

[8.15]Hooping Cranes

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AWARDS & NOMINATIONS

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EMMY

- **Outstanding Sound Mixing for a Comedy Series or Special:** Thomas J. Huth, Andre Caporaso, Robert Douglass, Dana Mark McClure
-

Transcript {Mike Lee}

ACT ONE

Scene One - Apartment

Frasier opens the door to Roz, holding an envelope.

Frasier: Oh Roz, to what to I owe the pleasure?

Roz: A messenger delivered this for you after you left. It's marked "Personal and Confidential." I thought it might be important.

He holds the letter up to the light, trying to see through it.

Roz: Oh, I already tried that, forget it. We could use some brighter bulbs at the office.

Frasier: Yes well, a brighter bulb wouldn't have admitted it. [*opens the envelope*] Let's see - oh! "Dear Dr. Crane, enclosed are four tickets to tonight's Sonics game as thanks for your advice on today's show. Sincerely, Allen from Earlemont."

Roz: That is gonna be a great game! You should take your dad and have a boy's night out.

Frasier: Well, actually Niles and I are already having a boy's night out. We're gonna go see the Northwest Chamber Ensemble's Spring Sing. After that, a late dinner at Le Cigare Volant!

Roz: Ooh, throw in a couple of strippers and that still sounds boring.

Frasier: And to think I was going to offer you these basketball tickets.

Roz: Well, can't use 'em anyway. I have a date with this French guy.

Frasier: So that's it, huh? No Americans left.

Roz: That's very funny. You know, I hope it goes well, because

he doesn't speak any English, and the only French I know is "oui" and "non."

Frasier: I suppose you'll just be using one of those.

Roz: Before you get too clever, you're the one who's going out with his brother.

Frasier: [*can say nothing but*] Have a nice date, Roz.

She leaves. Martin comes out.

Frasier: Oh Dad, I've got something here that I think you might be interested in.

Martin: Whoa-ho! Sonics tickets, how about that! Well, looks like I owe you an apology!

Frasier: An apology?

Martin: Well, last October you said we would go to a game together, but I thought that was just a lot of talk.

Frasier: Well, listen Dad, I intended to-

Martin: Well, it doesn't matter how long it took. You came through, that's what's important.

Frasier: [*trapped*] Glad to see you're so excited.

Martin: Well, who wouldn't be? [*checks the tickets*] Oh, look where we're sitting! Oh Frasier, you're the best!

Frasier: Listen Dad, there's something you should know-

Martin hugs him joyfully.

Frasier: You're paying for the snacks.

Martin: All right! Well, we'd better get going! Who are the other tickets for?

Frasier: Well, uh, [*the doorbell rings*] they're for, uh, Niles and Daphne, of course. But, um, I made the arrangements so long ago I didn't anticipate Daphne going for her master's degree at the Fat Academy.

[*N.B. Jane Leeves does not appear - Daphne is away at "reducing" camp.*]

Martin puts on his letterman jacket.

Frasier: But, uh, you know, Dad, uh, why don't I let Niles in, and then you can go get ready, all right?

Martin: I am ready.

Frasier: Don't you want to take your big foam finger?

Martin: Well, I got some nacho cheese on it last time, it smells kind of funky.

The doorbell rings twice.

Frasier: [*tries to sound cheerful*] This is gonna be fun!

He opens the door to Niles.

Niles: Oh good, for a moment I'd thought you'd left. You have the tickets?

Martin: Right here, we're good to go!

Niles: Dad's going with us?

Frasier: Yes, all three of us!

Martin: Well, we'd better get a move on, I'd like to get there early and see the players warm up.

Niles: Hey, me too! [*to Frasier*] What a surprise this is!

Frasier: Yes, just you wait!

They head out the door.

FADE OUT

HOOPING CRANES

Scene Two - Stadium

The stadium is packed with roaring fans, and the game is in full swing. Frasier and Niles come down to four empty seats next to the aisle.

Frasier: Ah, here we are, Row four. Here look, why don't we let Dad sit between us?

Niles: Good idea.

Frasier takes the aisle seat, Niles takes the second one over.

Announcer: [over P.A.] Now entering for the Sonics, Number Thirty-One, Brent Barry!

The crowd cheers.

Niles: It's like those family road trips Dad used to drag us on. Uncomfortable seats, sticky floors, underlying threat of violence.

Frasier: However did we get through those?

Niles: Games, mostly. License plate spotting, I Spy, throwing up.

Frasier: You know, Niles, that wouldn't be so much a game as an activity.

Martin comes down with three large beers on a tray.

Martin: Hey.

Frasier: Oh hi, Dad.

Martin: I sold the other ticket.

Frasier: Oh good, what'd you get for it?

Martin: Oh, these three frosty fellows and a chili dog that didn't make it.

Frasier: [takes a beer] Thank you.

Martin: [sits in the middle seat] Oh great, I didn't miss much.

As he watches the game, Frasier and Niles revert to habit, annoying him.

Frasier: I spy, with my little eye, something beginning with "V."

Niles: [looking around] Vagabond.

Frasier: No.

Niles: Vittles.

Frasier: No.

Niles: Vienna sausages.

Frasier: Where do you see Vienna sausages?

Niles: Well, I thought maybe that vendor might - oh, oh! "Vendor, vendor!"

Frasier: Excellent, Niles! Your turn.

Niles: I spy, with my little eye-

Martin: Would you cut it out, I'm trying to watch the game!

Frasier: We're just playing I Spy, Dad.

Martin: I know, and it's distracting.

Niles: Well, we used to do it all the time on family vacations.

Martin: And it was distracting then, so cut it out, or it'll end up like our family trip to Arizona.

Niles: You mean you'll turn around in your seat and almost drive the arena into the Grand Canyon?

Frasier: Tell you what, Dad, here. [getting up] Why don't you switch seats with me, and that way we won't disturb you?

Martin: All right, OK.

They switch, putting Martin in the aisle seat, and Frasier between him and Niles. A heavyset woman wearing a Sonics windbreaker and baseball cap comes down with a large beer, and shuffles past them into the seat next to Niles.

Martin: Oh, here's the lady who bought my ticket. I see you got yourself some suds there, huh?

Fan: Oh, you know it! You can't watch the Sonics without a beer or two! *[to Niles]* Especially this season, you know what I'm saying, huh?

Niles: Yes, might I. *[to Frasier]* I spy-

Fan: COME ON, BEECHAM, MOVE THAT SIDE OF BEEF DOWN THERE AND PLAY SOME DE-FENSE!

Niles rears back like a man trapped in a cave with an as-yet distracted lion.

Fan: Come on, come on... YEAH-AAAAAHHHH!

She turns to Niles and throws up her hand for a hi-five, causing him to gasp and cringe. He weakly slaps her hand, then turns to Frasier.

Niles: Switch seats with me.

Fan: COME ON, HUSTLE! LET'S SEE SOME BALL MOVEMENT!

Frasier: *[no fool]* I'm going to say no.

Niles: Well, there's no way I'm enduring this for... however long this thing lasts! Uh, Dad, Dad, I'm sorry, eh, my leg is getting a little stiff. Would you mind switching seats with me so I can stretch it out?

Martin: Oh, stiff leg, huh? Must have been that bullet you had pumped into you while stopping a robbery. Oh no, wait, that was me!

Niles: Dad?

Martin: Oh, all right, all right, but this is the last time I'm moving.

Niles: All right, just uh, you go in there, and I'll step through here.

Niles and Martin get up and awkwardly shuffle past each other. Now Niles is in the aisle seat.

Niles: Ow, oh, my leg's very tender. *[sits down]* Oh well, better!

Frasier: Niles, my legs are much longer than yours.

Niles: So?

Frasier: So I should be sitting in that seat.

Niles: Well, I'm not switching.

Frasier: It was mine to begin with.

Niles: Well, I'm still not switching. I spy, with my little eye-

Frasier: I'm not playing.

Niles: Fine.

Frasier: Fine.

Niles opens his mouth and stretches his lips like a fish.

Frasier: Now what are you doing?

Niles: I'm staving off chapping. It's very dry in here, and I don't have any lip balm.

Frasier: *[takes out a little jar]* I do. *[Niles reaches for it, but he pulls it away]* Switch seats with me.

Niles: My integrity is not for sale.

Frasier: Suit yourself. *[takes some balm and slowly applies it to his own lips]* Oh my, these rich, waxy emollients are delightfully soothing...

Niles: All right, you can have the seat, for goodness's sake, here!

Frasier: Thank you.

They switch, putting Niles in the second seat from the aisle.

Niles: Give me that. [*takes the balm and starts applying it*]

Announcer: Ladies and gentlemen, check your seat number! At half-time, one lucky fan will be taking your Northwest Cable's half-court shot! Are you ready? If your seat is Section 101-

Martin and the Fan sit up, excited.

Announcer: Row 4-

Even more excited.

Announcer: Seat 2, congratulations!

On the huge roof-mounted TV screen, there is a shot centered on Niles, obliviously balming his lips, framed by the flashing message, "WE GOT A SHOOTER!" As Martin slaps his back and points up towards the camera, he slowly raises his head.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Scene Three - Stadium

Niles is standing up, next to a P.R. Woman with a clipboard and a basketball jersey.

Frasier: Good luck, Niles.

Niles: Thanks, Frasier.

Martin: Praying, Niles.

Niles: Thanks, Dad.

Woman: Come on, right this way. [*holds up clipboard*] Now, we need you to sign this release form.

Niles: Why, what happened?

Woman: No, it's just so we can use your image on television. [*points*] Right there is fine. [*he signs it*] OK, now I need you to put this on.

Niles: Oh, uh, OK, sure, uh, let me just- [*takes off his suit jacket*] Can I undo this?

Woman: Absolutely. Are you OK?

Niles wrestles his arms and head through the jersey, a garment about as familiar to him as a brassiere.

Niles: [*tangled*] I just haven't done a lot of basket-balling. I'm just a bit nervous.

Woman: Ah, don't worry. Nobody makes the shot.

Niles: Yes, well I'm not even sure I can roll it that far...

Just as Niles almost has his head through, a loud buzzer sounds, making him jump.

Niles: What's that?!

Woman: Oh, that's nothing. It's just half-time.

He finally gets the jersey down over his head, and she leads him down to the court.

Frasier: Thank God we switched seats, that could be me down there! Poor Niles!

Martin: What do you mean? Every guy dreams of a chance like this.

Frasier: Dream or not, Dad, eventually he's going to try to take that shot. You know how Niles throws!

Martin: Yeah, and you're Pete Maravich.

Frasier: I don't know what that means.

Martin: Well, it means instead of criticizing him you might be a little more supportive. Because, no matter what happens down there, he's still your brother and my son.

Niles and the Woman reach the court.

Martin: Whoops, here we go. Hand me his beer, I'm going to need it.

Announcer: Ladies and gentlemen, here to attempt your Northwest Cable's half-court shot, from right here in Seattle - Niles Crane!

Applause. The stadium lights go out, except for two spotlights: one on Niles, in the center of the court, and the other on the basket, fifty feet away. The P.R. Woman hands him a basketball.

Woman: There you go, Niles. Good luck.

She walks away. Niles looks out at his invisible audience, and bows.

The scene goes into SLOW MOTION, and the Chicago Bulls' intro music begins to play over the soundtrack:

Niles dribbles the ball once, and it bounces back up into his hands.

He flashes a grin at the stands. Frasier and Martin are there, cheering and holding up their thumbs.

Niles dribbles the ball again. It bounces away, and he lurches after it.

Frasier and Martin put their hands over their eyes.

Niles gets the ball back, and tries several ready positions, holding the ball behind his hip like a shot-putter, then over his shoulder like a quarterback. Finally, he bows over, holds the ball between his legs, looks at the basket, takes a deep breath...

[FULL-COURT SHOT - the camera widens to include both Niles and the basket, meaning the following cannot be faked:]

And does a full-body, underhand heave that sends the ball in an arc towards the basket and swishing right through the string mesh.

The crowd erupts into applause. In the stands, Martin nearly has a heart attack.

As Niles stands there stunned, the Sonics' Cheerleading Squad runs out onto the court and mobs him.

Martin and Frasier trade a look of amazement, then they rise with the rest of the crowd, cheering.

The camera revolves around Niles. As the cheerleaders dance around him, his stupor gives way to realization, and then triumph. He raises his arms in victory, and the applause becomes thunderous.

FADE TO:

Scene Four - Apartment

The Crane boys come back from the game.

Frasier: Now entering the apartment, a 5'9" psychiatrist from Seattle, Niles Crane!

Martin: Yahoo! [*as Niles hangs up his coat*] He shakes, he bakes, he drives to the coat rack, he takes an arm out of the sleeve, he puts it up... and IT'S GOOD!

Niles: Thank you, Dad.

Frasier: [*pouring sherry*] Glass of sherry, Niles?

Niles: Please.

Martin: [*as Niles takes the glass*] He holds the glass, goes up to the sherry... IT'S GOOD!

Niles: OK, Dad!

Frasier: Gosh, Niles, you making that basket tonight was truly astonishing. And what's even more unbelievable is that you are now the proud owner of a rugged, ram-tough, all-terrain pickup truck.

Niles: It occurred to me we could use it to go antiquing.

Frasier: Ah! [*clinks his glass against Niles's*]

Martin: [*checks the answering machine*] Whoa, fourteen messages, new record! [*presses button*]

Duke: [*on machine*] Hey Martin, it's Duke. Was that Niles on Sports Center, or am I drunk? Call me. [*beep*]

Frank: [*on machine*] Marty, it's Frank. Bad news, Stosh had another heart attack... he saw your son make that basket, it's the greatest thing I've ever seen! Uh, give me a call. [*beep*]

Stosh: [*on machine*] Hey Marty, it's Stosh. Bad news-

Frank: I just did that one!

Stosh: Oh, sorry. Make sure you catch Sports Center! Congrats. [*beep*]

Martin: [*stops the tape*] We'll listen to the rest of them later. Oh Niles, I can't tell you how great you were tonight!

Niles: Well, thanks Dad, but I wasn't great. I just walked out on the court and heaved the ball as hard as I could and the rest was just luck.

Frasier: Well, that may be so, Niles, but still and all you did go down and do it. Not many people could have done that.

Martin: I know I always told you boys that sports aren't important... but they are! And what you did tonight out there makes me really proud.

Niles: Thanks.

Frasier is beginning to feel left behind and runs to catch up.

Frasier: Good thing I wangled those tickets, eh, Dad?

Martin: [*looks at the TV*] Oh look, Niles is on TV! Oh, I can't believe it, he made Player of the Week! We've got us a real-life celebrity in our own home! [*watching the replay*] It's up... and IT'S GOOD!

Niles raises his arms in another victory gesture while Frasier continues to stew.

FADE TO:

FRENCH KISS-OFF

Scene Five - Café Nervosa

Frasier is sitting at a table. Niles comes in wearing a Sonics letterman jacket.

Niles: [to counter person] Excuse me, nonfat latte to go, please.
Hey Frasier, mind if I join you?

By now, Frasier is in familiar sibling-rivalry mode. He slowly lowers his newspaper, looks at Niles over the top of it, and purses his lips at his jacket.

Frasier: Are you sure? The jocks usually sit over at that table.

Niles: Oh, this thing, yes, well, this was just part of a gift package the Sonics sent over.

Before he sits down, he makes sure to turn around, showing "CRANE" stenciled on the back.

Niles: I just didn't want to seem ungrateful. Not that I owe them anything; after all, I'm the one that drained it from way downtown.

Frasier: Yes, so we've been hearing.

Niles: Oh Frasier, don't grouse. I've earmarked a pair of practice pants for you.

Frasier: Thank you, Niles, but I'd like to think I've already mastered pants. I assume you're going to select a more appropriate jacket for this evening's concert?

Niles: Oh yeah, about that - Dad wants me to go with him to McGinty's so he can have me tell the tale.

Frasier: But Niles, we've already rescheduled the concert once!

Niles: Well, that was because of you.

Frasier: Well, not because of me, it was because of Dad.

Niles: Well, so is McGinty's.

Frasier: Well, it's not the same! We had an agreement! If you should choose to dishonor it, there will be consequences.

Niles: Why don't we compromise?

Frasier: Hmm?

Niles: Let's say we go and have a drink with Dad at McGinty's, and then afterwards proceed along to the concert?

Frasier: [fumbling] Well, I just don't, I don't, uh, well, I - all right, fine.

Niles: I'll see you later, Frasier.

As he gets up, Roz comes into the café.

Roz: Wow, Niles! You finally made varsity after thirty years, huh?

Niles: Yes, but it's not a real varsity jacket, Roz, so you're under no obligation to sleep with me.

She smiles - "touché."

Roz: See you around.

Niles: Take care.

Niles leaves.

Roz: Hi, Frasier.

Frasier: You may join me if you wish, Roz. Be forewarned, I am feeling a bit peevish.

Roz: [sitting] Oh, for God's sake, you're like Goldilocks with that latte. "This foam is too hard, this foam is too soft"-

Frasier: No, this is not about latte foam, Roz! Ever since Niles made that basket, his head's been getting bigger and bigger.

Roz: Well, you have to admit it was pretty amazing.

Frasier: Amazingly lucky! To hear Niles tell it, it all started with a little rubber factory in Sumatra, where an unsuspecting basketball began a journey that would lead to greatness.

Roz: So he's milking it a little bit, you'd do the same thing!

Frasier: I would not! I would treat it as the chance occurrence it was... like finding a terrific parking spot in front of the opera house.

Roz: [*pouncing*] You bragged about that for weeks!

Frasier: Well, it was right in front of the steps, Roz!

Roz: You know what I mean, Frasier.

Frasier: Yes, I suppose I do. Guess I'll just have to grin and bear it for a little while longer.

Jean-Pierre, Roz's French boyfriend, comes into the café.

Roz: [*gasps*] There's Jean-Pierre.

Frasier: Oh, your French beau. How's that going?

Roz: I'm breaking up with him.

Frasier: Oh, I'm sorry.

Roz: Actually, you're going to do it for me.

Frasier: What?!

Roz: I don't speak French! I need you to translate-

Frasier: For God's sake-

Roz: Pleeese?

Frasier: Well, all right!

Roz motions Jean-Pierre over to their table.

Roz: [*cupps a hand and yells in his ear*] We're having coffee! Sit down!

Frasier: I can't imagine why this isn't working.

Jean-Pierre sits at their table. The substance of his and Frasier's conversation appear in English subtitles at the bottom of the screen.

Roz: Jean-Pierre, this is Frasier.

Frasier: [*shaking hands*] Uh, **it's a pleasure to meet you.**

Roz: Now I want to do this gently, so will you tell him that I think he's a really nice guy.

Frasier: Uh-huh. **Roz thinks you're a great guy.**

Jean-Pierre: **She wants to break up with me, doesn't she?**

Frasier shrugs and nods.

Jean-Pierre: **Thank God, she's not my type. I've been looking for a way out for days.**

Roz: What'd he say?

Frasier: Um, he said that he-he's very fond of you too.

Roz: OK, now tell him that these past few weeks... have been really fun.

Frasier: You can go faster, Roz.

Roz: Let me do this my way. Tell him!

Frasier: **Uh, look, she's got all this worked out, if you don't mind indulging her.**

Jean-Pierre: **I understand. Listen, where's a good place to get a steak?**

He reaches out and tenderly caresses Roz's cheek.

Frasier: He says, what are you trying to say?

Roz: OK. Tell him, in another time, in another place, we might have a shot, but this just isn't working for me.

Frasier: **The Five Crowns has a great filet, and the wine list isn't bad either.**

He looks at Roz.

Frasier: OK, look sad.

Jean-Pierre takes on a grave face. Roz grimaces sympathetically.

Jean-Pierre: [sadly] Can you smoke in there?

Frasier: Is there any chance you'd reconsider?

Roz: I don't think so.

Frasier: Oh. You can smoke on the patio.

They rise.

Roz: Is he OK?

Frasier: Yes Roz, he'll be fine. But, you know, I think for his sake we should wrap this up. [they get up]

Roz: Jean-Pierre...

Jean-Pierre: Roz...

They embrace.

Jean-Pierre: [over her shoulder, to Frasier] Thanks for the tip. God, I'm starving.

Frasier: He says that he'll-

Roz: Please, Frasier. Some things don't need to be translated.

She kisses Jean-Pierre. They exchange a faraway look, and Jean-Pierre leaves.

FADE TO:

Scene Six - McGinty's

Niles and Martin are seated at the bar, surrounded by appreciative barflies. They are watching a video of Niles's shot. Frasier sits behind Niles, writhing in envy.

Bartender: So at this point, what were you thinking?

Niles: Stop tape, please. [the bartender does]

Martin: Boy, I'd be thinking about that sweet truck.

Barfly: Yeah, me, too.

Niles: [chuckles] Not me. If you're focusing on the reward, that's energy you're not using to make the shot.

Martin: And you know what else? He's donating that truck to the Police Activities League!

Niles: I just want the kids to know it's about the play-offs, not the pay-offs.

Martin: Is this a great boy, or what? You sure I can't pay you for this beer?

Bartender: Hey, your money's no good here. "Half-Court" Crane's dad doesn't pay for drinks.

Frasier: Excuse me, Niles, but we have a concert to make.

Niles: Oh, I know, soon, soon. I can't leave the fellas hanging, Frasier. Ah, back to the tape. Now, that's about forty-five feet to that basket. You see, I used my whole body, form is everything. You've already made or missed the shot even before you release the ball. And of course, we all know the rest of the story.

Frasier: [can take no more] Yes, yes! The story is, "once upon a time, Niles Crane accidentally made a basket, The End!"

Martin and the barflies react.

Niles: I don't deny there was some luck involved, but as we all know, luck is the residue of design.

The barflies nod sagely.

Frasier: Oh, please! Somehow managing to hurl a ball forward is hardly design!

Niles: You're just jealous because I have game and you don't.

Frasier: Oh, please! So you think you have game?

Niles: I do, yea.

Frasier: Oh-

Bartender: *[to Martin]* Think they're gonna fight?

Martin: *[wearily]* I got news for you, they are fighting.

Frasier: We'll just see about that! Barkeep!

Martin: What are you doing?

Frasier puts a twenty-dollar bill on the bar and points to the Mini-Hoop machine in the corner.

Frasier: I am going to challenge Niles to a game of One-on-One on that contraption over there.

Martin: *[alarmed]* What do you want to do that for?!

Frasier: *[to bartender]* Twenty dollars of your cleanest quarters!

Martin: Well, whoa, what about your concert, you guys better get moving, tick-tock!

Niles: All right, Frasier, game on!

Frasier gets his change. As they head over to the machine, the barflies all watch with anticipation - except Martin, who knows all too well what's going to happen.

Martin: Oh wait, it's not worth it! Sports aren't everything!

Frasier puts a quarter in, and receives a miniature basketball.

Frasier: All right, hotshot, after you. *[Niles takes the ball]*

Bartender: Let's go, Half-Court! Put it up, baby! *[the barflies cheer]*

Niles: Thank-thank you, I appreciate the support, but I think I might throw better with fewer voices.

The barflies fall into a reverent silence. While Frasier stands next to the machine, Niles faces the basket, cocks his arm... and awkwardly jerks the ball forward, missing the machine's cage entirely and bouncing the ball off Frasier.

Niles: Well, obviously I'm accustomed to shooting from further back.

Frasier: Yes, and just once! Allow me.

Frasier takes the ball, stands in front of the cage, aims... and throws just as awkwardly, missing the basket. Martin puts a hand over his face.

Frasier: All right, your turn.

Niles: All right, I believe I'm warmed up now.

He takes the ball again, and raises his leg to rest it on the front of the machine. He throws the ball and stumbles to the floor.

Niles: Wait, yeah, I hit the round part, and that's worth, uh, a half a point!

Martin: I think I could use another beer.

Bartender: That'll be \$2.95.

Martin looks devastated. He glares towards the boys as he angrily yanks his wallet from his pocket.

END OF ACT TWO

INSERT:

We see a series of abortive takes of Scene Three, revealing that it actually took David Hyde Pierce twenty-seven tries to make the basket. The shot was filmed on location at Los Angeles's Staples Center on January 9th, 2001.

Credits:

The bar is now empty except for Frasier and Niles, still trying to make one basket, and Martin, who is still at the bar.

Niles tries winding up like a baseball pitcher before heaving the ball. As Frasier starts to take his shot, Niles fights with him, trying to pull the ball away. Frasier fights him off.

The bartender puts a fresh beer in front of Martin. He reaches for it, but the ball flies over his shoulder, knocking the glass off the bar. The bartender calmly refills the glass while Martin angrily yanks out his wallet again and slaps some money down on the bar.

Guest Appearances

Guest Starring

PHILLIPPE DURAND as Jean-Pierre

VALERIE PETTIFORD as P.R. Woman

LISA K. WYATT as Fan

EDWARD JAMES GAGE as Bartender

Legal Stuff

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