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JIP 102

JOINED IN PROGRESS

"He's Not Late, He's Dead"

by
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INTRO

SCENE A

FADE IN:

INT. - KJIP-TV - THE HUB - DAY (1)
(STAN, BERNADINE, T.D., HARRY, NELSON)

ANOTHER DAY IS UNDERWAY. BERNADINE, NELSON AND T.D. ARE AT THEIR DESKS.

ANGLE ON: STUDIO DOORS.

STAN ENTERS HURRIEDLY FROM THE STUDIO DOORS AND APPROACHES BERNADINE.

ANGLE ON: BERNADINE'S DESK

STAN
Bernadine! Quick - what time is it?

BERNADINE
The computer system says it's 9:15.

STAN
Thanks!

BERNADINE
You're welcome, Stan.

STAN QUICKLY HEADS OVER TO T.D.

ANGLE ON: T.D.'S DESK

STAN
T.D. - how much to get into the office pool on when Harry first storms off the set of the new kids show?

T.D. OPENS A NOTEBOOK.

T.D.
Five bucks. What should I put you down
for?

STAN
Uh, today. Nine....sixteen.

T.D.
Today, 9:16. Got it.

STAN HANDS T.D. A FIVE DOLLAR BILL. T.D. PULLS A STACK OF
BILLS OUT OF AN ENVELOPE AND ADDS STAN'S MONEY TO THE STACK.

ANGLE ON: THE HUB

HARRY BURSTS THROUGH THE STUDIO DOORS INTO THE HUB.

HARRY
I absolutely refuse to work in these
conditions!

HARRY CONTINUES ACROSS TO JOE'S OFFICE DOOR.

HARRY (CONT'D)
This is absolutely preposterous! I
cannot believe - Joe we have to talk!

HARRY OPENS THE DOOR, ENTERS JOE'S OFFICE AND SLAMS THE DOOR
CLOSED.

ANGLE ON: T.D.'S DESK

STAN
Well what do you know - I do believe
it is 9:16. And that's mine. Yoink!

STAN SNATCHES THE WAD OF CASH FROM T.D.

ANGLE ON: THE HUB

STAN RUNS ACROSS THE HUB AND THROUGH THE STUDIO DOORS. T.D.
FOLLOWS IN HOT PURSUIT.

T.D.
Stan! Stan! You better get back here
with my money!

ANGLE ON: BERNADINE'S DESK

NELSON APPROACHES BERNADINE.

NELSON
Miss Bernadine, who had Stan in the
office pool on who would be first to
trick T.D. out of his office pool
money?

BERNADINE OPENS A NOTEBOOK TO CHECK.

BERNADINE
Why, that would be you.

BERNADINE HANDS NELSON A WAD OF BILLS.

NELSON
Thank you! And one for you.

NELSON DROPS ONE BILL ON BERNADINE'S DESK. BERNADINE STUFFS
THE BILL DOWN HER SHIRT.

BERNADINE
It's a pleasure doing business with
you.

END OF INTRO

ACT I

SCENE B

INT - KJIP-TV - JOE'S OFFICE - DAY (2)
(JOE, HARRY, NELSON, FAITH)

JOE IS SEATED AT HIS DESK. FAITH IS SITTING ON THE EDGE OF THE DESK. NELSON AND HARRY ARE OPPOSITE JOE.

JOE
You're probably wondering why I called
you into my office.

HARRY
Joe, if it's about my memo, I'm very
sorry. I clearly over stepped my
bounds.

JOE
Memo? What memo?

HARRY
Memo? Oh. Not important.

NELSON
I'm sure we'll talk about it later.

HARRY
(TO NELSON)
Not helping.

JOE

Look guys, you both know that ever since my Uncle Jeremiah went missing at sea and our accountant fled the country with the contents of the station's bank accounts, KJIP has been in desperate need of some cash flow.

FAITH

Some POSITIVE cash flow.

JOE

Positive cash flow, thank you, Faith.

Harry--

HARRY IS ADAMANT ABOUT HIS POSITION.

HARRY

Absolutely not! I refuse. You've already stripped me of my position as award nominated news anchor, only to force me to host a - ugh - children's show. There's nothing left, Joe. No more sacrifices from Harry Green. I am done.

JOE STARES AT HARRY FOR A MOMENT.

JOE

Are you finished?

HARRY
I'm sorry didn't you hear me? I said I
was done.

JOE
I heard a lot, Harry.

HARRY
I said I was done. As in "It's your
turn to talk now because I'm
finished."

NELSON
(TO HARRY)
You may be finished all right.

HARRY
Oh, you thought I meant that I was --
Oh. No. Huh-uh. You were saying?

JOE
I was SAYING "Thank you."

HARRY
Thank you?

JOE
You're welcome. What I was trying to
say was your new role as Uncle Harry
is working. We've sold some important
new sponsorships - all because of
"Uncle Harry's Hoedown."

FAITH

The point is, the concept is working.
There's money trickling in because of
it.

JOE

And that's where you come in, Nelson.

HARRY

Absolutely not, Joe! There is no way
I'm going to share the spotlight of
our highly successful - and might I
add PROFITABLE - new program with
this...Shakespearean wannabe trapped
in the middle of America's heartland--

HARRY TRAILS OFF AS HE REALIZES JOE IS STARING AT HIM AGAIN.

JOE

Harry?

HARRY

Yes?

JOE

Does any part of your brain think
before you speak?

A LONG BEAT.

HARRY

Yes?

ANOTHER BEAT.

HARRY (CONT'D)

No?

JOE

Nelson, I want you to figure out a way to apply the format of "Uncle Harry's Hoedown" to another part of the program schedule.

NELSON

Hmmm.

JOE

Late night, weekends, something. I want a host, a cheap set and a small crew. It's profitable for us in the afternoon and there's got to be a way to apply it to another time slot.

NELSON

Interesting.

JOE

Once you've got a proposal, sit down with Faith to work out a budget and revenue projections.

NELSON

Certainly.

JOE

And Harry?

HARRY
Yes?

JOE
Assist Nelson.

HARRY
Joe?

JOE
Yes, Harry?

HARRY
Why are you assigning this to Nelson
when I already have the experience--

JOE
Because we have two assignments to
pass out today.

HARRY
Oh? Yes?

JOE
And we flipped a coin to decide who
got what.

NELSON
Now I feel really special.

JOE
You should.

NELSON
Why?

JOE
You lost the toss.

HARRY
Ooh! What did I win?

JOE
You get to make the arrangements for
the public memorial for Uncle
Jeremiah.

HARRY
Yes, but what did I win?

JOE
You get to make the arrangements for
the public memorial for Uncle
Jeremiah.

HARRY
I heard that part. But I don't
understand how being responsible for a
service for someone no one liked is
much of a reward.

JOE
The reward is the look on your face.
Don't you think so, Nelson?

NELSON
Couldn't have lost to a nicer guy.

NELSON AND FAITH STAND EXIT. HARRY STARES OFF INTO SPACE.

JOE
Harry? (BEAT) Harry?

HARRY
Yes?

JOE
I'm done.

HARRY
If you're done, why do I feel so done
in?

SCENE C

INT - KJIP-TV - BREAK ROOM - DAY (2)
(GABE, HARRY, GRETCHEN)

GABE AND GRETCHEN ARE SEATED AT THE TABLE. HARRY ENTERS
CARRYING SEVERAL FILE FOLDERS.

GABE
Harry.

HARRY
Hello.

GRETCHEN
What's the matter, Harry?

HARRY GETS A CUP OF COFFEE.

HARRY
Ahh, it's nothing. Nothing much,
anyway.

HARRY SITS.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Joe just put me in charge of the
public memorial for Old Man Progress.

GRETCHEN
That sounds like a big honor.

HARRY
It would be if anyone liked the old
coot.

GABE
Yeah, anyone with a clue despised the
man.

GRETCHEN
I liked him.

GABE
Case closed.

GRETCHEN
He was cute in an old man sort of way.
Not creepy and smelly like in a
grandpa geezer sort of way, you know?

HARRY
Should I be taking notes?

GABE
There's your eulogy.

HARRY
Gretchen would you be willing to give
the eulogy at the service?

GRETCHEN
Oh I don't know about that. But I
would like to say a few words about
Mr. Progress, if I could.

GRETCHEN GETS UP AND GOES TO THE SINK.

HARRY
I wouldn't have it any other way.

GRETCHEN RINSES OUT HER COFFEE CUP.

GRETCHEN
He was really into physical fitness,
you know. He used to supervise my
"Buns of Steel" workouts all the time.

GRETCHEN POINTS HER REAR END AT HARRY.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)
Oh well, I gotta run. Bye!

HARRY
Gabe?

GABE
Yeah?

HARRY
Is it wrong to envy the dead?

GABE
Not in this case, man. Not in this
case.

SCENE D

INT - KJIP-TV - THE HUB - DAY (3)
(T.D., NELSON, BERNADINE, FAITH, MAX)

NELSON AND FAITH ENTER THE HUB FROM JOJO'S OFFICE. T.D. IS GETTING A FOLDER FROM BERNADINE AT HER DESK.

T.D.

Hey, Nelson. You've got a pretty good turnout for your big audition. That help wanted spot you ran worked.

NELSON

Should I be concerned that the man who sells television advertising for a living is surprised that it achieves results?

T.D.

I deserved that one. But wait till you see how many people showed up. It might surprise even you.

BERNADINE

There are a whole lot of people in the studio, Nelson.

FAITH

Well, I think it's a great idea. There was a time when stations all over the country had their own late movie creature feature hosts.

NELSON

Retro is in these days.

T.D.
I don't know about retro, but there
are definitely some heavenly creatures
with some heavenly features waiting
for you in that studio.

MAX ENTERS THE HUB FROM THE STUDIO.

MAX
Nelson, it's time to start.

NELSON
Well, then. Shall we?

NELSON MOTIONS TO FAITH, WHO EXITS TO THE STUDIO. MAX STOPS
NELSON FOR A MOMENT.

MAX
Before we get started, Nelson, there's
something I need to say.

NELSON
What is it, Max? Is everything all
right?

MAX
No everything is fine. Fine beyond my
dreams.

NELSON
Well what, then?

MAX
I want to help.

NELSON

Of course you're going to help. You're
the director.

MAX

Yeah, well I was thinking more along
the lines of helping on a more
personal level.

NELSON

Get to the point, Max.

MAX

Here's a stack of my business cards.
I'd like to host call backs... over
dinner... one at a time... if you know
what I mean.

NELSON

Oh, please!

MAX

Nelson!

NELSON

Troll for trophies on your own time,
Max. This afternoon, it's business -
and I expect you to behave yourself.
(LONG BEAT) I'll see what I can do.

NELSON TAKES THE CARDS.

MAX

My man, Nelson!

NELSON AND MAX EXIT THE HUB TO THE STUDIO.

SCENE E

INT - KJIP-TV - THE STUDIO - DAY (3)

(FAITH, GRETCHEN, WIZARD, MAD SCIENTIST, NELSON, MAX,
ELVIRA, ALICE, EXTRAS)

GRETCHEN IS SEATED BEHIND A DRAPED TABLE, PROCESSING THE LINE OF AUDITIONING ACTORS. FAITH IS STANDING NEXT TO HER. STAN IS BUSY IN THE BACKGROUND, SETTING UP LIGHTS.

FAITH

Wow, it looks like Nelson's got a
great turnout for this audition.

GRETCHEN

I know. Isn't it great?

GRETCHEN HANDS A CLIPBOARD TO A LARGE BEARDED WIZARD.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

Here you go, you're number twenty-
three.

WIZARD

Many thanks unto you, my dear.

WIZARD MOVES TO THE BACK OF THE STUDIO TO FILL OUT HIS PAPERWORK.

GRETCHEN

I wonder how many people we have?

FAITH

Didn't you just give him number twenty-
three?

GRETCHEN

Yeah. But I've got a lot of numbers
left.

GRETCHEN HOLDS UP A STACK OF NUMBERED LABELS.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)
See there's fifteen, and eight and
seventy-two and--

FAITH
Tell you what Gretchen, why don't you
take a break? You look a little tired.

GRETCHEN
Wow, that would be swell! Do you think
you can handle it? Numbers can be hard
to keep up with.

FAITH
I think I can handle it, Gretchen. I
do have a degree in macroeconomics,
after all.

GRETCHEN
Well, I don't see what religion's got
to do with it, but whatever you say.

GRETCHEN GETS UP AND FAITH SITS AND HANDS A CLIPBOARD TO MAD
SCIENTIST. GRETCHEN HEADS TOWARD THE STUDIO DOORS.

FAITH
Let's see, you'll be number eight, I
think.

MAD SCIENTIST
Excellent.

NELSON AND MAX ENTER THE STUDIO AS GRETCHEN EXITS. THEY
APPROACH FAITH WHO HANDS A CLIPBOARD TO ZOMBIE WHO IS
CARRYING A PROP LEG.

FAITH
You'll be number fifteen. Break a leg!

FAITH LAUGHS, ZOMBIE DOES NOT.

FAITH (CONT'D)
A little theater humor there. You
know, instead of good luck...you break
a leg... Oh never mind.

NELSON
How goes it, Miss Dennison?

FAITH
It's going just fine except for Mr.
Night of the Living Dead over there
(LOUDER) who might have a sense of
humor if someone hadn't already eaten
his brain.

NELSON
I see.

FAITH
Got a couple more folks to process,
ready in maybe five minutes?

NELSON
Excellent. Max, if you would be so
kind as to get the camera ready?

MAX
On it. Stan?

MAX MOVES TO THE CAMERA, WHERE STAN JOINS HIM.

NELSON HEADS TO STAN AND MAX.

NELSON
Would you gentlemen like a stand-in?

NELSON STANDS IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA IN THE BACKGROUND WHILE
STAN AND MAX MAKE THEIR FINAL ADJUSTMENTS WITH THE EQUIPMENT.
FAITH RETURNS TO PROCESSING AN ELVIRA LOOK-ALIKE.

FAITH
You're number thirty-eight!

ELVIRA
Thanks, honey.

ELVIRA MOVES ON.

FAITH
Honey? Probably only number thirty-
four without that wonderbra. Next?

AN ALICE COOPER LOOK-ALIKE IS NEXT.

ALICE
Could I get two numbers?

FAITH
Two numbers?

ALICE
One for me and one for Bruce.

ALICE PICKS UP HIS PET BOA CONSTRICTOR.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Say hello to the pretty lady, Bruce.

FAITH
Okayyyyy. You'll be forty-nine....and
apparently sixty-one.

ALICE

Cool.

SCENE F

INT - KJIP-TV - THE STUDIO - DAY (3) - A LITTLE LATER
(NELSON, MAX, NUMBER ONE)

NELSON AND THE VARIOUS ACTORS ARE GROUPED TOGETHER, NEAR THE TABLE. FAITH IS SEATED AT THE TABLE. MAX IS BEHIND THE STUDIO CAMERA. GRETCHEN STANDS NEAR HIM HOLDING A STACK OF CUE CARDS. STAN IS OPERATING A BOOM MIC.

NELSON

May I have your attention please?

We're ready to begin. My name is

Nelson. Your cameraman and director

today is Max.

MAX

A-HEM!

NELSON

You will find a stack of his business cards on the sign-up table.

MAX GIVES NELSON A BIG 'THUMBS UP.'

NELSON (CONT'D)

We want to see what you can bring to the presentation, so feel free to spice things up however you see fit.

NELSON MOVES TO THE FRONT OF THE CAMERA.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Now, when you audition be certain to take your position -

NELSON INDICATES A MARK ON THE FLOOR.

NELSON (CONT'D)
X marks the spot - look right into the
camera lens--

NELSON DOES SO, AND HIS PASSION FOR ACTING BUBBLES TO THE
TOP.

NELSON (CONT'D)
And address that one single solitary
viewer who is watching you, alone in
his living room, late on a rainy
Saturday night. Reach out and make
that one on one connection. Maintain
eye contact. Tell him with your body
language how much you appreciate the
fact that he has chosen your program
from the dozens of choices he has
available to him. You and he have a
personal relationship. The kind of
relationship that will bring him back
week after week. A bond that will
beckon him to share with his co-
workers, bringing them to the set as
well. Until, one by one, the entire
town of Progress, Iowa is tuned in to
KJIP-TV every Saturday night.

HE SWITCHES IT OFF AND IS JUST NELSON.

NELSON (CONT'D)
And don't forget to tell us your name,
and your audition number. Who's first?

NUMBER ONE, A BEARDED GENTLEMAN IN A STAR TREK TYPE UNIFORM,
STEPS FORWARD.

NUMBER ONE
I'm number one.

NELSON
You have the con.

SCENE G

INT - FX: TV MONITOR

(NUMBER ONE, NELSON, WIZARD, ELVIRA, MAD SCIENTIST, ALICE,
HARRY)

FX: A WHITE FLASH FRAME AND A SOUND SYNC TONE SEPARATE THE
FOLLOWING AUDITIONS AS WE VIEW THEM ON VIDEOTAPE.

NUMBER ONE
Welcome viewers, tonight we'll be
going where no movie has gone before--

NELSON (O.S.)
Thank you - next!

FX: FLASH & TONE

WIZARD
Tonight's film will frighten muggles
and non-muggles alike--

THE WIZARD'S HAT SLIPS OFF HIS HEAD

WIZARD (CONT'D)
(OUT OF CHARACTER)
Oops. Can I start again?

NELSON

Next!

FX: FLASH & TONE

ELVIRA

Wel-come - to - Feature Creature. I
mean, Creature Feature.

(TO SOMEONE OFF CAMERA)

I'm sorry, I can't read that without
my glasses.

NELSON

Thank you, next!

FX: FLASH & TONE

MAD SCIENTIST

Now? Okay.

MAD SCIENTIST FREEZES FROM STAGE FRIGHT. A LONG BEAT...

NELSON

Next.

FX: FLASH & TONE

ALICE

Hello, I'd like you to meet Bruce.

NELSON

Next!

FX: FLASH & TONE

HARRY

Welcome to Creature--

NELSON

Next!

HARRY
Oh, now you didn't even give me a
chance!

NELSON
NEXT!

THE TAPE SWITCHES OVER TO COLOR BARS FOR A MOMENT, THEN THE
MONITOR WE'VE BEEN WATCHING SWITCHES OFF.

SCENE H

INT - KJIP-TV - JOE'S OFFICE - DAY (3)
(NELSON, JOE)

JOE SITS ON THE EDGE OF HIS DESK AND HAS A TV REMOTE IN HIS
HAND. NELSON IS SEATED IN A CHAIR IN FRONT OF JOE'S DESK.

NELSON
I am sorry, Joseph. This experiment
was an unmitigated disaster. We have
wasted everyone's time.

JOE
Don't you think you're taking this a
little hard? I mean, you've got a
background in theater - sometimes it
takes a few auditions to find the
right person.

NELSON
You're right. I know. But I had such
high hopes.

(MORE)

NELSON (CONT'D)
I desperately wanted to have this show
on the air within the month - so we
could have the inevitable bugs worked
out in time for the next ratings
period.

JOE
Nelson. My goodness, man. If everyone
at this station cared about this place
as much as you do, we'd have no
problems.

NELSON
I appreciate the kind words, Joseph.
It's just that--

JOE
What?

NELSON
I don't want to let you down.

JOE
What?!

NELSON
You've been thrust into this extremely
challenging position - a tiny TV
station, in a tiny TV market, with a
tiny TV bank account.

JOE
You're afraid of letting me down?
Nelson, when have you ever let me
down? I'll tell you when - never -
that's when.

NELSON
Joseph--

JOE
No, let me finish. I've been meaning
to say this. You've always been there
for me. I mean, when I was six and
climbed too high up the antenna tower
and was frozen with fear - who climbed
up to help get me down?

NELSON
That would have been Bernadine.

JOE
Are you sure about that?

NELSON
Remember it clear as day.

JOE
Not you?

NELSON
Not me. Afraid of heights.

JOE
Remind me to thank Bernadine later.

NELSON
Certainly.

JOE
What about when I got my hand jammed
in the videotape deck?

NELSON
Bernadine.

JOE
Really?

NELSON
Afraid so.

JOE
Cracked my head open on the freshly
waxed floor in the lobby?

NELSON
Now that was me.

JOE
Ah ha!

NELSON
But that wasn't you. It was your
friend, Nicholas.

JOE
Nick? Nicky Nicholson! Wow, I haven't
thought of him in years.

NELSON

Nikki Nicholson wasn't a he. She was a she. Nicholas Henderson bled all over the lobby.

JOE

What did you do for me?

NELSON

I helped you with your memory skills.

JOE

See, I forgot that, too. Thank you!

NELSON

No, thank you.

JOE

Thank me? What for?

NELSON

For becoming the sort of man, a fellow could care about.

JOE

I'm sure I had a lot of help.

NELSON

You did. Well, I suppose I should ask Bernadine to schedule some spots announcing another round of auditions.

NELSON STANDS AND HEADS FOR THE DOOR.

JOE

Mind if I keep the tape?

NELSON
Feel free to torture yourself some
more, if you so desire.

JOE POINTS THE REMOTE AT THE TV MONITOR, THE TAPE GOES INTO
REVERSE SEARCH.

JOE
Thanks - that Mistress of the Dark
chick may be blind, but she is hot.

NELSON
Oh, and Joseph?

JOE
Yes, Nelson?

NELSON
That scar just above your left knee?

JOE
Yeah?

NELSON
You were seven. You had a bicycle
accident in the parking lot. I believe
you were attempting to pop a wheelie,
when you hit the curb and ended up
underneath the production truck.

JOE
That was you? That was you!

NELSON
Who else?

NELSON EXITS. JOE PLAYS THE TAPE

SCENE I

INT - FX: TV MONITOR
(NELSON)

JOE HAS REWOUND THE TAPE PAST THE AUDITIONS AND WE SEE NELSON ON SCREEN.

NELSON
...You and he have a personal relationship. The kind of relationship that will bring him back week after week. A bond that will beckon him to share with his co-workers, bringing them to the set as well. Until, one by one, the entire town of Progress, Iowa is tuned in to KJIP-TV every Saturday night.

SCENE J

INT - KJIP-TV - JOE'S OFFICE - DAY (3) - AS BEFORE
(JOE, NELSON)

JOE IS ASTONISHED BY WHAT HE IS SEEING.

JOE
And Nelson saves the day again.

NELSON (O.S.)
And don't forget to tell us your name and audition number. Who's first?

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

INT - FUNERAL PARLOR - NIGHT (4)

(HARRY, JOE, FAITH, MR. GRIMM, GABE, GRETCHEN, BERNADINE,
NELSON, T.D., ALL)

THE FUNERAL PARLOR IS DECORATED FOR THE MEMORIAL SERVICE. THE
LARGE PORTRAIT OF JEREMIAH PROGRESS IS DRAPED IN FLOWERS AND
IS ON DISPLAY NEAR THE LECTERN. THERE ARE SEVERAL ROWS OF
CHAIRS IN THE ROOM. A CASKET HAS BEEN PLACED NEAR THE
PORTRAIT. HARRY PACES ANXIOUSLY FOR A MOMENT, THEN FAITH AND
JOE ENTER.

HARRY

Joe! Faith! You're finally here!

JOE

Finally here? We're early, Harry. Calm
down.

HARRY

I hope everything is to your liking.

JOE

I'm sure everything will be just fine,
Harry.

FAITH

The portrait looks great.

JOE

It does. Nice touch, Harry. If you'll
excuse me, I have to visit the little
boys' room.

JOE EXITS.

FAITH

Harry? I have a question.

HARRY

Yes?

FAITH

They never found Jeremiah's body,
right?

HARRY

Right.

FAITH

So, why is there a casket at a
memorial service for a man who was
lost at sea?

HARRY

Huh? Oh! It's for display purposes, I
suppose. Sets the mood?

FAITH

Hmm.

AN UNCOMFORTABLE SILENCE.

HARRY

He was a great man.

FAITH

Mmm. (BEAT) No he wasn't, Harry. I
can't believe anyone who worked for
him liked the guy. He ticked off half
the town. Frankly, we'll be lucky if
anyone shows up.

HARRY
I know. I was just making
conversation.

FAITH
Mmm. (BEAT) Why do we do that?

HARRY
Do what?

FAITH
Make conversation. I mean, we're
adults. We should be able to handle a
little silence without getting
uncomfortable.

HARRY
Mmm.

ANOTHER SILENCE.

FAITH
The flowers are nice though.

HARRY
Mmm. They are, aren't they?

FAITH
Oh, it's going to be a long night. I
need a drink.

HARRY
Cash bar - in the back. Bartender's
not here yet.

FAITH
No problem. I put myself through
college tending bar.

FAITH GOES BEHIND THE BAR. HARRY STARTS TO FOLLOW HER, BUT
JOE AND MR. GRIMM, THE FUNERAL HOME DIRECTOR, ENTER AND STOP
TO TALK TO HIM.

MR. GRIMM
Mr. Green, guests are beginning to
arrive. Are you ready to open the
doors?

HARRY
Sure. Joe?

JOE
I guess it's show time.

MR. GRIMM GOES TO THE ENTRANCE OF THE ROOM AND OPENS THE
DOORS.

HARRY
Can I get you anything?

JOE
A drink?

HARRY
Cash bar - over there.

FAITH WAVES.

JOE
Oh good - I think I know the
bartender. Ask her to start a tab for
me.

HARRY
What would you like?

JOE
Let's go with water for now. But not
for long.

HARRY HEADS TO THE BAR AS GUESTS START TO ENTER THE ROOM. JOE
WELCOMES THEM.

JOE (CONT'D)
Hello. Thank you for coming.

HARRY RETURNS WITH A DRINK FOR JOE. GABE AND GRETCHEN ENTER.

JOE (CONT'D)
Gretchen. Gabe. Thanks for coming.

GABE
Sure thing.

HARRY
Care to join me at the bar?

GABE
Harry, I underestimated you.

GABE, GRETCHEN AND HARRY HEAD TO THE BAR.

ANGLE ON BAR: GABE AND GRETCHEN AND HARRY JOIN FAITH AT THE
BAR.

GRETCHEN
A bar at a funeral?

HARRY
Let's just say Old Man Progress was
known to enjoy a cocktail or two.

GABE
Something light and bubbly for me and
the pretty lady.

FAITH POURS GABE AND GRETCHEN DRINKS. GABE RAISES HIS GLASS
FOR A TOAST.

GABE (CONT'D)
To Progress?

HARRY
To Progress!

FAITH
Progress!

GRETCHEN
Yeah, to Progress.

GABE
Harry, I am impressed. You've set up
quite a spread here, my man.

HARRY
Thank you.

GABE
One question, though.

HARRY
Yes?

GABE
Why is there a casket at a memorial
service for a man who was lost at sea?

HARRY
For display purposes.

FAITH
Sets the mood.

BERNADINE AND NELSON JOIN THEM.

BERNADINE
Hello everybody.

FAITH
What'll you have, Bernadine?

BERNADINE
Oh, just water for me, dear.

FAITH
You sure?

BERNADINE
Oh, you're right! Let's live a little -
throw in a slice of lime!

NELSON
Same for me, please.

FAITH MAKES THEIR DRINKS.

BERNADINE
Harry, the flowers look lovely.

HARRY
Thank you.

BERNADINE
One question, though.

HARRY
Yes?

BERNADINE
Why is there a casket at a memorial
service for a man who was lost at sea?

HARRY
Why does everyone keep asking me that?

GABE
It's for display purposes.

FAITH
Sets the mood.

BERNADINE
I don't know about that. I think this
bar is going to go a long way toward
setting the mood!

T.D. JOINS THEM.

T.D.
People!

ALL
T.D.!

ANGLE ON: GUESTS. THE STAFF IS GETTING A BIT LOUD AND
ATTRACTING THE ATTENTION OF THE GUESTS, WHO HAVE FILLED MOST
OF THE SEATS.

ANGLE ON: BAR.

T.D.
Harry, my man. What were you worried
about? You've put together an A-1
presentation tonight. Looks great.

HARRY
Thank you. That means a lot to me.

T.D.
One question though - why is there a
casket--

HARRY
It's for DISPLAY, all right? IT SETS
THE MOOD!

ANGLE ON: GUESTS. AGAIN, THE NOISE HAS CAUGHT THE ATTENTION
OF ALL THE GUESTS WHO ARE LOOKING IN THE DIRECTION OF THE
BAR.

ANGLE ON: LECTERN. JOE STEPS UP TO SPEAK.

JOE
Okay, I think maybe it's time we get
things started. Before some folks get
too far ahead of the rest of us.

ANGLE ON: THE BAR. FAITH SALUTES JOE WITH HER GLASS.

ANGLE ON: LECTERN. JOE WAVES TO FAITH.

JOE (CONT'D)
(TO FAITH)
Thank you, Faith.

(TO THE GUESTS)
I want to thank you all for coming
tonight. It means a lot to me
personally. I know that my uncle
wasn't the easiest man to know. He was
tough. At times, he was downright
mean.

(MORE)

JOE (CONT'D)
But his presence on this planet has given us all something in common. Like him or not, his influence on each of us is a bond we all share. Tonight, we're here to remember that influence, to share stories, good and bad, and yes, to have a drink or two. First, I'd like to present Gretchen Jergensen, who has volunteered to share some of her memories of my Uncle Jeremiah Progress. Gretchen?

JOE STEPS AWAY FROM THE LECTERN. GRETCHEN STEPS UP.

GRETCHEN
Hi. I'm Gretchen Jergensen. I'm a little nervous. I'm not a great speaker. But I've had some champagne, so I'm a little relaxed, too. Anyway, I was thinking about how much Mr. Progress was interested in my career and my personal well-being. Not a lot of people know this, but he hired me away from a modeling job, doing car shows in Minneapolis. He said I deserved a career, and gave me my job in Master Control. He worked out with me all the time.

(MORE)

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)
We used to do aerobics together. Well,
actually I would do the aerobics and
he would coach. See my Buns of Steel?

GRETCHEN STEPS AWAY FROM THE LECTERN AND BENDS OVER,
EMPHASIZING HER BEHIND. SHE THEN RETURNS TO THE LECTERN.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)
He helped make my bottom what it is
today.

ANGLE ON: FRONT ROW. JOE & HARRY, ARE GROWING QUITE
CONCERNED.

ANGLE ON: THE LECTERN.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)
Which is pretty amazing, when you
consider how bad his eyesight was.
That poor man could only check the
progress of my Buns of Steel by using
his bare hands.

ANGLE ON: GUESTS. SHOCK REVERBERATES THROUGH THE ROOM.

ANGLE ON: FRONT ROW. JOE & HARRY, BOLT FROM THEIR SEATS
TOWARD THE LECTERN.

ANGLE ON: THE LECTERN.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)
That sort of dedication--

HARRY ESCORTS GRETCHEN AWAY. JOE STEPS UP TO THE LECTERN.

JOE
Thank you Gretchen, for that
insightful trip down memory lane. Uh,
Mr. Grimm?

ANGLE ON: GUESTS MR. GRIMM STEPS FORWARD FROM THE REAR OF THE ROOM.

JOE (CONT'D)
I think it's time for our toast.

MR. GRIMM NODS AND SUMMONS SEVERAL WAITERS WHO BEGIN DELIVERING GLASSES OF CHAMPAGNE TO ALL THE GUESTS. MR. GRIMM DELIVERS A GLASS TO JOE AND MOVES TO A POSITION AT THE FRONT OF THE ROOM, NEAR THE CASKET. JOE RAISES HIS GLASS.

JOE (CONT'D)
To Progress! Jeremiah Progress, that
is.

EVERYONE TAKES A DRINK.

JOE (CONT'D)
I think we'll break here and allow
everyone a chance to mingle and share
their stories on a more personal
level. Thank you again for coming.

GUESTS STAND AND BEGIN TO MINGLE. JOE STEPS DOWN AND JOINS HARRY AT THE CASKET.

JOE (CONT'D)
Well, that was a close one.

HARRY
I'll say.

JOE
Harry, I gotta ask--

HARRY
I had no idea she was going to talk
about that.

JOE
No not that. This. (POINTS TO CASKET)
Why is there a casket at a memorial
service for a man who was lost at sea?

HARRY
What is wrong with you people? It's a
display. It sets the mood.

HARRY FLIPS OPEN THE LID OF THE CASKET.

HARRY (CONT'D)
And it has a very large black man in
it.

HARRY SLAMS THE LID CLOSED AND POINTS AT MR. GRIMM.

HARRY (CONT'D)
You! Here! Now!

HARRY POINTS AT THE FLOOR IMMEDIATELY NEXT TO HIM. MR. GRIMM
HURRIEDLY JOINS HIM.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Why is there a casket at a memorial
service for a man who was lost at sea?

MR. GRIMM
It sets the mood?

HARRY OPEN THE LID AGAIN AND POINTS AT ITS OCCUPANT.

HARRY
And why is there a very large and very
dead black man in the casket?

HARRY SLAMS THE LID CLOSED AGAIN.

MR. GRIMM
Hmm. That might explain why the family
in parlor number three is looking for
Uncle Shorty.

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE L

INT - FUNERAL PARLOR - NIGHT (4) - A FEW HOURS LATER
(MR. GRIMM, JOE, NELSON, BERNADINE, GABE, GRETCHEN, FAITH,
HARRY, T.D.)

HARRY, JOE, T.D., NELSON, BERNADINE, GABE AND GRETCHEN ARE
GATHERED AROUND THE BAR. FAITH IS STILL SERVING DRINKS. T.D.
HAS FALLEN ASLEEP, HIS HEAD ON THE BAR. THE OTHER GUESTS AND
THE CASKET ARE GONE. MR. GRIMM APPROACHES JOE.

MR. GRIMM
I'm afraid it's about time to lock up,
Mr. Progress.

JOE
Thanks. Could you call a couple of
cabs for us?

MR. GRIMM
Certainly, sir.

MR. GRIMM EXITS.

JOE
Well, people, this is a night I won't
soon forget.

NELSON
It's a good thing Uncle Shorty's
family was so understanding.

BERNADINE
They're good folks. I do wish someone
had told me Shorty had died though.

JOE
You knew him?

BERNADINE
Knew him? I dated him.

GABE
Go Bernadine!

BERNADINE
You hush!

JOE
Why didn't you mention it while the
family was here?

BERNADINE
Oh, it was a long time ago. They all
had their own stories to tell. And
they were being so upbeat and
positive.

GABE
This sounds good!

BERNADINE
I thought I told you to hush.

JOE
Come on Bernadine. Tell us your story.

BERNADINE
Oh there's not much to tell, really.
Except I'm the one who gave him his
nickname.

JOE
How so?

BERNADINE
Let's just say Uncle Shorty's nickname
didn't have anything to do with his
height.

BERNADINE FINISHES HER WATER, SETS THE GLASS DOWN ON THE BAR
WITH AUTHORITY.

BERNADINE (CONT'D)
Now, who needs a ride home?

GABE
I'll take you up on that offer.

GRETCHEN
Me too!

JOE
Good night, you guys!

BERNADINE, GRETCHEN AND GABE EXIT.

FAITH
Well I must say - it has been one
interesting week. Are they all like
this in Television Land?

JOE
God, I hope not.

NELSON
I'll second that. We've got to go
through that entire miserable audition
process one more time.

JOE
I'm not so sure about that, Nelson.

NELSON
What do you mean?

JOE
I watched the tape again after you
left. Found an exceptional talent we
missed during the first pass.

HARRY
I knew it! I accept your offer to re-
audition.

JOE TAKES AWAY HARRY'S GLASS AND HANDS IT TO FAITH.

JOE
Okay, you've had enough.

FAITH
Thank you.

HARRY
You're welcome.

JOE
One person I saw on the tape brought a
distinct passion to the screen.

(MORE)

JOE (CONT'D)
He talked about making a one on one
connection with the viewer, and then
he just - did it. He reached out and
connected, and it was marvelous.

NELSON
What? Me? Hosting the Creature
Feature? Oh - no! I'm a Shakespearean
trained actor.

JOE
So was William Shatner. It worked for
him.

T.D. POPS HIS HEAD UP.

T.D.
T.J. Hooker is the man!

T.D.'S HEAD FLOPS BACK ONTO THE BAR.

NELSON
Oh, I don't think so, Joseph. I'm too
old. Kids aren't interested in seeing
a tired old man on television.

JOE
A tired old man, with tired old
movies. It's a perfect fit.

FAITH
Do it, Nelson. You'd be great.

NELSON
Are you serious?

JOE
There's no one I'd rather lean on.

NELSON CONSIDERS IT FOR A MOMENT.

NELSON
All right...what could it hurt?

JOE
There you go! You debut next Saturday
night.

NELSON
Next Saturday? Are you insane? We need
to do a pilot--

JOE
I trust you, Nelson. You'll do just
fine.

MR. GRIMM ENTERS.

MR. GRIMM
Mr. Progress? Your taxis are here.

JOE
Thank you.

NELSON
(TO JOE)
I'll buddy up with Harry and Theodore.

(TO FAITH)
Make sure he gets home safe and sound,
will you Miss Dennison?

FAITH
Sure.

NELSON HELPS T.D. UP.

HARRY
Nelson?

NELSON
Yes, Harry?

HARRY
I couldn't have lost to a nicer
fellow.

NELSON, T.D. AND HARRY EXIT.

NELSON (O.S.)
You're drunk, Harry.

HARRY (O.S.)
Yes, I am.

FAITH
They are quite a pair, those two.

JOE
Yes they are.

AN UNCOMFORTABLE SILENCE. JOE STARES AT FAITH.

FAITH
The flowers were nice.

JOE
Mmm. Why do we do that?

FAITH
Do what?

JOE
Feel compelled to fill uncomfortable
silences.

FAITH
Don't know. Come on, we need to go.
The meter's running.

JOE
Always worried about the money, aren't
you?

FAITH
Just doing my job.

FAITH COMES AROUND AND GUIDES JOE TOWARD THE EXIT.

JOE
Know what?

FAITH
What?

JOE
We're quite a pair, too.

FAITH
Yes, we are. Yes, we are.

FAITH AND JOE EXIT. MR. GRIMM DIMS THE LIGHTS AND EXITS.

ANGLE ON: LECTERN. JEREMIAH'S PORTRAIT IS STILL LIT IN A SOFT
SPOTLIGHT.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT II