

FAMOUS

Joseph Olsen

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Cast of Characters

<u>SCOTT HARRISON:</u>	An aspiring film director with several films under his belt. He has come to the show to promote his upcoming film.
<u>JIMMY DALE:</u>	A famous Talk Show host known for his late night show "TOO LATE AT NIGHT." He's upbeat and always has a smile on his face.
<u>KYLE PETERS:</u>	Kyle is rated the #1 film director of his generation, not bad after dropping out of college.
<u>NANCY HARRISON (MOM):</u>	Scott's mom, she loves Scott and would do anything for him, sometimes too much.
<u>CAMERA-MAN:</u>	Operates the cameras and other equipment around the LIVE TV Set for Jimmy Dale's show.
<u>HARAMBE:</u>	A GORILLA.

Scene

A tall skinny lamp rests stage-right of a grey-blue couch that has two cushions. Next to the couch is JIMMY DALE's brown wooden desk. Resting on the desk as always is his microphone, his coffee mug, and a digital clock with blue numbers.

Time

It's late at night, May 28, 2022. Presumably past 1 AM.

ACT I

Scene 1

SCOTT sits on a couch in a semi-formal suit while he types on his laptop. He contently studies the screen--

CAMERA-MAN:

SCOTT! You ready?

SCOTT:

(breaking focus)

Huh? Oh, well...

CAMERA-MAN:

You don't look ready. It's a live recording. You only have one take. So get ready.

SCOTT:

I mean, I'm as ready as I'll ever be.

CAMERA-MAN:

Nice confidence.

The CAMERA-MAN walks over to SCOTT as he folds up his laptop. The CAMERA-MAN relieves SCOTT of the laptop. SCOTT readjusts himself on the couch before noticing the lamp by the couch. He gets up to turn it OFF and returns to his position. SCOTT yawns.

The CAMERA-MAN gives him the "A-okay" hand signal. SCOTT flattens his pant creases. Three... Two... One...

LIGHTS come up as the BAND plays 1960s music to reveal a desk and its inhabitant, JIMMY, with a microphone, a digital clock, and a white coffee mug.

JIMMY:

Good evening ladies and gentlemen! You're watching *TOO LATE AT NIGHT* with me, your host, the one and only, yours truly, JIMMY DALE! We've got a great show coming up for you tonight including two very special guests--

SCOTT:

(under his breath)

two?

(CONTINUED)

JIMMY:

(continuous)

--a test that could determine your future, the six year anniversary of the death of Harambe, and much, much more! So don't change that channel! And if you're watching this two days later on YouTube... do us a favor and turn off AdBlock!

JIMMY sends a quick glance to SCOTT.

JIMMY:

Our first guest of the night is an engineer-slash-entrepreneur turned big time movie director! You may know some of his films such as *THE DAY OF NIGHT*, *STORIED PAST: FUTURE FRIENDS*, and *AWAKE. Ladies and Gentlemen, SCOTT HARRISON!*

The crowd cheers and claps. The band plays.

JIMMY:

It's great to have you here, Scott!

SCOTT:

Well thanks for having me.

JIMMY:

Always a pleasure. So, Scott. You used to be an engineer. And then you switched to film!

SCOTT:

Heh, that's right. Well, I wasn't an engineer for long. I graduated from college and I worked a few years until I had enough money to really start a good channel on YouTube.

JIMMY:

And that made you enough money for your first film, *AWAKE*.

SCOTT:

Yeah-huh. And I don't know, I really love what I do now.

JIMMY:

And you used to... I heard you liked to pretend you were on talk shows when you were younger.

SCOTT:

Yeah! Kind of. It wasn't like play-time pretend or anything. But any time I'd be doing a task or just laying in bed unable to sleep, I would make whatever I was thinking sound like an interview between me and one of the Jimmy's.

(CONTINUED)

JIMMY:

One of the Jimmy's?

SCOTT:

You're name is Jimmy. Then there's Jimmy Fallon, Jimmy Kimmel, James Corden--

JIMMY:

--Which is like a formal Jimmy name--

SCOTT:

Sure. Then if you really think about it, J-names are it too. John Oliver, Jay Leno, and of course Johnny Carson.

JIMMY:

Wow, I never even thought of that! Oh, don't forget John Stewart. Now wait a second, what about Craig Ferguson? Not a "J."

SCOTT:

True, he is white though. Oh, you're all white too!

Awkward beat.

SCOTT:

If I hadn't been an engineer and filmmaker, I would have liked to have been a talk show host but my name doesn't start with J AND I'm not white.

The "awkward beat" hole is dug deeper.

SCOTT:

I guess it's kind of funny. I used to pretend I was on talk shows. Now I'm actually talking on a talk show about talking on talk shows.

This Beat hole might reach to China.

SCOTT:

I mean really, if it's about the name James, why not Jamie Foxx. Jamie is practically James. Plus he's so much more talented and you KNOW he always steals the show on Fallon. He's probably even more charismatic than you!

Welcome to China, Scott! Greeted by a straight-faced Jimmy.

JIMMY:

(moving on)

So four years of engineering school for nothing, right?

(CONTINUED)

SCOTT:

Five, actually.

JIMMY:

Super senior!

SCOTT:

Haha, actually I repeated junior year, so my fourth year I called myself a "double junior."

JIMMY:

Sounds like something I'd order at the Burger King drive-thru.

SCOTT:

Right? Heh, but to answer your question, it didn't feel like it was all for not. I learned a lot and probably wouldn't be here without that knowledge.

JIMMY:

Oh, but the *tests*!

SCOTT:

The tests were always hard. Not because the material was hard.

JIMMY:

(as he taps his cue cards on the desk)
Right, because differential equations is sooo easy.

SCOTT:

Haha, no. Well yes--for me, yes.

JIMMY:

And so humble too!

They both laugh.

SCOTT:

But the point is, the material didn't matter. I just used to get all stressed and stay up all night.

JIMMY:

Regardless of the class.

SCOTT:

Exactly. I couldn't sleep, I would just lay there and think of test problems in my head, or think about my future. Life after college.

JIMMY:

That is just the worst!

(CONTINUED)

SCOTT:

Yeah, but eventually I--

The Band's flute, trumpet, and cymbal abruptly clatter and steal SCOTT's train of thought.

Beat.

JIMMY:

Tell us about your upcoming film.

SCOTT:

Right, so I've got this great film coming out. I've really put my heart into it. It also feels good to actually have a large budget. In some ways it's more stressful, but mostly it's freeing in terms of what I can actually do on screen.

JIMMY:

Now, you almost dropped out of college once, right?

SCOTT:

Yeah. At the time, I was pretty... well I was depressed. But back to the movie, it's--

JIMMY:

Bah! Let's talk about the depression first.

The Band plays a quick line of 60s music.

SCOTT:

(hesitantly)

Well, okay. I think everyone eventually goes through some form of depression in college and I just felt like I wasn't really fulfilling my purpose in life--

JIMMY:

Which was?

SCOTT:

Simply put: inspiring people. When I was younger I thought that meant being a storyteller, or even just an artist or teacher. But you know... sometimes you have people in your life that tell you things like--

MOM:

(from off stage)

You need to make money first.

SCOTT:

Or

KYLE:

(from off stage)
You need a fallback.

SCOTT:

And really, it's all true. Mostly. I think you hear these stories of people that are famous now, and they talk about how they were struggling artists and all that, but if you chase your dreams with everything you've got, then they'll come true.

JIMMY:

Which is what happened with you!

SCOTT:

Kind of. I mean, I still had the fallback though. I was never a "starving" artist.

JIMMY:

Can we get hungry Scott over here a BK Double Junior?

The camera-man looks up as if to take the cue.

SCOTT:

Ha, no thanks, I'm good. Honestly, my degree made the in-between living... well, livable. Plus, the only reason you hear those stories is because EVERY artist goes through that, so even though the ones that make it talk about the struggle, everybody's going through that shit. The only difference is some people never escape it. You know? I never went through that, but I'm still here.

JIMMY:

Whoa, nelly! I thought you were going to get all "Soapbox Kanye on Ellen" for a second there.

The crowd giggles.

JIMMY:

(Imitating Kanye)
"I have ideas that can make the human race existence within our hundred years better. Period!"

SCOTT:

(Going along, raising his hands)
"Ye is in the BUILDING!"

JIMMY:

Aha! My God. Easily one of my most re-watched YouTube clips.

(CONTINUED)

SCOTT:
Same.

Beat.

JIMMY:
Well speaking of starving artists that now have more money and popularity than even you, let's welcome our second guest of the night: KYLE PETERS!

A skinny KYLE walks on stage from stage-right and sits on the couch next to SCOTT. His walk is peppy, yet flagmatic, his feet roll through steps like Shaggy from "Scooby Doo."

KYLE:
Hey Jimmy!

JIMMY:
Boy, you just keep showing up on my show! This has gotta be the fourth time this year, and it's only May!

KYLE:
I know! I'm surprised I can make it with my busy schedule. But I just love it so much.

KYLE leans over and whispers something in SCOTT'S EAR.

SCOTT:
WHAT?

JIMMY:
You've been making movies for the last few years since you dropped out of college. Kind of a 180 from Scott's story.

KYLE:
Mhm. I just felt like the art I was making in college was a high priority. If I wasn't valuing my art at at least an equal importance as my schooling, then I wasn't doing myself any favors. I had a pretty bad semester, but it gave me the opportunity to just get rid of the safety net and spread my wings.

SCOTT:
Kind of a mixed metaphor...

JIMMY:
TIME magazine put you in the TOP 10 directors of *ALL TIME* list--

(CONTINUED)

SCOTT:

(in bad taste)
I was also on that list.

JIMMY:

--at NUMBER ONE!

KYLE:

I was really honored.

JIMMY:

If there was anything you could tell aspiring film directors what would it be?

KYLE:

Well, I think I would say just follow your dreams.

SCOTT:

Oh, please.

KYLE:

Don't be afraid to just go out there and do it. Even if you're in college, find time. MAKE TIME. You can do whatever you want to, the world is your--

SCOTT:

(mocking)
Oyster?

KYLE:

Canvas. Paint a picture and frame it.

KYLE leans over and taunts SCOTT with another whisper.

SCOTT:

What the hell is that supposed to mean? I couldn't do anything. I was in school! I had tests like almost every week.

Stage-right a printer starts to sputter, gaining only the attention of SCOTT. CAMERA-MAN walks over and starts banging on it.

KYLE:

You know, I think I know what you were like in college. You probably spent a lot of time doing a whole lot of nothing. Always talking about stuff and never actually doing it.

SCOTT:

But I'm here now. And that's what's important. We all work at our own pace.

(CONTINUED)

KYLE:

Don't you wonder what you could have accomplished if you had left college sooner though?

SCOTT:

Probably nothing, honestly! I used my first paycheck as an engineer to buy equipment an--

BANG! BANG! BANG! The CAMERA-MAN continues to whack at the printer.

SCOTT:

Is everything okay?

JIMMY:

We've got a very special THIRD guest tonight, and Scott, you may know her! Everybody, SCOTT's MOM, NANCY HARRISON!

JIMMY gestures towards the front seat bank, and MOM stands up holding a plate of Tabouli Salad. She waves her hands towards the card and makes her way to sit on the couch.

MOM:

Thanks for having me, Jimmy. (to SCOTT) Hey, honey! I brought you a salad. It's quinoa tabouli.

MOM hands the plate to SCOTT.

SCOTT:

(confused)

I don't want this.

JIMMY:

Oh mothers!

The Crowd laughs. SCOTT places the plate on JIMMY's desk. KYLE reaches over SCOTT and tries a bite.

KYLE:

Mmmmm! That's great Mrs. H!

MOM:

Thanks, Scott usually likes it. He doesn't eat when he's stressing over stuff like tests.

SCOTT:

Could you not right now?

(CONTINUED)

MOM:

Oh, it's fine! People need to hear this. YOU need to hear it! Nobody's perfect.

JIMMY:

So Nancy, you paid for almost all of your son's college.

MOM:

I did, I did. I had to get a job just to make it work. But I'm proud of him. My little engineer!

SCOTT:

I'm a filmmaker.

MOM:

He always says that.

SCOTT:

I'm on this show to promote my new film, mom!

MOM:

You know, Jimmy... he used to tell me these wild ideas. Like a new genre of film called "science non-fiction" where the fictional movie would act as an advertisement for REAL upcoming innovative technology!

JIMMY:

Fascinating.

KYLE:

But you never got around to doing that yet.

SCOTT:

I will.

MOM:

But I used to tell him "just stick to college. Focus on your classes. STUDY FOR YOUR TESTS." And I'm so glad he did.

SCOTT:

As much as I hate to admit it, I'm happier this way too. In the long run it was the right choice.

KYLE:

You have no balls.

SCOTT:

Pardon me?

(CONTINUED)

KYLE:

Mama's boy.

SCOTT:

Why are you even here?

KYLE:

I've got THREE movies coming out this year, what about you?

SCOTT:

Well, just one. But I was busy too.

KYLE:

There's a success that comes with failure. When you're no longer afraid to fail, the doors open.

SCOTT:

But why do my choices that led to my success have to fit your definition of failure. Maybe I succeeded, just differently.

JIMMY:

You can't spell Success without Suck.

SCOTT:

Can we like regroup for a second?

SLAM! BANG BANG! CRUNCH!!! The CAMERA-MAN really goes at it on the printer, kicking it and hitting it with a baseball bat.

MOM:

Scott, I really think you should try my salad.

She gets up and grabs the plate, trying to force-feed SCOTT.

SCOTT:

Mom, get out of here! We're on live TV.

JIMMY:

OH MOTHERS!

KYLE:

IF Kanye West could record his first song with his jaw wired shut from a car wreck, what was really stopping you from your dreams in college? I vote you.

MOM:

Seconded!

(CONTINUED)