

# JUST PAST DARK

Written by

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FADE IN:

1 A TELEVISION SET

1

Plays a local small-time talk show's theme song, BLARING JAZZ MUSIC. Energetic and whacky clips of America's Never-Aging Golden Boy: JIMMY ADAMS (20s) roll across the screen. "Just Past Dark" is a classic American Late Night talk show with celebrity guests and lots of laughs for the whole family.

STUDIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

LIVE! From the lower side of the east upper-west side... it's The Just Past Dark Show! With your host, Jimmy Adams!

2 INT. JIMMY'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

2

The glamour and flare of the intro have faded to the background of a cold and dingy broom closet that has been converted to a backstage area.

The walls are lined with promotional posters and cobweb-covered awards, each depicting the ageless Jimmy throughout his career, from 1967 to 2034.

JIMMY

Twelve more seasons?

Jimmy sits in his chair as MAKEUP ARTISTS powder and fluff the star. Standing behind him is RALPH (50s) a large and in-charge producer with impeccable taste in sweat-stained sport coats and an elephant's trunk where his nose should be.

RALPH

That's right, pal. We're on our way back to the top!

Jimmy turns in his chair, shooing away his entourage.

JIMMY

And you're sure this guy is the real deal?

RALPH

This guy wasn't some jackoff from uptown trying to buy us out for a frickin' blow pop and a ham sandwich. This was a real offer from a real network, Jim.

JIMMY

That's amazing. Where do I sign?

Ralph sits back in his chair and lights a cigar.

RALPH

Not so fast, a representative from the network is coming to tomorrow's show. You suck? Get the red light and it's a no-go. Make him laugh? Get the green light, and we're in business.

JIMMY

Ralph, you and I both know I haven't made anyone laugh in this studio in a decade. How am I supposed t--

Ralph hands a crumpled business card to Jimmy.

RALPH

Give these guys a call.

JIMMY

(hesitant)

Come on, tell me this isn't--

Ralph pulls out another cigar. He hands it to Jimmy.

RALPH

It's just a bit of insurance, is all.

JIMMY

(considering it)

Well...

RALPH

Just think, hundreds of people chanting your name as we walk all over them. Wouldn't you like that?

Ralph offers a lighter with a crude image of a hula-girl.

Jimmy stares in contemplation. He snatches the lighter from Ralph, lighting his cigar.

RALPH (CONT'D)

That's what I like to hear.

An INTERN walks in the door.

INTERN

Mr. Sullivan, the horse carcass you ordered is in your office.

RALPH

Perfect!

Ralph walks to a baseball bat leaning against the door.

RALPH (CONT'D)

(to Jimmy)

Just be your funny self and let fate do the rest.

Jimmy reads the card:

THE LAF BROTHERS 1-800-LAF-BROS.

RALPH violently beats the dead horse. (O.S.)

3

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

3

Outside the studio, Jimmy stands near a LAF BROS delivery truck. From the side jumps out a DELIVERY BOY (20s) dressed in a jumpsuit and protective goggles.

DELIVERY BOY

You Jimmy?

JIMMY

Yeah, eh. That's me.

DELIVERY BOY

(routinely)

Sign here, please.

Jimmy signs his clipboard on several different lines.

DELIVERY BOY (CONT'D)

Here... Initial here...

JIMMY

Uhm. Alright.

Delivery Boy reaches into the back of the truck and pulls out a large metal canister labeled:

LAF BROS "GIGGLE MIST" -- \*HIGHLY FLAMMABLE\*.

Jimmy lifts the container and carries it inside as we fade to

4

INT. STUDIO STAGE - MINUTES BEFORE THE SHOW

4

Audience members can be heard chatting about.

Hidden behind the scenery, Jimmy connects the "GIGGLE MIST" to the air vents, turning the pressure to half.

RALPH (O.S.)

There you are!

Jimmy jumps, startled by Ralph's entrance.

RALPH (CONT'D)

I have been looking everywhere for you. Lookie here!

Ralph grabs him and points toward a large SHADOWY MAN (40s) with a Rhino's horn on his head sits in the back row of the audience. In his lap sits a nearly clear box.

JIMMY

Ralph. This isn't right. I can't do this, I can--

RALPH

Woah, woah! Calm down, pal.

Jimmy backs away as Ralph tries to comfort him.

RALPH (CONT'D)

If this goes wrong. What was it all for? What is the point of all this?

RALPH (CONT'D)

Point? I'm gonna let you in on an industry secret. None of this means anything, pal. The point is to get as far as we can before we OD on something not worth ODing on. That's just the business, Jim.

JIMMY

That's not it. This place...

(frantic)

My god Ralph how long have we been stuck here? We have to leave now--

Ralph grabs Jimmy by the collar and brings him closer.

RALPH

(threatening)

You listen to me right now you little brat.

(MORE)

RALPH (CONT'D)

Do you remember where you were when  
I picked you up off the street?  
Huh? Do you want to go back to  
sleeping in the god damned gutter?  
Everything you are is because of  
me.

(closer)

I made you. Don't make me take it  
away.

Ralph lets him go, Jimmy petrified in fear.

RALPH (CONT'D)

Break a leg, kiddo. And nice nose!

He walks off as Jimmy feels his new Pig's Snout. Jimmy turns  
to the mist, turning the pressure all the way up.

STUDIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

LIVE! From the lower side of the  
east upper-west side... it's The  
Just Past Dark Show! With your  
host, Jimmy Adams!

5 INT. STUDIO - TALK SHOW STAGE - CONTINUOUS

5

The studio is set for a talk show. Vibrant curtains sway next  
to a colorfully lit diorama of a city skyline.

The AUDIENCE ROARS IN APPLAUSE as Jimmy struts his way to his  
center mark. He stands with his hands in his pocket, staring  
at the audience as they continue to CLAP AND SHOUT.

JIMMY

(joking)

I... I didn't know I was supposed  
to prepare something.

The audience LOSES THEIR SHIT laughing at his joke, and he's  
pretty proud of it too. The LAUGHTER continues to grow.

He looks to the back.

THE BOX GLOWS RED.

The smirk on his face tells the whole story, he loves this.  
Or, he thought he'd love this. His smile fades as he again  
looks to see

THE BOX GLOWS RED

The LAUGHTER grows LOUDER AND LOUDER. The AUDIENCE starts to  
CHANT HIS NAME.

He looks to his mug. Inside is an array of multicolored liquid. Something is very wrong.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
 No. No. Stop laughing. It wasn't  
 even funny, I haven't done  
 anything!

The LAUGHTER and CHANTING grow IMMENSELY. Jimmy looks past the blinding lights to see the audience.

Only there are no people, just cardboard cutouts.

IMAGE: THE PRESSURE IS ALL THE WAY UP

Lost in a daze, Jimmy's vision begins to spin. The colorful liquid spins as a black spot begins to grow.

IMAGE: A DEAD HORSE

IMAGE: THE BOX GLOWS GREEN.

SMASH TO:

6

INT. STUDIO STAGE - LATER

6

Jimmy stands alone on stage, bathed in the green light of the box.

Jimmy pulls out Ralph's lighter.

JIMMY  
 (to himself)  
 Just be funny, and let fate do the  
 rest.

Jimmy strikes the lighter.

Fire begins to spread all around. Jimmy drops his head and raises his arms.

He joins in the AUDIENCE'S CHANTING as it overtakes him.

The flame engulfs the entire studio as we

FADE TO:

7

INT. DINER - DAY

7

A WAITRESS (40s) brings a bill to the corner table. She hands it to an ELDERLY MAN who sits with TWO CHILDREN.

On the diner television, a rerun of "Just Past Dark: starring Jimmy Monroe" plays.

We see that the man is JIMMY (60s) with his two grandchildren, MATT (12) and ALEX (10).

Jimmy stares longingly at the television set.

MATT  
Grandpa?

ALEX  
What's wrong?

He snaps out of it. He looks to see their faces, bathed in a warm glow.

JIMMY  
Oh...

He smiles.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Nothing is wrong, **kids**. Nothing.

The Elderly Jimmy tries to stand. His breath speeds up and he clutches his left arm as he slowly collapses to the floor.

MATT  
Grandpa!

ALEX  
Grandpa are you okay?

People rush over to help him. Jimmy takes one final breath.

FADE TO BLACK.