[1.6] The Crucible

The Crucible

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Transcript {michelle cushley}

Act One.

Scene A - Frasier's booth at KACL.

Frasier is on air.

Frasier: You're listening to KACL 780 on your AM dial. This is Dr.

Frasier Crane. All our lines are open, so please, give us a call. [silence] I'm just sitting here waiting. [silence] Hey, Seattle, c'mon, I know you're out there. Hey, look, I realise it's a sunny day but on all those rainy days, I was there for you. [silence] Well, alright then, if that's the way you want it, you leave me no recourse...

[clears his throat; singing]

"When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie-"

His board lights up.

Frasier: That seems to have gotten you going there, okay! Alright

then, I knew you were out there. Okay, Roz, who do we have?

Roz: We have Gary from Issiqua on line two. He and his wife had

a big fight.

Frasier: Sorry to hear that, Gar. I'm listening.

Gary: [v.o.] Well, y'see, Dr. Crane, my wife is hell-bent on going

to Italy this year.

Frasier: Ahh, Italia - the rolling hills of Toscana, the art of

Firenze, the passion that is Venizia...

Gary: [over his head] Yeah, well, anyway - I like taking vacations

as much as the next guy but I say that, if we dip into our savings, I think the first thing we should buy is a new

sump-pump for the basement. At least with that-

Frasier: [interrupting] Oh, listen, Gary. Let me stop you right

there. I'm afraid I'm going to have to side with your wife on this one.

on this one.

Gary: But the trip to Italy costs eighteen hundred bucks, and that

doesn't include the "Splendours of the Vatican" package.

Frasier: Gary, there is more to life than sump-pumps. Whatever happened to feeding our souls? Look, for example, I recently purchased a painting by one of this country's premier artists -

oh, it's not important who. Well, it's Seattle's own Martha Paxton, but... Practical? No. But ever since acquiring that painting, I look at it every day and there's not a moment when

I do that I'm not uplifted by its beauty. So Gary, go to Italy, bring back a suitcase full of memories. Will you do

that?

Gary: I still think I should get the sump-pump.

Frasier: [contemptuous] Well then, yes, Gary, you... you should get the sump-pump! We'll be right back after this newsbreak.

Frasier is now off-air and moves through to Roz in the control booth.

Frasier: Roz, just what is a "sump-pump?"

Roz: If you need one, you'll know. Listen, do you really own a Paxton or were you just blowing sunshine up old Gary's skirt?

Frasier: Yes indeed, I do own a Paxton.

Roz: Well, you'll be pleased to know that she's on line three.

[holds up the phone]

Frasier: [gasps and snatches the phone] My God, Roz, she's the preeminent Neofauvist of the twentieth century! How

could you put her on hold?

Roz: Well, the phone rang and I pushed the little button-

He gestures for her to push the little button again.

Frasier: Yes, hello, Miss Paxton. I'm so sorry to have kept you waiting. Well, thank you. I'm very flattered that you listen to my little show. Yes, well, yes, I meant every word. Yes, that's lovely, I'd like to meet you, too sometime. [sudden thought] As a matter of fact, I'm having a few friends over for a little gathering this Friday night, for cocktails and such. Well, I suppose you're far too busy to... you would! Oh, that's marvelous. Alright, that's the Elliot Bay towers on the Counterbalance. Around seven is just fine. And, well, I'll see then then. Ciao! [hangs up]

Roz: I didn't know you were having a cocktail party.

Frasier: That makes two of us!

FADE OUT

WHAT A SWELL PARTY

Scene B - Frasier's apartment, Friday night.
The cocktail party has started. Martha Paxton's painting occupies a place of honor over the fireplace.

Daphne is standing in the middle of a small clique, while the rest of the party mingle around them. Niles is seated on the stereo cabinet, gazing at her adoringly.

Daphne: Well, my theory on death is: first you're whisked down a long dark tunnel towards a beautiful white light; you suddenly get all the jokes you never got before, you let out a little chuckle, and then you die!

The clique laughs.

Frasier: That's a delightful story, Daphne, but I think the toast

points need replenishing.

Daphne: [moving away] Be right on it.

Niles: [hops down] Enchanting, just enchanting.

Frasier: My God, Niles, why is no-one eating the Mussoline of Duck?

Eddie hops onto the chair and starts eating it.

Frasier: Oh, you mangy little cur! [chases Eddie away]

Niles: Well, now we know why.

Frasier tidies up the duck and nervously licks his fingers clean.

Frasier: Look, Niles, the dog is eating the food, the pianist is too intrusive, the Pinot Noir is far too stagey and it's five past seven and Martha isn't even here yet!

Niles: I'm not going to have to sedate you, am I?

Frasier: No, I'm just a bit on edge, I want everything to be so perfect. [pause] By the way, where's Maris? I haven't seen her all night.

Niles: She's on your bed.

Frasier: My bed?

Niles: Yes, she's asleep under the guests' coats. She exhausts easily under the pressure to be interesting.

Frasier: Niles, she's supposed to be looking after dad. That's the only reason you're here, remember?

Niles: Dad is in the bathroom - don't worry.

Doorbell rings.

Frasier: That must be la Paxton - and fashionably late, of course.

He opens the door. It's Roz.

Frasier: Oh hi, Roz, it's you. [she looks offended] And you look radiant.

Roz: I look like crap - I've got a spot on my dress, I over-plucked one eyebrow and the crotch of my pantyhose is creeping down to my knees.

To Frasier's horror she squats behind the table next to the couch and pulls them up.

Frasier: Couldn't you have just done that in the elevator? [takes her coat] Oh, my goodness, Roz, you've got a neck. Gee, so what do you think of the place? Is it everything you imagined it would be?

Roz: Well, to be frank, Frasier, I don't spend my idle hours imagining how you live. But I did expect lots of beige and, look, I was right.

Frasier: Would you like a drink?

Roz: Sure, something light would be nice.

Frasier calls the waiter over.

Roz: [to waiter] Double bourbon, rocks, and spill a little in the glass.

In the Kitchen, Daphne is bent over, taking a tray out of the oven. Niles sidles in, apparently innocently.

Niles: Oh, Daphne, you're here, too.

Daphne: Lovely party, isn't it?

Niles: Yes, it is.

Niles: [smelling Daphne's hair instead] It certainly does. Daphne: [catching Niles] Dr. Crane, were you sniffing my hair?

Niles: Why would I do a thing like that? I'm a happily married man - I love my Maris.

Guest: [entering kitchen] Where should I put this coat?

Niles: Just throw it on the bed.

In the lounge, people are still milling around.

Roz: So, Frasier, which one is your dad?

Frasier: Oh, well, he's the older gentleman over there talking to

Bethany van Pelt, showing her the photographs. [realises]

Oh my God!

He rushes over to them.

Martin: [re: photos] ...and when we finally got to her it was only

hanging by two tendons.

Frasier: [to Bethany, who looks ill] Would you excuse us, please?

[leads his dad away] Dad , will you stop showing these crime

scene photos? You're embarrassing me.

Martin: Oh, these society people eat this up. Besides, she was the

one that brought it up.

Frasier: Oh, she brought it up? Bethany van Pelt - the head of the

Junior League - brought up the subject of a hooker whose body was hideously dismembered and scattered all over an

abandoned warehouse.

Martin: Yeah, she asked, "aren't these Swedish meatballs the

messiest things you've ever seen?" and I said, "no,

as a matter of fact"-

Frasier: Dad, dad, please!

Martin: Alright, alright, but stop shadowing me. I don't need a

nursemaid.

Frasier: Alright, if you give me your word, that's good enough for

 ${\tt me.}$

He passes Niles, who is following Daphne out of the kitchen.

