

KNOW FOR SURE (21 min)

“KNOW FOR SURE”

PRODUCED BY THE RESEARCH COUNCIL OF THE ACADEMY OF MOTION
PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES

FOR THE UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

TONY MADRONI

“Now we’re gonna make a ‘and’.

- It’s pretty good, huh? It’s pretty good. Now a S. U. N. N up, down.

- Tony, Tony, what are you doing?

- Huh?

- What are you doing?

- That’s for my son, I’ll get a boy. I got to put him up here.

- Tony, it’s spelt with an ‘o’. S.O.N.

- O? Like this?

- That’s right.

- That’s o, all right, all right.”

& SON

“Get out everybody, please make space, come on. I got everything all ready like Dr. David said to get. Please. Maria, my wife, she’s in this room. She got her sister with her too. Please, doctor, hurry up. I stay right here, wait for the good news.

Oh! What’s the matter? Please, let the doctor finish. Please, outside. Tomorrow, everybody come and drink the free wine for my new bambino.

- *Buona sera.*

- *Buona sera.* Good night. Thank you everybody. Good night.”

“What the matter, doc? Don’t you gonna tell me she’s a boy? He’s a boy, no?

- Yes, Tony, it’s a boy.

- Maria, my Maria, she’s ok?

- She’s alright.

- Well then... The *bambino* is alright, my Maria is alright but ... Your face isn’t alright. What’s the matter?

- Tony, your son was born dead.

- Dead. Wait, [...] the *bambino* is dead, what’s happ...?

- Well, I got a pretty good idea, Tony. But I’ll have to ask you a few questions first.

- Questions, what questions?

- Well, not now, Tony. I’d better wait till your wife is...

- No, please, now you’re gonna make crazy. What’s the happening?

- Alright. Did anyone ever tell you, Tony, that you’ve got syphilis?

- Syphili... What are you talking? My... I never got this. This isn’t my fault.

- Now easy, Tony, take it easy. Think. I want you to think back carefully. Do you remember ever having a sore [...] that didn’t heal very fast?

- No, no, I never... Wait, yes, about two years ago. It's before I was married, I got a little sore but, but I buy some salve, I put it on it. It gets all a cured.
- It might make the sore go away but no medicine you could buy ever cured syphilis.
- I've got syphilis.
- I'm almost sure syphilis killed your baby, Tony. You see, a syphilitic sore will go away without any treatment in time, but the germs stay in your body.
- You mean, I...
- Yes, Tony. I'm afraid that you gave Maria syphilis and she gave it to the baby.
- Tony!
- I kill my *bambino*. I break my wife's heart. I don't want to live no more.
- Tony, you've got to get hold of yourself.
- Well, it's God's will. I no more can have a *bambino*.
- You're wrong, Tony. With proper medical treatment you can both be cured. Then you can have all the *bambinos* you want.
- You, you mean, if me and my Maria, we go to the *hossipal*, we can have another *bambino* and he's gonna live?
- Sure, you can. If you have the proper medical treatment. I want you to promise me you're gonna come to the hospital.
- Please, doctor, excuse me, please, I... The heart is so full up, it kind of runs over a little bit but... Is it true that we can have another son who is gonna be alright?
- Believe me Tony, it is.
- Alright, we take any kind of a treatment, doctor.
- Atta boy. I've got to go in the other room to see your wife again.
- I can go with you?
- No, Tony, but I'll let you know when you can come in.
- Please, doc, don't be too long, huh?
- Ok, Tony."

VENEREAL DISEASE CLINIC

TREATMENT ROOM

- "Well, goodbye, Tony. Now remember, you and your wife must come here every week. You mustn't miss a single treatment.
- I know, don't you worry, doctor. Me and my Maria will come here every week. You betcha my life.
- Thank you, Mr. Doctor for coming to see me so many times. My Tony and me are very glad we have such good friend who tell us what to do.
- Oh, that's alright, Mrs. Madroni. Goodbye.
- Goodbye.
- Goodbye, Tony.
- Goodbye, doctor and thank you too much.
- Be sure you come every week.
- Come in, young man.
- Oh, Dr. Perkins!
- Yes?
- I want to thank you for taking an interest in Tony Madroni and his wife.
- Oh, don't thank me, the more patients the better I like it, Dr., er...
- Morton, I was the intern on the Madroni case.

- Oh yes, Dr. Morton, I'm very glad to meet you. Won't you come in? Have a chair.
- Thank you.
- I won't be long. Well, young man, what seems to be your trouble? It's alright, this is Dr. Morton.
- Well, sir, some time ago, I picked up a girl on the dance floor and about three weeks later I noticed a sore here on my mouth. I didn't pay much attention to it. I thought it was just a cold sore but the damn thing hang on so long I kind of worried about it. I happened to pick up one of these public health service folders and got to reading about syphilis and I got scared.

SYPHILIS

ITS CAUSE • ITS SPREAD ... ITS CURE!

- Did the folder explain everything alright?
 - Yes, sir. Said in there, even though a sore might heal up just like mine did, if you got syphilis, the germs might still be in your body. I found out all the things that could happen to you if you didn't get cured right away. I figured I'd better come down and find out about it.
 - Good boy. Miss Jones, I want to take a blood test on this man.
 - Yes, doctor.
 - Alright, take off your coat and roll up your sleeves please. Now, this blood test will show whether you had a cold sore or whether you've got syphilis. Now, if this makes you nervous, you can turn your head. Make a tight fist, please.
 - Is it gonna hurt much, doc?
 - No, no. Just a little pin prick. As soon as we finish this, you can go on to the other room and Dr. Howard will give you a complete physical examination.
 - He is pretty lucky to have picked up this folder.
 - Sit down. Make yourself comfortable.
 - Thank you, sir.
 - Yes, he was lucky to have picked up that folder. There are hundreds of thousands of men and women in this country suffering from syphilis who won't pick up a folder. It's a pretty sad state of affairs when we have to depend on luck to whip this syphilis problem. If they could see the truth behind newspaper articles reporting nervous breakdowns, suicides and deaths from heart failure, they'd find a shocking percentage could be chalked up to late syphilis.
- Now I was called as a, as a consultant on this case.

STANTON BROKERAGE FIRM CRASHES

STANTON PRESIDENT SUFFERED NERVOUS BREAKDOWN

Stanton didn't have a nervous breakdown; he had paresis, probably contracted syphilis 15 or 20 years ago. The outward symptoms disappeared and he thought he was cured. Then syphilis began to soften his brain, his business judgment went bad but by the time he went to pieces, it was too late to save either the public's money or Stanton.

- And yet he could have been cured if he'd had received medical care in time.
- Surely. If Stanton had had a blood test and proper treatment years ago, we could have prevented that tragedy. Now here is another problem we run into. Here is a man who began his treatments 10 years ago. He took them for a few weeks until the sore cleared up and he thought he was cured. We couldn't get him back again for the rest of the treatments. It took syphilis ten years to get him, but two months ago he had a heart attack while he was driving his car. He crashed into a schoolyard and killed 3 children. Syphilis killed them all.
- Yes but those men didn't know as much about syphilis as young fellas do today. [...]

- Well, Morton, I'd like to agree with you but I can't. [...] Now, here is a typical case. Jerry Anderson. Jerry Anderson, college athlete, good student, intelligent, son of respectable family. Jerry's story began in the afternoon of the last football game of the season. He and his teammates had won the game and decided to go out for a little celebration that evening."

"Remember me?

- Sure do, honey.
 - There are 6 of us.
 - 'more the merrier. Ladies, in the parlor.
 - Come on in, fellas.
 - Good evening.
 - Good evening.
 - Good evening, sir.
 - Good evening.
 - Hurry up, quiet.
 - Good evening.
 - Little Peg is waiting for you.
 - Thanks."
-

"So Jerry had his celebration and only 3 weeks later he was sitting just where you are."

"What's your name?

- Jerry Anderson.
- Jerry Anderson. How did you happen to come into the clinic?
- I couldn't afford to go to a private doctor. I didn't know what to do. Called the County Health department, see if they couldn't do something for me. I was told to come and see you.
- What's your trouble, Jerry?
- I've got a pretty bad sore down here.
- Just stretch out on the table over there, we'll have a look at you. [...]
- Come over here. I want you to see this little corkscrew devil that's causing all your trouble. Look.
This dark field test shows up the *spirochetes*. Can you see them wriggling back and forth across the slide?
- Yes. What did you call them?
- *Spirochetes*. Those are the germs that cause your syphilis. You had to learn the hard way that you can't tell by the looks of a woman whether she has syphilis or not.
- Well, I guess that finishes me. I'll have to leave home, quit school and go some place where people don't know who I am.
- Now, Jerry, you know you can't beat any problem by running away from it. You may not realize it but you're a very lucky young man because we're catching this on time to cure you. Miss Jones, prepare a four tenth neo injection, please.
- Yes, but doctor, I can't take a chance on the folks and the kids at school finding out I've got syphilis.
- Don't worry about having syphilis. Luckily after the first few injections, the sore will disappear and you won't be able to infect anybody. You can go about your class way, play basketball, tennis or indulge in any other sport. Sit down here, please, and roll up your sleeve.

And nobody need ever know that you have syphilis. But you'll have to report every week and not miss a single treatment for at least one year.

- That's a relief. I feel like living again. Gee, doctor. That, that didn't hurt a bit. I've always heard that shots for syphilis were painful.

- Not if you go to a doctor who knows his business.

- I don't know how to thank you, doctor.

- Just come into my office and give me the name of the girl that infected you. That's all the things I want. Come on.

- See, doctor, I kind of hate to do that. I'm no stool pigeon.

- Sit down here, please. Now Jerry, a lot of men have a false sense of chivalry about giving the name of the woman who infected them. We're not going to do anything harmful to the girl and your name won't be brought into it. We only want to bring her in for examination and treatment. If we can treat and cure you and the woman responsible for your infection, we are breaking another link in the evil chain of syphilis that stretches out [...] case of the disease. Now look here. We've found that one case of syphilis usually results in three more. Each of the three results in another three. So you can see Jerry, that every time we treat and cure this disease, we are preventing the spread of syphilis to many hundreds of people. So you're doing your job by coming to me for treatment and I'll do mine by curing you."

"I'm beginning to see what we are up against. The same old mistakes over and over again. What are we going to do to put young men wise?

- I can show you one of the answers to that question if you have a little of time to spare.

- I'm right with you, doctor."

"Oh, the courthouse! What are we doing here?

- Well, the County Health officers sometimes hold their meetings here. Other times in school houses, large buildings or wherever they can find the space and get an audience. Today they're running a new film for a group of young men to show them how to protect themselves from contracting venereal diseases."

"Those are the facts about syphilis and its dangers. But why let syphilis get started? You can't have syphilis or gonorrhea unless you expose yourself to the germ. If you're smart, you'll keep away from prostitutes and pick-ups. Most of them have syphilis or gonorrhea. They're not safe and they can't be made safe. [...]

As you leave the room there will be someone waiting at the door to pass out folders containing further information about venereal diseases. They will answer almost any question that comes to your mind about syphilis and gonorrhea."

"You'll find that those folders give simple straightforward facts with no pointers pulled."

- What do they mean by 'sucker'?

ARE YOU BEING PLAYED FOR A SUCKER

- Anybody that believes druggers or quack doctors ever cured a case of syphilis. And there are hundreds of thousands of them in this country. Why, disreputable druggists and quack doctors rob the poor devils of millions every year. Just the other day I heard of a tragic case."

M.D. PAXTON
SPECIALIST IN MEN'S DISEASES

“Well, Mr. Spencer, I can see you're walking much better since that last medicine I gave you. Sit down, sit right down.

- No, doctor, not much better. My legs seem to be getting worse every day.

- But yours is a very stubborn case, Mr. Spencer, very stubborn indeed. But you must remember that every rocky road in life has a turning. I have just perfected a new remedy for locomotor ataxia. It has taken me years of research.

- But doctor, you've been prescribing new medicines for me for a long time. I've paid you over 2,000 dollars.

- Mr. Spencer, I'd sooner cut off my right arm up to there than take another dollar from you if you've lost faith in my ability or my integrity.

- I'm sorry, doctor. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. I don't mind putting out the money if I, if I could only get better.

- But losing faith in me isn't going to make you feel any better, is it now?

- Well, maybe since you've put so much time on the new medicine I ought to give it a fair trial. Are you really sure it will help me?

- Why, of course I am sure. This medicine I absolutely guarantee. Paxton's Panacea. Three bottles of this scientific discovery of mine at 5 dollars a bottle will eliminate every last evil germ of syphilis from your body. But just follow the directions: each bottle will last you three days and on the ninth day all your pain will have vanished and all of your troubles will be over.”

“Of course, the coroner said suicide.

- Yes, but that quack with his worthless drugs really murdered the old man. Morton, there's no excuse for that. We got the weapons to wipe out this disease but to use them, doctors must have the help of everyone who has been exposed to syphilis.”

Syphilis kills babies. It strikes back with blindness and insanity. A licensed physician with modern methods can cure syphilis. No quack doctor or medicine you buy can do the job. Don't be a sucker, stick to medical treatment and you can be cured. Prostitutes and pick-ups aren't safe and cannot be made safe. It doesn't pay to take a chance. [...] Watch for the warning signals: any sore or rash that does not heal quickly means “go to a licensed medical doctor or call your City or County Health officer at once”. If you think you've been exposed at any time, get a blood test and a physical examination now. Know for sure.”

KNOW FOR SURE
GET A BLOOD TEST FOR SYPHILIS

THE END
U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE 1798

Transcript: Inès Bailly