**Jim At My Door**

**By Dave Carley**

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**Synopsis:**

Poor Jim. He's on a date from hell, locked out of his one night stand's apartment, without decent raiment. Actually, without any raimant at all. Now he must rely on the kindness of strangers - but will the police arrive first?

**Cast:**

JIM – 30
RUSS – 35-40

**Set:**

Just a good, sturdy door frame. The point of view is from inside the door.

**Play History:**

Following successful 2014 productions by Stage Q in Madison, Wisconsin and Left Coast Theatre in San Francisco, ***Jim at my Door*** was produced by Buffalo United Artists at that city's Alleyway Theatre, March, 2015. It has most recently been produced at Stage 773 in Chicago in February 2016 by Thorpedo Productions.

**Jim At My Door**

*The set consists of an apartment door with a peephole and a chain. The point of view is from inside the apartment.* *The stage is dark and only light is coming through peephole or under door. There’s a knock. Tentative. Another knock. A little bolder. Another one.*

**RUSS:** *(Off, inside i.e. on audience side of door.)* Who’s there –

 *(Another knock.)*

 I’m coming.

 *(There’s a light up, off, from a hall or bedroom. RUSS enters, bathrobe on. Another knock.)*

 Who’s there?

**JIM:** *(Other side of door.)* I need help. Please -

 *(RUSS looks through peephole. Looks away.)*

**RUSS:**  What the hell.

 *(But he looks again.)*

**JIM:** Is anyone - are you there?

**RUSS:** Yes.

**JIM:** Please – sorry to bother you - I’m in trouble/

**RUSS:**  Why are you/

**JIM:** Please/

*(RUSS looks through peephole on an angle, trying to scope both ends of the hallway, then opens door to the length of the chain.)*

**RUSS:**  Did you get – attacked or?/

**JIM:** No/

**RUSS:**  What’s – why don’t you have/

**JIM:** Is there any chance, can you/

**RUSS:** Are you OK, do you want me to phone 9-1-1?

**JIM:** No no no. Just a - Can you – I need you to call someone for me.

**RUSS:**  Who.

**JIM:** Someone down the hall/

**RUSS:** Do you live on this floor?/

**JIM:** I’m - a guest.

**RUSS:** A guest of who.

**JIM:** Just a sec, I’ll look.

 *(RUSS watches through slit or peephole.)*

 *(Returns.)* The guy in 615. Across and one down.

**RUSS:** Is this a prank?

**JIM:** It’s stupider than that.

**RUSS:** Did he throw you out?

**JIM:** I got up to take a leak and when I came back out of his washroom I took a wrong turn.

**RUSS:**  What do you mean?/

**JIM:** I didn’t turn any of the lights on, I didn’t want to wake him up, cuz I was going to go back and get my clothes and leave but, after I peed, instead of taking the door back to the bedroom, I took the door out to the hall. And it shut. Locked.

**RUSS:**  Yeah, our doors automatically lock when you shut them.

**JIM:** Please, can you call him/

**RUSS:** Why aren’t you knocking on his door?

**JIM:** I tried, but there’s no answer. I think maybe he’s passed out. And the door to his bedroom is shut. Maybe if he hears the phone, that might wake him. You’re my last hope. I tried next door, no one answered.

**RUSS:** They’re away.

**JIM:** And the lady across the hall/

**RUSS:** Mrs. Grundell, you didn’t get her up/

**JIM:** She sounded pissed.

**RUSS:** You probably scared the crap out of her.

**JIM:** She said if I didn’t get away from her door she was calling the cops. Can you phone 615 for me? Please/

**RUSS:** I’m not actually sure who 615 is. Tall?

**JIM:** Yeah, goatee.

**RUSS:** He moved in a few months ago/

**JIM:** That explains – yeah, everything’s in boxes. I just need to get back in and get my clothes, honest, this isn’t a – I’m not stoned or anything – this is the most embarrassing thing that has ever happened to me. I really, please/

 *(RUSS thinks, then he decides to open the door. JIM is naked. Holding a rubber plant leaf in front of him.)*

**RUSS:**  Come in. I must be crazy. Just stay there, I’ll get my phone.

  *(RUSS turns lights up a bit, exits.)*

**JIM:** You know that dream you get when you’re in a public place with no clothes on, it’s supposed to be all about your fears of being vulnerable or exposed, I’m living it.

**RUSS:** *(Returns, with phone.)* What’s his number?

**JIM:** I don’t know.

**RUSS:** Well how can I – what’s his name then?

**JIM:** I uh/

**RUSS:**  You don’t know his name?

**JIM:** I was hoping you would.

**RUSS:**  Seriously.

**JIM:**  He told me but I forgot.

**RUSS:** Well try remembering, cuz I sure don’t know. He’s new, we’ve only nodded at each other. Actually, I’ve seen him just three, four times. And sorry to tell you this but two of those were late at night, and he was bringing someone home drunk.

**JIM:**  He had a nice smile.

**RUSS:** That’s your criteria?

**JIM:** Pretty much.

**RUSS:** The world is full of nice smiles.

**JIM:** I’ve always found it to be a reliable way of judging.

**RUSS:** A smile is just lips going up and maybe some teeth. You should be more careful. Said the guy who just let a naked man into his apartment. *(Of the rubber plant leaf.)* Is that from the plant by the elevator?

**JIM:** Yeah.

**RUSS:** Mrs. Grundell waters that. Those plants are her babies. She’s got them all over the building. She’s our plant whisperer. She rescues the dying ones people put in the garbage. That rubber plant is down to its last three leaves.