Frasier: [hits Niles] You watch him!

As Frasier moves off, Niles would obviously prefer to stay with Daphne, when Roz comes over to him.

Roz: Hi, Niles.

Niles: Oh, hello.

Roz: You may not remember me, I'm-

Niles: Of course I remember you. Would you be a love and watch that

man with the cane? [continues following Daphne]

Doorbell rings. Frasier answers - this time, it is Martha Paxton. She is short, bald and aged around 50. She wears a poncho which covers her arms completely, and a Native American bead necklace.

Martha: Dr. Crane? I'm Martha Paxton.

Frasier: Of course, who else could you be? Welcome to my salon.

[loudly] Everyone, everyone, your attention, please. I'd like you all to welcome our quest of honour, the renowned

artist - Martha Paxton.

The guests applaud.

Frasier: May I take your... poncho?

Martha: No, no, no, no, I never take it off at parties. It gives me

an excuse not to shake hands with people.

Frasier: Oh, how delightfully eccentric! You must meet my brother,

Niles. Oh, Niles?

Niles: [moves over to the door] Miss Paxton, Dr. Niles Crane. It is

an honour to shake your hand. [outstretches his hand then, seeing no reaction on her part, shakes her poncho instead] Well, to shake anything of yours is an honour. [skulks away, embarrassed]

Martha: Now, where did you hang my painting? I'm always curious to know how people live with my work.

Frasier: "Live with my work" - I love that phrase. If you would, right this way, please. [leads her towards the centre of the room] I think this is the perfect spot for an ideal viewing. Oh God, I've waited so long for this moment - I'm just going to stand back and let you describe your work - "Elegy in Green" - in your own words. The way you insinuate the palette but never lean on it, you capture the zeitgeist of our generation. It is the most perfect canvas it has ever my privilege to gaze upon. I mean, one can only imagine what inspired you to paint it.

Martha: I didn't paint it.

A murmur passes through the crowd.

Martha: [walks to the painting] I didn't do anything to it - I never saw this painting before in my whole life.

Martin: [leans into Frasier's ear] And you thought I was gonna

embarrass you!

End Of Act One.

Act Two.

Scene C - Frasier's apartment, post-party. Martin and Frasier are in the lounge. Daphne is cleaning up while Frasier just leans against the pillar, staring at the painting.

Martin: I really liked your friend Roz.

Frasier: What?

Martin: Roz, at the party tonight. Nice gal. Why don't you ask her out? She's great-looking and she can really hold her liquor.

Frasier: Dad, do you mind? I've just suffered the most humiliating evening of my life. I've been been made a fool of by this, this, this... thing. [gestures towards the painting]

Daphne: You know, I may be just a girl from Manchester but, I have to tell you, even though it's not a Paxton, I really like that picture. I liked it the minute I saw it. I liked it even before I knew who Martha Paxton was. And quite frankly, I don't think that woman bathes.

Frasier: Well, enjoy it while you can because, first thing in the morning, this is going back to the dealer where I bought it. I'm demanding my money back - no-one is going to take advantage of Frasier Crane.

Martin: You know, listen, Frasier. You're kind of upset about this, maybe I should return it for you.

Frasier: Well, Dad, I appreciate the gesture but, really, what do you know about the art world?

Martin: Apparently about as much as you do.

FADE TO:

Frasier is staring at a painting, he is approached by Phillip.

Phillip: I can see the love in your eyes. You must have this painting.

Frasier: Are you the owner?

Phillip: Yes, I am. Phillip Hayson. [they shake hands]

Frasier: How do you do, I'm Dr. Frasier Crane. I happen -

Phillip: No, not the Dr. Frasier Crane. From the radio?

Frasier: Guilty. Yes, but -

Phillip: My wife and I love your show! Could I have your autograph
 before you go?

