

MURPHY BROWN

LOVE MEANS HAVING TO SAY YOU'RE SORRY

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"Love Means Having To Say You're Sorry"

ACT ONE

(A)

IN BLACKNESS

MUSIC: "SUSPICIOUS MINDS" - BY ELVIS PRESLEY

SUPER TITLE: MURPHY BROWN

FADE IN:

INT. GENE KINSELLA'S OFFICE
(Gene, Secretary)

GENE IS DICTATING A MEMO TO A/HIS SECRETARY. HE CON-
CLUDES AND NODS AS IF TO THANK HER. SHE EXITS.

DISSOLVE TO:

MURPHY

I'm Murphy, and I'm an alcoholic.

GENE

Hey, this reminds me of that old show -- "To Tell the Truth?" Remember?... All three guests claimed to be the same thing, but only one was telling the truth. I'm Gene, I'm not an alcoholic.

(A BEAT) I'm not!

MILES

I'm Miles and, uh...I'm Miles.

FRANCINE

Francine, cross-addicted.

MILES LOOKS AT HER FOR CLARIFICATION.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)

(TO MILES) Sex and alcohol.

MARSHA

I'm Marsha, and I'm an alcoholic.

LYLE

I'm Lyle, and I have four days sober.

EVERYONE APPLAUDS. MILES GETS CARRIED AWAY AND GIVES A STANDING OVATION.

MILES

(CATCHING HIMSELF) I wasn't supposed to do that, was I?

HE SITS.

VINCE

Okay, who would like to start?

RICK RAISES HIS HAND.

RICK

It's the same old story -- money.
I'm sober three years and I
still can't find a job.

GENE

Why not?

RICK

Well, I'm black...

MILES

(INTERRUPTS, STRONG) Oh, come on,
man! That's a cop-out and you
know it! (RENEGING) Isn't it?

RICK

(TO MILES) I'm black, and I have
a drug-related record.

FRANCINE

Me too. What'd you do?

RICK

Held up a liquor store. This
was right after I got fired
for telling my boss I had a
drinking problem. I didn't
take any money, just some
vintage champagne. ...guess it
was just my crazy way of
celebrating. (FULL OF REGRET)
You should've seen the look on
that old man's face.

RICK LOWERS HIS HEAD IN SHAME.

LYLE

What year was the champagne?

MARSHA

Oh, Rick, you've got to forgive yourself!

VINCE

What else can Rick do besides forgive himself?

AFTER A FEW BEATS.

MILES

Easy, don't give up.

FRANCINE

Never mind, "don't give up" -- don't drink! Remember when Mr. Sims, my dance teacher, wanted to take it a step passed the dip? I was (MAKES THE "INCH-SIGN" WITH THUMB AND FOREFINGER) this close to giving in. But, I waited and it passed. Don't drink!

GENE

(TO RICK) You can also come to my office for a job.

RICK

Hey, man, don't kid.

Yeah, Gene, don't kid.

Gene

(TO RICK) I'm not kidding.

We can always use good people.

(RETRIEVES AND OFFERS CARD)

Here's my card, call me in
in the morning.

RICK TAKES GENE'S CARD.

RICK

(VIGOROUSLY SHAKES GENE'S HAND)

Thanks, man, thanks!

THE TWO SIT. RICK IS CONGRATULATED BY HANDSHAKES AND PATS ON THE BACK, ETC. FROM THE OTHERS, COUPLED WITH THE LIKES OF "WAY TO GO," ETC. MURPHY LOOKS AT GENE.

VINCE

Okay, now we're up to the part
of our session where we let go
of secrets. Who has a secret they
would like to share?

MURPHY RAISES HER HAND AFTER A FEW BEATS.

MURPHY

I've been a bully.

MILES

You, Murphy? Nooo!

MURPHY

Shut up, Miles, before I crack
you one. Gene tried to organize
a drug test at work and I organ-
ized a strike. Sorry, Gene, I
should have found a better way
to handle it.

GENE

No hard feelings, Brownie. Besides, you did find a better way to handle it. So have I. I'd like to take some literature back to the office, for anyone who might be having problems. Vince?

VINCE

Consider it done. If there's one thing we've got plenty of, it's literature.

MURPHY AND GENE EXCHANGE "KNOWING" LOOKS THAT SAY THE FEUD IS OVER.

VINCE (CONT'D)

(TO THE GROUP) Anymore secrets?

MILES RAISES HIS HAND.

GENE

(SURPRISED) Silverberg?

MILES

Please...this is hard enough.

(IT IS) I lied about my SAT scores on my grad school application. I didn't get a seven seventy in math, I got a seven twenty. ("MR. SHAME-AND-REMORSE") I just didn't put in that little curly thing under the two. Oh, God, I don't deserve to live!

HE BURIES HIS FACE IN HIS HANDS.

FRANCINE

(UNIMPRESSED WITH MILES')

SECRET) Could I tell my secret
now?

MILES SHOOTS SOME DAGGERS HER WAY.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)

Okay... I was putting you on when
I said I threw out my Frederick's
of Hollywood catalogue. I spent
all last night staring at the
mens' underwear section, trying
to guess the models' sizes.

GENE

Sizes?...

MURPHY

(TO FRANCINE) Never mind.
Forgive yourself.

DISSOLVE TO:

(G)

INT. PHIL'S - NEXT DAY, LUNCHTIME
(Miles, Jim, Corky, Murphy, Phil, Frank, Extras)

MILES, JIM, CORKY, AND MURPHY ARE HAVING LUNCH.

MILES

(TO JIM) Pass the salt, please.

JIM

(PASSES SALT) Isn't this
amazing? Just yesterday we were
on strike, and here we are
having a perfectly normal lunch.

MILES

Good thing... I didn't get to
eat any of the danish at this
morning's rally. (TO EVERYONE)
What'd you think of Gene's speech?

JIM

Loved it, especially the Murrow
quote.

CORKY

I think getting literature
instead of a drug test is a
great idea. I just wish I
hadn't forgotten to cancel these.

CORKY HOLDS UP TWO T-SHIRTS. ONE IS BLUE WITH AN
OUTLINE OF A DARKER BLUE CIRCLE IN THE CENTER, WITH A
LINE RUNNING THROUGH IT. INSIDE THE CIRCLE IS A
SPECIMEN CUP WITH EVEN ANOTHER SHADE OF BLUE DAISIES
PUNCTUATED BY A PINK MIDDLE. THE OTHER T-SHIRT IS PINK
WITH AN OUTLINE OF A DARKER PINK CIRCLE IN THE CENTER,
WITH A LINE RUNNING THROUGH IT. INSIDE THE CIRCLE IS A
SPECIMEN CUP WITH EVEN ANOTHER SHADE OF PINK DAISIES,
PUNCTUATED BY A BLUE MIDDLE.

MURPHY

I wonder what's keeping Frank?
(CHECKS WATCH) He left for the
men's room over twenty minutes
ago.

MURPHY GETS UP AND HEADS FOR THE MEN'S ROOM.

CORKY

Murphy, you can't go to the men's
room!

JIM

She's not going to the men's
room, Corky, she's going to get
Frank.

CORKY

But Frank is in the men's room.

(CALLING AFTER HER) Murphy!

MURPHY ENCOUNTERS PHIL.

PHIL

Hey, Murphy, I want to thank you for turning around this drug testing thing. I'm getting swamped with reservations of people wanting to celebrate. My last call was for a party of ten.

MURPHY

(NOT REALLY INTERESTED) Gee, that's great, Phil. Have you seen Frank?

PHIL

Not since he asked me for a roll of quarters.

WE SEE FRANK ON PHONE.

FRANK

(ON PHONE, WORRIED) ...still busy.

HE HANGS UP WITHOUT PUTTING DOWN RECEIVER, TAKES OUT A QUARTER FROM THE ROLL AND DEPOSITS IT.

SFX: COIN DROPPING IN PHONE

FRANK DIALS.

FRANK

...still busy.

EVEN MORE URGENT, HE REPEATS THE PROCESS WITH ANOTHER QUARTER.

SFX: COIN DROPPING IN PHONE

FRANK DIALS.

FRANK

...still busy.

HE HANGS UP WITHOUT SETTING DOWN RECEIVER AND IS ABOUT TO DROP IN ANOTHER QUARTER WHEN MURPHY APPROACHES.

MURPHY

Put the phone down, Frank.

FRANK DOESN'T.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

Put the phone down!

FRANK

(FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE AND HOLD-
ING UP ROLL OF QUARTERS) But
you don't understand, I have
three quarters left!

MURPHY

Here, we'll do it together.

MURPHY PUTS HER HAND OVER FRANK'S, ON THE RECEIVER.
THEY STRUGGLE. THE ANTE IS "UPPED" WITH THE ADDITION
OF MORE HANDS. FRANK FINALLY SURRENDERS AND THEY
HANG UP.

MURPHY

There, don't you feel better now?

FRANK

Look at me, I'm breaking out
into a sweat!

MURPHY

(TAKES HIS ARM) Come on, Frank,
we'll get you an iced tea.

THEY HEAD TO TABLE.

FRANK

He's never going to get off
the phone, is he, Murphy?

MURPHY

Have you thought about writing
him a letter?

LIGHTS GO OFF IN FRANK'S HEAD.

FRANK

You know, that's a great idea.
I could Federal Express it.
...even send it over by messenger.
I'll mark "important" on the
outside of the envelope. No --
"urgent," in red... ...red and
capitals... ..."very urgent"...
..."very, very urgent." I'm
free, Murphy, I'm free!

MURPHY

Way to go, Frank. Way to go.

FADE OUT:

THE END