

[9.16]Wheels of Fortune

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Written by Ken Levine
& David Isaacs
Directed by Scott Ellis

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Transcript {Mike Lee}

ACT ONE

Scene One - KACL

Frasier is finishing his show.

Frasier: Our topic today has been honesty--the courage to face each other with the plain truth. I've certainly enjoyed myself these last few hours, I hope you have too. This is Dr. Frasier Crane, wishing you good mental health.

He goes off the air, Roz comes into his booth.

Frasier: Well, that was a dog of a show.

Roz: They all blend. [*picks up a message slip on Frasier's console*]
Oh, you got a message. A Blaine Sternin called--

Frasier starts and recoils from the slip like it's a rattlesnake.

Frasier: Blaine Sternin! [*gives her back the slip*] Call him back, tell him I'd dead!

Roz: [*rereads the slip*] Sternin? Is he related to Lilith?

Frasier: Yes, he's Lilith's half-brother, the curse of the family! What does it say when Lilith is the good one?

Roz: He sounded charming on the phone.

Frasier: Well, of course he sounded charming. Charm is the viscous grease with which he oils his flim-flam machine! The man will say anything to get what he wants!

Roz: I can't believe I haven't dated this guy.

Frasier: The only reason he'd be contacting me is to separate me from my money. The man is always coming with some sucker's sob story, while he's busy living the high life in Laughlin, Nevada! You know, he once stole from me a very precious antique: my 18th Century English salt server.

Roz: Well, if you don't mind Elvis, you can have mine.
[*gives him back the slip*]

Frasier: [*looks at it*] Oh, dear God.

Roz: What?

Frasier: This number he left... it's local. The beast walks among us.

FADE OUT

Scene Two - Apartment

Martin, Niles, and Daphne are watching television. Frasier rushes through the front door and slams it behind him.

Frasier: Don't answer the front door or the phone. Lock all the windows. Blaine Sternin is in Seattle!

Daphne: Who?

Martin: [turns off the TV] Lilith's half-brother.

Niles: Is he the scoundrel that walked off with your 18th Century salt cellar?

Frasier: The very same!

Daphne: Blaine Sternin. A package came for you this afternoon, I believe that was the name on the return address.
[picks it up from the bookshelf]

Frasier: What could he possibly be sending me? Daphne, you've got longer nails than I have.

Daphne: Open it yourself. [tosses it to him]

Frasier: Very well, all right.

He sits on the couch and opens the package. Inside is a small ornate box with a note.

Frasier: Well, what do you know? It's my salt server.

He slowly opens the box. He and Niles both gasp.

Niles: I've heard you speak about it, but I had no idea it was so magnificent.

Martin trades a look with Daphne.

Frasier: Would you look at this beautiful gilding, and the exquisite but playful scrollwork.

Niles: And... it has a tiny spoon! [lifts it out]

Daphne: Aren't you going to read the note?

Frasier: Oh yes, of course. [Niles takes the server] Thank you, Niles. [reading] "Frasier, I apologize for any trouble I've caused, and hope you'll forgive me." He must think I've got turnips growing out of my ears! He's after something!

Martin: Yeah, hide the pepper.

The phone rings. Daphne answers it.

Daphne: Hello, Crane residence. Thank you. [hangs up] That was the doorman. Mr. Sternin's on his way up.

Frasier: So much for living in a security building!

Daphne: Come on now, Dr. Crane, maybe he wants to make amends.

Frasier: Daphne, let me acquaint you with the *curriculum vitae* of Mr. Blaine Sternin--or "Brad Cunningham," as he's known in Maine, "Royce Thibideaux" in Loo-siana, and "Santana De La Cruz," the pride of Albuquerque, New Mexico! This is a man who once made a living selling rare autographs, until it was discovered that Madame Curie and Sugar Ray Robinson had the same handwriting. And would you care to see the deed to my 50,000-acre kelp farm?

Daphne: It's hard to believe a man of your intellect could be so fooled.

Frasier: It wasn't my intellect that he preyed upon, Daphne. It was my kind and generous heart. Well, not this time. This time I will make it a stone.

The doorbell rings.

Frasier: He may come swaggering in here, but I assure you, he will go slinking out with his tail between his legs! [*opens the door*]
All right, Blaine...!

He trails off when he sees Blaine sitting in a wheelchair.

Blaine: Frasier, my brother. It's been too long.

Frasier: Hello, Blaine. A wheelchair? Nice touch.

Blaine: Well, the truth is, I've been in a terrible accident. I've lost all feeling from my waist down, the doctors tell me I'll be like this for the rest of my life--oh hi, everybody!
Blaine Sternin.

He wheels himself in as everybody ad-libs hellos and shakes his hand.

Martin: Come on in, Marty Crane.

Blaine: Hey, hiya, Marty, how are you?

Daphne: Daphne Moon.

Blaine: Hey.

Niles: Niles Crane.

Blaine: Niles, how are you?

Frasier: [*still by the door*] Bravo, Blaine! This is the best one yet!
But you forget with whom you're dealing. I've seen it all.

Daphne: Dr. Crane, the man is in a wheelchair!

Frasier: Which means that somewhere, someone is missing a wheelchair!

Martin: Frasier, if you don't believe him, why don't you call Lilith?

Frasier: Good idea.

He takes the phone to the hall. Martin sits back down and Blaine wheels beside him.

Blaine: So, Martin, I see you also park in the blue zone.

Martin: Yeah, when I can. But those spaces are always filled.

Blaine: Ah yeah, well that's probably partly my fault. Boy, I sold a lot of fake handicapped plates in my time. Boy, talk about a butt-load of poetic justice, huh?

Niles: Yes, I believe that is the basic unit of poetic justice.

Frasier comes back and hangs up the phone.

Niles: So, what did Lilith say? Has Blaine really lost the use of his legs?

Frasier: She says she doesn't know, but hopes so.

Blaine: Well, all right, I guess there's only one way I can prove this to you. Daphne, may I borrow that lovely pin you're wearing?

Daphne: Oh, um... [*unfastens it*] let's see... here you go.

Blaine: All right, here you go, Frasier, my man! Stick it anywhere you'd like.

Frasier: You'd have to get up for that.

Blaine: All right, I guess I'll just do it myself.

He calmly stabs the pin into the flesh of his right thigh, without flinching. Daphne, Niles, and Martin react.

Blaine: There you go.

Niles: That's disturbing.

Martin: Cool!

Frasier: Come on, that is nothing but a cheap parlor trick!

Blaine: You know, I thought you'd take a little more convincing than that. Daphne, would you have a butcher knife in the kitchen?

Martin: [*gets up*] Oh, I'll get it!

Frasier: No, no, that's enough, Dad! All right, Blaine, let's cut to the chase. What's it going to cost me to get you out of here?

Blaine: You want to know something, Frasier, you're almost right. You're *almost* right. It's true. I do want something from you. But what I want... is for you to get down on your knees and pray with me. I know these words sound strange, but I've had a deeply religious conversion.

Daphne: Really?

Frasier: Oh, this just gets better and better.

Blaine: I guess it started with my car accident. I was driving drunk, which I had done one too many times. You know, it was a sign.

Daphne: From God?

Blaine: No, from the highway department. It said, "Lane Ends," and I just plowed right into it. The next thing I saw was a bright light and a tunnel.

Daphne: So you had a near-death experience?

Blaine: No, it was a CAT scan. You know, when Dr. Kagan told me I was paralyzed, well, I was devastated. There I was, at the lowest point a man can be... and He came to me.

Daphne: Dr. Kagan?

Blaine: No, wrong again, hon. It was God.

Daphne: Oh, damn!

Niles: Hang in there, sweetheart, you'll get one.

Blaine: He showed me how I've squandered my life--you know, cheating innocent people. I-I was just filled with shame. And that's why I'm here, as a matter of fact. I've started a ministry to save souls the way the Lord saved mine.

Frasier: What genius! The Lord--a credible partner who doesn't take a cut!

Daphne: Dr. Crane, you should be ashamed of yourself! The fact that Mr. Sternin has turned his accident into something positive, well, it's one of the most inspirational stories I've ever heard.

Frasier: Oh, Daphne, please! You have no idea what this man is capable of-

Daphne: Sir, can I get you something to eat or drink?

Blaine: You know, I could use a beer. I haven't given up everything.

Martin: That is inspiring! Yeah, make it two, Daph.

Daphne: O.K.

Blaine: But I insist that I help. It's like a thing with me, all of a sudden. I just won't allow anyone to wait on me.

Blaine wheels forward, and Daphne pushes him into the kitchen.

Frasier: Well, you've just witnessed the first step in the Blaine Sternin long con. He sets you up, sucks you in, and then bam! Kelp futures.

Niles: Perhaps you're rushing to judgement, Frasier. I know you two have a history, but isn't it possible that he's changed?

Frasier: Oh, don't be a sucker, Niles! Dad, you're not buying any of this medicine show, are you?

Martin: Well, the guy is laying it on pretty thick, but I guess he could be on the level. I mean, that pin thing was freaky. I want to get that on video.

Daphne comes out with a beer for Martin.

Frasier: Daphne, you left him alone in the kitchen? My sub-zero's probably on the way to a chop shop right now!

He rushes into the kitchen and finds Blaine sitting there.

Frasier: All right, Blaine, I've had enough. Get out.

Blaine: Frasier, look, I don't know how to prove this to you, but I swear all I really came for was your forgiveness--first of all, for stealing that little teapot.

Frasier: Salt server.

Blaine: Is that what that was? Man, nobody knew. And for all the times I lied and I cheated you, and for the time I posed as you and treated patients for a year--

Frasier: You what?!

Blaine: It was only a couple people, I'd tell you who they were, but you know we've got that doctor-patient confidentiality thing. [*Frasier puts a hand to his forehead*] The point is, that part of my life is over, Frasier. I just--I don't know, I just want to give something back.

Frasier: Really? If you wanted to give something back, you'd be mopping a soup kitchen, or reading to bedridden vets, or traveling to the Galapagos Islands to clean oil off some poor sea fowl, then maybe you'd have some credibility!

Blaine: I know I've given you so many reasons to mistrust me. But don't you believe that people can change?

Frasier: If I forgive you, will you leave and never return?

Blaine: Yes. I promise you, you'll never see my face in this house again, unless I'm invited.

Frasier: Very well. I grant you this boon, and I forgive you, now get out.

Daphne: [*enters*] Oh, Mr. Sternin, I hope you'll stay for dinner.

Blaine: Sounds like an invitation to me, Fras.

Frasier storms out.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Scene Three - Apartment

Blaine is sitting at the table with the Crane boys. Martin, and Niles are rapt, while Frasier keeps rolling his eyes.

Blaine: This kid, no more than fifteen years old, he lives in a cardboard box under the overpass, and his mother comes to me and begs me, "Will you get my kid off drugs...?"

Frasier: Yes, yes, and then you cured him, let's eat.

Blaine: No, no, no, you don't cure something like addiction overnight. Well, look who I'm telling, you're a psychiatrist. You know.

Frasier: Well, that's true. I have found in my research with addictive personalities that... oh, for God's sake, what the hell am I doing? There probably is no kid anyway!

Martin: Oh, Frasier, let up on the guy, he's a man of God. Blaine, can I take a picture of you with a fork in your leg?

Daphne brings dinner from the kitchen.

Daphne: All right, everybody, dig in.

They all thank her and start to serve themselves.

Niles: That looks beautiful, Daphne...

Blaine: Well, who wants to say grace?

Niles: Oh... [*covering*] We almost forgot.

Daphne: [*covering*] Whose turn is it this time? [*everyone mumbles*]

Blaine: O.K., I will! You want to join hands?

Blaine, Martin, Niles and Daphne join hands. Blaine holds out his

hand to Frasier. Frasier holds up a "one second" finger, removes his watch from that wrist, and holds it in the hand that joins Daphne's before joining hands with Blaine.

Frasier: Ready.

Blaine: Dear Lord, bless this food, and this company. Give us your guidance, and teach us to be forgiving, as you instructed your Apostles--

Frasier: I'll give you fifty bucks if you can name three of them!

Niles: Frasier!

Frasier: [puts money on table] Here you go, two twenties and a ten. Tell you what, I'll spot you John.

Daphne: Dr. Crane, we're in the middle of a prayer! [to Blaine] Please, go on.

Blaine: Thank you, Lord. Amen.

All but F: Amen.

Frasier: [sullen] Amen.

They begin to eat.

Blaine: You know, normally I get paid after I say grace.

They stop and look at him.

Blaine: Nah, I'm kidding!

They laugh.

Niles: That was funny.

Blaine: Yeah, you know, you're a godless bunch, but I love you.

Frasier: You know, even worse than the godless are those who would use God for their own gain. They are the true hypocrites, who should burn in the fiery hell for all eternity!

Blaine: Am I picking up a vibe here?

Frasier: Oh, I'm sorry, did you think that was directed at you?

Blaine: You know, I could quote you chapter and verse all night to try to prove to you that I'm a changed man. But you know what? Instead, why don't you come see me in action on Sunday?

Niles: What do you mean?

Blaine: Come and hear me preach. Witness what God can do through me in all His splendour and all His glory in the Regency room down at the airport Ramada.

Daphne: I'd love to go.