Frasier: It would be my pleasure but, speaking of autographs, I have a small problem with this painting. [holds up painting]

Phillip: I'm really distressed to hear that. Would you like a glass of wine?

Frasier: Well, actually I -

Frasier: Well, I'd really rather not have any wine at this moment -

Phillip lets Frasier taste the wine.

Frasier: Well, that's rather nice, isn't it? Finishes well.

Phillip: Very well. Would you like some more?

Frasier: No, no, no, thank you. I'd... getting back to my problem - I recently gave a small but elegant soiree at which Martha Paxton was in attendance, you see. She told me that this painting was not her work.

Phillip: Oh dear, I can imagine how embarrassing that must have been.

Frasier: I doubt you can, Mr. Hayson.

Phillip: Please, Phillip. Let's take a look at that in slightly better light, shall we? [walks the painting over to a stand and places it on the easel] Oh, yes, I remember this - it's breathtaking. [Raising his voice] Ronald, Diane, will you step in here a moment please?

Two of Phillip's shills come through to join them, they gather around the painting.

Phillip: Do you remember when this piece was in the gallery - everyone who saw it wanted it.

Diane: Yes, it's a very special piece.

Ronald: Mrs. Chitcherelli was heart broken when it sold.

Phillip: Oh, I remember -

Frasier: Yes, I'm sure she was but, you see, it's not a Paxton!

Phillip: But it says right here that it *is* a Paxton. The signature is here. [The three bend to point at the signature]

Frasier: Martha Paxton says that it is not a Paxton.

Phillip: Oh, Martha, how is the old dear? Her and I go back a long
 way, is she still-? [makes a gesture to his hair - a reference
 to Paxton's baldness]

Frasier: As a Crenshaw melon, yes.

Phillip: Would you like a little more wine?

Frasier: No, I don't want any wine. I want to discuss this painting.

Phillip: So would I. Maybe some brie? [Ronald and Diane disappear]

Frasier: No, I don't want any brie! I want my money back.

Phillip: Oh, well, that's where things might get a bit... prickly.
 You see, we have a strict policy here at the Hayson gallery all sales are final.

Frasier: But, in this case, you're willing to make an exception.

Phillip: Oh, I'd love to, but I can't.

Frasier: Yes, but it's a forgery.

Phillip: Well, if it is, it's a damn good one. [laughs]

Phillip: I'm sure you do.

Frasier: Oh, I know what you're doing - you're "handling" me. You're agreeing with everything I say hoping I'll tire and go away.

Phillip: Whatever you say.

Frasier: I don't believe it! You're shining me on. You are shining me on! Where is the fairness of this, where is the justice?!

Phillip: Dr. Crane, if you ever find justice in this world, let me
 know, will you? Now, if you'll excuse me, I have work to do.
 [walks away]

Frasier: What? Did a crate of freshly-painted Rembrandts just arrive?! [follows him] Damn it, you're not getting away with this! I am not leaving. I am not leaving! I am NOT leaving.

FADE TO:

AFTER HE LEFT...

Scene C - Frasier's apartment.

Frasier arrives, with the painting, to find Martin eating at the dinner table.

Martin: What are you still doing with that? I thought you were going to return it.

Frasier: They wouldn't take it back. All I got was some attitude and a cheap glass of wine - Loire valley, my ass.

Martin: What are you going to do now?

Martin: Five-five-five three thousand.

Frasier: Thanks, Dad. Try to mess with Dr. Frasier Crane, I'll teach them. [into phone] Hello, yes. Oh, just a second. [to Martin] Dad, who do I ask for?

Martin: Have them put you through to the fine arts forgery department. Frasier: [into phone] Hello, yes, the fine arts forgery department, please.

At the table, Martin hides his grin while Frasier gets a sour look.

Frasier: Dad, they're laughing at me.

Martin: [chuckling] Give me the phone. [Frasier does] Hi, who's this?
Hey, Doris. Yeah, Marty Crane. Yeah, that was my son. Yeah,
I just thought he needed a bite of a reality sandwich. Yeah,
yeah, give my best to the guys. Thanks. Bye. [hangs up]

Frasier: What was that?

Martin: Frasier, the boys downtown have their hands full of murders and robberies - they don't have time for this artsy-fartsy stuff.

Frasier: Yes, Dad, but what am I supposed to do? I've been cheated!

Niles and Daphne emerge from Frasier's bedroom, both are disheveled and appear straightening their clothes.

Frasier: What were you two doing back there?

Niles: Maris lost her earring at the party last night. Daphne was good enough to crawl under the bed to look for it while I...

Frasier: [long and low] Yeeeess?
Niles: Searched the credenza!

 elevator.

Niles: Two hours early. [laughs]

Frasier: Oh, shut up, Niles!

Niles: [sees the painting] Oh, I see. Am I to ascribe this foul mood to the fact that you were unable to unload the bogus Paxton?

Frasier: Yes. Gee, I know, Niles. What is the name of that really vicious lawyer that you use?

Niles: Which one, the one I used to sue the contractor or the one I used to sue the personal trainer?

Frasier: Well, the meanest.

Niles: Uh, that would be the second one. I used him to sue the first one.

Martin: Ah, forget it, Frasier. Five years of litigation and you'll end up paying eight times what you paid for the painting. [carries his plate to the kitchen]

Niles: He's right about that.

Frasier: [replaces the phone] God, I hate laywers!

Niles: Oh, me too. [sits down on the couch] But they make wonderful patients. They have excellent health insurance and they never get better.

Frasier: Say, I know, I know. I can use my radio show - why didn't I think of this earlier? I can use my bully pulpit to expose that man for the fraud that he is!

Niles: Now, Frasier, that's slander. He'll sue you for everything you've got.

Frasier: Damn it, Niles, where is the justice? Where am I supposed to turn to? I'm a, a beloved household personality and I've been screwed! [gestures at the painting]

Martin: [as he returns from the kitchen] For God's sake, Frasier, you're forty-one years old. It's time you learned something: the system ain't perfect. Sometimes the bad guy wins. And all those things you thought would be around to help you, the courts and the police department? Well, sometimes they're just not there when you need them. So you can either let it eat a hole in your stomach, or you can just file it away under the heading, "Sometimes Life Sucks."
[exits to his room]

Niles returns from the bar with two sherries. He hands one to Frasier.

Frasier: So that's that, huh? Hayson just gets away with it. He's sitting there now with his brie and his wine and his little chuckle at my expense. Gosh, you know, I finally understand why people take matters into their own hands. It would be so satisfying right now to just... slash his tires, or... throw a brick though his window or something. Just so he'd learn that you don't do this to people and get away with it.

Niles: Yes, well, I know you, Frasier, and I know that you'd never resort to that sort of thing. [looks at his brother, and becomes unsure] Would you, Frasier?

Silence.

Niles: There's a vein throbbing in your forehead.

Daphne enters from the hallway.

Daphne: Well, I couldn't find it in the hallway but let me give it
 one last try. Could you give me the matching earring? Maybe
 I'll get something from it.

Niles hands Daphne the earring. She holds it in both hands and concentrates.

Daphne: Oh yes, I'm getting a feeling. It's in your father's room.
 No, no, it's in Dr. Crane's room. Oh, this is odd, now it's in the hallway.

Eddie scampers in from the hallway and across the lounge.

Niles/Daphne: Eddie!

Niles and Daphne run after Eddie while Frasier grabs his car keys and exits the apartment.

FADE TO:

PEACHFUZZ

Scene D - Outside the Hayson Gallery.

Frasier creeps round the corner, holding a brick. He checks that the coast is clear, then stands in front of the window and is about to throw it until he notices an old couple walking past. He hides the brick behind his back.

Frasier: Good evening. Lovely night, isn't it? Yes, well, goodnight.

Again, Frasier gets ready to throw the brick but this time a horn honks and Niles's car pulls up in front of the gallery.

Niles: [through car window] Get in the car.

Frasier: Niles, what the hell are you doing here?

Niles: Stopping you from doing something really stupid. Now get

in the car.

Frasier: I will not! Niles, look, I know this is wrong but I don't

care! It's the only thing left for me!

Niles: Alright, Frasier. [steps out of the car; Frasier retreats]
Frasier, just give me the brick and no one will get hurt.

Frasier: Why don't you just go away? This is no concern of yours.

Niles: Yes, it is.

Frasier: How?

Niles: Remember that day in junior high school when somebody took all my clothes while I was in the shower, right after gym class? They hung them from the goalpost on the football field. I had no choice but to get a ladder and climb up there wearing nothing but a towel, wet and shivering. Then the towel fell off! There I was - your little brother, hanging naked from a goal post, and everyone was standing around laughing, and all Coach Medwick would do was stand there going- [holds his arms up to imitate the gesture] whatever that means.

[N.B. In American football, the signal - raising the arms to vertical and then dropping them to a "Y" position - means "field goal!" when a player scores by kicking the ball over and through the goal post.]

Frasier: Niles, why are you telling me this?

Niles: Because - I was so humiliated, I went home, I cried my eyes out, I swore I would get even. I was just about to put

sugar into Coach Medwick's gas tank... and you stopped me. Remember what you said? "If you act like a barbarian, you will become a barbarian."

Frasier: I said that?

Niles: Yes. Well, actually you were more verbose at the time.

I had to listen, you were sitting on my chest.

Pause.

Niles: Give me the brick, Frasier.

Frasier: [frustrated] And let him get away with this?!

Niles: I know, I know! What the gallery owner did to you was wrong, it was humiliating. But if you throw that brick through that window, you will have lost something more valuable than your money. You will have lost... your mind. Frasier, you can't

do this!

Frasier: Well, Niles, if you were strong enough to show restraint

after so much humiliation, not to mention the nicknames.

Niles: [as if remembering] Nicknames. [then:] There were nicknames? Frasier: Oh, you didn't know that? Oh dear God, yes. Uh, "Peachfuzz,"

"Jingle Bells" - I can't remember the rest.

Niles: "Peachfuzz"?

Frasier: Yes, I believe Coach Medwick made that one up himself.

[hands Niles the brick] Well, anyway, here you are.

I won't be needing this anymore.

Niles: I'm proud of you.

Frasier heads towards the car but Niles does not join him. Instead, he cocks his arm and hurls the brick through the gallery window, shattering it with a loud crash. As the alarm sounds, Niles throws his hands up in a gesture reminiscient of the Coach Medwick signal.

Frasier: [shouts above the alarm] My God, Niles! What are you, what

have you done?!

Niles: [proud] I've struck a blow for justice! Nobody calls me

"Peachfuzz." Now let's get the hell out of here.

They both run to the car, but as Frasier dashes to the passenger side, Niles stops and runs back to the window with his wallet out.

Frasier: Niles, what are you doing now?

Niles: We may be barbarians, but we pay for our pillaging!

He throws a handful of notes in through the broken window.

Frasier: Come on, come on! [Niles gets into the car] GO, GO, GO!

Niles's tires squeal as he speeds away from the gallery.

End Of Act Two.

Credits:

Frasier is contemplating the painting after hanging it on the wall. The camera begins to zoom out and we discover that he's hung it above the cistern in the powder room.

Guest Appearances

Guest Starring

JOHN RUBINSTEIN as Philip Hayson

RACHEL ROSENTHAL as Martha Paxton EUGENIE BONDURANT as Diane GREGORY EUGENER TRAVIS as Ronald

Guest Callers

ROBERT KLEIN as Gary

Legal Stuff

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