

Poltergeist Online

by

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FADE IN:

INT. FRANKLIN'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

Two businessmen conference via Zoom: FRANKLIN FULLER, 20s,
and his stonefaced boss, MR. LAMB, 40s.

FRANKLIN

The August inventory isn't in...

Lamb freezes onscreen, face snarled amid a rotten connection.

Franklin gazes until Lamb comes unstuck, out of limbo.

LAMB

Sorry. Our connection sucks.

FRANKLIN

All the time this happens.

LAMB

You know why, right?

Franklin shrugs.

LAMB

The server's clogged with dead
fuckers and poltergeists.

Franklin half-chuckles, picks at the edge of a spreadsheet.

LAMB

Honest to God. Their souls get
sucked into the ethernet and they
glitch shit up. If you look quick,
you can see 'em.

FRANKLIN

(searches for diplomacy)
I haven't heard about that one.

LAMB

Haven't you ever glimpsed a dead
person on one of your online
meetings? You're kidding me, right?
The sightings are all over YouTube.

Franklin stares, completely befuddled.

LAMB

Okay. Time for an experiment. We're
gonna find some poltergeists on our
screens.

Franklin chuckles nervously. This must be a joke.

LAMB

You have to sneak up on them. They show themselves when they think that nobody's watching.

FRANKLIN

Mr. Lamb, I'd like to circle back to the August inventory.

LAMB

C'mon, Franklin. Set aside your spreadsheets for thirty seconds. Here's what you need to do: Turn out the lights and step away from your computer. Go to the other side of the room. Count to ten softly.

Franklin scratches his nose, full of doubt, confusion.

LAMB

Then you're going to sneak up to your monitor. If you're quick enough, you'll see some dead dudes.

FRANKLIN

Yeah?

LAMB

It'll be fun. I'm going to try it on my end. I'm turning out my lights, too.

Mr. Lamb steps away from his camera, but Franklin hears him.

LAMB (O.S.)

Maybe we'll see some freaky fucking poltergeist shit, Franklin.

With a small sigh, Franklin gives in. He turns off the light and steps to the far end of the room.

Franklin faces the back of his computer. The monitor's glow reflects off the wall, casting the room in eerie light.

Standing in the shadows, he softly counts to ten.

Slowly he begins his approach.

The floorboards creak. The monitor hums, throwing unnatural light on the wall.

Three feet away. Two. One...Mere inches...Shadows skitter.

Nervous, wincing, holding his breath, Franklin hunkers low and then whips his face in front of the monitor...

He sees Mr. Lamb's office. Lights out. Nobody there.

Franklin scans the screen for dead faces, floating ectoplasms, anything.

Nothing. Darkness. A small anxious electric hum. Shadows.

A moment crawls by. Franklin searches uncomfortably, breathing quickly. On edge. Full of dread.

It becomes unbearable. He calls out:

FRANKLIN

Mr. Lamb?

Nothing. Silence. Shadow.

FRANKLIN

I'm not seeing anything.

Zap. The monitor goes out. Total darkness for Franklin.

FRANKLIN

Ah, crap.

To the light switch he goes. Flick-flick. No light. No power.

FRANKLIN

You're kidding me.

He shuffles in the darkness for several seconds before the computer monitor flickers back to life.

Franklin flips the light switch. Nothing. No power.

The monitor glows independently of the electric grid.

Loud static from the monitor. Whispers. Words being said backwards. Gurgling.

Eyes wide, Franklin calls out:

FRANKLIN

Mr. Lamb? I'm having problems with my power. Is that you?

From the monitor: Mmmm...gurgle...shhhhh.

A step forward. A step back. Franklin has nowhere to turn.

He inches toward the monitor.

He gets to it. He peers at the screen. His mouth drops.

Mr. Lamb stares, his head torn open: tissue, brains, and blood all over his face. Sunken eyes. Purpled skin. His teeth: broken, jagged, sharp.

Franklin struggles to comprehend.

FRANKLIN

Mr. Lamb? Are you hurt?

Mr. Lamb stares dead ahead. The screen flickers.

Bloody drool from Mr. Lamb's mouth. He speaks:

LAMB

I didn't make it, Franklin.

Sputtering. Flickering. The monitor lags.

LAMB

Died this morning. Gunshot.

FRANKLIN

Is this a prank?

He tries to turn his monitor off, but no luck.

FRANKLIN

This isn't appropriate. It's over the line, Mr. Lamb. Not funny.

Mr. Lamb sputters, laughs, wheezes.

LAMB

I'm still your boss. You still work for me, dead or alive.

Something ghostly swoops behind Franklin. Two blue-tinted, cadaverous hands grab his shoulders. Mr. Lamb's hands.

Franklin screams, squirms. The hands push him to the monitor.

On the screen, Mr. Lamb licks his lips with his black, dead tongue. He opens his mouth wide--ready to devour.

Franklin gets his face shoved to the awful on-screen face.

They're nose-to-nose. Franklin's panicked cries fog the monitor. Tears fall from his terrified eyes.

Mr. Lamb's mouth widens. One last scream from Franklin.

FADE OUT: