

A Harmless Curiosity

By

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Based On The Life of Leonard Jones

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EXT. LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY - MAIN STREET - DAY

Victorian architecture. Horse-drawn carriages jam the cobble-stone street. An old clock tower bell tolls in the distance.

ON CURB

A fancy black carriage wheel with gold trim skids to a halt.

A hickory cane stabs the pavement. A man's foot. Another.

VOICE #1 (O.C.)
Lemme hep you deh, suh.

Struggling sounds.

VOICE #2 (O.C.)
Dat! I ain't needin' any help, God
willin'!

His feet hobble towards the front door. His legs shake.

Grunts and sighs on each step.

His stance buckles and he collapses on one knee.

VOICE
Blasted mother o' Moses!

His voice sounds like Tom Waits with the flu.

He picks himself up and brushes the dust off.

FAST TILT UP

Above the door, a sign: Baxter Huxley's Freelance Political Campaign Office.

INT. CAMPAIGN OFFICE

A CLERK works at a desk. A sweaty slob, dark hair in his eyes. Unshaven. Papers and folders stack to the ceiling.

He pulls a folder from a stack, almost causing an avalanche. Dust rains down. He hums a tune under his breath.

Off-camera, a door creaks open and closed. A bell jingles. Stumbling, slow foot steps.

The Clerk studies a paper form and scribbles notes in its margin, mumbling. Dirty fingernails. Oblivious to his visitor.

(CONTINUED)

BANG!

The hickory cane hits The Clerk's desk, dead center.

The Clerk looks up in disgust, revealing his rotting teeth.

CLERK

Uh?!

CLOSE ON VISITOR

A dark grey-haired man, LEONARD JONES, leans close and squints one eye. He wears an expensive brown suit. His sideburns flair like dragon wings.

JONES

I'm here to be seein' Huxley!

ON CLERK

The clerk coughs and swipes the greasy hair out of his eyes.

CLERK

Can't you see, old man... he's
busy. Why do you even bother coming
in here? You're just a los--

The cane points at the clerk's neck and presses forward. The clerk backs up.

VOICE (O.C.)

Leonard!

They turn.

A fat man in an expensive pure white suit, brimmed hat, and gloves, BAXTER HUXLEY, emerges from a side office door. He clasps his hands together. His collar is buttoned up so tight that his fat neck bulges. He chuckles.

HUXLEY

You have not initiated a new
campaign in weeks, I was fraught
with high drama, my friend!

The Clerk rolls his eyes and pushes the hickory cane out of his face.

CLERK

Phh.

Huxley puts his arm around Jones and scoops him away.

(CONTINUED)

JONES

We got somethin' important and
urgent to be discussin' here.

HUXLEY

Indeed! We do!

Huxley hustles Jones into his office and closes the door.

HUXLEY'S OFFICE

In contrast to The Clerk's office, Huxley's room is
immaculate. Everything painted entirely white.

Huxley gestures to a couch.

HUXLEY

Have a seat, my esteemed colleague!

Jones pokes the couch with his cane. A wet spot.

He sniffs the tip of his cane and makes a face.

JONES

I'll... stand.

Huxley settles into a padded chair. He yanks a lever on the
side and it reclines. He leans his hands behind his head.
The chair lunges backwards and he loses his balance.

He catches himself and opts to cross his hands in front of
him.

JONES (cont'd)

That there fancy-dancy chair made
by Gnomes?

HUXLEY

Umea, Sweden.

Huxley clears his throat.

HUXLEY (cont'd)

Now then... I was so sorry about
your misfired Eighteen Oh Seven
Campaign For Governor. Perhaps you
should join an established party
who can advance us a thorough
budget. I've seen some thin results
in my time, but ZERO votes? It's a
sign of divine intervention!

Jones turns and peeks through the blinds.

(CONTINUED)

JONES

You're right, 'ol Hux. Zero votes
can only mean one dang thing. The
time has come.

Huxley shoots out of his chair, a look of terror on his
face.

HUXLEY

No! Not... retirement!?

PUSH IN ON JONES

Jones whirls around and leans on his cane with both hands, a
smile on his face.

JONES

God wants me to be gettin' elected
President.

A beat.

Huxley snaps his fingers.

HUXLEY

Well now... that shall be
expensive!

Huxley steps to his desk, grabs a pencil and licks the tip.
He scribbles on a note pad.

HUXLEY (cont'd)

That troglodyte from Hardin County,
Abraham Lincoln, hired a firm of
proper hucksters... acquired for
him a fancy top hat.

Huxley holds up a rough pencil sketch of Lincoln.

HUXLEY (cont'd)

We can do far better... but we'll
need a development budget for a
superior meme that--

JONES

We ain't gonna need the usual
balloons and confetti crapola.

Huxley takes his glasses off and stares at Jones.

HUXLEY

No? Well, Lincoln is a gentleman of
the tall dark and handsome variety,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HUXLEY (cont'd)
a renowned state legislator, a
substantial member of the House of
Representatives... I'm not
proposing that you cannot emerge
victorious, of course, my most
loyal of customers, but what shall
be our angle here? Have you a
platform this time? Hmm?

A beat.

JONES
I'm a gonna live forever, Hux. I
got me the gift of im-mor-tal-it-y.

Huxley raises his eyebrow.

A beat.

Huxley claps his hands.

HUXLEY
Splendid! I'd like to see Lincoln
top that!

He stands up.

HUXLEY (cont'd)
(yelling to the next room)
Booth, prepare the Campaign
Champagne! We're going to D.C.!

THE END