you a check.

George: Look, most people don't, just sign the form so I can get this gate open.

Niles: Oh, Frasier, it's an out! You should take it.

Frasier: Niles, I refuse to sign anything that says I am unable to pay! It's untrue!

George: Look, I really don't care, Jack, I just got to get this lane re-opened. Now it's either two dollars or the form, so I can put it in my drawer.

Frasier: You know my terms: you will receive your money when the twenty minutes is up.

George: Fine. Then I'll put in my own money! [reaches for it]

Frasier: No, no, you can't do that!

George: It's too late, it's on me! [*opens gate*] Go ahead, Mr. Beemer!

Frasier: Don't you call me that! You put that down right now, we're not going anywhere!

Niles: [*can take no more*] AAAAHHHH!!! I can't do this anymore, Frasier!

Frasier: Excuse me. [*rolls window up*] What are you talking about?

Niles: Do you really want justice? Or is this just an outlet for your bad mood?

Frasier: I AM NOT IN A BAD MOOD! [*Niles looks at him*] Oh fine, just go! And bravo for staying on a whole ten minutes! Goodbye!

Niles gets out of the car.

George: I don't blame you for bailing on that idiot.

Niles: He's not an idiot. He's just... passionate.

George: I think he's an idiot. [*to Frasier*] Suit yourself, idiot.

He brings the gate down again. More honking is heard.

Niles: That idiot happens to be my brother.

Niles bends down to look at Frasier through the window, then gets back in the car. Frasier gives him a grateful nod. Niles nods back.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Scene Four - Garage

By now a group of half a dozen angry people is standing behind Frasier's car, yelling.

Frasier: Don't these people realize I'm on their side?

Niles: I don't think they care, so long as you're in their lane.

Frasier: [*out his window*] I'm doing this for all of you! Don't you understand?

Man 2: No, no, come out here and explain it to us!

Niles: Don't even think about it, Frasier, that man wants to hit you.

Frasier: I'm not afraid.

He does not, however, get out of the car. Instead, he rolls open the sunroof and sticks his head up through it, turning around to face the angry crowd.

Frasier: People, please! I am not the enemy! I am your champion!

Man 2: Well, we got places to be, so move yo' ass!

WoMan 2: Yeah, move it!

Frasier: But I'm doing this for all of us!

Woman 3: If you want to do something for me, get out of the way!

WoMan 2: You save the protest for your own driveway!

Frasier: If you could only see things from my point of view, then I'm sure you'd agree with me! You see, I pulled into this garage, decided not to park, and now I want to leave, but they still insist on collecting two dollars! Is that fair? Has a service been provided?

Woman 3: Even if it's a rip-off, it's better than causing a big stink!

Frasier: Ah! But is it? I say no! I say we've been trod upon long enough by people who are supposed to be providing our services! By the postmen who mix up our deliveries! By the telephone repairmen who swear to be there between nine and noon, and yet arrive at-

Unseen by Frasier, Niles rolls his eyes and mouths, "twelve forty-seven."

Frasier: -12:47, when you're wearing nothing but a towel and a hatful of shampoo! Well, ENOUGH! I invoke my right to peaceful protest! Civil disobedience is a cornerstone of this country, for it is how the common man is heard!

Behind Frasier, in the entrance lane, George confers with a tow truck driver

that has just arrived.

George: Can you tow it?

Driver: Not with them in it.

Frasier: Well, that's just tough luck! Because we ain't budging.

Driver: You'll have to call the police.

Crowd: Good idea!/It's about time!/Yeah!

Frasier: GO AHEAD! [*sits back down and closes the sunroof*] I think I made a mistake.

Niles: Maybe it's time to back down.

Frasier: I'm not sure that I can. I am right, after all. My principles are holding me captive.

Niles: Your principles may have started this, but it's your rigidity that's kept it going.

Frasier: My rigidity? The rigid ones are the ones who operate this garage, and enforce such inflexible policies.

Niles: You've been given more than one opportunity to leave without paying!

Frasier: Yes, but that's not the point! They have to know why I won't pay.

Niles: Which you could explain in a letter! But no, you won't be satisfied until everyone either agrees with you, or has suffered for failing to!

Pause.

Frasier: Do you really think so?

Niles: I do.

Frasier: Well... that's quite an indictment. I never really thought of myself as uncompromising. Well, not in a bad way. I'm not sure I like this side of myself.

Niles: Well, you can still change course. If you can leave here without getting your full twenty minutes' worth, you'll be the bigger person for it.

Frasier: Yes, but then these taunting motorists won't know that I'm being the bigger person. They'll think they've gotten the better of me, or that I'm afraid to be arrested.

Niles: The bigger person doesn't worry about what other people think.

Frasier: Damn! [*sulky*] I DO want to be the bigger person, it's just so hard! [*pause*] You know, we wouldn't be in this mess if it weren't for you and that ridiculous birdcage!

Niles just looks at him.

Frasier: Oh, come on, I can only change one character flaw at a time!

Scene Five - Apartment

Martin and Daphne are sitting on the couch, playing with Eddie.

Daphne: You were right about distracting him, he seems fine now.

Martin: As soon as you head for that door again, he's gonna have a fit. Let me get you some dog treats to give him.

He heads for the kitchen. As soon as he's gone, Eddie jumps down and paws at the box Daphne was carrying.

Daphne: I don't understand. I may sleep across town, but I still see him all the time.

Martin: Well, you got to look at it from Eddie's point of view. This person who's meant so much to him isn't going to be living here anymore.

As he speaks from the kitchen, Daphne looks inside the box and finds one of Eddie's toy tennis balls. Eddie jumps at it.

Martin: For nine years, he's felt the comfort of knowing you were here every night, and making him his breakfast every morning, and he's come to depend on that. Now everything's changed.

Daphne smiles to herself and tosses Eddie the tennis ball. He scampers away

happily as Martin comes out of the kitchen.

Martin: Ah, would you look at that. He's probably gonna get on my bed to pout.

Daphne: I think he'll adjust.

Martin: Well, who knows? Old dogs get used to a certain routine. And as tough as they might look, they get lonely. Well, I guess he'll adjust eventually.
[sits back down to the puzzle]

Daphne: You know, maybe I haven't been coming around enough lately. Why don't you and I make a regular appointment to walk him together?

Martin: Oh, geez, that'd be great! I have to check with him, but he's free most of the time.

Daphne: Why don't we start tomorrow morning? [opens the door] That way I can have breakfast with the old boy too.

Martin: He'd really like that.

Daphne smiles and leaves.

Scene Six - KACL

The show has started and Roz is reading from a paper.

Roz: Then, on Friday, it'll be fish sticks with tater tots and a fruit cup. That takes care of the St. Victoria's Elementary lunch schedule for the next month. We'll be back to tackle St. Victor's, after this!

She goes to commercial. Kenny comes in.

Kenny: Holy buckets, what are you doing?! Take some calls!

Roz: I'm not a shrink, I can't tell people what to do!

Kenny: Yeah, that always stops you women. Just rap about something, open up a discussion, you know? [checks wall] The station I.D.'s over, go!

Roz: Oh, OK! [back on the air] Hello again, everybody! Well, we're still waiting on Dr. Crane. So, until he gets here, let's hear what's on your minds! You know the number, give me a call. [presses button] Hello, caller. You're on the air.

Mark: [v.o.] Hi, Roz. This is Mark from Bainbridge, and I made a big mistake.

Roz, feeling confident, puts her feet up on the desk, and even imitates Frasier's pompous intonation.

Roz: Go on.

Mark: I slept with my boss. Now things at work are super uncomfortable.

Roz: Well, Mark, I feel for you. I've been there myself. What you ought to do is just talk it out with your boss.

Mark: You went through this too?

Roz: Yeah, and it was weird for a while, but now, things are just fine.
[chuckles] Who else out there needs my advice? Let me hear your calls.
[presses button] You're on the air. How can I solve your problem?

Sheila: [v.o.] Actually, I was calling about something else, but when you say, "now things are fine," it sounds like you still work with this person.

Roz: What? No, no! [laughs nervously] I worked with this person a long, long time ago.

Sheila: Then why'd you say "now"?

Roz: Because... I don't speak so good?

Sheila: Isn't Dr. Crane your boss?

Roz: Well, no, I like to think of Frasier as a "colleague."

Sheila: Oh, now he's "Frasier"!

Roz: Yeah, I mean, it's just that I...

Sheila: I think you did Frasier.

Roz drops her feet off the desk.

Scene Seven - Garage

Niles is still trying to convince Frasier.

Niles: Frasier, you are not a prisoner of your character. You can decide right

now that you're going to be the flexible one here. Pay the money, and go!

Frasier: I could break my pattern.

Niles: Yes!

Frasier: I could just pay the money, without proving to everyone that I'm right, without teaching them a lesson.

Niles: Exactly! You can do it!

Frasier rolls down his window.

Frasier: Sir? I'll have you know, I am leaving, with time to spare.

George: Congratulations.

Frasier: Since you cannot understand the moral code for which I stayed here, I am sure you must be perplexed that I am leaving before the twenty minutes is up. Suffice it to say, I am the bigger man for it. And you, and your nefarious policy may now carry on, in what is highway robbery in the truest sense of the expression! Here is your ticket, and... [*hands over ticket and money*] your ill-gotten two dollars.

George takes the money and the ticket. Frasier starts the car, but instead of raising the gate, George flips the sign in his window from "\$2.00" to "\$4.00."

George: Four dollars.

Frasier: Four dollars?!

George: You went over twenty minutes. It's two dollars for each portion of twenty minutes.

Frasier: But I already backed down!

George: Well, if you had spared me the speech, you would have made it out in time. [*smiles*] Tough break, huh?

Frasier gets that look again.

Frasier: Indeed... hold on, Niles.

Niles, scared again, huddles down in his seat. Frasier floors it, plowing through the gate and snapping off the bar as he exits.

Scene Eight - KACL

Roz has spiraled into Hell. On one side she faces a board lit up with incoming calls, while Kenny hovers nosily behind her.

Outside in the hall, dozens of staffers are massed like hyenas outside the booth, peering in and gossiping among themselves.

Kenny: I can't believe it! I mean, I always felt some chemistry between you and the doc, but... Wowza! This can't hurt ratings.

Roz: Calm down, Kenny, it isn't true!

Kenny: [*laughing*] Yeah, right. Hey, you didn't do it here at the station, did you?

Roz: Of course not!

Kenny: Hey, as long as it wasn't on my couch, who gives? Hey, the commercial's over.

Roz: [*back on-air*] And we're back, with our new topic: Cats or Dogs, which is better?

As she takes the next call, Frasier rushes into his booth and takes his position.

Roz: Hello, caller, you're on the air.

Jerry: [*v.o.*] This is Jerry from Elliot Bay.

Roz: Which do you have, Jerry: cat or a dog? [*hits cough button*] Frasier, I am so sorry, I really screwed up!

Frasier: It's all right, Roz. I'll take care of everything.

Jerry: I don't have either, I just want to know what's going on with Dr. Crane.

Frasier: [*on-air*] Yes, well I'll bet you do, Jerry! Dr. Frasier Crane here, Seattle. I'm sorry I'm late. It sounds as if Roz has informed you of my exploits!

Roz is horrified.

Jerry: She hasn't said much, but we'd like to hear it from you.

Frasier: Well, it wasn't my finest hour. Let's just say that I got in there, realized I made a mistake, and then tried like hell to get out!

Roz: [waving urgently] Frasier!

Frasier waves her off, not noticing the staffers exploding with excitement behind him.

Frasier: There was a lot of shouting, and then a line started to form behind me. Fortunately, my brother was with me for moral support, and, well, let's face it, somebody to talk to. You know, you'd be amazed how long twenty minutes can be when you're watching the clock. At least, in the end, I got out of there without paying the four dollars!

He gives a self-congratulatory chuckle, and looks at Roz. Her head is buried on her console.

END OF ACT TWO

Credits:

Niles comes back to the garage and gives George the four dollars. George, unsatisfied, points to the broken gate, prompting Niles to pull out some more money.

Guest Appearances

Guest Starring

LUIS GUZMAN as George
 TOM MCGOWAN as Kenny
 KAREN KIM as Motorist #1
 TONY PASQUALINI as Motorist #2
 DAMIAN D. LEWIS as Motorist #3
 KILA KITU as Motorist #4
 ANNA C. MILLER as Motorist #5
 MOROCCO OMARI as Tow Truck Driver

Guest Callers

BILLY BEAN as Jerry
 CHARLES BUSCH as Mark
 LEELEE SOBIESKI as Sheila

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