

MS SMITH & MR JONES

COOKING UP A ROMANTIC COMEDY WITH A TWIST

A TV SERIES SCREENPLAY BY LARRY K. ELMORE



TELLURIS
STUDIOS





SHE SEES EVERYTHING.
HE SEES NOTHING.
TOGETHER, THEY SEE IT ALL.

Jonathon Jones, a charismatic New York culture columnist coasting on charm, has been receiving career-making tips from an anonymous source called "Ms. Smith" for a year —until he discovers she's actually Melanie Barnes, his overlooked photographer who uses lip-reading skills to gather intelligence. Forced into an uneasy partnership after her secret is exposed, they must work together to expose a dangerous Ponzi scheme involving corrupt politicians and a ruthless hedge fund manager, while navigating newsroom rivalries, ethical dilemmas, and their growing attraction as they discover that the biggest story might be learning to truly see each other.

THE STORY

Who is Ms Smith?

Photographer Melanie Barnes uses lip-reading skills at a gallery opening to gather intelligence on a Warhol lawsuit, feeding information anonymously to columnist Jonathon Jones as "Ms. Smith." Jones publishes the exposé while Melanie remains invisible, working with her deaf sister Ashley to verify facts. Editor Marcie pressures Jones to identify his source. Rival Morgan Simms questions Jones's sudden success. Jones becomes obsessed with identifying Ms. Smith. The emotional challenge centers on Melanie's conflicted feelings—pride in her work versus resentment at Jones receiving credit, complicated by her unacknowledged attraction despite their anonymous relationship.



THE STORY

Suspicious are on the rise.

Jones receives documents exposing Councilman Moore's investment in the fraudulent fund, destroying Moore's career and marriage. When Melanie objects to Jones's tabloid approach, Ms. Smith sends an identical message moments later, triggering Jones's suspicion. He confronts Melanie with circumstantial evidence, building a conspiracy theory. Melanie deflects but is rattled. Ashley warns discovery is inevitable. Jones presents his theory to Marcie, who dismisses him. The emotional stakes escalate as both recognize their arrangement is unsustainable, with consequences unpredictable and Jones's girlfriend Janice growing frustrated with his obsession.



THE STORY

Therapy, accusations, obsessions & anonymity.

Jones attends therapy, revealing terror that Ms. Smith is the real journalist. Morgan directly accuses Melanie of being Ms. Smith, threatening exposure. Janice breaks up with Jones, recognizing his obsession. Ms. Smith sends cryptic messages suggesting surveillance, creating thrill and unease. Melanie and Ashley discuss revealing the truth before Morgan does. The emotional complexity deepens as Melanie admits she's been flirting through texts, blurring boundaries. Ms. Smith finally agrees to meet Jones face-to-face at Rubicon, forcing Melanie to choose between continued anonymity and vulnerable honesty.



THE STORY

The truth comes out, finally.

Janice offers reconciliation if Jones skips meeting Ms. Smith—he chooses his obsession. Jones tells Melanie he suspects her; she neither confirms nor denies. That evening, Melanie arrives at Rubicon elegantly dressed, finally visible. Their confrontation is raw: Melanie explains she helped because he was lazy; Jones feels manipulated. She stayed anonymous to protect herself from being pushed out. They negotiate genuine partnership with shared credit. Morgan photographs them together, planning to use evidence against them. The emotional climax centers on mutual vulnerability and whether they can build something real from deception.



THE STORY

Confessions, threats and resolution.

Jones and Melanie confess to Marcie, who considers the challenges. Morgan threatens exposure. Working openly, they investigate deeper, discovering the fund is a Ponzi scheme. At the Met Gala, Melanie lip-reads Catherine Moore confirming criminality. They obtain documents proving Victor Hale orchestrated the scheme. Their exposé saves their jobs; the publisher creates "Ms Smith & Mr Jones" column with joint credit. The resolution is bittersweet—professional partnership achieved, but romance remains unresolved as they focus on work first. A threatening message from Hale establishes future danger, confirming their work attracts powerful enemies.



LEAD CHARACTERS



JOHNATHON JONES

Mid-30s, 6 feet tall, with blond hair and blue eyes. He has an athletic build. As a wealthy celebrity chef and author, he is a graduate of Le Cordon Bleu in Paris and is known for his thought-provoking social commentary.



MELANIE BARNES

Late 20s, standing at 5'7", with brown hair and green eyes. She is a skilled gymnast, an aspiring journalist, and graduate of the New York Institute of Photography. She lives independently with her cat, Mystic.



MARCIE BLANCHARD

In her mid-40s, she stands at 5'2", with black hair highlighted by streaks of gray. She holds a Master's degree in Journalism from Boston University. She is divorced with one child in college.



ASHLEY BARNES

Early twenties, 5'6", with brown hair and brown eyes. Holds a BS in Computer Science, Columbia University. Deaf due to meningitis in childhood, proficient in both sign language and lip reading.

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS



MORGAN SIMMS

Late 20s, standing at 5'6", with auburn hair and captivating green eyes. A society and gossip columnist for New York Today, she holds a Bachelor's degree in Literature from NYU. A glam girl, she lives independently with her Bichon Frise, Buster.



JANICE ROLAND

In her early thirties, standing at 5'4", with blond hair and blue eyes, holds a JD from Yale. Employed at a Wall Street hedge fund. She appreciates her time spent with Jones, yet she knows that there is no future for them together.



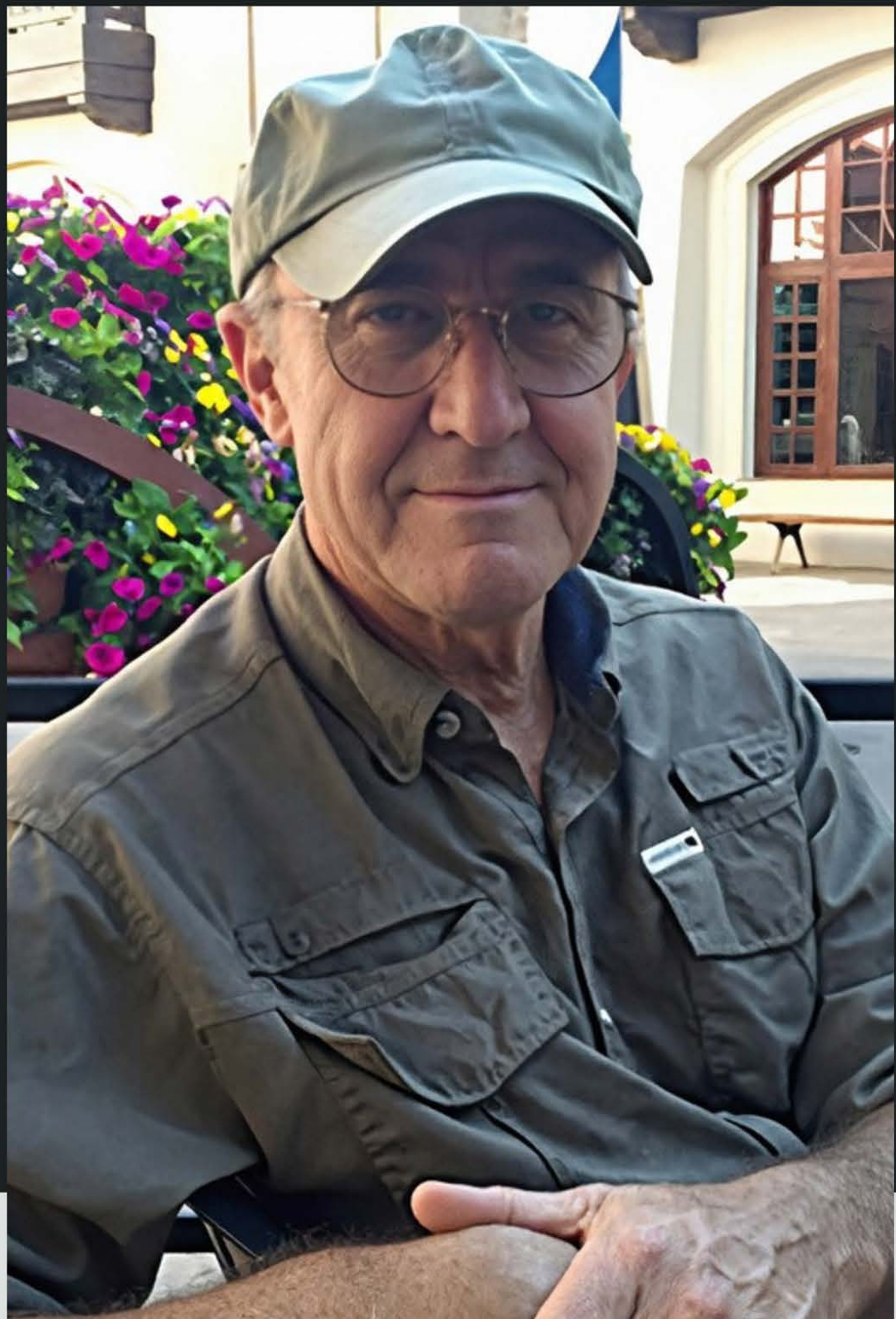
BOB PETERS

Arriving in later episodes, late 30s, 6'1", African American, with a BA in Journalism from the University of Chicago. He is a hard news reporter for the newspaper, married with two children, and resides in Brooklyn.



BILL ROBERTSON

Arriving in later episodes, early 30s, standing at 5'10", an African American. A graduate of Queens Technical High School in Photography. Served as a Photospher in the US Air Force. Currently single, he resides in Queens with his younger brother.



Ms Smith & Mr Jones was born from a fascination with the invisible labor that powers our world, and the quiet, brilliant people who perform it. In an era dominated by loud voices and public personalities, I wanted to tell a story about the power of observation, the strength in silence, and the courage it takes for a person who has spent their life in the shadows to step into the light. At its heart, this is a series about partnership. It's about what happens after the romantic comedy ends—after the grand gesture and the big reveal. How do two fundamentally different people, with different methods, motivations, and fears, build a life and a career together on a foundation of secrets? Jonathon Jones is a man who has performed his life, while Melanie Barnes has observed it. His journey is about learning to be authentic, while hers is about learning to be seen.