Martin: I wouldn't mind checking that out.

Niles: Sure, why not?

Blaine: Bless you people, that's just great, thank you very much. The only problem is, the advertising was just a skosh more than I thought, and I came up a thousand dollars short on the hall rental-

Frasier: A-ha! The other shoe comes cascading from the sky! One thousand dollars, you say? Well, you're not getting it out of me, you born-again Bilko! [to the others] Didn't I tell you?

Blaine: Frasier, you know, what I was going to say if you'd let me finish was, somehow, the Lord will provide. And by the way, [rapidly] Matthew, John and Thomas, Bartholomew, Jude, Judas, two Jameses, Andrew, Peter, Simon the Zealot, and Phillip. [picks up the money] \$950 to go, pass the po-tah-toes, please.

Daphne does.

FADE TO:

THAT'S HOW THEY TALK

IN SWEDEN

Scene Four - Cafe Nervosa

Frasier and Roz are sitting in the doorway booth.

Frasier: He says, "the Lord will provide" the money. But we all know who that means--me!

Roz: You know, I always had a thing for evangelists. When I first started out, I worked at this station back in Wisconsin. There was this young preacher who had a show of his own on Sunday mornings. He spent hours trying to save my soul. [chuckles at the memory]

Frasier: And?

Roz: And it worked, and now I'm a nun. What do you think happened?

She gets up and goes to the counter. Niles and Daphne come in.

Daphne: Hello.

Frasier: Oh, Daphne, Niles.

Daphne: Well, Dr. Crane, you needn't worry about Blaine asking you for money anymore. He's received the thousand dollars he needs for Sunday.

Frasier: What nitwit gave him a thousand dollars?

Niles: Now, Frasier, that's not fair. Perhaps whoever did it simply has a kind heart and a trusting nature that I, for one, find refreshing.

Frasier: [after glaring at Niles] Oh, Daphne...

Daphne: I come from a large family of scoundrels and n'er-do-wells, who repeatedly promised me they'd change their ways, and never made any effort. Now here's someone who's actually trying, and succeeding. Now I think that's worthy of a little encouragement. Coffee, Niles?

Niles: Yes, please.

She gets up and goes to the counter.

Frasier: I can't believe Daphne got snowed by that crook. Now I've got to expose Blaine for the charlatan that he is. [takes out cell phone] What was the name of that doctor he said treated him in Laughlin?

Niles: Uh, it was... Kagan, if memory serves, Dr. Kagan.

Frasier: Shouldn't be too hard to find. [speaking very slowly into phone] Laughlin, Nevada. Dr. Kagan. [to Niles] I'm being connected.

Niles: Frasier, you're sure you're not being a tad obsessive?

Frasier: Niles, this is about the truth. [into phone] Yes, hello? Uh, yes, Dr. Kagan, please. Busy? Too busy to talk with Dr. Frasier Crane, from [fake European accent] ze Nobel Prize Committee?

On Niles's look, we:

FADE TO:

Scene Five - Auditorium

Blaine is preaching from a dais in an auditorium, speaking into a headset microphone. Daphne, Martin, and Niles, are among the crowd.

Blaine: Now, you may ask yourself, "Why would THIS man spend the last hour preaching the word of God, look what God did to him!" Well, I'll tell you what God did to me. He took away my legs, to show me how tall I can stand!

Assent from the crowd. Martin, Niles, and Daphne are rapt with attention.

Blaine: Because until this happened, I was not a whole man. I was a gambler, I was a liar, I was a cheat! Everything you can imagine--that was me, I did it! Ooh, I was a BAD man. Go ahead, name something!

Frasier comes into the auditorium and sits behind Martin.

Woman: A thief!

Blaine: Oh, a thief! Not a day passed that I wasn't. Anybody else, come on!

Man: A womanizer!

Blaine: [snorts] Yeah, in between affairs.

2nd Woman: A tax evader!

Blaine: Yeah, but that was on principle.

As Blaine continues:

Frasier: Come on, little sheep. Come on into this nice little pen.

Daphne: Shh!

Martin: I thought you weren't coming.

Frasier: I just can't stand to see people get fleeced. I have left half a dozen messages for this so-called doctor of his. I'll tell you what, the guy comes back with a different excuse every time why he can't come to the phone. Niles, I tell you, there is no such man as this Dr. Kagan. He doesn't exist!

Blaine: And yet, for the first time in my life I'm a happy man. Oh, I can't dance the way I used to, but you know, my heart's turning cartwheels. I can't run, but there's no need to hide anymore. I can't make love, but I can feel love. Now, do you want that kind of happiness? Because if you do, let me hear you say, "Yeah!"

Crowd: Yeah!

Blaine: Come on, like you really mean it! Yeah!

Crowd: Yeah!

Blaine: Are you willing to do whatever it takes? Are you willing to make these earthly sacrifices to make heavenly gains?

As the crowd's chorus of "Yeah!" rises, Frasier stands up and bleats like a sheep.

Frasier: BAAAAAAA! Have you people lost your senses? Do you hear yourselves? This is no man of God! He's a huckster!

Martin: Frasier, sit down! This is why I hate going anywhere with you.

Frasier: This charade has got to stop right now! I will not allow these good people to be bamboozled!

As he steps onto the stage, the crowd boos and hisses him.

Blaine: No, no, people, it's all right. He belongs up here. He's one of God's creatures.

Frasier: I am no such thing! I will prove once and for all that this man is a fraud! See for yourselves!

He grabs Blaine's wheelchair and tips him onto the floor. The crowd gasps, and the people in the front row start forward.

Frasier: No, no, no, don't help him! That's enough of this, Blaine! Get up! GET UP!

Blaine: Wait, people. He knows not what he does.

Frasier's cell phone rings. He answers it.

Frasier: What?! ...Yes, Dr. Kagan. Yes, I did. Uh-huh... uh-huh...
For life. I see, thank you. [*hangs up*] Well, it seems an apology is in order. Please, help me get this man back into his chair. [*the people do*] And I will match all contributions to this man's ministry here today, dollar for dollar! You want fulfillment, you want inner peace, this is your man right here: Blaine Sternin! Come on, dig deep! Brother Niles, you've been richly blessed!

Niles' eyes widen furiously at Frasier putting him on the spot, but Daphne elbows him. He takes out his wallet as everyone else reaches for their wallets and purses.

FADE TO:

Scene Six - Apartment

Frasier and Martin are standing over Blaine by the front door.

Blaine: Thanks again for paying in cash there, Frasier. I'd rather see that money go to poor people than, you know, Uncle Sam.

Frasier: It's my pleasure to do it. Blaine, there's something I'd like you to have.

He goes to the curio cabinet by the door and takes out the box with the salt server in it. He gives it to Blaine.

Blaine: Well... well, thanks. You know, this is, uh, this is really gonna help some needy people now that I know what the heck it is.

They share a laugh.

Blaine: Martin, it's been a pleasure, my man.

Martin: [*shakes his hand*] Oh, same here, Blaine. Good luck to you.

Blaine: Well, thanks a lot.

Frasier: [*extends his hand*] Blaine, you are welcome in my home any time.

Blaine: [*moved, shakes his hand*] Well, thank you, Frasier. That means a lot to me. God bless you. Well, I'm off to spread the good word.

Frasier: Right. [*opens the door*] You are indeed a "holy roller."

Blaine: [*chuckles*] Yeah. Yeah, that's good.

Blaine exits. Frasier closes the door and sighs.

Frasier: Well, there was a lesson learned.

Martin: Yeah, don't throw a guy out of a wheelchair. Who knew?

Frasier: Well, I guess I just needed a reminder that people really are capable of change. [*sits on the couch*]

Martin: [*sits in his Chair*] Well, I got to be honest with you. I wasn't totally convinced myself until I saw him on stage. Before you came in, he was talking about all these things he did right after his conversion. Man, that guy was committed. He mopped up soup kitchens. He read to bedridden veterans. He even went to the Galapagos Islands to help clean the old off some fowls!

Frasier's face has hardened noticeably through this recitation.

Frasier: He said that, did he?

He rushes to the door, pulls it open--and gasps when he sees the wheelchair sitting vacant in the hallway.

Frasier: *BLAAA-INE!!!*

END OF ACT TWO

Scene Z - Apartment

Martin slips a folded newspaper down the front of his pants, over his right thigh, obviously meaning to duplicate Blaine's "parlor trick."

Daphne comes out, and Martin shows her the pin, daring her to stick him. Daphne doesn't want to, but he cajoles her into taking the pin.

He sits back, smiling--and Daphne stabs him in the LEFT thigh. He yells in pain and rises angrily, as Daphne backpedals toward the kitchen, trying to ward him off.

Guest Appearances

Special Guest Star

MICHAEL KEATON as Blaine Sternin

Co-Starring

KARI MCGEE as 1st Woman

RICHARD REDLIN as Man

JANET SONG as 2nd Woman

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