

FINAL DRAFT
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FOREVER FERNWOOD



EPISODE #423

by

JERRY ADELMAN

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PRODUCTION

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARTHA	DODY GOODMAN
GRANDPA	VICTOR KILIAN
MERLE	DABNEY COLEMAN
WANDA	MARIAN MERCER
ELEANOR	SHELLEY FABARES
GEORGE	PHIL BRUNS
NAT DEARBORN	LOU FRIZZELL
JACK MARS	

SETS

ACT I
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BIDE-A-WEE EAST - DAY
(Wanda and Jack Mars)

ACT II
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SHUMWAY KITCHEN - DAY
(Martha, Grandpa, George,
and Nat Dearborn)

ACT III
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BIDE-A-WEE EAST - DAWN
(Wanda and Jack Mars)

ACT IV
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MAJOR LIVING ROOM - MORNING
(Merle, Eleanor, and Wanda)

ACT ONE

BIDE--A--WEE EAST - DAY

WANDA, SOLA, VERY INTENT ON HER WORK, IS SKETCHING. CAMERA SEES SOME OF HER SKETCHES WHICH ARE OF PUNK-ROCK OUTFITS, QUITE GOOD, ACTUALLY, IN THAT RIDICULOUS AREA.

SFX: KNOCK ON DOOR

WANDA OPENS DOOR, REVEALING JACK MARS.

JACK

Wanda Jeeter?

WANDA

Yes...

JACK

(OBVIOUSLY EXPECTING THE NAME TO MEAN SOMETHING TO HER) Jack Mars.

THE NAME MEANS NOTHING TO HER.

JACK (CONT'D)

You know who I am, of course.

WANDA

No, I'm afraid I don't.

JACK

Rapping with Mars?

WANDA

I beg your pardon?

JACK

"Rapping with Mars." The late-night
talk show.

WANDA

What about it?

JACK

That's my show. You never heard of it?

WANDA

No...

JACK

It's radio. Not the boob tube.

WANDA

Still doesn't ring a bell, I'm afraid!

JACK

You must've just breezed into town. I'm
a fixture here in the Big Apple. Johnny
Carson is meaningless compared to me.

WANDA

Is this a door-to-door campaign?... Do
you have a petition I should sign?

JACK

Hey, this man doesn't ask favors,
inquisitive lady.

WANDA

Then why are you here? I don't want to
be rude, but in this neighborhood, one
has to worry about muggers.

JACK

I'm here because I've got a favor I can do for you.

WANDA

I don't want to appear overly cautious, but you're not a pervert, are you?

JACK

You get right to the point. I like that... Feisty women are dynamite for ratings.

WANDA

That doesn't answer my question.

JACK

Hey, if I wasn't clean-cut, would I be the star I am today? Would I be able to offer you instant stardom via my talk show?

WANDA

Let me try to make sense of your basically inarticulate and convoluted question... Are you asking me to be a guest on your show?

JACK

(EMCEE-LIKE) You got it!! You're thrilled, aren't you?

WANDA

Why would I be?

JACK

Everybody wants to be a star!

WANDA

Perhaps the blonde hair fooled you...
I'm a legitimate designer, not Charo.

JACK

Hey, you don't need a big bosom to be
on my show...

WANDA

How kind. But the answer is no.

JACK

Let me warn you... rejection intrigues me.

WANDA

I don't care.

JACK

And so does insensitivity... Will you do
the show?

WANDA

No.

JACK

That only makes me more determined.

WANDA

I'm sorry...

JACK

(INTERRUPTING) ... Apology accepted...
so... I can count on you, right?

WANDA

Allow me to explain it in terms even an imbecile could understand. You see, I'm basically out of my element here. New York is difficult enough to deal with, without the added burden of stardom.

JACK

You're a natural... You got what we call in the trade... "yowie!"

WANDA

Don't try to ply me with your sweet-talk.

JACK

You wanna talk turkey, huh?... Okay. "Publicity." I'm offering you free advertising, business-lady. Your line of Punk-rock fashions will become a household name... You know what some people would pay for that?

WANDA

Please, spare me.

JACK

Hey, I'm not asking you to go that far. Just guest on the show... Maybe have a little dinner with me afterwards... go on. Give yourself a chance to know the real me. Then when you get back home, you know the question that'll be on everyone's lips?

WANDA

What is Jack Mars really like?

JACK

Hey, they've asked it already!

WANDA

And, frankly, I was stumped.

JACK

Even now, I am a hard guy to get to know.
No pun intended. But you start getting
to know me by guesting on my show tonight.

WANDA

That would be kind of exciting...

JACK

Leave the "kind of's" at home, little
lady. When you're rapping with Mars,
you're mingling with stars. (STARTS FOR
DOOR) I'll have my secretary call and
tell you what subway to take to the
studio.

WANDA

(CHECKING IT OUT) Wanda Jeeter on the
radio?

JACK

In living color. (EXITS)

WANDA

(TO SELF) This is my kinda town.

FADE OUT.

ACT TWOSHUMWAY KITCHEN - DAY

MARTHA, GEORGE AND GRANDPA AT
BREAKFAST. GEORGE IS READING
NEWSPAPER.

GRANDPA

Martha, will you stock up on prunes?

GEORGE

(SUDDENLY EXPLODING FROM BEHIND THE
NEWSPAPER) This is crazy!

GRANDPA

All right, then, just a few prunes.

GEORGE

The world is falling apart, and all you
can think about is prunes!?

GRANDPA

My world falls apart without them.

MARTHA

Is something troubling you, George?

GEORGE

Everything! The newspaper makes it sound
like Mel Beach is an innocent victim in
all this. We all know he murdered those
people, and not just people! -- Heather,
too!

MARTHA

Yes, but I don't think he's guilty.

GEORGE

What the hell are you talking about??

MARTHA

I think he's innocent by reason of insanity.

GEORGE

That's right. Stick up for him. You've still got a soft spot in your heart for him, haven't you?

MARTHA

No, I haven't.

GRANDPA

She must have a soft spot in her head if she picked you instead of him.

GEORGE

(FLARES) You keep out of this. You haven't made sense for thirty years!

GRANDPA

Twenty-five.

GEORGE

Maybe I'm not the greatest husband in the world, but I'm a hell of a lot better than a crazy mass murderer! At least when I opened fire on the town square I didn't hit anybody.

MARTHA

Mel Beach is not a murderer until the court says so.

GEORGE

I don't have to wait for the court to tell me. I know. He killed those people.

MARTHA

Oh, George, you're just being pigheaded. One thing about Mel, he was never pigheaded.

GEORGE

If he's such a wonderful guy, maybe you should have married him instead of me.

GRANDPA

Then I'd have my prunes.

GEORGE

(THREATENING) I'm warning you...

MARTHA

Oh, George, you're so jealous you can't think straight. You shouldn't judge Mel until he has a trial.

GEORGE

Trials are for people who haven't made their minds up yet. I know the facts and Mel is guilty! And it's my duty as a citizen to see he gets what's coming to him.

SFX: KNOCK ON DOOR

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Good. That must be Nat Dearborn.

GRANDPA

Nat Dearborn the clown?

GEORGE

He's the new assistant D.A.

GEORGE OPENS DOOR, ADMITTING
DEARBORN WHO CARRIES A BRIEFCASE.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Hi, Nat... Mr. Assistant D.A. Don't waste any time... tell 'em Mel Beach is guilty.

DEARBORN

Well, let's look at the facts. (OPENS BRIEFCASE AND STARTS PAWING THROUGH A MESS OF PAPERS) I've got all the facts here someplace... Let's see... No, that's a dispossess notice. Forgot to pay my rent last month. All the hubbub with a new job. Let's see. Where are those facts? Wait a minute. I know the facts.

GEORGE

Well, he's guilty of murder, isn't he? So you're gonna convict him.

DEARBORN

Oh, we'll convict him, all right. Don't worry about that. We just may not be able to convict him of murder that's all.

GEORGE

What?? Why not?

DEARBORN

Well, we haven't been able to find any
bodies.

MARTHA

I'm so happy!

DEARBORN

But we're gonna see that he doesn't
get off.

GEORGE

How?

DEARBORN

I've been doing some research, and
there's a Fernwood city ordinance from
1874 making it illegal for butchers to
transport uninspected meat across county
lines without a license.

GEORGE

What the hell has that got to do with
anything??

DEARBORN

Well, I'm sure we can get him for shipping
those human organs around without a
license. He'll do time for that, all
right.

GEORGE

How much time?

DEARBORN

Oh, he could get as much as thirty, maybe even forty days in jail.

MARTHA

(TO NAT) Thank you, thank you, thank you.

GRANDPA

(TO MARTHA) Now how about a trip to the market.

GEORGE

Thirty days in jail for killing all those people?

DEARBORN

Well, he could be fined, too. As much as fifty dollars.

GEORGE

Okay. Okay. I can see that if justice is gonna get done around here, it's gonna be up to the citizens to get it done. All that's needed is leadership, and that's where I come in.

MARTHA

Now, George, don't do anything rash.

GEORGE

(TO DEARBORN) You can fool around with the butcher's union if you want to.

(TO GRANDPA) You can sit around and stuff yourself with prunes. (TO MARTHA) You can leave me for Mel Beach if you want to...

MARTHA

I can't do that. I've got to stay with
you whether I like it or not: we're
married.

GEORGE

Some marriage!

GEORGE GETS UP AND STALKS OUT
INTO THE LIVING ROOM. THE OTHERS
LOOK AFTER HIM.

GRANDPA

I think he is gonna do something rash.

FADE OUT.

ACT THREEBIDE-A-WEE EAST - DAWN

EMPTY BUT LIGHT HAS BEEN LEFT ON.
DOOR OPENS AND WANDA AND JACK
COME IN, WEARING COATS OVER THEIR
RATHER DRESSY CLOTHES. JACK, WHO
HAS USED WANDA'S KEY
POLITELY TO OPEN THE DOOR, OFFERS
THE KEY TO HER, BUT SHE SEEMS NOT
TO NOTICE IN HER ANXIETY TO GO
DIRECTLY TO THE PHONE. SHE DIALS
"0".

WANDA

(TO PHONE) This is Mrs. Jeeter in Room
312. Have there been any calls for me?
... I know you just told me, but I
thought there might have been a call
while I was coming up in the elevator.
All right. Thank you.

SHE HANGS UP, LOOKING DISAPPOINTED.
JACK HAS REMAINED STANDING. IT
TAKES A BRIEF MOMENT FOR WANDA TO
BRING HER ATTENTION BACK TO HIM.

WANDA (CONT'D)

(MERELY BEING POLITE) Take off your coat.

JACK

(DOFFING COAT) Thank you.

WANDA

Would you like a drink?

JACK

No, thank you.

WANDA

Are you sure? You're turning down some tasty, artificial fruit juice from the snack machine on the ninth floor.

JACK

Were you expecting a call?

WANDA

No, not really. But one never knows when one might hear from someone -- like one's husband.

JACK

Oh... a husband. Do you like him.?

WANDA

Yes I do.

JACK

(TRYING TO MASK HIS DISAPPOINTMENT)

Do you think about him a lot?

WANDA

Hardly at all, actually. There were several minutes during dinner when my attention was focused entirely on you.

JACK

Really? Which minutes were those?

WANDA

When your hand was clutching my knee.

JACK

My audience knows me as a man who is a
real attention grabber.

WANDA

Well, get it any way you can.

JACK

You were getting it pretty good yourself,
Wan... You were the star of the show
tonight.

WANDA

It wasn't really hard -- competing against
a hairdresser to the stars, a vaudevillian
on the road back, and who else was on?
I've forgotten.

JACK

Me, too. I only noticed you.

WANDA

But I realized something tonight...
stardom is empty glory without Merle.

JACK

Oberon?

WANDA

My husband.

JACK

You really do care about him, don't you,
you crazy kid you.

WANDA

It's a little frightening, but the indications are, that I do... even being with celebrities couldn't really sway me... You people who represent excitement, glamor, le business show -- all things that are quite seductive to one such as me. Oh, Merle is not without accomplishment. He's Mayor of Fernwood.

JACK

We turn Mayors down for guest shots all the time.

WANDA

Oh, really? And what about candidates for President, albeit mistakenly on the Communist Party ticket?

JACK

Dime a dozen. Wanda, stick with me. I'm on a rocket to the moon. Hang on tight for as long as you can.

WANDA

I think I'll be getting off at the next stop.

JACK

I gotcha. It's you and me just for the night. Well, let's get started. (MAKES MOVES ON HER)

WANDA

It's down, Jack. The night is over.

JACK

We'll pull down the drapes and make believe. Fantasy. That's what show business is all about.

WANDA

There aren't any drapes.

JACK

We'll put them up, and then we'll pull them down. More show biz magic. Come on, Wanda. (MAKES MORE MOVES ON HER)

WANDA

Don't.

JACK

To me, "don't" means "yes."

WANDA

To me, "yes" means "kill." (PUSHING HIM AWAY)

JACK

I like feisty. (MOVES IN)

WANDA

Jack, I know Shizendo.

JACK

John Lennon's wife?

WANDA

Shizendo. It's a self-defense for women. See? (HANDS HIM A PAMPHLET THAT SAYS "SHIZENDO" ON THE COVER)

JACK

(READING) "Shizendo is a no-nonsense attitude toward rape and assault using a technique natural to the female body."

(TO WANDA) Does that mean... (POINTS TO GROIN, APPREHENSIVE) Knee-time?

WANDA

That's right, big fella.

JACK

I thought we were hitting it off real well.

WANDA

If it's any consolation to you, Jack, you have had not a small effect on me.

JACK

Really?

WANDA

You've made me realize how much I love my husband.

JACK

Why do women always say that to me.

WANDA

I'm going back to Fernwood today.

JACK

I see. And when are you going?

WANDA

(REPEATS) Today, Jack.

JACK

You and I were on the verge of making beautiful music together.

WANDA

It'll have to remain an unfinished symphony.

JACK

Why must women get so damn sentimental.

WANDA

Goodnight, Jack.

JACK

Another guest spot on the show?

WANDA

Thank you, Jack, but no.

JACK

Dinner afterwards?

WANDA

No... I can't even eat without Merle.

JACK

In other words, you want to leave today.

WANDA

I'm catching the first plane out of here. I'm not even going to tell Merle I'm coming. Not that I won't come back to New York, but I do have to be with my husband now.

JACK

Sure, I understand. I'm not insensitive,
y'know.

WANDA

I know.

JACK

There's still time for a quickie.

WANDA REACTS.

FADE OUT.

ACT FOURMAJOR LIVING ROOM - MORNING

MERLE AND ELEANOR ARE IN THEIR ROBES, GETTING TO WORK ON THE PRINTING PRESS. ELEANOR IS ENERGETIC. MERLE IS DISGRUNTLED.

MERLE

I don't get my full steam at this early hour, Eleanor.

ELEANOR

I'm sure you always have it, dear... Besides, all news people wake up early.

MERLE

This isn't the "New York Times," exactly.

ELEANOR

The "New York Times" hasn't got what we've got.

MERLE

A staff of two?

ELEANOR

That's all it takes! Think of the magnitude of this story, Merle!

MERLE

It is kind of wonderful... a mad killer sweeps Fernwood -- and we've got him under contract.

ELEANOR

We accomplished that together, dear.

MERLE

You're right. I shouldn't complain about losing sleep -- not when my future as a journalist is at stake.

ELEANOR

Our future... From now on we're like Pierre and Marie Curie, Alfred Lunt and Lynne Fontanne, Betty White and Allen Ludden.

MERLE

Hey, that's a great idea for the "Flyer," Eleanor!... We put in quizzes like that.

ELEANOR

Brilliant! It is a brilliant idea, Merle. Your inventiveness astounds me.

MERLE

It even surprises me, at times.

ELEANOR

And you do know the newspaper business.

MERLE

Well, kid, I have been around the block a few times. (THEN) So page one covers murder and black market organ sales, page two is a lighthearted quiz.

ELEANOR

I don't know how you do it!

MERLE

I've seen "Citizen Kane" fifteen times.

ELEANOR

You're going to make the "Fernwood Flyer" a household word... And I'm going to be your number one subscriber.

MERLE

It wouldn't've been possible without you... You can have the issues half price.

ELEANOR

(ALoud, TO SELF) I guess the success of this business venture proves it, then.

MERLE

Proves what?

ELEANOR

Something I've been thinking about for a long time. Something about you and me.

MERLE

Well, y'know, you talk about success but we ain't exactly made a dime yet.

ELEANOR

We will... Let's celebrate.

MERLE

You mean like beer and pretzels?

ELEANOR

(SEDUCTIVELY)... Yes, after.

MERLE

Well, let's lay our cards on the table here... You are talking about... You and me... The two of us...

ELEANOR

Exactly.

MERLE

More than business partners?

ELEANOR

Does it excite you as much as me?

MERLE

I'll tell ya something, Eleanor. My head is really involved in this newspaper thing. Let's kinda put this conversation off until later in the day.

ELEANOR

I don't want talk, Merle. And I think you want what I want.

MERLE

How can you know that I want what you want?

ELEANOR

Because I know that you know what I want. And you know that I know that... we both want it.

MERLE

(GLANCES OUT WINDOW) What kind of bird is that? God, you get up this early in the morning, you see some really interesting natural-type phenomena.

ELEANOR

(JOINING MERLE AT WINDOW) We work beautifully together, darling. We can do everything beautifully together. I sense that in you when you're writing those strong, masculine headlines: "Psychotic Killer Talks."

MERLE

It ain't a Finch.

ELEANOR

It's a bluejay.

MERLE

Think so?

ELEANOR

I'm sure of it. Nature is a beautiful thing. One mustn't fight it.

MERLE

Bluejay, huh.

ELEANOR

You must do what nature tells you to do.

MERLE

Eleanor, it ain't as if everytime I look at you I see "wheelchair"... and I'm not sayin' that I'm totally turned off of you --

ELEANOR

I'm not in a wheelchair now.

MERLE

I know. That's the logic of it. But the emotion is another thing entirely.

ELEANOR

(GETTING CLOSER) Tell me what emotion you're feeling now?

MERLE

Curiosity.

ELEANOR

All right, I'll settle for that.

ELEANOR TAKES MERLE IN HER ARMS
AND THEY KISS.

SFX: KEY IN DOOR

DOOR OPENS. MERLE AND ELEANOR
PULL APART. WANDA ENTERS, SUIT-
CASED, SEES NOTHING OUT OF THE
ORDINARY. MERLE AND WANDA
EXCHANGE HELLOS, HUGS, ETC.
ELEANOR, TOO. A STRANGE MOMENT.

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE #423

