

Maxwell House Coffee Time
Starring George Burns and Gracie Allen

Guest Star Howard Duff

Transcribed script

Commercial

for Maxwell House

Gracie: Another cup of Maxwell Coffee, George?

George: Sure, pour me a cup, Gracie.

Gracie: You know Maxwell House is always good to the last... drop.

George: That drop's good too.

Announcer

Yes, it's Maxwell House Coffee Time, starring George Burns and Gracie Allen.

[MUSIC. Applause]

With our special guest, Howard Duff, who is the famous detective Sam Spade.

Yours truly Toby Reed, Joseph Kearns, Eric Snowden, Harry Lubin, the Maxwell House Orchestra, and Bill Goodwin.

Bill Goodwin: For America's Thursday night comedy enjoyment its George and Gracie, and for America's every day coffee drinking enjoyment, it's Maxwell House, always good ...to the last drop.

[MUSIC]

Announcer: Many people say that Gracie is responsible for George being where he is today. And that's certainly true. Gracie is also responsible for Sam Spade being where he is today. You see, George and Sam Spade are both in jail. How did it happen? Well, let's listen as George is being questioned by a police lieutenant (played by Joseph Kearns).

Regan

Alright, let's start at the top. Name?

Burns

George Burns.

Regan

Occupation?

Burn

I'm married to Gracie Allen.

Regan

No. No, no. What do you do? What keeps you busy?

Burns

I'm married to Gracie Allen.

Regan

Let me put it this way. What's your source of income?

Burns

I'm married to Gracie Allen.

Regan

Alright, skip it. What's your age?

Burns

Approximately 42.

Regan

How come you look older?

Burns

I'm married to Gracie Allen.

Regan

What's your address?

Burns

360 North Camden.

Regan

Alright, Burns, now suppose you tell me why you're in this jam.

Burns

I'm married to Gracie Allen.

Regan

You're in a rut. Hey, Spade, how come you're in this jam?

Spade

He's married to Gracie Allen.

Regan

You know, Burns, you and this Spade character are accused of murder. Now suppose you tell me the whole story right from the start.

Burns

Okay, Lieutenant. It all started last Sunday night. I was sitting home listening to the radio with my wife... I'm married to Gracie Allen.

Regan

...to Gracie Allen. Yes. That part I know. Take it from there.

Burns

Well, Gracie and I were listening to the Adventures of Sam Spade. The

program was just finishing...

Spade

Alright, Jenkins, let's take a little ride down to headquarters.

Jenkins

Me, sir? But I wouldn't murder Mr. Benson! I've been his butler for twenty years.

Spade

Don't play innocent. I know you pulled this caper, and I've got enough evidence to put you right in the hot seat.

Jenkins

But Mr. Spade, I didn't do it!

Spade

Save that malarkey for the warden. You were clever, Jenkins, but not clever enough. I think I'll call this the Careless Butler Caper. [SPADE THEME MUSIC]. Radio clicks off.

Burns

Why did you turn off the radio, Gracie?

Gracie

Sam Spade got the wrong man tonight.

Burns

What?

Gracie

I'm positive that Jenkins the butler wasn't guilty. An innocent man's gonna get the hot plate.

Burns

Hot seat. And don't worry. He'll only get it on the radio.

Gracie

Well, who cares where they put it? When he sits down it will burn. Oh, I've got to talk to Sam Spade right away.

Burns

Honey, Sam Spade is not a real detective.

Gracie

I'll say he isn't. Any man who'd make an innocent butler sit on a hotplate...

George

Gracie. He'll get a hot seat.

Gracie

He sure will after he sits on a hot plate.

George

Look, here's what I mean. On his program, Sam Spade is a private detective. But in real life he's just an ordinary guy. Just like on

your program you're a nitwit, but in real life....

[Long pause. Laughter]

That won't work. Anyway, Gracie, what you just heard was only a radio program.

Gracie

I know that. The real crime happened last week. Every Sunday night Sam Spade broadcasts his most thrilling case of the week.

George

You still don't understand. Sam Spade is just a character.

Gracie

I'll say he's a character. Making that poor innocent butler sit on a hotplate.

George

Hot seat! Let me try to explain this once more. Sam Spade isn't even the fellow's real name. He's the brainchild of Dashiell Hammett.

Gracie

Oh, oh, you mean his real name is Sam Hammett?

George

No. His real name is Howard Duff.

Gracie

Then why isn't his father's name Dashiell Duff?

George

Look, Sam Spade doesn't have any actual father or mother. He came from Dashiell Hammett's typewriter.

Gracie

Oh, George, you're so innocent. You know, I'll bet you believe that old story about coming from under cabbage leaves, too.

George

What's the use? OK, Sam Spade is a naughty detective and he's sending an innocent butler to the hot plate.

Gracie

Hot seat.

George

Good night, dear.

Gracie

Good night.

[MUSIC]

George

Well, Lieutenant, I didn't think any more about it. I was tired and it was past my bedtime.

Regan

What time was it?

George

It was after nine.

Regan

Gee!

George

So I went to bed thinking Gracie would follow me. Instead she followed Sam Spade.

Regan

Oh, what do you mean?

Spade

Let me tell you about that part of it, Lieutenant.

Regan

Okay, Spade.

Spade

Well, I'd finished my regular Sunday night show at the broadcasting studio, after which the actors lingered on for a little bull session. You know, who stepped on whose lines, 'I want a bigger part next week', and so forth. So, uh, it's about ten when I step out into the California night air, which is also about ten. But, uh, there's no snow so I decide to walk home. I haven't taken two steps when this little lady grabs me by the sleeve and says...

Gracie

Are you Sam Spade?

Spade

Well, if I had known then what I know now, I would have thrown myself under the wheels of a passing Sunset bus! But I'm a ham and I figure she's maybe a fan so I answer in my best Pasadena playhouse voice ''Why yes, I'm Sam Spade.''

Gracie

The butler didn't do it.

Spade

Huh?

Gracie

You've got the wrong man. The butler didn't jerk that kipper.

Spade

Jerk that kipper?

Gracie

Yank that copper?

Spade

You mean pull that caper?

Gracie

That's it!....You sent an innocent man to jail.

Spade

No I didn't.

Gracie

Yes you did.

Spade

Lady, I think you're a little mixed up about me. I'm just an actor on CBS.

Gracie

That's what everybody says.

Spade

Look, uh, little lady. I'm tired. It's been a tough day. I'll, uh, see you around, huh?

Gracie

Now, just a minute, Sam Spade. I heard you arrest that butler. Now, you've got to let him go free.

Spade

You, uh, wouldn't give me a rib, would you?

Gracie

Anything to free that butler. Which rib do you want?

Spade

I tell you what. Why don't you write me a letter? With a dull pencil. Don't use anything sharp.

Gracie

I'll do better than that. I'll come to your office. Where is it?

Spade

I haven't got an office.

Gracie

Ah oh ho. Playing cagey, eh? All right, I'll come to your house. Where's that?

Spade

321... Oh, no, I'm not talking. I want to get some sleep tonight. So long.

Gracie

So long.

Spade

[Footsteps. Woman's footsteps]. Why are following me? What do you want?

Gracie

Got a cigarette?

Spade

Sure. Here you are.

Gracie

Thanks. Got a match?

Spade

Sure. Want me to light it for you?

Gracie

No thanks. I don't smoke.

Spade

Then why did you ask me for a cigarette?

Gracie

Well, I thought I better have it in case somebody asked me for one.

Spade

I see.

Gracie

Would you like a cigarette?

Spade

No thanks.

Gracie

Well, good night.

Spade

Goodnight. [Footsteps. Woman's footsteps] Okay, okay, now what?

Gracie

Got the time?

Spade

Yeah, it's exactly uh, ten ten.

Gracie

Thanks, thanks.

Spade

I meant it's ten minutes after ten.

Gracie

You're wrong. My watch says fifteen after ten.

Spade

You've got a watch?

Gracie
Sure.

Spade
Then why did you ask me the time?

Gracie
Want a cigarette?

Spade
No!

Gracie
Well, good night.

Spade
Good night. [Pause. Footsteps. Woman's footsteps] Look, lady, stop following me.

Gracie
Oh, it's you again.

Spade
Yeah, fancy meeting me here. Can't I uh, give you the slip?

Gracie
Please! I couldn't accept a thing like that from a strange man!

Spade
All right. What do you want this time?

Gracie
Got a road map?

Spade
A road map? Are you lost?

Gracie
No.

Spade
May I make a suggestion?

Gracie
What?

Spade
Get lost!

Gracie
Well, good night.

Spade
Good night! [Footsteps. Woman's footsteps. Running.] Well, I've had enough of this, little lady. You've seen the end of me.

Gracie

Yes, for two blocks.

Spade

This time I'll lose you. Hey! Taxi! Taxi! [Cab brakes screeche, door slams] Let's get out of here cabbie, but fast! [MUSIC] Here's my house, cabbie. Pull up. That was real driving, buddy, keep the change. Good night.

Cabbie

Good night

Spade

[Footsteps. Woman's footsteps] Oh, no! Oh, no! How did you get here?

Gracie

On the back of that cab.

Spade

Who are you, anyway?

Gracie

Oh, no, no, I'm too smart to tell you who I am. If I did you'd complain to my husband, George Burns.

Spade

Oh, so you're Gracie Allen.

Gracie

How did you find out?

Spade

You forget I'm a detective.

Gracie

Oh.

Spade

And now I know what the National Safety Council means when they say 'don't be a Gracie.'

Gracie

Oh, never mind that. Are you going to let the butler go?

Spade

Look, Gracie, there's really no butler in prison and I'm not really Sam Spade.

Gracie

Oh, ho, now don't give me that story about your mother being a typewriter.

Spade

What?

Gracie

You're not talking to a child. I'm older than I look.

Spade

Okay, Gracie, I see there's no use arguing with a smart girl like you. I'll see that the butler gets out. I'll get him the best mouthpiece in town.

Gracie

Get him out first, fix his teeth later.

Spade

Okay, okay, goodnight!

MUSIC

Well, Lieutenant, I thought that that would be the end of the episode.

Regan

But it wasn't, eh?

George

Brother, you haven't heard anything yet. The next morning...

Regan

Wait a minute, Mr. Burns. Before I listen to any more of this story I'll have to send out for some aspirin.

George

Here, have some of mine.

Regan

Hey, how come you walk around with your pockets full of aspirin?

George

I'm married to Gracie Allen.

COMMERCIAL: Music.

And now, back to the city jail, where George and Sam Spade are trying to explain how Gracie put them there.

Regan

Let's see if I've got this straight so far, Burns. Your wife listened to Sam Spade's program, thought he was really sending an innocent butler to the Chair and started hounding him.

George

That's right, Lieutenant.

Regan

What did you think, Spade?

Spade

I, uh, didn't know what to think, Lieutenant. The surveys tell me I have ten million odd listeners but I didn't think any of 'em were that odd.

Regan

Well, anyway, to get rid of her, you told her that you'd free the butler.

Spade

Yeah, but that didn't satisfy Gracie. She demanded to see the guy.

George

That's when Spade came to see me. ...I told him to ask me something easy. Like getting Wesbrook Pegler to dance with Eva Hellyg[?]. He asked me to make Gracie leave him alone.

Regan

What did you say?

George

[?]... Eleanor Roosevelt.

Regan

Mr. Burns, why do you put up with a wife like that?

George

I'm too old to go back to Gus Edwards. Besides which, I happen to love her.

Regan

Well, so what did you two decide to do?

Spade

There was only one thing we could do. That was dig up the actor who played the butler on my program and let Gracie see him.

George

Which we did.

Spade

Yeah, and that's when we really got into trouble.

Regan

Tell me just what happened.

George

Okay...Spade was giving the guy his final instructions...

Spade

Remember, Claude, you are Jenkins the butler, and I have set you free.

Claude

Don't worry. I'll have Mrs. Burns crying like a baby. In radio they don't call me the male Ma Perkins for nothing.

George

Well, come on, Gracie's in the next room. (Opens door) Honey, here's Sam Spade.

Spade

Yes, Mrs. Burns, and I have freed the butler. Here he is.

Claude

How do you do, Madam.

Gracie

It is the butler. I recognize that voice. Oh, I'm so happy for you, Jenkins. What will you do now that you're free?

Claude

I shall return to the home of my youth.

Gracie

Where does your youth live?

Claude

I had reference to my birth place, madam. Dear old England. I shall go back there to regain my health.

Gracie

Really?

Claude

Yes. America is nice but I'll take Liverpool.

Gracie

Oh, you don't have to go to England for liver pools, they're made right here.

George

Ah, yes, that's Carter's little liver pools. They take them...

Claude

Liverpool is the name of a city.

Spade

Yes, now thank Mrs. Burns for getting you out of jail and then screw...uh, disappear.

Claude

Madam, your beneficent intervention has terminated a most injurious and humiliating incarceration. You'll never know what that means.

Gracie

I won't unless you shorten the words.

George

Goodbye, Jenkins.

Claude

Farewell, all. I go to a new and better life.

Gracie

Goodbye. Write me from Kidney Creek.

Claude

Liverpool.

Gracie

Well, I was in the right neighborhood. Goodbye. (Door closes)

Spade

Well, that takes care of that, eh, George?

George

You said it.

Spade

I'll be running along too. Goodbye, Gracie.

Gracie

Just a minute. Now look, if the butler didn't murder Mr. Benson, who did?

Spade

Huh?

Gracie

You proved that his wife and daughter didn't do it. And there was only other person on the scene. So he must be the murderer.

Spade

(Warily) Who?

Gracie

You.

Spade

Me?

Gracie

Confess, Sam Spade, you murdered Mr. Benson.

Spade

But I had no motive!

Gracie

Then you did it with something else!

George

Look, Gracie. We...

Gracie

Hand me my lipstick, George, I'm gonna give him the third degree.

George

Lipstick?

Gracie

I want to look nice when he shines that bright light in my face.

George

You're supposed to shine it in his face.

Gracie

Oh, oh, well then give him the lipstick.

Spade

I'm getting out of this madhouse. Goodbye! [Door closes]

[MUSIC]

George

Well, Lieutenant, Spade ran out of that house like...like..after...like he was seeing a ghost. Which was true because from then on Gracie started haunting him, trying to make him confess.

Spade

Yeah, she, uh found out that my radio sponsor was Wildroot Cream Oil so she disguised herself with a big hat and a veil and knocked at my door. [Knock]

Gracie

Sam Spade?

Spade

Yes?

Gracie

How do you do? My name is Wild Root.

Spade

Wild Root?

Gracie

Perhaps you know my husband. Willie Cream Oil? My full name is Mrs. Wild Root Cream Oil. I'm the wife of your sponsor.

Spade

Now look...

Gracie

I understand you murdered a Mr. Benson. Now, that's strictly forbidden in your contract.

Spade

Mrs. Cream Oil. You look like Gracie Allen to me.

Gracie

Flattery will get you nowhere. Now, if you'd like to confess perhaps we can get you off with life imprisonment. And when you come out you could take over your program again.

Spade

Gracie, I did not murder Mr. Benson. Go away.

[MUSIC]

But the next day she was back. This time, with another disguise.

Gracie

[Knocks] Sam Spade?

Spade

Yes.

Gracie

I'm from Western Union. I have a telegram here from President Truman.

Spade

What?

Gracie

I'll read it to you. "'Dear Sam, Confess. Signed Harry.'" Any answer?

Spade

Scram. Beat it. Go away.

Gracie

That's no way to talk to the President.

Spade

Out! Out!

[Music]

But the third day topped everything. She posed as a private detective.

[Knock] [Door open]

Gracie

Sam Spade?

Spade

Yes.

Gracie

I'm Sally Shovel. Now, listen chum, we're in the same racket, pal, and I want to help you, buddy, so why don't you confess, mac?

Spade

You're a private eye?

Gracie

Also ear, nose and throat. I put everything into my work. Now, confess, doc. So you murdered Benson, so what? I've been mixed up with a few keepers. Or is it capers?

Spade

In your case its keepers. Now go away!

[Music]

George

Well, Lieutenant that's when Spade came to see me again. Looking much older.

Spade

Yeah, we uh, hit on a brilliant scheme. We decided that I should confess to the murder. Then George would pretend to take me to the City Hall to surrender, and Gracie would forget the whole thing.

George

But Gracie did something we didn't count on .

Regan

What was that?

George

While I was going to pick up Spade, she called the police.

Regan

Oh, yes, that's where I come into the picture. She called me.

Spade

Suppose you tell us what happened then.

Regan

Well, when I got to the house she said...

Gracie

Officer... There's a desperate criminal on his way here to confess a murder. As soon as he confesses, you can grab him.

Regan

Don't worry, lady, I'll

Gracie

[Knock] That must be him.

Regan

You wait in the next room. He may be armed.

Gracie

Oh, he is, there's one hanging from each shoulder. You call me if you need me.

Goodwin

(Door opens) Hello. Where is everybody?

Regan

Never mind. What's your name?

Goodwin

Bill Goodwin? (Young voice, innocent)

Regan

What did you do with the body?

Goodwin

I took her home.

Regan

What did you do then?

Goodwin

I dumped her out.

Regan

Ah, she was dead, eh?

Goodwin

Sure, that's why I took her home!

Regan

You've done a pretty terrible thing, young man.

Goodwin

Ah, tomorrow I'll send her some flowers.

Regan

Oh, you're a real killer.

Goodwin

Well, sure.

Regan

Now tell me everything you did tonight.

Goodwin

I will not! Who're you, her father?

Regan

No!

Goodwin

Well, in that case I'll tell you then. Another fellow and I double dated. We met the girls and the four of us went into a restaurant for dinner. I ordered four cups of Maxwell House coffee.

Regan

Then what?

Goodwin

I told the waiter to bring the other people some too. See, I wanted them to taste the rich, mellow goodness of Maxwell House. It's America's favorite coffee, you know.

Regan

Yes, I know. What happened then?

Goodwin

Well, that's when the girl and I got into a fight.

Regan

Aha! What about?

Goodwin

She caught me drinking her Maxwell House Coffee.

Regan

But you'd had four cups!

Regan

Well, when you taste that good-to-the-last-drop flavor you just don't know when to stop. You know, Maxwell House is a blend of the finest Latin American coffees, radiant roasted to the peak of flavor perfection.

Gracie

Well, officer, did he confess to murder...Bill Goodwin!

Regan

He confessed everything, Mrs. Burns. He got mixed up with a girl and now he's headed for the Chair.

Goodwin

You're nuts. When I get mixed up with a girl I head for the divan.

Regan

I mean the electric chair! You killed a girl!

Goodwin

Are you kiddin'? All I killed was five cups of Maxwell House coffee!

Gracie

Yes, officer. This is the wrong man. Sam Spade is the one you want to arrest.

Goodwin

Sam Spade is in trouble? Ah, gee I was going to hire him to find someone for me.

Gracie

Who?

Goodwin

Girl about five feet two, red hair, green eyes, terrific figure, drives a Cadillac convertible.

Gracie

Oh? When did you last see her?

Goodwin

Whose seen her, I want Spade to find me one like that! Well, so long.
(Door closes)

[MUSIC]

Gracie

Well, there won't be any mistake this time, officer. Here comes my husband up the walk with the real murderer.

Regan

Yeah. Anyone can tell that guy's a criminal. Look at that low forehead.

Gracie

That's my husband.

Regan

Oh. Well, this time I want to hear the confession before I make the pinch. I'll just duck into this closet. (Door opens, closes)

Gracie

Oh, Poor Mr. Spade. I hate to think of him sitting in the electric chair. With those long legs he'll be so uncomfortable.

George

(Door opens) Well, here he is, Gracie, ready to confess.

Spade

Yes, I can hide the truth no longer. I killed Benson.

Gracie

Why did you do it, Mr. Spade?

Spade

That man murdered my mother, ruined my father, tortured my sister and robbed my brother.

Gracie

Ah, then it was nothing personal.

Spade

No, I just didn't like him.

Gracie

Oh. How, how did it happen?

Spade

Benson was standing in a bar, see. I walked up to him, let him have two slugs and he fell to the floor.

Gracie

Oh. Couldn't hold his liquor, huh?

George

He let him have two slugs from a pistol. Now keep quiet and let the man confess.

Gracie

Yes, dear.

Spade

I never gave him a chance, see. I shot him down in cold blood, and as he lay on the floor I pulled the trigger again and again and again. When the gun was empty I stood over his body and laughed like the fiend that I am. Heh heh heh heh. I should be locked up for twenty years. Thirty years!

Regan

[Door opens] I'll make that forty!

Spade

Huh? Who are you?

Regan

I'm Regan from homicide.

Gracie

I called him over to hear your confession.

Regan

Okay, come on Spade.

George

Officer, wait a minute, let me explain. Mr. Spade and I cooked this whole thing up together.

Regan

Oh, an accomplice! I'll take you along too.

George

Wait a minute, I've never done anything wrong in my life!

Gracie

Well of course, not, he's my husband. The man who married me.

George

All right, all right, so I did one thing wrong.

Regan

Come on, come on, you two.

[MUSIC]

George

Well, lieutenant, that's the whole story.

Regan.

Ah, my apologies, fellows. You're both free to go.

George

Thanks. Come on, Sam, let's get out of here.

Spade

You said it.

Regan

By the way, Mr. Burns, you're wife's waiting outside.

Spade

Gracie? So long, George, I'm staying in jail.

George

So long. (Door opens, closes)

Gracie

Oh, hello, darling.

George

Hello, Gracie, let's go home.

Gracie

Oh, I can't, sweetheart. I've got something important to do.

George

Hey, you've got that big hat and the veil on again. Where are you going?

Gracie

Well, why you were in jail I heard Ellery Queen on the radio and he arrested the wrong man!

George

Oh, no, you're not going to start....

[MUSIC]

Announcer

Join us again next Thursday when we'll all be back . George Burns, Gracie Allen, Bill Goodwin, Harry Lubin and the Maxwell House orchestra and yours truly Toby Reed.

George

Well, Gracie, next week we're going to have two guest stars. Mr. and Mrs. James Mason

Gracie

James Mason! He's that wonderful English actor who's so mean and so rough with women.

George

That's the man.

Gracie

Gee, he might hit me. Ah, but with you here he wouldn't dare. If he hit me, you'd show him. You'd hit Mrs. Mason.

Bill Maxwell

Ladies and gentlemen. Let's all remember to help the National Safety Council cut down the terrible toll of home accidents. Be safe. Be careful. Don't be a Gracie.

[MUSIC]