**JIM:** Two.

**RUSS:** She’s going to have your nuts.

**JIM:** Would she know his name?

**RUSS:** *(Dialling.)* That’s worth a try. She’s kind of like the floor monitor. I’ll get you a coat in a sec. Oh hi, Mrs. Grundell? It’s Russ in 612. Yeah, I know there’s a naked man out there. Don’t phone the police. He’s in my apartment. He’s OK. *(Holds phone out as Mrs. GRUNDELL reacts.)* He has a nice smile. I’ll explain everything tomorrow. He got locked out of 615 and all his stuff is in there – the guy’s not answering his door. Do you know his name? The new guy with the goatee. Yeah. Think. Bernie. *(To JIM.)* Bernie?

**JIM:** Yeah – that’s him!

**RUSS:** Bernie what.

**JIM:** No idea.

**RUSS:**  If I’m going to get his number from Information I need more than Bernie.

**JIM:** Ask her.

**RUSS:** Do you know Bernie’s last name. Mrs. Grundell – you still there? You know Bernie’s last name? *(To JIM.)* She says she’s thinking. *(Back to Mrs. G.)* A store? You’re sure? *(To JIM.)* She thinks he’s got the same name as a store.

**JIM:**  Williams, Sonoma, Apple. Tarjhay.

**RUSS:** Be serious.

**JIM:** Marshalls? Sears - Sears?/

**RUSS:** *(To Grundell.)* Sears? No? *(to JIM.)* Hey – where’s your cell?

**JIM:** In my pants.

**RUSS:**  Why don’t we just phone your phone and he’ll hear that?

**JIM:**  Bernie’s in the bedroom. I closed the door to it when I went to the can. My pants are in his front hall.

**RUSS:**  Why are they there/

**JIM:** It was – spontaneous. Well, I mean, it wasn’t actually ‘spontaneous’ because we talked at the bar for fifteen minutes and then it took us another fifteen to walk here so it was actually a long date. For me.

**RUSS:** *(On phone.)* Walgreen?? You sure? Walgreen? Mrs. Grundell says Walgreen. It’s worth a try. OK, thanks Mrs. G.

 *(RUSS dials Operator.)*

Don’t you think you were being a bit - I mean, a bar? Isn’t that kind of old school? *(To operator.)* Residential. Last name: Walgreen. No a person. No, not the store. Residential. 400 Charles East. Thank you. Eureka.

**JIM:** How do you meet guys?

**RUSS:** I don’t. *(Dialling.)* I don’t drink so bars are out and, it’s ringing, you better hope it doesn’t go to answering machine – hello? Bernie? Bernie Walgreen? It’s Russ, across the hall, 612. There’s a guy here, he got locked out of your apartment. Apparently he got up to pee and hung a left. Locked out. *(Pause.)* Well, is there anyone beside you right now? No. Was there someone there before? You think so but you’re not sure. I’m telling you, he got locked out in the hall. Yeah. He wants to, listen, it wasn’t me, don’t yell at - listen – I’m not – He just wants to get his clothes. He doesn’t want to stay. He wants his clothes so he can get the hell out *(To JIM.)* I can really really hear that nice smile in his voice. *(Back to BERNIE.)* Listen Bernie Walgreen I don’t give a shit if I woke you, your trick woke me and everyone else on this floor and I’ll phone the super next and your fat hairy ass *(To JIM.* Is it? *(JIM* *nods.)* is going to be out on the street so – he hung up. He doesn’t actually sound too nice.

**JIM:** I didn’t like him so much. That’s why I was going to sneak out. I mean, nice smile but, what were you implying when you said ‘trick’/

**RUSS:** I couldn’t exactly say ‘boyfriend’. If he was your boyfriend you’d probably know his name.

**JIM:** Not necessarily.

**RUSS:** Unfortunately, Mr. Cheerful has your clothes. I can lend you a coat. And pants and shoes. You can get home and bring them back tomorrow or/

  *(SOUND out in hall.)*

 Wait.

 *(Looks out in hall.)*

 Were you wearing red chinos? Jean jacket. Looks like he’s thrown/

**JIM:**  *(Looks.)* That’s my stuff. Well. That was an adventure. I owe you. What’s your name?

**RUSS:** Russ. Johnston.

**JIM:** OK, well thanks Russ. I really appreciate this. Not everybody would open their door to a naked guy.

**RUSS:** Take care.

**JIM:**  Thanks.

*(It almost looks like Jim is going to give RUSS a goodbye kiss, but he just leaves. RUSS closes door. Leans against it. Looks out peephole. Tries looking sideways down peephole. Leans back against the door.)*

 *Now* try getting to sleep after *that*.

 *(SOUND: Knock on the door. RUSS looks out peephole, opens door. JIM is standing there, holding his clothes in front of him.)*

**JIM:** My name is Jim by the way.

**RUSS:** Jim what. I’m learning it’s good to know last names.

**JIM:** It’s the same as a major river.

**RUSS:** Jim Mississippi.

**JIM:**  East.

**RUSS:** Hudson.

**JIM:** South.

**RUSS:**  Jim Delaware?

**JIM:** You’re good.

  *(RUSS smiles.)*

 See - you have a nice smile.

**RUSS:**  No I don’t. You have to stop trusting smiles.

**JIM:**  You’re right. Starting tomorrow.

 *(JIM drops his clothes and they kiss…)*

**Black.**