

STILL HERE

Screenplay

Written and directed by ALESSIO GALFO · 2026

Format: Short film · 2.20:1
Runtime: 2 min 11 s
Characters: One (the Clown / Jeff Patterson)
Acts: Four — no backstage
Production: AI · 2026
Note: Silent film, save one unfinished line.

«SOME MASKS DON'T COME OFF. THEY WASH AWAY.»

STILL HERE · Screenplay · v.02

CHARACTERS

JEFF PATTERSON – THE CLOWN. A man of ~65, short and stocky, shaved head. White makeup with three black tears under each eye, a bordeaux conical hat, a bordeaux circus coat with gold embroidery, beige-gold gloves, oversized black shoes, a leather suitcase. He wears the costume at all times. He becomes JEFF – no mask, bordeaux overcoat, bowler hat – only in Act IV, at the match cut.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

A silent film. The only line: «Ladies and gentlemen, the show is now—» (unfinished). There is NO backstage – the film ends suspended. Water is a purifying agent: not merely a transition, it is what washes identity away. Made entirely with AI tools.

THEME

We all wear a mask. Losing the mask does not free you, it empties you. Who Jeff will become is the question the film leaves open.

ACT I

THE STREET

Frame 01 — 07 · 7 shots



Frame 01

EXT. VICTORIAN LONDON · STREET · PUDDLE · NIGHT

Dettaglio pozza · Static

A wet cobblestone street in the night. Steady, silent rain. A large puddle reflects the gas lamps and the grey sky.

It is the film's first mirror. The portal.



Frame 02

EXT. STREET · CONTINUOUS

Full Shot basso · Dolly forward lento

At the far end of the deserted street, a small figure advances under the lamps.

THE CLOWN walks. No hurry. No destination. Only his feet, which keep moving.



Frame 03

EXT. STREET · CONTINUOUS

Medium Full laterale · Tracking

The clown draws closer. A bordeaux circus coat with gold embroidery, worn. A leather suitcase in his hand.

The details of the costume emerge from the dark.



Frame 04

EXT. STREET · CONTINUOUS

Medium Shot frontale · Micro push-in

Frontal. White greasepaint. Three black painted tears under each eye. A bordeaux conical hat.

He looks at us. He is not performing: he exists.



Frame 05

EXT. STREET · CONTINUOUS*Full Shot · Static*

The clown stops in the middle of the rain-slicked street.
The suitcase is heavy.

He lowers his gaze to the ground.



Frame 06

EXT. STREET · PUDDLE · CONTINUOUS*Medium laterale · Static*

He bends slowly toward the puddle at the edge of the kerb.
He sets the suitcase down.

First contact with the narrative portal.

**EXT. PUDDLE · TOP-DOWN POV · CONTINUOUS***Top-Down POV · Static / Fade to black*

In the puddle, upside down, his reflection. White face.
Black tears. It is him.

The mirror is imperfect – rippled by the rain. The scene darkens. FADE TO BLACK. It reopens from inside the same water-mirror, in the circus.

ACT II
THE VISION

Frame 08 – 12 + TC · 5 shots + title card



Frame 08

INT. VICTORIAN CIRCUS · RING · NIGHT (VISION)*Bird's Eye Wide · Slow crane down*

Bird's eye on the ring of a 19th-century circus. Sawdust and dry leaves. Red drapes. Hundreds of spectators in Victorian dress fill every seat.

At the center of the ring, under a blinding spotlight, THE CLOWN stands motionless.



Frame 09

INT. CIRCUS · RING · CONTINUOUS*Medium Wide eye-level · Lento push-in*

Medium wide. The audience is visible on both sides. Silence. No one applauds. Thousands of eyes watch him.

The Clown opens his mouth. He speaks to camera – the painted smile is not the smile of the face.

THE CLOWN

«Ladies and gentlemen,
the show is now—»
(line unfinished)



Frame 10

INT. CIRCUS · RING · CONTINUOUS*Medium teatro · Slow crane up / Pull-back*

At that exact instant – before a line, a gesture, an act – the audience rises and leaves. Not in anger. In indifference. As if the clown were not there.

The red seats empty under the grand staircase. Only the ring, the clown and the spotlight remain.



Frame 11

INT. EMPTY CIRCUS · RING · CONTINUOUS*Medium Shot · Static*

The theatre empties. THE CLOWN bows his head and takes a bow to the empty house. The spotlight still follows him.

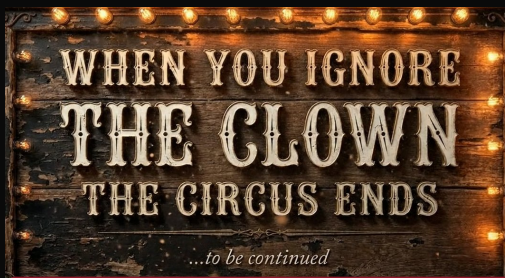


Frame 12

INT. CIRCUS · RING · CONTINUOUS*Full Shot silhouette · Lentissimo pull-back*

The spotlight slowly narrows to a minimal circle of light around him. Everything else is darkness.

The Clown's outline becomes pure silhouette. A clown in the dark. Still here.



«WHEN YOU IGNORE THE CLOWN, THE CIRCUS ENDS.»

Title Card · Wooden panel · Vintage bulbs

ACT III

THE PORTRAIT

Frame 13 – 17 + TC · 5 shots + title card



Frame 13

INT. CIRCUS · RING · CONTINUOUS (VISION)

Overhead grandangolo · Slow crane down

Overhead on the Clown seen from above, in the circle of light on a floor of dry leaves. The camera descends slowly – the wide angle heightens the vertigo.

The Clown looks up. Straight into the camera. He knows we are watching.



Frame 14

INT. CIRCUS · ECU FACE · CONTINUOUS

ECU frontale · Static

Extreme close-up of the face. Gradually the light turns red – anger, resignation, wounded pride. The emotion rises.



Frame 15

INT. CIRCUS · ECU EYE · CONTINUOUS

ECU occhio · Static macro

ECU on the eye. A black tear (the running makeup) crosses the wrinkled face. The emotional peak. The tear is real. The flowing makeup turns the pain into graphics.



TC

«SOME MASKS DON'T COME OFF. THEY WASH AWAY.»

Title Card · Wooden panel · Vintage bulbs



Frame 16

INT. CIRCUS · CU GAZE · CONTINUOUS

Close-Up frontale · Static

CU of the Clown's face. Still in the theatre, but the light has changed – no longer red. A serene, almost liberated expression. As if he had set down a weight, a role that kept him captive.



INT. CIRCUS · CU RAIN ON THE FACE · MATCH CUT

Close-Up pioggia sul viso · MATCH CUT

The Clown laughs in the rain. Water runs over the makeup and dissolves it. Purification and loss at once – the character literally melts away. He is still the Clown, but he is disappearing.

MATCH CUT on the rain.

ACT IV

THE RETURN

Frame 18 – 20 · 3 shots



Frame 18

EXT. STREET · JEFF RISES · REALITY

Medium Shot frontale · Static

The same rain. The same street. The vision is over.

He is no longer the Clown. He is JEFF – an ordinary, dejected man. No makeup. Bordeaux overcoat. He bends to pick up the suitcase that is too heavy.



Frame 19

EXT. STREET · JEFF FROM BEHIND · CONTINUOUS*Full Shot dietro · Lento follow*

Jeff puts his hat back on. He picks up the suitcase. He walks away, from behind, along the rain-slicked street. The lamp behind him lights him for one last moment.



Frame 20

EXT. STREET · JEFF WALKS AWAY · CONTINUOUS*Wide Shot prospettiva · Lentissimo pull-back*

Jeff keeps walking away. A small figure on the long street. The fog absorbs him. The street stays empty. The rain keeps falling.

The lamp keeps burning. There is NO backstage – the film ends here, suspended.