- LARRY K. ELMORE

TONE



Ms Smith & Mr Jones is a sophisticated romantic dramedy that balances sharp, witty dialogue with genuine emotional stakes and compelling investigative procedural elements. **Dialogue** is the series' engine. It is fast-paced, intelligent, and layered, in the vein of Aaron Sorkin or Amy Sherman-Palladino. The banter between Jones and Melanie is a form of intellectual foreplay—a constant dance of wit, challenge, and subtext. The **Visual Style** is cinematic, elegant, and built on a language of surveillance and reflection. The camera often adopts Melanie's perspective, using long lenses, reflections, and obscured views to create a sense of voyeurism. Each episode is tightly plotted. The **Pacing** within scenes is brisk, but the overall season allows for quiet, character-driven moments that let the emotional arcs breathe.

AUDIENCE DEMO

Primary: Women 35-65, college-educated, urban/suburban professionals who enjoy cozy mysteries with romantic tension (Castle, Hart to Hart, Only Murders in the Building fans).

Secondary: Couples 40-70 seeking sophisticated escapism with NYC glamour—fine dining, art galleries, theater—without graphic violence.

Psychographic: Aspirational viewers who appreciate wit over action, character-driven storytelling, and "will-they-won't-they" dynamics. Values intelligence, ethical complexity, and stylish settings.

Platform fit: Hallmark Mysteries (skews older), Acorn/BritBox (Anglophile tastes), Freevee/Roku (accessible streaming).

Key appeal: Comfort viewing with substance—smart, charming, safe.



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Through vivid characters and a powerful narrative, Ms Smith & Mr Jones takes viewers on a ride through the heady world of celebrity culture at the heart of NYC. Join our heroes as they navigate the world of fine dining, red carpets, fashion shows, Broadway stars, backstage romances, the rich and powerful, museum and gallery openings, all wrapped in a murder mystery plus a little political intrigue, too.

– **LARRY K. ELMORE**



VISUAL REFERENCE



A WORD ABOUT THE WRITER

Larry Elmore is an award winning writer/producer. He has been a US Air Force Photojournalist, Educational Filmmaker, owns Telluris Studios, served as a Director of Marketing, and produced corporate marketing media for Fortune 100 companies across the nation. He has traveled to almost every continent interviewing leaders in High Technology and University Presidents. Now, his focus is completely on screenwriting.



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THANK YOU