

"THE FLYIN' BALLOON BOY MASSACREE"

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. A SMALL TOWN - DAY

The snow capped Rocky Mountains line the western horizon. To the south rise the skyscrapers of Denver.

A SIGN: "WELCOME TO LARIMER COUNTY."

PAN TO:

AN AVERAGE SUBURBAN HOME. A van is parked in the driveway sporting a SIGN: "SCIENCE DETECTIVE RESEARCH GROUP."

An average-sized, Caucasian 30-something man, dark-haired RICHARD HEENE, works in his back yard. He's building a silvery weather balloon, along with his wife, 30-something Japanese MIYUME. It lies flat while they tape it with duct tape.

She speaks with a Japanese accent.

RICHARD

Come on, Miyume. You're lagging behind.

MIYUME

Richard, you reavy me arone. I go fast as can.

RICHARD

Dammit, Miyume. No wonder the Japanese lost World War Two.

MIYUME

You reave my ancestors arone, Richard, or I no workee for you no more.

RICHARD

OK, OK, just hurry up, wouldja? Jesus!

A 7-year old boy, their son, FALCON, kicks a soccer ball into the back yard.

FALCON

Another weather balloon?

RICHARD

Whaddya mean, "Another weather balloon?" I'm a weather chaser, aren't I? I need weather balloons.

MIYUME

Why you not just buy kit? It-a workee much bettah.

RICHARD

(Exasperated)

Because kits are expensive! I told you. Can't you remember anything? Fuck!

MIYUME

(Exasperated)

And fuck you, science boy! I no workee for you any more.

She starts to walk off, weepy.

Falcon watches, amused.

Richard rolls his eyes and then follows after her. He catches up with her and turns her around, tenderly.

RICHARD

Aw, honey, I'm sorry. It's just that I've been under a lot of stress lately.

MIYUME

You be under more stress if you keep-a cussee me.

He hugs her.

RICHARD

I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

He kisses her.

RICHARD

We'll figure out something.

Two more BOYS saunter into the back yard. They're Falcon's brothers, RYO, 9-years old, and BRADFORD, eleven-years old.

FALCON

I think we should make another music video!

RYO

Yeah, dad, your lyrics were awesome!

BRADFORD

Yeah, that's how we're going to be
rich and famous! With music
videos!

BOYS (In unison, jumping)

Music videos! Music videos!
Music videos!

Richard settles them down.

RICHARD

Come on, you guys, settle down.
You know I'm a science guy. I
want to be famous for something
serious.

FALCON

Aw, dad, you're no fun.

RICHARD

Now, you boys run along.

FALCON

Can't we watch the launch of the
weather balloon?

RICHARD

Well, it is all done. I tell you
what, you can name it.

He and Miyume attach a helium canister to it and begin to
fill it with helium.

RYO

Hey dad, can I have a snort?

BOYS (In unison, jumping)

Yeah, can we? Can we?

RICHARD

(Smiling)

I'll beat you to it!

He takes a whiff of helium and then speaks in a helium
voice.

RICHARD

I say we name it the "Weather Or
Not."

(Laughs)

Miyume takes a whiff.

MIYUME

I say we name it the "Heene Silver
Weinie."

(Laughs)

The boys jump around and beg for their turns.

Ryo goes first.

RYO

I say we name it the "Heene Chili
Beanie."

(Laughs)

Bradford goes first.

BRADFORD

I say we name it the "Heene Meenie
Minie, Moe."

(Laughs)

Falcon goes last.

FALCON

I say we name it the "The Flyin'
Balloon Boy." And we let me fly
in it!

(Laughs)

BRADFORD

Wow, if your voice got any higher,
you could break glass.

Miyume and Richard pause and look at each other.

RICHARD

That's it!

Miyume gives him a knowing look.

They finish filling the balloon. One rope holds it to
the ground as it floats above them in the back yard.

RICHARD

The "Flyin' Balloon Boy" it is.
Here we go...

He cuts the rope. The balloon rises slowly and then
springs a leak and shoots like a toy balloon over the
fence, with a loud FARTING sound.

They all look at it go, wide-eyed. Then they look at
each other, laughing hilariously.

All except Miyume, who's looking at Richard with knives
coming out of her eyes.

FADE IN:

INT. A BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Heene parents' bedroom. It's dark, lit only by the moon coming through the open windows.

Richard and Miyume lie on their backs on their bed.

RICHARD

Come on, Miyume, it'll work; I just know it will.

MIYUME

You outta your fucking mind, Richard? With Falcon inside? You rearry not dearing with furr deck.

RICHARD

The other boys are older, but Falcon's the lightest.

MIYUME

Farcon not-a go, none of boys go. You rearry outta your fucking mind.

(Pause)

RICHARD

This could be the big break we need. The publicity would be amazing. The networks would come begging.

MIYUME

No!

RICHARD

Reality TV; that's it! "Science Idol," starring Richard Heene. Can't you just see it?

MIYUME

No!

RICHARD

Come on, it's just what kids need...A good role model. One who promotes science. It's foolproof!

MIYUME

No! I say "sayonara" first. I go back-a Japan. And I take-a boys with me.

(Pause)

RICHARD

Pleeeeeease?

She swings an elbow at him.

MIYUME

Hi-yah!

FADE IN:

EXT. THE HEENE'S BACK YARD - DAY

Richard works at a new balloon. This one is bigger and shinier. There's an enclosed silver-lined basket under it.

He secures six ropes off of every seam.

Miyume walks around the corner carrying lemonades. She hands one to Richard. She lifts her glass.

MIYUME

To kit balloons.

He lifts his glass.

RICHARD

To kit balloons. Much easier.

MIYUME

Rike I told you.

He continues to secure the ropes.

RICHARD

And much more expensive. Damn, I hate being limited by budget! CSU has deep pockets, I got nothing.

MIYUME

Maybe you should appry there.

RICHARD

(Laughs)

With my degree? Mom always said I'd hold a PhD...A post-hole digger.

(Pause)

Miyume peaks inside the basket.

RICHARD
Aw, come on, honey. I promised
you: No launching Falcon. And I
always keep my promises.

MIYUME
I'm a mom; I had to check. Solly.

RICHARD
OK, connect the helium.

She holds up the gas hose.

MIYUME
Want-ee snort first?

RICHARD
The ceremonial snort. Of course.

They both inhale a whiff of helium.

RICHARD
To, "The Flyin' Balloon Boy!"

MIYUME
I kill-ee you!

She chases him around the back yard, laughing in helium
voices as they go. When the voices wear off, they
collapse in a heap.

MIYUME
No barroon boy, I terr-ee you!

She looks inside the basket again. Satisfied, she gives
him the OK sign.

She attaches the hose and the balloon fills quickly. It
rises straight up until all the ropes are tight. Richard
adjusts each one until the balloon is level.

RICHARD
OK, now release each opposite rope
as me at the same time I do.
Ready?

She stations herself on the opposite rope as him.

MIYUME
Ready!

One, two, three!

They release their ropes and then move clockwise to the next ropes.

Ready!

One, two, three!

They release their ropes and the balloon wobbles more than before, but then stabilizes. They then move clockwise to the last remaining ropes.

Ready!

One, two, three!

They release their ropes and the balloon drifts up into the sky. It catches a breeze and sails over the fence.

They jump around in glee.

Woohoo! Yippee!

She looks at him with admiration.

You rearry amazing science guy. I solly I doubt you.

He hugs her.

All is forgiven, if I can get another lemonade as good as the last one.

Coming light up.

She takes their glasses and walks into the house.

He takes out his cellphone.

Hello, 9-1-1?

FADE IN:

EXT. THE HEENE HOUSE - DAY

Police cruisers drive up to the house, lights flashing and sirens sounding.

Ryo and Bradford run in, excited, and then run outside.

Miyume is wide-eyed. Richard takes her aside.

RICHARD
Miyume, I've got something to tell
you...

She looks at him suspiciously.

RICHARD
Don't worry; I didn't launch
Falcon.

She looks relieved.

RICHARD
He's safe and sound in the attic.

MIYUME
In the attic? Why?

RICHARD
(Nervous)
Now, don't be mad. I hid him
there.

MIYUME
You hid him there? Why?

RICHARD
(Nervous)
I, um, I...didn't want the police
to find him.

She looks at him with knives.

MIYUME
(Growing angry)
Why?

RICHARD
I, um, I...I told them he was in
the balloon.

MIYUME
(Livid)
You what?!

The police KNOCK at the door.

RICHARD
 Heh, heh. It'll get us the
 publicity we want for a reality TV
 show.

The police KNOCK again.

RICHARD
 We'd better get that, heh, heh.

He answers the door. Miyume follows in his wake, with smoke coming out of her ears.

Richard opens the door, revealing no-necked, balded, 40-something SHERIFF JIM ALDERDEN and six DEPUTIES of varying ages and genders.

RICHARD
 Thanks for coming so quickly.
 We're so distraught we didn't know
 what else to do.

Right, honey?

MIYUME
 (Looking down)
 Yes. That light...

She slinks down behind him. A FEMALE DEPUTY, 20-something BETSY ANN, comforts her.

SHERIFF
 I'm Jim Alderden. I came
 personally when I heard. This
 must be a terrifying ordeal for
 you folks.

RICHARD
 You couldn't imagine! Right,
 honey?

MIYUME
 (Looking down)
 Yes. You no imagine.

SHERIFF
 Now, you folks don't worry about a
 thing. The Channel Seven News
 helicopter is already tracking the
 balloon.

He shows them his phone. A picture of the balloon flying through the sky appears on the screen.

SHERIFF
We'll get right to work from this end. Now, where did you see him last?

Richard leads them. Miyume and the female deputy and the rest follow.

OUTSIDE, BACK YARD

Richard lifts a couple of ropes.

RICHARD
We launched it right here, like we always do.

SHERIFF
Well, that balloon's headed right for DIA.

RICHARD
The airport?!

SHERIFF
They'll shut down Denver's air traffic if they have to.

MIYUME
Boo hoo!

DEPUTY
You poor thing! Here's my hanky.

Miyume empties her nostrils into it and then hands it back. Betsy Ann gingerly sets it down.

SHERIFF
I'll leave a couple of deputies here to interview you folks.

He points to a male deputy.

SHERIFF
The rest of you, let's saddle up! We've got us a balloon boy to rescue!

Don't worry, sir, madame; We'll get him back for you.

As they scramble for their cruisers, the sheriff

confides to a deputy.

SHERIFF
If that flimsy piece of tin foil
doesn't crash first...

They hasten off, lights flashing and sirens BLARING.

A MONTAGE OF FILE FOOTAGE:

- Denver news helicopter reporting on the balloon.
- Different U.S. news programs reporting on the balloon.
- Denver news helicopter reporting on the balloon.
- Foreign TV news reporting on the balloon.
- Denver news helicopter reporting on the balloon's closing of Denver International Airport.
- Squad cars and ambulances chasing the balloon.

INT. A SQUAD CAR - DAY

Sheriff Alderden rides in the passenger seat of his squad car, driven by RAFF, a 30'ish male deputy. They scream down a dirt road, sirens BLARING and dust flying, followed by a dozen other manned squad cars and ambulances.

SHERIFF
Rafe! I see him! There he is, at
two o'clock!

RAFF
Yo're shore right, Sheriff!
That's gotta be him for shore!

SHERIFF
(Exasperated)
Ya think! Come on, turn right,
turn right!

The car careens up on two wheels as Rafe guns the car around a right turn. The rest of the cars follow suit.

A tent-like structure appears on the horizon.

RAFE
 Sheriff! Ain't that Denver
 International?

SHERIFF
 (Exasperated)
 No. It's a female warthog on its
 back! Of course it's DIA, you
 moron! It sure ain't Larimer
 County Airport! Now gun it!

The car fishtails as Rafe guns it. The other cars follow
 suit.

The Sheriff picks up his radio mic.

SHERIFF
 Earl! You and the boys closing in
 on it from the east?

EARL (O.S.)
 We are, Sheriff. But where it
 comes down is anybody's guess.
 And we got the Colorado Highway
 Patrol joining us.

SHERIFF
 Roger that. I'll notify the
 Kansas HP, too.

Kansas Highway Patrol, Kansas
 Highway Patrol, come in.

KANSAS TROOPER (O.S.)
 This is the Kansas Highway Patrol,
 Sheriff. We've been monitoring
 your frequency.

SHERIFF
 Heard about it, huh?

KANSAS TROOPER (O.S.)
 The whole world's heard about it,
 Jim.

RAFE
 Shee-yut, Sheriff! We're famous!

SHERIFF
 We'll be infamous if we don't
 rescue that kid! Turn left! Turn
 left!

The car fishtails as Rafe guns it. The other cars follow
 suit.

SHERIFF
 (Into the mic)
 Betsy Ann! Betsy Ann! How's it
 going back at the house?

EXT. THE HEENE'S HOUSE - DAY

Betsy Ann and Miyume sit on a low brick wall in the back yard. Betsy Ann comforts the crying Miyume as the male deputy questions Richard and his two older sons. Richard waves his arms and points. The boys stand shyly next to Richard.

A box of Kleenex sits near Betsy Ann and a pile of used kleenex sit next to Miyume.

BETSY ANN
 I'm a mother myself. I can't
 imagine what you're going through.

MIYUME
 Honk! Sniff! Oh, you no know-ee
 half of it! Boo hoo hoo!

BETSY ANN
 You're Asian, aren't you?

MIYUME
 You vely obselvant.

BETSY ANN
 From where?

MIYUME
 Japan. I born thele. Boo hoo!
 Honk!

BETSY ANN
 Oh, I see you're out of Kleenex.
 I'll get some more.

MIYUME
 I come-ee with you. You rike-ee
 tea?

BETSY ANN
 That would be lovely. Thanks.

MIYUME
 Come on, boys. I get-ee you
 chocorate mirk.

The boys CHIRP assent and follow the two women into the house.

A MONTAGE

- Denver news helicopters reporting on the balloon.
- Different U.S. news programs reporting on the balloon.
- Denver news helicopter reporting on the balloon.
- Foreign TV news reporting on the balloon.
- Stranded travelers in Denver International Airport.
- Squad cars and ambulances chasing the balloon.
- The balloon descending.

FADE IN:

EXT. A FARM FIELD - DAY

Squad cars and ambulances converge on the descending balloon from the east and west. The spires of DIA appear in the background.

They all jump out of their cars and jump for the balloon as it descends.

SHERIFF

Grab that thing! Come on, jump!

They all jump and most fall.

SHERIFF

Get it, get it! Come on, jump!

They jump and most fall again. But a couple of the taller ones finally grab the corners.

SHERIFF

Pull it down! Pull it down!
Rafe! We gotta make sure that
thing doesn't blow away again!
Get a shovel!

Rafe secures a shovel out of the back of the squad car.

SHERIFF

Now beat that sucker! Knock it
flat!

Rafe swings at the balloon. It makes a tear and the balloon FARTS helium at him.

RAFE

(In a helium voice)

But, Sheriff! What about the kid?

The balloon FARTS helium at the sheriff, too.

SHERIFF

(In a helium voice)

We'll get him! First we gotta make sure that thing don't fly off again! Now swing! Don't just stand there, you men, help him!

Three other deputies secure shovels and beat on the balloon. It FARTS helium on them, too, and they all speak in helium voices.

DEPUTY #1

We got it, Sheriff!

DEPUTY #2

Ha ha! You talk funny!

DEPUTY #3

No, you do!

ALL

Ha ha ha!

SHERIFF

You morons! Get out of the way!

They stand back as the sheriff lifts back the flattened fabric and uncovers the basket.

He tears at the fabric.

SHERIFF

Hey, kid! Hey, Falcon! Falcon, come out!

They stand back, aghast.

RAFE

Omigawrsh, Sheriff, he could have passed out!

He and the Sheriff rip at the fabric and reach in from opposite directions.

They grab hands in the middle.

RAFE

I got him, Sheriff! I got him!

The Sheriff smacks him on the back of his head.

SHERIFF

You idiot, Rafe! That was me!

RAFE

Goll-ee. Sorry, Sheriff. Well,
where do you suppose that kid is?

They scratch their heads, quizzically. Suddenly, a
"eureka" light comes on in all their heads.

RAFE

Omigawrsh! He mighta fell out,
Sheriff!

SHERIFF

For once, you could be right,
Rafe! Everyone, back in your
cars! Let's go!

They race back to their cars and scream off to the east.

FADE IN:

INT. THE HEENE'S HOUSE - DAY

Betsy Ann & Miyume share a cup of tea in the living room.
Miyume walks to a bookcase and shows Betsy Ann a picture
of Falcon.

MIYUME

This-a be him. Oh, Farcon! I
miss you bery much! Sob!

BETSY ANN

(Comforting)

Oh, you poor dear!

Betsy Ann's police radio SQUAKS.

SHERIFF (O.S.)

Betsy Ann! Betsy Ann! We're
coming back!

BETSY ANN

Sheriff? Did you find him?

(Pause)

SHERIFF (O.S.)
I'm afraid not. He wasn't in that
basket. We're combing the area
back to you in hopes of finding
him.

MIYUME
Oh, Falcon! My son, my son!

She collapses. As Betsy Ann rushes over, we see Miyume's
eye open. She shuts it as Betsy Ann turns her over,
feigning fainting.

BETSY ANN
You poor thing! No parent should
have to endure this! Gotta get
water!

She drops Miyume's head on the floor with a CLUNK!
Miyume winces and looks over her shoulder at Betsy Ann as
she runs around. Finally, Betsy Ann brings water to
Miyume.

A CLUNKING SOUND from the direction of the garage.
Another CLUNKING SOUND from the direction of the garage.

Betsy Ann, alarmed, pauses and pulls out her pistol. She
edges towards the garage.

BETSY ANN
Who's there?!

Miyume opens her eyes and sits up.

MIYUME
Herro? Where am I?

Betsy Ann rushes to her, pistol still drawn.

BETSY ANN
Miyume? You're in your living
room.

MIYUME
Oh, I remember. I thought-ee bad
dlean.

Betsy Ann feeds Miyume the water. Miyume SPUTTERS and
spews water out of her nose. The pistol still waves
around in Betsy Ann's other hand.

Another CLUNK from the garage. Betsy Ann walks slowly
towards the garage, gun pointed.

BETSY ANN

Just when you think things can't
get any worse...

SIRENS SOUND in the distance

BETSY ANN

Great! The sheriff ought to be
here soon...I'll have backup.

Another CLUNK from the garage, frightening Betsy Ann.

The sirens get LOUDER.

MIYUME

Oh, that no probrem. That lacoon.
We got-ee lacoon in galage attic.
We no can catch.

Betsy Ann holsters her gun.

BETSY ANN

Awfully big racoon, but OK.

She lifts Miyume to her feet and they rush through the
garage just as the sheriff and his posse drive up, lights
FLASHING and sirens BLARING.

The sheriff rushes in, followed by the others. When she
sees no Falcon, Miyume feigns terror.

MIYUME

Don't terr-ee me! You no find-ee?

Richard rushes to her side and takes her up in his arms.

RICHARD

There, there. We might have
missed him.

MIYUME

Oh, my poor baby!

SHERIFF

I'll organize a proper manhunt,
with dogs and the National Guard,
if I have to!

He takes out his radio.

A CLUNK from the garage attic. Everyone stops and looks
up.

MIYUME

It-a lacoon, sheliff.

A CLUNK from the garage attic. Everyone looks up towards a hatch to the attic.

SHERIFF
Awfully big racoon. Might be an intruder!

He takes out his gun, as do the rest of the police. They're all pointed at the hatch.

SHERIFF
Come out, you shiftless polecat!
You picked the wrong time to burglarize this house!

The staircase CREAKS as unknown hands lift out the plywood hatch. It CREAKS again and then CLUNKS as it's put aside.

SHERIFF
Come on out, with your hands up!

A pair of sneakers and a butt in jeans appear in the hatch. In a second, Falcon swings out and onto a work bench below.

SHERIFF
It's the kid! Hey, Falcon!

They all holster their weapons and clamor forward.

Richard and Miyume reach them first and gather him into their arms. The posse CHEERS.

RICHARD
Oh, Falcon, my son, my son!

Miyume sobs and hugs and pets him. The other two Heene boys run in and join in the group hug.

MIYUME
Oh, Falcon, my son, my son! We-a thought-ee you gone! We thought-ee you in barroon!

FALCON
Naw, I just went to play in the attic and I guess I just fell asleep.

RICHARD
Well, you're safe now. That's all that counts.

He directs the group hug

INSIDE. THE LIVING ROOM.

The Heene's sit on the couch, still hugging Falcon. The police gather around.

SHERIFF

Well, you certainly gave us a start, young man! But we're glad you're safe.

RAFE

Goldang, sheriff! That there was about the dumbest chase I ever been a part of.

SHERIFF

Rafe, hush! These parents have been through enough!

Well, listen, you folks, all's well that ends well. I'll let you re-connect, then be back tomorrow to take statements, if that's all right with you.

RICHARD

That'd be fine, sheriff. Thanks so much for all your help. And sorry to be so much trouble.

SHERIFF

Like I said, all's well that ends well. Besides, you've put our county on the map. People have tuned in from all over the world.

MIYUME

(Smiling slightly)

Rearry?

SHERIFF

Yep, we got coverage all over the globe. Everybody wants to know you're OK, little fella.

FALCON

Wow!

SHERIFF

And I guess I'd better go tell them. I've got a press conference this evening. I'd better get going. Let's saddle up, boys!

They head for their patrol cars.

FALCON
Wow, dad! It's just like you
said, "All for the show!"

Richard puts his hand over Falcon's mouth and then waves
to the sheriff and Rafe at the living room door.

RICHARD
Thanks again, sheriff. See you
tomorrow!

SHERIFF
I'll call before I come out. Bye
for now, folks.

He and Rafe reach their patrol car.

SHERIFF
I wonder what that kid meant, "All
for the show?"

RAFE
Goldanged if I know, sheriff.

They get in their cars and drive out, one after another.

They reach a traffic circle.

The sheriff has a "Eureka" moment. His jaw sets.

His car careens around the traffic circle, doubling back
on itself, as he turns on the lights and siren.

THE BALLOON BOY MASSACREE TALKIN' BLUES

(Talking blues)

There once was a dad who was such a crook

He said to the police, "Look!"

My son flew away

In my balloon today,

& the police bit it, sinker & hook.

Now the balloon looked like a chef's hat,

Sorta round & sorta flat.

How could that kid hide

In the basket inside

With the thing tilting over like that?

The police finally caught up with it in the east,

& they beat it with shovels to subdue the beast.

They pounded that hat

They knocked it flat,

That's how we treat beasts in the east, at least!

Woop, woop, woop, woop, Hey Moe & Hey Larry!

We've doinked and we've thwapped this beastie so airy,

But there ain't no kid,
After all that we did,
This is starting to get scary, Larry!

So they all flew off to learn just how,
If he fell out, perhaps on a cow.
But back at the house
It was as still as a mouse,
Where could that kid be at now?

Up on the rooftop there arose such a clatter,
Everyone looked in the attic to see what was the matter.
The kid they did find,
Even the cops, so blind,
Then little Falcon started to chatter:

It seems the dad, he was dumb as a fox,
He hid little Falcon inside a box.
The kid let us know
It was all "for the show"
The folks should end up in cellblocks.