

[2.20] Breaking The Ice

Breaking The Ice

Written by Steven Levitan

Directed by Phillip Charles Mackenzie

Production Code: 2.20

Episode Number In Production Order: 47

Original Airdate on NBC: 18th April 1995

Episode filmed on

Transcript written on 10th July 2000

Transcript revised on 8th February 2003

AWARDS & NOMINATIONS

Won

ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

- **Reader's Favorites: 3RD**
-

Transcript {Mike Lee}

ACT ONE

ROZ DOYLE AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM

Scene One - KACL

Frasier is wrapping up his show.

Frasier: Well, that's it for today. Goodbye, and good listening.

He goes off the air, and walks into Roz's booth. She's preoccupied.

Frasier: Little off our game today, aren't we, Roz? Is something wrong?

Roz: Yes. I told a guy I love him.

Frasier: Somebody you know this time?

Roz: *[gives him a look, then]* Forget it, Frasier, I know you don't like to hear about my love-life.

Frasier: Oh, Roz, don't be ridiculous. I care about you. If you have a problem, and I can help, I'd love to. Just keep the details on a need-to-know basis.

Roz: OK. We've been dating a couple of weeks, and last night he started licking me behind my ear. See, I have this sweet little spot there...

Frasier: Uh, Roz, is this—?

Roz: Yes, you do need to know this. So anyway, what I meant to say was, "Oh, I love that!" But I got so caught up that I yelled out, "Oh, I love you!" and then all of a sudden he got this look on his face like Indiana Jones running from the big ball!

Frasier: Well, uh, Roz, do you love him?

Roz: No! But I said it, so he should have said it back, it's just polite.

Frasier: There is no more emotionally charged phrase in the language than "I love you." Some people are just incapable of saying it, it makes them too vulnerable. My father, for instance, incapable of saying "I love you," even to me. But I know he does.

Roz: So your father never told you he loves you? God, that explains so much.

Frasier: What is that supposed to mean?!

Roz: Well, maybe if he had, you wouldn't be so emotionally needy that when a close friend asks your advice, you have to steer the conversation back to your own problems. So anyway, now that I told this guy I love him, how do I take it back?

Frasier: [*putting on his jacket*] Very simple, Roz. Do you remember when I said that I cared about you and I'd like to help?

Roz: Yeah?

Frasier: [*picks up his briefcase*] I take it back.

He strides out of the booth, leaving Roz gaping.

FADE OUT

I ONLY HAVE ICE FOR YOU

Scene Two - Apartment

Martin is going through his tackle box at the dinner table.

Eddie jumps up and starts sniffing.

Martin: Eddie, get out of there! You'll get a fishhook up your nose!

Daphne comes out of the kitchen, spraying air freshener.

Daphne: Don't you ever clean that thing out?

Martin: No! It's bad luck. Everybody knows that. You show up on a fishing trip with a tackle box that doesn't smell like the most rancid, rotten thing on the face of the earth, and nobody'll sit next to you.

Frasier and Niles come in.

Frasier: Yes, Niles, I used to have the same problem with my multiple personality patients. They always kept saying that the other one had sent the check!

Niles: [*sniffing*] What an odd combination of odors. Smells like a fish died, and all the other fish sent flowers.

Frasier: Yes, it's time for Dad's annual ice-fishing trip to Lake Nomahegan.

Martin: Yep, I'm getting my gear ready. Duke rented a cabin right on the lake, and I'm bringing the bait and the pork rinds. Now, just 'cause your old man's going out of town, I don't want you boys throwing any wild parties.

Frasier: How can we if you're taking all the pork rinds?

Niles: I can't figure it out. [*probes a finger in the tackle box*] How could a fish be so dumb as to put its mouth around — Ow!

He jerks his finger back and puts it in his mouth. The phone rings. Daphne answers.

Daphne: Hello? Oh, hello! Yes, he's right here. [*to Martin*] It's Duke.

Martin: Oh! [*takes phone*] Hey, Duke! [*face falls*] Oh, I'm sorry.

Yeah, sure I understand. Hey, we'll do it next year. Yeah, we've had too many good times up there to let this tradition die. *[laughs]* Yeah, yeah, I love ya, you big lug! OK, bye.

He hangs up. Frasier looks a little put-out.

Daphne: Your trip's been canceled?

Martin: Yeah, Duke's back's out again.

Daphne: Oh, what a shame. You were so looking forward to it.

Martin: Well, I still have the cabin. But I can't go alone...

He looks meaningfully at Frasier.

Frasier: Dad, look, as much as I'd like to do something with you this weekend, I'm afraid ice fishing just isn't it. Oh, look, look, here's an idea! You know what, they're doing a revival of "The Iceman Cometh" playing downtown! Now, you see, we could catch a matinee, and then go out for sushi, and stay well within the same theme music, you know?

Martin: Thanks, anyway.

Daphne: Well, I'd go, but to me the pleasure of fishing has always been waiting for the men to return with their catch. Oh, I can still see my brothers' friends coming back from the lake, their chiseled faces all ruddy and wind-burnt. Ooh, they were so masculine, I just couldn't wait to panfry their kippers!

Regular as clockwork:

Niles: I'll go ice fishing, Dad!

Martin: Really, are you sure?

Niles: Unless you don't want me to...

Martin: No, I do! Oh, this'll be great!

Frasier: You, ice-fishing?

Niles: Well, why not? I've always thought of myself as a man of the great al fresco.

Frasier: Niles, you get a runny nose watching figure skating on TV.

Martin: Hey, thanks, Niles.

Niles: It's the very least I can do if it'll help save your trip for you.

Frasier: Yes, well, Niles, that's quite a gesture. But I mean, really, ice-fishing? In an arctic tundra where large men spit and it freezes in their beards?

Niles: After you've seen Maris's interpretive dance group perform "Afternoon of a Faun" in the east garden, the wilderness holds no terror.

FADE TO:

Scene Three - Apartment

The next morning. Daphne is making sandwiches in the kitchen.

Frasier comes in.

Frasier: Morning, Daphne.

Daphne: Good morning! Lovely day, isn't it?

Frasier: Well, you're in a good mood.

Daphne: Yes, well, as much as I love your father, with him gone it's going to be a wonderful weekend... care to make it perfect?

Frasier: I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I am staying.

Martin comes in, wearing his heavy boots.

Martin: Well, I found the thermos! Be sure to make that coffee extra-

strong!

Eddie runs up and barks.

Martin: Oh, hey, how you doing, chief? Yeah, I know you want to go with me, but we're gonna be on the ice, it'll be too cold for you. Yeah, I love ya, you little mutt! Well, I better go make sure I have everything.

Frasier is thrown off again. Martin leaves the kitchen.

Frasier: Did he just say "I love you" to the dog?

Daphne: Oh, that's nothing. I had an aunt who used to say, "good night, Mr. Vanderpump" to a hat rack.

Frasier: Does he say that to Eddie a lot?

Daphne: Well, I try to give them their privacy.

Frasier goes to the front door to get the paper.

Frasier: I'm sorry, Daphne, I'm just curious. I don't mean to sound maudlin, but, you know I can't remember Dad ever saying that to me.

Daphne: Oh, you know what a crusty old git your dad is.

Frasier: Well, yes, but he says it to Eddie, you know he said it to Duke the other day on the phone...

Daphne: Duke and your father go way back. He's his chum.

Frasier: And I'm not?

Daphne: Well, you know when your dad wants to go fishing, at least Duke will go with him.

Frasier: So you're suggesting that I go along and pretend I'm enjoying myself, doing something that gives me absolutely no pleasure at all, just to hear the words "I love you?"

Daphne: Why not? Women have been doing it for centuries.

Daphne goes back to the kitchen. The doorbell rings. Frasier opens the door to Niles, who is decked out head-to-toe in brand new winter clothes and fishing paraphernalia, including an oversized fur hat.

Niles: Call me Ishmael.

[N.B. The first line of "Moby Dick."]

Martin comes out and sees him.

Martin: Wow, Niles, look at you! Now are you sure you're gonna be warm enough?

Niles: No problem there. I dressed in layers - Polo, Eddie Bauer, and Timberland.

Frasier: You look like a skinny Elmer Fudd.

Niles: Dad, wait'll you see all the stuff I got. I had no idea how much I liked fishing until I realized all the shopping involved. Graphite poles...

Martin: Wow!

Niles: And, [takes out a pair of blue seat cushions] Hot Buns!

Martin: Wow!

Niles: They're heated seat cushions. You microwave them and they stay toasty warm for hours.

Frasier: You know, Dad, maybe I was a little hasty...

Daphne comes out of the kitchen.

Daphne: All right, here we are, some snacks for the trip, or- [sees Niles and laughs] Oh, Dr. Crane, look at you in your new

togs!

Martin: Yeah, quite an outfit, huh? The fish'll see him coming!

Daphne: Yes, well, the salesman certainly did!

Frasier: Dad, you know, I feel kind of bad that I turned you down when you invited me...

Martin: Oh, don't worry about it.

Niles: Wait'll you taste this freshly smoked turkey jerky!

Daphne: [to Frasier] For heaven's sakes, you know you want to go, so why don't you just ask him?

Frasier: How can I? I already said I didn't want to.

Martin: [tasting the jerky] Oh, that's delicious!

Niles: No, don't put it back in the bag!

Martin: Hey, Niles, come on, it's getting late.

Niles: Well, yes, guess we'd better hit the road.

Frasier: You know, guys, it's kind of a long trip. Are you sure you're up to the drive?

Martin: Frasier, I'm getting some mixed signals here. You don't want to go with us, do you?

Frasier: Oh, all right! Better than hearing you nag, nag, nag all the time! Fine, I'll go!

He storms to his room, leaving Martin and Niles confused.

FADE TO:

PROOF THAT HELL REALLY DOES FREEZE OVER

Scene Four - Cabin

A small, square cabin on the surface of the lake - essentially a wooden box with a trapdoor in the center of the floor. There are three wooden benches against the walls, but no beds.

Martin limps through the door. He turns back.

Martin: Hey, come on! The ice isn't gonna break, this lake's been frozen solid for three months.

Frasier stumbles through the door, carrying a large thermos and doing his best not to look thoroughly miserable.

Frasier: Well, I'm-I'm sorry, Dad. It's just that when you said Duke rented a cabin "on the lake," this is not what I had in mind.

Martin: It's a cabin. It's on the lake.

Frasier: Yes - a few degrees warmer, it'll be IN the lake.

Niles comes in, breathless.

Niles: That was amazing! I've never felt so in touch with nature!

Martin: What happened?

Niles: For the first time in my life, I just urinated outdoors!

Martin laughs. Frasier wonders if his brother has flipped completely.

Niles: Another cup of coffee, I'll go back and dot the "I!" [looks around] Oh Dad, this is great!

Martin: Yeah... well, Frasier doesn't think so.

Frasier: Well, it's not that I'm complaining. It's just that I thought it would be something more... well, lake-adjacent. Are we actually going to sleep in here?

Niles: [laughing] Who is this rube? Maybe we can trick him into touching his tongue to the bait bucket!

Martin: No, we're fishing here, we're sleeping someplace else. Remember where we turned off the highway? Well, right down from there is the Bed 'N Bass Motel.

Frasier: "Bed 'N Bass" – yes, one of the finer fish-themed hotels.

He picks up a long auger screw from the wall.

Frasier: So, what do we do? We make a hole in the ice with this little corkscrew-thingy and then just start fishing?

Niles: It's called an "auger."

Frasier: Well, imagine my embarrassment.

Niles: [*handing Martin one of two seat cushions*] Here's your Hot Buns, Dad.

Martin: Oh, thanks.

Frasier: What am I gonna sit on?

Niles: The auger's free. [*off Frasier's look*] Oh, all right, come on, come on, here.

He slides over, leaving half of his own seat cushion free.

Frasier sits beside him.

FADE TO:

Scene Five - Cabin

The guys are sitting side by side on the bench. A fishing rod is mounted over the open trapdoor, with the line dangling down a hole in the ice. Nothing's happening. Frasier covertly pulls his sleeve up and sneaks a glance at his watch.

Martin: I saw that.

Frasier: I'm not bored. I was simply wondering how long we've been sitting here enjoying ourselves.

Niles: If the fish don't feel peckish just now, we'll pass the time in good conversation. Dad, did you know that Lake Nomahegan was formed by the retreat of several glaciers during the Cenozoic Era?

Frasier: Which, coincidentally, is the last time anyone caught a fish in it.

Martin: How'd you know that, Niles?

Niles: Well, last night I was browsing through "Fielding's Geological History of Western Canada." It's fascinating! For example, did you know this very lake is eighty-nine meters deep and boasts fifty varieties of fish!

Frasier: Oh, Alex, I'll take "Bodies of Water" for five hundred!

Niles: It has lake trout, rainbow trout, wall-eyed pike—

Frasier: How would you like to be sleeping with them?!

Martin: Hey, you know, you could learn a thing or two from your brother about getting into the spirit of things.

Frasier: Well, I'm sorry, it's just that my back hurts, I'm hungry, and I'm tired of sitting here trying to warm up one bun at a time in twenty-degree weather! That's negative six degrees Celsius, a system named after Anders Celsius, the famed Swedish astronomer and compulsive temperature-taker! Niles, switch!

He gets up and moves to the other side of Niles's Hot Buns.

Niles: I believe you're on my side.

Frasier: I am not.

Niles: You've crossed the border!

Frasier: [*getting up*] Oh my God, I don't even know why I'm here!

Niles: I'm thinking the same thing myself.

Martin: Now, guys, come on!

Niles: If you're having such a terrible time, why don't you just head back to the Bed 'N Bass?

Frasier: Oh fine, that's just what I need, a brisk five-mile hike through sub-freezing temperature.

Niles: Oh, for God's sake, take the car, you can pick us up later.

Frasier: Fine.

Niles: [*searching his pocket*] Oh, no. There's a hole in my pocket.

Martin: You lost the keys?

Frasier: Oh, no. Where?

Niles: Well, if I knew where, they wouldn't be lost! They could be anywhere between here and the car.

Martin: Well, good luck finding them, it's been snowing all day.

Niles: Great — we're gonna have to stay here all night.

Frasier: This is just dandy! By morning we'll be Stoafer's Frozen Entrées for wolves!

Martin: [*points under the bench*] Hey, wait a minute, is that them over there?

Niles: Where? [*sees them*] Oh, oh, oh, thank God! [*picks them up*]

Frasier: All right, mister, I don't trust you. Give me those right now.

Niles: Fine, Mr. Big Brother!

He tosses them to Frasier — well, "toss" being used loosely, more like an anemic lob that sends the keys plummeting down the fishing hole.

Niles: Nice catch!

Frasier: Me? You throw like a girl!

Martin: Hey come on, let's not panic. You know, we're gonna be fine staying here all night. You know, the same thing happened to me and Duke about ten years ago.

Niles: You dropped your car keys down the hole?

Martin: No, we're not idiots. The car battery died. But the three of us made it through the night just fine.

Niles: You, Duke, and who?

Martin produces a flask bottle of bourbon.

Martin: My old drinking buddy, Mr. James Beam! You're not the only one who went out and got some fishing supplies.

He takes a healthy swig, then hands it to Frasier.

Frasier: Boy, I never thought I'd end up yearning for the Bed 'N Bass. [*takes a swig*] Niles?

Niles: [*taking a sherry glass from his bag*] Yes, please!

Frasier fills the sherry glass, as Martin rolls his eyes.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Scene Six — Cabin

The boys are waiting out the day. Each has a bench to himself. Suddenly they hear a low creaking sound.

Frasier: My God, what was that?

Martin: Just the ice cracking underneath us.

Frasier and Niles, panicked, lift their feet off the floor.

Martin: Relax, it happens all the time.

Niles: Well, if we do fall in we'll have ninety seconds until hypothermia sets in.

Frasier: One more fact, you're going in that hole!

Niles stands up.

Niles: [*defiantly*] The wall-eyed pike—

Frasier: OK, that's it!

The brothers get up and face off.

Martin: Stop it! Will you guys stop going after each other already? I know, we got to lighten things up around here. Hey, we're drinking, we need a drinking song!

Frasier: All right, all right. Ooh, I know, there's a wonderful drinking song from "La Traviata" called, uh, "Libiamo Brindisi!"

Niles: No, no, no, no, that's from "Rigoletto."

Frasier: No, it's from "La Traviata!"

Frasier starts singing "Libiamo" in a brassy opera voice.

Niles tries to correct his pitch, singing the same word in a different voice. Martin rolls his eyes.

FADE TO:

Scene Seven - Cabin

A While Later. After a few more drinks, the three Crane men are sitting on the same bench, singing "Libiamo Brindisi." They're slow, and off-key, but at least they're in unison.

Frasier/Niles/Martin: Si, ne scopra, ne scopra, Il nuovo di...

They finish and start laughing.

Martin: That was great! What's the second verse?

Niles: I don't know, it's in Italian! [*laughter*] Another drink, Dad?

Martin: No, no, I'll take a pass on that, I got to go use the facilities. But, I'll be right back, so keep a light on in the window for me!

Martin limps out the door.

Frasier: Well, I'm still thirsty, Niles. Here, "Beam" me up.

Niles giggles and hands Frasier the bottle.

Frasier: Niles, do you mind if I ask you a personal question? What the hell are you doing here?

Niles: What do you mean?

Frasier: You know, this whole "Sergeant Niles of the Yukon" act. I mean, come on, it can't be all to impress Daphne—

Niles: It's not an act!

Frasier: Niles, in twenty years, I've never heard you comment on fish except to say that the sauce had separated.

Niles: All right. I'll tell you. You promise not to laugh?

Frasier: You'll have to take that hat off.

Niles: Well, two years ago when you took Dad in, I thought I was getting away with something. Watching you two get closer, I started to think maybe I was missing out on something.

Frasier: You want him?

Niles: No, no, let me finish. I just really feel the need to make

a connection.

Frasier: Well, Niles, I think you've made a connection. It just seems a little extreme though, you know? You probably could have accomplished the same thing if you'd just taken him to Captain Andy's Surf N' Turf!

Niles: And miss out on all the fun of memorizing 101 useless fish facts and buying a large battery-operated wardrobe? *[laughs]*

Frasier: So you're having just a bad a time as I am!

Niles: Oh, oh, oh, worse! At least you have the fun of complaining, I have to feign enthusiasm! Oh, oh... *[sinks down]* I really am King of the Ninnies, aren't I?

Frasier: Oh no. Don't be reaching for that scepter yet, son. Want to know the reason I came up here?

Niles: Hmm.

Frasier: It was just to hear him say the words "I love you."

Niles: What?

Frasier: Yeah, well, you know – he said it to Duke, he said it to Eddie. He's never said it to me.

Niles: Surely you don't put yourself up there with Eddie? *[they laugh]* Oh, Frasier, you know he loves you!

Frasier: Oh yeah, of course I do. I'm being ridiculous, I know that. I mean, look at the guy! He's content just to sit here freezing his buns off because we're sitting here with him. It's just I guess I just got a little obsessed about, you know, hearing it. Well, I mean, you know that Maris loves you, right? But it's still nice to hear it.

Niles: I imagine it would be, but let's stick to attainable goals.

They laugh again.

Frasier: As they laugh the laugh of the damned.

Martin comes in.

Martin: Hey, I did it! I wrote my name out there! I had to borrow an "N" from Niles, but I did it!

Frasier: We're leaving quite the urological crossword puzzle out there, aren't we?

Martin: What were you guys laughing at?

Frasier: Oh, nothing.

Martin: Oh, come on! Don't leave your old man out.

Frasier: Well... all right, O.K. I was just explaining to Niles the reason why I drove all this way up here was to... I was hoping I'd hear you say the words, "I love you." *[laughs]*

Martin: Oh, jeez, I leave you fortwo minutes and you have to start thinking. Isn't it enough that we're just here having a good time?

Niles: Dad...

Martin: You know, every year in this country thousands of guys go fishing, and love never enters into it!

Frasier: Okay, okay, forget about it.

Martin: Thank you. Can we just go on fishing?

Frasier: Sure.

They settle onto the same bench again, watching the hole.

Niles: A fisherman in Oshkosh, Wisconsin stared into one of these holes for twenty years before he caught his first fish.

Frasier: Haven't we been here that long?

He and Niles laugh, but Martin gets up and moves to another bench.

Martin: Anyway, just because I didn't say it doesn't mean I don't

mean it or feel it.

Frasier: Dad, that's exactly what we were saying.

Niles: Absolutely.

Martin: Yeah, well, my dad never said it, but I know he felt it.

I mean, feeling it's the same as saying it, isn't it?

Frasier: Dad, you don't have to say it.

Martin: [upset] Well, did it ever occur to you that... maybe I want to say it? You know, your mother used to get all over me about not saying stuff too. [pause] Well, I can't say it if you're looking at me!

Niles: Would it help you if we left?

Martin: Just for that, I'm doing you second!

The boys look away. Martin stares down into his lap.

Martin: I don't know why it's so hard.

Frasier: Dad, listen, you know you can say it. I mean, I heard you say it to Duke.

Martin: Oh, that's different, I said, "I love ya!" Ya!

Frasier: We'd take "ya."

Niles: Yeah.

Martin: Well, if I'm gonna do it, I'll do it right. [sniff] Frasier...

Martin stops and takes a long pull from the bottle.

Martin: Frasier... I love you. Niles... I love you.

Frasier: Thanks, Dad. I love you too.

Niles: And I love you too.

Silence.

Niles: But I hate ice-fishing!

Martin and Frasier smile.

Martin: Well, it's the last time you'll have to come out and do that.

Niles: Oh, in that case I REALLY love you!

Martin: Well, thanks, Niles.

Niles: Oh, look at that, that's so cute. When you say it to him, he blushes! I love you!

Martin: Oh, no!

Niles: I love you...

Martin: Oh, come on!

Frasier: I love you...

Martin: No, cut that out...

Niles and Frasier crowd Martin, repeating "I love you."

Martin tries to shoo them away.

Onto this strange scene a park ranger appears in the doorway.

Niles: Come on, give us a kiss!

Martin: Oh, shut up!

Ranger: [knocking on the glass] Excuse me!

Martin: Hey, officer!

Niles: Oh, we're saved!

Ranger: You guys are gonna have to come off the ice for the night.

Martin: Well, we can't, we lost the car keys.

Ranger: Then I'll take you to your motel, and you can call a locksmith in the morning.

Martin: Oh, thanks, officer!

Frasier: That's a wonderful idea, you're quite a sport.

Niles: Yes! Yes! Thank you, we love you!

The ranger holds up a "No, Thanks!" hand.

Niles: Ya! We love ya!

Martin: We've been drinking a little.

The Crane boys exit. The Ranger follows them out.

Credits:

Daphne looks around the empty apartment one last time, and sighs. Then she goes to the door and opens it. Martin comes in with a string of four or five large fish. Daphne takes the string and gives him a big kiss on the cheek.

Frasier follows Martin in with his own string - not as many as Martin, but just as large. Daphne takes the string and gives him another kiss on the cheek.

Niles follows Frasier in, somewhat sulkily. On his string hangs a small, solitary minnow. Daphne takes the string and gives Niles a little kiss on the cheek. For him, that's enough to make the trip worthwhile.

Guest Appearances

Guest Starring

RICK CRAMER as Ranger

Legal Stuff

This episode capsule is copyright 2000 by Nick Hartley & Mike Lee. This episode summary remains property of Frasier, Copyright of Paramount Productions and NBC. Printed without permission.