

What would you do if you saw your death before it happened, but couldn't do anything to stop it? Or could you? How would you live out your final days? And what would they say about you when you were gone?

Afterthought

Afterthought Television Series

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Afterthought

Afterthought is a TV series about Death...and Death's friend Jake.

Death has a problem. There's a leak in the system. Every person's fate is pre-determined - time, place, and method. But every now and then, for reasons unknown, some people get a premonition. This premonition can be in the form of a dream, a vision or a nightmare.

Afterthought explores each person's reaction to the certain knowledge of their impending death.

Each episode begins with a new guest star's vision of their own death. That character then meets Jake, Death's Assistant, and the first regular character of the series. Jake appears to each episode's guest star immediately following their vision of death. He assures them that their premonition is true, and advises them to use their remaining time wisely. He counsels them, offering direction and suggestions at various points throughout the episode.

Jake's job is to maintain the natural balance - he makes sure events run their course despite the chaos and confusion the premonitions cause. Some characters fight their fate, but find that it becomes harder to change the outcome as their story accelerates towards its climax. Others accept their vision as destiny, and surprisingly see it as an opportunity, living their remaining days with a renewed sense of life and vigor. However they react, the guest stars of each episode face deep and fundamental challenges.

Jake never directly kills anyone, but he can manipulate events in subtle ways that have far-reaching consequences. If a character does manage to escape fate, Jake uses collateral damage from another episode to get the job done. This connection between episodes creates a "six degrees of separation" effect.

A supporting character from one episode may reappear later as the guest star in another, creating more and more connections as the series unfolds. In any given episode, Jake may cross paths not only with past characters, but also future ones, creating built-in teasers for upcoming episodes.

Most of each episode takes place in the real world, but we do get to look “behind the veil” and see how death works. Death works in an office and she is the second regular character of the series. She is a stern and dignified middle-aged woman who everybody addresses as “Sir.” She runs a busy, efficient operation. It isn’t actually called DeathCorp but it might as well be. A portion of each episode is devoted to Death giving Jake his new assignment and the development of their working relationship.

The third regular character of the series is Dotty, Death’s secretary. As her name implies, she appears flighty and eccentric and makes an odd match for her boss, but she is surprisingly good at her job. She runs Death’s office, keeping track of each episode’s guest star. Her most important function is processing new arrivals. At the beginning of each episode, she interviews the guest star of the previous episode. It looks like a job interview with a not very attentive HR rep, but what she’s really doing is stripping away the memories of their premonition, since they died knowing more than any person was ever meant to know.

Each episode deals with death in a different manner, because each character is unique. They respond to the full awareness of their certain death in a different way as influenced by their personalities and cultural or religious upbringing. Everyone relates to Jake differently, according to their beliefs and understanding of death. We see how they confront or avoid unresolved issues in their lives and how small actions can have a great influence on the course of events.

Each guest star either introduces or conceals Jake's existence from other supporting characters. Some will try to explain the existence of Jake without revealing who he is. Others will want to reveal Jake’s identity. Some supporting characters will be jealous or distrustful and may misunderstand who Jake actually is.

Jake is more than just a metaphysical hit man. He keeps the karmic balance by trying to convince people to make the most of their remaining time rather than fighting their destiny. When a character does try to avoid it, Jake's role quickly turns into clean-up and damage control. No one escapes their fate.

There is one exception: C.C., the fourth regular character of the series and the one assignment Jake was never able to complete. She has consistently stayed one step ahead of him, and Jake began to think of her as his nemesis. C.C. is a professor of Folklore and Mythology. Her deep knowledge of mythology and symbolism allows her to see Jake's influence where nobody else could, and avoid his attempts to manipulate events to result in her death. Because C.C. is so highly skilled at the reading of omens it's almost like she can read Jake's mind and stalemate his attempts to trap her. Eventually, Jake had to take other assignments.

Over time, their mutual antagonism evolved into an almost affectionate truce. Jake knows that someday he'll get C.C., but he's in no hurry, as her death would mean the end of a relationship he's starting to enjoy. When they meet, it is unlike any of Jake's other encounters. What started as a deadly game of cat-and-mouse has evolved into something deeper. C.C. understands Jake like no other living person ever could, and Jake has come to depend on their contact. She is his foil, the one person who not only understands him but can also even offer him advice on occasion.

Death tolerates and even grudgingly admires C.C.'s defiance. She says it's because ultimately C.C. is helping Jake do his job better. She's also amused at Jake's frustration when C.C. foils him. But her real reason for tolerating C.C. she keeps private: Death secretly considers C.C. a viable candidate to replace Jake should the need ever arise.

Afterthought

There are 4 reappearing main characters in every episode:

Death

Death's Assistant - Jake

Death's Secretary - Dotty

Jake's Nemesis - C.C.

Death is a beautiful but severe woman, with a well-polished, no-nonsense style, blended with a sense of European sophistication. She has an element of pomposity, which Dotty is constantly testing. The only time we see Death is in her office. She is always addressed as Sir, and is always in, because Death never sleeps. Death took Jake under her wing 20 years earlier, and they have developed a complex working relationship.

Death's Assistant - Jake is a sophisticated-looking man with a morose, understated quality and a dry wit. He usually appears well groomed and well dressed. He has the supernatural ability to blend into any scene, appearing as a different character to fit his needs. He can be a bartender in one scene, and then reappear as a TV newscaster or policeman in another scene. Jake is not only a specific character, but also a mythological archetype, the Gatekeeper and Ferryman who guides the souls of the soon-to-be or newly-deceased. Being Death's Assistant is a serious job which sometimes involves imparting some "wisdom of the ages," but because he is also human, idiosyncratic, and sometimes mischievous, this tension between the eternal and the temporal is expressed in his character. Jake is strictly forbidden to save a character. Death has also forbidden him to check up on people from his past. He is familiar with death and its workings, but has little or no influence on Death herself.

Death's Secretary - Dotty is perky, eccentric and always flamboyantly dressed. Besides running Death's office, her most important function is processing new arrivals - interviewing them, stripping away their memories, and ushering them into the Afterlife. Her relationship with Jake is friendly and flirty, while her relationship with Death is full of badgering and bantering. She is constantly redecorating her desk in elaborate themes that threaten to take over the office. Each episode will feature a different theme based on the details of the guest star's premonition.

Jake's Nemesis – C.C. is a solitary and eccentric woman who has managed to elude Jake for some time. She is a college professor in an extremely underfunded and unpopular Folklore and Mythology department. She is well-travelled and has some knowledge of other languages, but most of them are ancient or very rare, making her short on practical skills. However, her unparalleled knowledge of omens and legends allowed her to instantly recognize her premonition for what it was and to take careful steps to escape fate, avoiding all the traps everyone else always falls into. There are two ironies in C.C.'s life: the first is that the one skill she possesses, the one that everyone told her was useless her whole life, is the one thing that is keeping her alive. The second is that the one person she can really relate to has the job of making sure she dies.

Season 1 gradually reveals the inner workings of DeathCorp and Jake's personal history, as it comes back to haunt him even here. He died 20 years earlier on the way to his wedding, leaving his fiancé waiting at the altar. He was caught in circumstances that unfairly ended his life. His body disappeared without a trace, leading Jake's fiancé to think he abandoned her. She never got to tell him she was pregnant. Both Jake's fiancé and his daughter each appear as guest stars in later episodes.

As *Episodes* unfold a conflict between Death and Jake begins to take shape when he realizes Death has assigned him his fiancé, his daughter, and his mother. When he realizes Death not only kept him from knowing about his daughter, but also made him a party to her death, he takes revenge in the only way he can, breaking the rules and intervening to save his mother's life. Furious and disappointed, Death determines to get rid of Jake, utterly destroying him.

In a surprising turn of events, Jake's fiancé returns in Season 2 as Jake's Boss and prevails on Death to keep Jake around, but answering to her, a consequence of him breaking the rules when he tries to save his 80-year-old mother.

Also during the series Jake and C.C.'s relationship evolves and becomes much deeper. This friendship becomes jeopardized when Jake's fiancé becomes his boss. She is instantly suspicious and jealous of the special attention Jake gives C.C., and an odd love triangle begins to form. The rivalry between Jake's fiancé and C.C. has Jake walking a delicate balance between the two women in Season 2.

Afterthought Episode Structure

Each episode of **Afterthought** consists of several essential elements:

Jake gets his assignment from Death.

Dotty intakes and processes previous episode's guest star, interviewing them, stripping away their memories, and ushering them into the Afterlife.

Current guest star sees their death through a dream, a vision, or a nightmare, immediately followed by a meeting with Jake.

Guest star formulates a plan to deal with the premonition - possibly trying to escape, possibly to make the best use of their remaining time.

The plan succeeds or fails, but not in the way the guest star expected, leading up to the familiar scene itself.

Episode connections via supporting characters and collateral damage of events crossing over from one episode to another as a result of Jake's subtle interventions to get the assignment completed.

Afterthought Episode Listing - Season 1

- 1. The Office Guy – Pilot**
- 2. The Elevator Slumlord**
- 3. Gambler Horserace**
- 4. Guido Marriage Proposal**
- 5. Politix**
- 6. Guru Meltdown**
- 7. Rube Goldberg Suicide**
- 8. Revenge**
- 9. Dog Saves Owner**
- 10. Big Box Store Trampling**
- 11. Hollywood Couple**
- 12. Nursing Home**
- 13. Jake's Girlfriend – Season Finale**

Afterthought Episode I – The Office Guy

Premonition:

The guest star takes a last walk down his office hallway a few minutes after being fired, carrying a box of his belongings. He takes the elevator to the parking garage where a van explodes, killing him. He wakes up from this nightmare in his bed. Jake is in his bedroom and tries without success to convince him that his nightmare was a real vision of his death.

Afterthought:

We follow the guest star through several days leading up to his vision. He is skeptical that his vision is anything more than a dream until he starts to recognize details of it coming true. The more familiar his vision becomes, the harder he tries to change his fate. In the process, he is forced to confront the path his own life took. He struggles to come to terms with the feelings he has for his assistant and her son. At the same time, competition with a coworker highlights his insecurities.

Episode Connections:

The son of the guest star's assistant is featured in his own episode *The Troubled Youth* in Season 2. The competitive coworker returns as the guest star of *Episode 6 - Guru Meltdown*.

Afterthought Episode 2 – The Elevator Slumlord

Premonition:

A 68-year-old man sees his death as the result of a fatal malfunction on his decrepit office elevator – a character in itself, with a grinding motor and elevator music playing through a broken speaker. He wakes up from his dream and meets Jake. Convinced he can change his death if he changes his surroundings, the guest star moves his office to a building with no elevator.

Afterthought:

As the office relocation unfolds, we see growing concern from the guest star's wife. She notices a change in him and thinks it's because he's moving from his first and favorite building. She decides to surprise him by remodeling his original top-floor office for their 50th wedding anniversary. On the big day she playfully blindfolds him and takes him to the newly-remodeled office. He happily goes along with the surprise until they step into the elevator and he hears the all-too-familiar sounds. His mounting panic escalates into a quarrel between the couple which ends with her leaving him alone in the penthouse. Because of unfinished construction, the stairs are blocked, leaving the man to face his last elevator ride.

Episode Connections:

The guest star employs Guido from Episode 4 as a thug to collect past due rent from his tenants. A Gambler from Episode 3 is one of the guest star's tenants. The Gambler's wife visits the guest star to try and get a break on their rent.

Afterthought Episode 3 – Gambler Horserace

Premonition:

A man sees his death at the racetrack when Guido, a loan shark, stalks him around the grounds during the year's biggest race. The man dies of gunshot wounds but sees the winning numbers to the race.

Afterthought:

A poor man, his wife and two small children struggle to make ends meet. He's a gambler who would rather place a bet than pay a bill. Now, as a result of his vision of death, he knows the outcome of the biggest horserace. He single-mindedly begs, borrows, steals, pawns and swindles money in order to place a bet at that race. His wife opposes his gambling and thinks he needs help, but she obediently goes to the race with him and their two children. When the man sees a loan shark that he owes money to, he hands the money to his wife and tells her how to bet the money. She obeys, but sticks some of the money into her purse for bills. The loan shark continues to stalk her husband as the race proceeds. The guest star's wife watches the big race, clutching the soon-to-be winning tickets in her hand and looking around concernedly for her missing husband. As the race ends, the wrong three horses have won and she throws the tickets down and walks away hugging her kids. Suddenly there's an announcement that one of the winning horses has been disqualified, thus changing the order of the winners and giving her the big win. She and the kids rush back to pick up the winning tickets for their long-shot win.

Episode Connections:

The woman works as a nurse in *Episode 12 - Nursing Home*. The Elevator Slumlord from Episode 2 is landlord in the building the family lives in. Guido from Episode 4 is the Elevator Slumlord's thug.

Afterthought Episode 4 – Guido Marriage Proposal

Premonition:

Guido, a loan shark and thug, proposes to a woman in an Italian restaurant just as a car careens through the front windows, killing him and leaving an engagement ring spinning in front of the woman, who looks relieved. He wakes up, has a long talk with Jake, and is convinced that his death is inescapable and is ordained by God.

Afterthought:

Guido is a single father of one son, and he knows he needs to find someone to care for him after he's gone. He turns his attention to an old childhood friend, herself a child of the mob. She has cut her connections to the mob, and is surprised by Guido's sudden interest and affection. As he persists, so does her apprehension about reviving their past relationship. Although Guido's first priority is to find care for his son, his dream causes him to re-evaluate his tough-guy way of life, and a genuine interest in his friend begins to develop.

Episode Connections:

Guido is employed by The Elevator Slumlord from Episode 2 as a thug to collect past due rent from his tenants. He also tracks down The Gambler from Episode 3 and an employee in *Episode 10 – Big Box Store Trampling*.

Afterthought Episode 5 - Politix

Premonition:

The husband of a matriarch of a prominent political family sees his death in an exploding limousine during his brother-in-law's presidential campaign. In his meeting with Jake, he reveals that his own political career is over, and expresses the belief that his own death might result in a victory for his brother-in-law.

Afterthought:

The guest star is a once-idealistic, failed politician who married into a very powerful political family. During his brother-in-law's election campaign he must come to terms with his own failed political career. His domineering wife constantly reminds him of his shortcomings. To add to his problems, their twenty-something year old son is a rising star in Hollywood whose rebellious behavior makes him a constant source of embarrassment to the family. Knowledge of his impending death is comforting to him because he knows his problems will soon be over. On the night of the acceptance speech the candidate realizes he left his lucky cufflinks at home. The guest star offers to go back to the house to retrieve the item, and steps into the familiar limousine from his dream. The brother-in-law wins the election by a landslide. The guest star is memorialized as a campaign casualty. The wife uses the death of her husband to further her standing in the public life she leads.

Episode Connections:

The guest star's son is the Husband in *Episode 11 - Hollywood Couple*. He also appears with his wife at a retail grand opening in *Episode 10 - Big Box Store Trampling*.

Afterthought Episode 6 – Guru Meltdown

Premonition:

Haji the competitive coworker from *Episode 1 – The Office Guy* returns in his own episode, in which he is the leading speaker of a self-help seminar cult. He dies when a former member returns dissatisfied with her results, confronting and shooting him in the middle of a seminar. He wakes up nervous. He tells Jake all about this troubled woman, whom he vividly remembers from previous seminars.

Afterthought:

Haji knows that his death is imminent, but his popularity as a self-help guru continues to grow. His growing fear of death plays on his nerves and he begins to have breakdowns. He decides he'll escape death by retiring, but succumbs to temptation when he is offered a huge bonus to do one final seminar which will be filmed and aired live. We learn that a woman who spent all her savings on Haji's seminars without results has developed quite a hatred of him and we see her grow more unbalanced as the episode progresses. Haji is constantly in the media and the continual reminders of his existence send her over the top. The Main Character from *Episode 8 – Revenge* is also at the seminar where the shooting occurs. His wife and best friend are there with him, intending to tell him they are leaving him for each other. The wife gets shot in the crossfire, setting up the later *Revenge* episode. Jake and Haji watch as the police shoot his killer. They stand over her as she is dying. Because she is dying, she can see and speak to them. Haji confesses his disbelief in the rhetoric he's been teaching.

Episode Connections:

The competitive co-worker from *Episode 1 – Office Guy* returns as the guest star of this episode. The guest star from *Episode 8 – Revenge* appears with his wife and Best Friend from the same episode.

Afterthought Episode 7 – Rube Goldberg Suicide

Premonition:

A middle-aged widower wakes up from a dream about how he would build the perfect Rube Goldberg-style contraption to kill himself. As he thinks about it, he becomes more excited and more engaged in the idea of building the contraption. Jake is amazed at the man's enthusiasm.

Afterthought:

We learn that the guest star's wife and children died when the car he was driving malfunctioned. He never forgave himself for not being able to foresee the danger and prevent his family's death. He lives in a small town in the remote northwest, continually tinkering with ingenious but ultimately unsuccessful inventions. The Rube Goldberg-style contraption soon takes over his house, his life, and his every thought, causing consternation amongst his neighbors. Obsessed with ordering obscure parts, he takes to perusing catalogs at the local hardware store. A friendship develops with the female owner of the store, who is Jake's fiancé, and guest star in Episode 13 Season Finale – Jake's Girlfriend.

Episode Connections:

The owner of the hardware store comes back as the guest star in *Episode 13 – Jake's Girlfriend*. She returns in Season 2 as Jake's newly appointed boss.

Afterthought Episode 8 – Revenge

Premonition:

The guest star sees his death in an airplane crash when an improperly secured plate begins to break loose mid-flight. Upon awakening, he decides to take revenge on his best friend, whom he blames for his wife's death. He is confronted by Jake, who warns that revenge is never the right solution and that there could be serious consequences.

Afterthought:

In *Episode 6 - Guru Meltdown*, the guest star's best friend and wife took him to a self-help seminar to tell him they were having an affair and that she was leaving him. When an assassin shot the guru, his wife was killed in the crossfire and he has never forgiven his best friend. Now that he knows he's going to die, taking his friend down with him seems like the perfect way to take revenge. The guest star proposes a vacation with his friend as a way to mend fences. Once confined to the airplane cabin, he reveals his true intention. Throughout the scene on the plane, we see a piece of the airplane start to slowly rip away from the fuselage.

Episode Connections:

The guest star and his best friend return from *Episode 6 – Guru Meltdown*. The Plane and Pilot return in Season 2 in *Airplane Malfunction*.

Afterthought Episode 9 – Dog saves owner

Premonition:

A middle-aged woman and her dog awaken at 4 am. She gets up, showers and dresses and takes the dog out jogging with her, running through an affluent neighborhood and stopping only for the dog to relieve itself. As they cross the street a car runs a red light, running over them both. The dog wakes up in his bed and looks around to see Jake speaking to him. He looks over at his owner who is now getting ready to take him on their morning run.

Afterthought:

The dog goes along hesitantly on his run, slowing the woman's pace. They both watch as a car runs through a red light at the same intersection of the dog's vision. We then follow the dog through his routine with the woman. He goes to work with her at the Nursing Home from Episode 12. He starts to act differently about going on walks and runs with the woman and chews up one of her running shoes. When the woman buys a replacement pair, the dog buries them in the backyard. When she finds the shoes and puts them on, the dog is reluctant to go on their last run. As they approach the familiar intersection the dog cuts in front of the woman, tripping her and saving her from death, but her momentum throws the dog into the path of an oncoming car.

Episode Connections:

The dog reappears in *Episode 11 – Hollywood Couple*. The Hollywood Couple appear in *Episode 5 – Politix*, *Episode 10 – Big Box Store Trampling*, and *Episode 12 – Nursing Home*.

Afterthought Episode 10 – Big Box Store Trampling

Premonition:

We see an immigrant lined up with a dozen other employees of a big box retail store. The store manager is yelling at everyone not to mess up on the biggest shopping day of the year. The manager tells a man to unlock the front doors. As he unlocks the door the crowds push through, trampling the man to death. He wakes up in his bed with his wife. Because he is a Hindu, he sees Jake as Shiva the Destroyer and is convinced of the truth of his vision.

Afterthought:

We follow the man and his family from a plane through customs and then to a special immigration job placement office where he and his family are assigned jobs at the big box store in his vision. The whole family works under an abusive store manager who gets his way by threatening to fire and deport anyone who opposes him. Everyone working for him fears for their jobs and immigration status. The guest star has no idea what Black Friday is or what to expect. On the shift leading up to Thanksgiving, he is forced to work 16 hours when his boss locks the employees in the store after-hours until their jobs are done. The store is scheduled to open at 4 am for The Black Friday Sale. When he is assigned to the front door and sees the crowd of people in front of the store, he begins to panic.

Episode Connections:

Guido from *Episode 4 – Guido Marriage Proposal* stops in the store to shake down one of the employees. The Hollywood Couple from Episode 11 make a guest appearance at the store for a promotional event.

Afterthought Episode 11 – Hollywood Couple

Premonition:

A couple is quarreling while driving a car around the Hollywood hills. The car skids over the edge of the road, rolling over and bursting into flames. The couple wake up simultaneously and look at each other in horror. They realize they both had the same dream of the car crash. They both see and talk with Jake and refuse to see their deaths as inevitable, thinking they can escape death by changing their ways.

Afterthought:

We follow the everyday life of one of the top celebrity couples of Hollywood. An example of opposites attracting, the husband flaunts a bad-boy image while the wife is idolized as a good girl. Both of their careers are at their peak. In response to their dream, he tries to straighten out and clean up, while she does the opposite, trying to shed her good-girl image. She hires a private investigator, who unsuccessfully attempts to find her father, instead discovering her grandmother living in the nursing home featured in *Episode 12 – Nursing Home*. The husband is the son of the guest star in *Episode 3 – Politix*. The couple constantly bickers, blaming each other for the car accident as if it had already happened. They do not seem to get along, but stay together for the sake of appearances and their careers.

Episode Connections:

The husband is the son of the Main Character in *Episode 5 – Politix*. He and his wife are also in *Episode 10 – Big Box Store Trampling* and *Episode 12 – Nursing Home* where we find out she is Jake's daughter.

Afterthought Episode 12 – Nursing Home

Premonition:

The guest star turns out to be Jake's 80-year-old mother, alive and living in a nursing home. She watches as a nurse's jealous husband comes in to the nursing home to confront his cheating wife. He has firearms and is intoxicated. Suddenly all sounds fade away and Jake's mother hears her son's voice telling her to "Get out!" She gets up, goes into her room, and hides in the closet and watches as the husband goes on a shooting spree, hitting some of the patients. When the shooting is over, she looks around to see who survived. When her premonition ends, Jake's mother wakes up in her bed at the nursing home. Before she even sees her son appear as Jake, she talks to him as if she knows he guided her to safety.

Afterthought:

In the days leading up to the shooting, Jake's mother starts telling others about what she saw in her dream. Her friends and the staff think she's delusional and try to pay no attention to her warnings. She confronts the nurse about her abusive husband, and the nurse breaks down in tears. She spends her final days worrying the other patients by telling them who is going to die and who is going to live.

Episode Connections:

The wife in *Episode 3 – Gambler Horserace* is a nurse in the nursing home. The woman from *Episode 9 – Dog Saves Owner* works at the nursing home. Jake's daughter is in *Episodes 10 - Big Box Store Trampling* and *Episode 11 – Hollywood Couple*.

Afterthought Episode 13 – Jake’s Girlfriend

Premonition:

Jake is already in trouble with Death. The guest star is Jake’s girlfriend, whom he left at the altar pregnant, because he died on his way to the wedding. We see the guest star with her eyes closed, daydreaming in the sunlight coming through the window of the hardware store from *Episode 7 – Rube Goldberg Suicide*. The beep of her register scanner wakes her up. She starts to smile, then quickly angers when she sees Jake and recognizes him as her fiancé of 20 years ago.

Afterthought:

The woman confronts Jake about leaving her at the altar, pregnant. She explains their daughter grew up to become a huge Hollywood star. Jake explains how he died on the way to the wedding, but she isn’t letting him use that as an excuse; it’s been 20 years and she can’t change overnight. We learn about both the woman and Jake as they reconnect. The episode ends with Jake having to meet his boss, Death, who is highly displeased with his bending of the rules when he saved his Mother in *Episode 12 – Nursing Home*. She condemns Jake to complete annihilation, then changes her mind and makes Jake’s girlfriend his boss and tells Jake to teach her the ropes. This sets the stage for Season 2 with Jake fighting to get his job back, while having to answer and kiss up to his eternal fiancée and new boss.

Episode Connections:

Jake’s Girlfriend returns in Season 2 as Jake’s newly appointed boss.