[2.6] The Botched Language Of Cranes

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Written by Joe Keenan Directed by David Lee

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[N.B. This was actually the first episode written by Joe Keenan for the series, as an "audition" pice during the first season. He was accepted onto the writing staff for the second season, and this episode was filmed and aired after [2.03], "The Matchmaker."]

Transcript {nick hartley}

ACT ONE

Scene One - Radio Station.

Roz is working in her booth as Frasier enters. He is soaked to the skin by the heavy rain and his umbrella is blown out of shape.

Frasier: Look at this! My so called "wind proof" umbrella.

He struggles to close the umbrella but, failing, throws it away on the floor in the corridor.

Frasier: I might as well use one of those little paper ones they put in Polynesian drinks!

Roz: I've got a big collection of those; they remind me of wonderful evenings that I can't remember. You know, I've got some requests here for some personal appearances.

City College wants you to lecture...

Frasier: Fine, just tell me the date.

Roz: Okay. St. Bartholomew's Hospital wants you to emcee their

annual benefit.

Frasier: Pass.

Roz: What, you're turning down a hospital?

Frasier: Yes.

Roz scowls at him.

Frasier: [without even looking at Roz] Don't look at me that way.

Roz: Hey, I'm with you, I hate the way those whiny sick people are always nagging you for things. "I want a magazine, I

want a kidney!"

Frasier: Roz, I have as much sympathy for sick people as you do, which is why I said yes when they asked me to appear last year.

I bought an Armani tuxedo, spent a week working on my speech, postponed a trip to go see Frederick; then on the morning of the dinner they called me, told me they didn't need me because their first choice had become available: the

irrepressible Kathie Lee Gifford!

Frasier and Roz enter the other booth.

Roz: God, way to hold a grudge!

Frasier: This is not about spite. This is about dignity. Dignity is a rare and fragile thing. Any other requests?

Roz: Yeah, the Teenage Seattle pageant wants you to be a judge.

Frasier: Oh, I'll do that.

Roz: [looks at him] That's real dignified!

Frasier: A scholarship is involved!

Roz: Right. You're on in ten seconds. We have new sponsors and the sales department wants you to work this copy in as often as you can.

Roz hands him a sheet of paper as she enters her booth and cues him.

Frasier: Good Afternoon, Seattle. This is Dr. Frasier Crane, KACL 780. Well, it's another gray, depressing day here in the Emerald City. Here's hoping we can brighten up your afternoon. We hold it our personal duty to banish your rainy day blues. But first a message from our sponsors. [reads paper] "Death is inevitable."

Frasier and Roz glance at each other with this morbid news.

Frasier: "But it's especially painful when it claims a beloved family pet. If you've lost, or are planning to lose, a cherished dog, cat or bird, let Pet Paradise console you with a tasteful Plexiglas memorial bearing the likeness of your departed friend. Pet Paradise - 'though your pet may be small, your loss is great.'" [puts down sheet] Who's our first caller, Roz?

Roz: We have Edna on line two, she's a receptionist at a pest control company and she's feeling depressed.

Frasier: Hello, Edna, I'm listening.

Edna: [v.o] Hello, Dr. Crane. I've been working at pest control for fifteen years. I go in every day, answer the same calls, ask the same questions. "What kind of bugs are they?" "Have you seen any droppings?" Then I go to the next person. "What kind of bugs are they?" "Have you seen any droppings?"

Frasier: Edna, I'm a psychiatrist, I can sense where this is going.

Now, even the most interesting of lives can become routine.

What you need to do is shake up your world, find a new boyfriend, a new job, a new city even.

Edna: You mean move?

Frasier: Certainly there are far easier places to cheer up than this dreary, soggy old city of ours.

Edna: You know something, Dr. Crane, you're right. I don't have to stay here. When you think about it, there's a whole world of vermin out there!

Frasier: Very eloquently put, Edna. Thank you for your call.

Frasier presses a button as Roz motions him to the ad.

Frasier: Speaking of vermin... [reads] "When that special rat of yours turns his little toes up for the last time, don't forget your friends at Pet Paradise. Pet Paradise - 'when a shoe box isn't enough.'"

Frasier rolls his eyes.

IT WILL BE THE WORLD'S FIRST FOUR LEGGED LEPRECHAUN

Scene Two - Frasier's Apartment.

The following morning, Martin is sat reading the paper with his breakfast as Frasier enters from his bedroom in a dressing gown. The weather outside suggests why the city was called SEA-ttle!

Frasier: Another radiant morning! Morning, dad. Do I drive to work today or just hail a passing gondola?!

Martin: I like the rain, it chases those squeegee guys off the street.

Frasier exits to the kitchen.

Daphne enters from the front door in her raincoat. She has Eddie who is appropriately dressed in a bright yellow dog mackintosh.

Daphne: Now stay put until I can dry off your feet.

Frasier re-enters to see Eddie jump up onto the suede couch to rub his feet dry.

Frasier: There, that ought to do it!

Martin: Oh, Daphne, get that hat off him. Isn't it bad enough we had him neutered?

Martin: I've never seen a dog look that stupid.

Daphne: You'll change your tune when you see the outfit I got him
 for St. Patrick's Day!

Martin: [reading paper] Hey, get a load of this. Derek Mann mentioned you in his column. "I've been listening to Frasier Crane this week because I've been trying to drop a few pounds; I find his voice makes an effective appetite suppressant!"

Frasier: [dry] How witty!

Martin: [serious] I thought so too. [laughs]

Frasier: Give me that! [takes paper] "Yesterday, I heard him advise an unhappy young woman that she could magically cure her depression simply by leaving Seattle. I know it would cure my depression if the Seattle-hating Dr. Crane would take his own advice and leave town as soon as possible!" [folds paper] It's just ludicrous, I never said any such thing!

Daphne: Oh, yes, you did. I heard you. You said Seattle was dreary and if she wanted to spruce up her life, she should leave town.

Frasier: Well, that was just one of several suggestions I made.

He took that completely out of context.

Martin: Well, whatever you said, you're gonna apologize, right?

Frasier: What for?

Martin: For insulting Seattle! People round here take a lot of pride in this town, they don't appreciate some radio know-it-all telling them it's rainy and depressing.

Frasier: In case you haven't noticed, Dad, it does get a little damp around here! For God's sake, the state flower is Mildew!

Martin: Let me tell you something: a city's like a woman. You get one mad at you, it doesn't matter if you're completely right and she's completely wrong, you'll apologize anyway, or you'll be paying for it for the rest of your life!

Daphne: I'm not sure I care for that analogy.

Daphne stands and heads to her room.

Martin: Oh, gee, I'm sorry, Daphne, I was way out of line.

Daphne: [smiles] All right, you're forgiven.

Daphne exits to her room as Martin gives Frasier a "You See?" look.

Frasier: You know, Dad, to you, everything is like a woman. A fast car is like a woman, a romantic song is like a woman, good meatloaf is like a woman. Well, a city is not like a woman, it's like a city and I am not apologizing to this one. Even if you won't understand that, Seattle does! And Seattle loves Frasier Crane!

Frasier goes to the window and looks out over the city only to have thunder and lightning as his response before he exits to his room.

FADE TO:

Scene Three - Radio Station.

Father Mike is using the vending machine as Frasier enters with another blown-out umbrella. He again fails to shut it and throws it into another booth.

Frasier: Hello, Father Mike.
Mike: Hello, Frasier.

Frasier enters the booth to find Roz on the telephone.

Roz: Look, Dr. Crane was not bashing Seattle, he was sincerely trying to help that woman! Who's our sponsor? Pet Paradise. Well fine, go ahead and boycott them - see how easy it is to flush your dead German Shepherd down the toilet! [hangs up]

Frasier: Don't tell me, was that a complaint about this rain business?

 ${\bf Roz}\colon$ Yes and thanks to you I've been on the phone all morning.

Frasier: Oh, well, forgive me. From now on I'll stick to subjects like suicide and birth control, stay away from the controversial stuff like weather!

The phone rings, which Roz answers. As she listens to the caller, Bulldog enters.

Roz: [hangs up] I hope you're happy! According to Betsy, the switchboard has logged over fifty irate calls!

Bulldog exits.

Roz: You know, Frasier, you really should think about apologizing.

Roz: I've got half a dozen calls stacked up in there, and they
 all said you did.

Frasier: Yes, well, just take messages from all those people - I don't want to talk to them.

Roz: You know, I don't know how to break this to you... but it's a call-in show!

Roz exits to her booth.

FADE TO:

Scene Four - Radio Station.

Time has lapsed. Frasier is listening to an irate caller (Connie). It seems Roz and Frasier have ordered Chinese take out.

Connie: [v.o.] I don't know how you can say Seattle is a depressing place. I spent the last forty years in this city working the graveyard shift at a cemetery! And let me tell you something, you fat-headed moron: I am probably the most cheerful person you'll ever meet! [hangs up]

Frasier: You're certainly the most cheerful I've met today! [Roz mimes him to smile] Alas, we're out of time. I'd like to just say, as I've been saying for the last three hours, it was not my intent to cause anyone offense but since it seems obvious that I have, I would like to say this: I apologize. [Roz is happy] I do not find Seattle a depressing place to live. It would take more than clouds to obscure the beauty of her landscape and more than drizzle to dampen the warmth and good fellowship that makes Seattle the only place in this bad old world that I care to call home. Till Monday then, this is Dr. Frasier Crane, signing off.

He presses a button, then drops the façade.

Frasier: Good grief! Never in my life have I heard from such a bunch of whiny, provincial crybabies. I swear to God, this entire city has lost it's tiny, rain-addled mind!

Roz notices the "on air" light and rushes frantically to the microphone.

Roz: [honeyed voice] Dr. Crane, we're still on the air.

Frasier: Thank you, Roz. [presses the button firmly]

Roz: [mad] Now we're off!

FADE TO:

LET A SMILE BE YOUR UMBRELLA

Scene Five - Frasier's Apartment.

Daphne and Martin are watching as Niles fumbles around with a new television set.

Niles: This goes here and that attaches there!

Niles: No, no, Daphne, this is no job for you. You might crack a

nail or snag a cuticle. There, are we getting anything?

The TV is obviously still not working.

Martin: Does annoyed count?

Daphne: Oh, hush. If you hadn't bashed it with your cane because your precious Seahawks lost, we wouldn't need a new set now,

would we? Isn't there a manual?

Niles: Yes, but unfortunately Stephen Hawking is not here to explain it to us!

Frasier enters once again with a deranged umbrella. This time he doesn't even bother trying to make sense of it and throws it out

into the hallway.

Martin: God, I thought the winds had eased up out there!

Frasier: They have.

Daphne: Then what happened to your umbrella?

Frasier: One of my listeners recognized me on the street, he pulled it backwards through a chain link fence! You would not believe the hostility I've encountered. Even at the Café Nervosa, my sanctuary, I thought they were trying out the new cappuccino

maker - I turned and saw three tables hissing at me!

The phone sounds.

Martin: Don't answer that, Daphne.

Daphne: I can't abide the sound of a ringing phone.

The phone sounds.

Martin: It's just going to be another crank complaining about

Frasier, they've been calling here all day!

Frasier: Oh, no, they've got my home number now?!

The phone sounds.

Daphne: Yes, but, just because the phone rings doesn't mean we have

to answer it.

The phone sounds.

Daphne: Even though it could be Frederick calling to say he loves you

or Grammy Moon calling to say her hip's gone out again.

The phone sounds.

Daphne: Still, we can't be swayed by a little ringing bell. Just

because it's going ring... ring. ring.

The phone sounds.

Daphne: Or in the case of a British telephone; Ring-ring... ring-

ring... ring-ring... ring-ring...

The phone sounds.

Frasier: Just answer it, for God's sake!

Daphne: Thank you!

Daphne picks up the receiver.

Daphne: Crane residence. Oh, no, I'm afraid he can't come to the

phone, may I take a message? [pause] Oh, nice language that!

I hope you don't eat with that mouth!

Niles: Daphne, Daphne, excuse me. [takes receiver and speaks into

phone] Now see here, how dare you speak to a lady that way.
[pause] Yes, well, that's no excuse, ma'am! Well, only a
coward makes threats over the phone, I dare you to come here
and say that to my face. [fake laugh] Never you mind where

I live! [hangs up]

Suddenly there's loud knocking on the door.

Frasier: Is anyone expecting visitors? Well, I suggest we all remain

very, very quiet.

There's another knock which is responded to by Eddie's frantic barking. The rest stare at him.

Niles: I suddenly have this image of angry villagers wielding torches

and pitchforks.

Roz: [o.s] Frasier, open up, it's Roz!
Niles: Oh dear, it's worse than I thought!

Frasier opens the door to Roz.

Frasier: Roz, what are you doing out on this ungodly night?

Roz: I tried calling but your line is busy.

Martin: Hey, Roz.

Roz: Hey, Martin. How are you doing?

Martin: Great.

Roz: Is that a new TV?

Martin: Yeah.

Roz: It looks great. Did you get it hooked up yet?

Martin: No, I decided I'd let Niles take a crack at it first!

Roz and Martin laugh.

Roz: Martin you're awful. [laughs] Frasier, after you left, the station manager stopped by. He's taking a lot of heat from the sponsors and he says if you cannot smooth this over, he may have to suspend you.

Frasier: Suspend me? Well, what's he going to put in my timeslot?

Roz: He'd have to run "The Best Of Crane."

Martin: What will he do on the second day?

The gang laugh bar Frasier.

Frasier: I don't know how I'm ever going to smooth this over.

The entire city is out to lynch me.

Roz: Tell me about it. This guy I know at the gym cancelled on me when he found out I worked for you. You've been alienating my boyfriends!

Frasier: Oh, well, we can't afford to lose a demographic as large as that!

Roz: Look, what we need here is a little damage control. Now it's still not too late to call the people at St. Bart's hospital and tell them you'll speak at their fundraiser.

Frasier: After the way they treated me last year?

Roz: It's a big event, there'll be lots of media there, this is a perfect chance for you to redeem yourself.

Martin: Listen to Roz.

Frasier: Oh, Dad, just stay out of this!

Martin: [already in it] Why? If you take my advice...

Frasier: I did take your advice, I apologized.

Martin: Oh, so sincerely!

Roz: What is the big deal? You'll make a few jokes, a few self-deprecating remarks, you'll be helping sick people and showing everyone you know how to laugh at yourself.

Niles: I think it's a brilliant suggestion.

Roz: My God, Niles, did you just compliment me?

Niles: Indeed I did. You're very savvy, Roz. You remind me of one of those cleverly amoral PR flacks who sell their services to industries that pollute!

Frasier: You really think it's a good idea, Niles?

Niles: Well, worked for Nancy Reagan. After her first year in the White House she was widely criticized for her lavish spending. She responding by appearing at a satirical dinner wearing

cheap store clothes and performing "Secondhand Rose."

Daphne: And that made people like her again?

Niles: Yes, briefly.

Frasier: Oh, what the hell. Tell them I'll emcee. You know, better

yet, tell them I'll take a whole table at the banquet. Roz: I already did. [hands tickets] You owe those nuns eight

hundred bucks.

Frasier: Eight hundred...?

Roz: Don't mess with them!

Frasier: I've put myself in such a precarious position, I've got to

choose my material very carefully.

Niles: Ooh, I know some good jokes.

Frasier: No, Niles, you don't!

Roz: If it's jokes you need, feel free to use some of mine.

Frasier: [laughs] I'm sure the nuns would just love that. Why don't I call Bulldog and ask him for a couple of limericks from his Nantucket series?! I'll just call Father Mike, I'm sure he knows a couple of inoffensive jokes.

Frasier goes to the phone to pick it up. However, before he can it rings.

Frasier: [into phone] Hello? Yes, well, you know, I don't care how you feel! I want to use the phone right now! [hangs up]

Daphne, your grandmother's hip was out again.

Daphne stands up in worry as Frasier calms her explaining he was just joking. Daphne isn't amused.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

MAN OVERBOARD

Scene One - St. Bart's Annual Benefit Banquet Hall. Everyone is sat around tables in the hall. Frasier is sat near the podium with a nun, Sister Joselia, from the hospital. Martin, Roz, Niles and Daphne are sat around a table.

[N.B. "Sister Joselia" is the name of a character from Joe Keenan's early novels, "Blue Heaven" and "Putting On The Ritz."]

Joselia: I do hope you'll have some humorous stories for us.

Though, of course, nothing too racy or risqué.

Frasier: Oh, no, no, of course not, I wouldn't dream of it.

Joselia: Good. Last year, Kathie Lee Gifford told the most unfortunate story involving newlyweds and a ski lift!

Frasier looks guilty and quickly pulls out his speech and makes some serious alterations. Meanwhile, Father Mike joins the rest of the gang.

Mike: Hello, all. Thank you for coming out for such a good cause.

Martin: Hey, I'd support this cause anytime. St. Bart's is where I had my hip surgery, they treated me good.

Mike: Oh, I just saw Frasier. I must say, he seems a bit nervous.

Martin: [looks over] She's not so sweet! That's Sister Joselia, the

scrubbing nun! Better known as "The Terror of Ward Three"!

[N.B. In Joe Keenan's novels, Sister Joselia's nickname is "The Mutilator."]

Daphne: Do you remember her?

Martin: Hey, you know that nightmare where I wake up screaming,

"Not the sponge! Not the sponge!"

Roz: You know when I was a girl, I considered being a nun.

Mike: Really, what changed your mind?

The rest look at each other, worried that she might offend.

Roz: [grasping] I didn't want to work weekends!

Martin: Hey, where did Maris go?

Mike: Well, I believe Mrs. Crane is over there. [points her out] Niles: Where? [notices] Oh, bless her busy little heart, she's

> cornered Lydia Beaumont, head of the museum board. Maris has been angling to get on that board for years.

Martin: It looks like Lydia's getting away.

Niles: Oh, yes, the old freshen-the-drink ploy. Poor old Lydia has no idea with whom she's dealing. That's right, Maris, chug that sherry, on with the chase! There she goes, she's gaining, she's gaining, she's coming round the ice sculpture; It's Mrs. Beaumont and Maris, Mrs. Beaumont and Maris, and...

Yes! They meet again!

The gang suddenly start applauding them.

Niles: I fully expect they'll be board mates before they clear away the desserts.

Frasier comes down to them.

Daphne: Oh, Dr. Crane, we were just saying how handsome and

confident you were looking.

Frasier: Really?

Niles: Absolutely! [hands over a handkerchief] Forehead.

Frasier wipes his nervous sweat away.

Mike: Did you memorize those jokes I gave you?

Frasier: Yes, yes, they're the reason I look so handsome and confident.

Roz: Shouldn't they have started this thing by now?

Frasier: Oh, well, we're waiting for Bishop Cologie, he's supposed to be introducing me.

Mike: I'm sure he'll be here any minute. Break a leg, Frasier.

Father Mike moves off.

Martin: Now, listen, I've done a few bolwing banquets in my time the thing to remember is keep smiling and look like you're

having a good time.

Frasier: Right.

Martin: And if a joke bombs, don't pay any attention to it. Do what Johnny Carson used to do - just make a joke about how bad it

is. [impression] Hmmm? Bomb-o!

Martin and Roz start chuckling.

Martin: I miss that quy!

Roz: Your dad's right, Frasier, just go up there and be confident.

Frasier: Yes, well, I'll do that just as soon as I find a men's room.

Niles: Oh, you'll be fine, you've just got a few butterflies in

your stomach.

Frasier: Not for long, I won't. I'll be right back.

Frasier exits to the toilet as Mike goes to the podium.

Mike: Good evening, I'm Father Mike Mancuso and I've just been asked to make a very sad announcement. As you now, every year, our guest speaker has been introduced by Bishop Cologie, our chairman and host of the popular Sunday morning cable TV show, "Pancakes and Parables." However, we've just been informed that the Bishop has suffered a terrible accident. [audience gasp] It seems that he was out fishing this afternoon when his boat was hit by a storm and capsized. At the moment he remains missing. However, I will keep you abreast of any further developments.

Niles is holding a clump of Daphne's hair and sniffing at it.

Niles: Why does everything happen to Frasier?

Niles lets the hair go as Daphne looks over her shoulder.

Mike: But, fazed as you are, we know how much this evening means to the Bishop and how he delights in entertaining us each year with his biblical hand shadows. We also know that he would be the first to insist that we proceed without him. So, I'm going to step in and introduce this year's speaker. Won't you extend a cordial, gracious welcome to my friend and colleague, Dr. Frasier Crane. [Dr. Crane is nowhere to be seen] Dr. Crane? Dr. Crane?

Frasier enters from the bathroom, completely oblivious to Father Mike's speech.

Mike: Ah...

Frasier takes the podium.

Frasier: Thank you, Father Mike. Thank you very much. I can't tell you what a honor it is to be here this evening. I expected the Bishop to introduce me but I'm sure he'll drift in eventually.

The audience are shocked by this use of words.

Frasier: You know, it's a real comfort to see so many priests out there in the audience. These days I don't dare speak in public without someone standing by who can perform the last rites.

[audience are appalled] Whoa! Very religious crowd, I see.

I can tell because of the vow of silence! [to a priest] I hope you've got some holy water standing by there, father, I'm dying here. And speaking of water! That reminds me of a little story. A Rabbi, a Minister and a Priest, are all sitting at the bar on the Titanic...

Joselia: Dr. Crane, the Bishop!

Frasier: Oh, well, I heard the story with a priest, but what the heck, a bishop's even funnier. Thank you, Sister. Okay, then, a Rabbi, a Minister and a Bishop are all sitting at the bar when the Purser rushes in to give them the horrible news.

Roz: [stands in a plea] Frasier, the Bishop is lost at sea!

Frasier: Hey, look, are you telling this story or am I?!

Roz: Frasier...

Frasier: Come on, lady, I work alone! All right, hey, thank you.

Roz gives up and sits down cradling her head in her hands.

Frasier: All right, anyway, so the Purser rushes in to give them the horrible news about the boat. So, the Rabbi gets up and says, "My God, my people will need me." The Minister's about to leave when the Priest said - oops, oh, sorry - the Bishop says, "Sit down, relax, have another drink. I'm sure that the Rabbi can handle it." And the Minister says, "My God, man! How can you abandon your flock when we've just hit an iceberg?!" And the Bishop says, "An iceberg?! I thought he said we had no ice aboard!"

Everyone just stares at Frasier.

Frasier: Hello? [taps microphone] Is this thing on? [imitating Johnny Carson] Whoa! Bomb-o!

At the table his family bury their heads.

End of Act Two

Credits:

The banquet hall is now empty as Sister Joselia watches over Frasier writing a check. Frasier shows her the amount to which she just stares at him with a frank expression of its small value. Frasier writes a larger one, however she is still not pleased. So he just gives up and hands over the whole check book and pen to the Sister, who walks off in pride having won the battle.

Guest Appearances

Guest Starring

GEORGE DEL HOYA as Father Mike HELEN GELLER as Sister Joselia

Guest Callers

ALFRE WOODARD as Edna SANDRA DEE as Connie

Legal Stuff

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