

LOOKING FOR OSCAR BENTLEY

by

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INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY (1973)

The STATIC of a tube television fills across the room as a pair of small child's hands bend and twist the bunny ear antennas.

These hands belong to RANDY THOMPSON (7), lanky and thin, with a rather sizable head that eclipses the rest of his body.

He continues to stir with the antennas. A slight adjustment allows the fuzzy TV reception to turn visible, revealing indeterminable portions of The Brady Bunch.

Randy sits himself down a few inches from the TV screen as his enjoyment seeps in.

As the show progresses, the loud, muffled SOUNDS of screaming and discussion bleed through the background. Randy turns his head for a second, then turns back to the TV screen.

The sounds start to get louder, yet Randy, growing slightly more anxious, keeps his full attention on the screen.

A door opens from the back of the room as two silhouettes - one male and the other female - quickly emerge.

The male silhouette, suitcase in hand, briskly walks to the front door. He slams it shut.

The female silhouette pauses, then walks to the middle of the room. She steps out of the darkness to reveal SUSAN THOMPSON (31), a slender motherly type with watery, weatherworn eyes.

She stands next to Randy, sniffing and wiping away at her eyes and increasingly red nose.

He looks up at her, as she builds herself back together.

SUSAN

Let's go to a movie.

EXT. BAUREGARD MOVIE THEATRE - DAY

Susan, with a purse over her shoulder, stands in a sizable line of customers with Randy, holding him by the hand.

RANDY

Shouldn't we wait up on Dad?

Susan doesn't address Randy, staring straight ahead at the line.

INT. BAUREGARD MOVIE THEATRE - DAY

Somewhat dark, yet lit enough for customers to walk around and pick out seats, most of which are already occupied.

Randy and Susan find two seats near the center of the theatre and sit down. She digs in her purse and discretely pulls out two candy bars, handing him one.

SUSAN

If you see anyone walking down the aisle, hide that - you understand?

Randy nods, as he tears open the corner and takes a bite.

The lights dim down as a whirring projector above their heads illuminates the theatre in a white, hazy glow.

The Universal Studios globe logo fills the theatre screen, followed by the familiar sight of Mel's Drive-In accompanied by the neon light title card reading "AMERICAN GRAFFITI".

Randy continues to watch the screen, taking bites out of his candy bar.

LATER,

Randy's enthusiasm has peaked, as he leans forward in his seat with an empty candy wrapper. The voices of Harrison Ford and Ron Howard converse back and forth in the theatre.

Randy listens with overwhelmed ecstasy.

EXT. BAUREGARD MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

Randy, animated and full of liveliness, walks out of the theatre building next to Susan.

RANDY

That was just - wow! I mean, the cars and that guy with the cowboy hat. It was cool!

Susan nods and gives Randy a smile.

They finally make it to Susan's car, as Randy opens his door.

RANDY (CONT'D)

We need to take Dad to this. He has to see it.

Susan's smile fades as she walks to the other side of the car.

SUSAN

We have to talk about that, Randy.

Randy watches her walk around, not quite sure what to make of her comment, but otherwise gets in the car. He closes the door.

EXT. THOMPSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Susan's car pulls up to the front of the house as the head lights shut off, masking the car in darkness.

INSIDE THE CAR,

Randy's face is flooded with tears. Susan's return to their watery state, but are more self contained. She continuously wipes at her eyes and nose.

Randy turns to Susan.

RANDY

Did I do something wrong?

SUSAN

No, no, no. It wasn't you, me -
it's not even your dad. It's
just...you did nothing wrong, okay?

Randy nods, albeit doubtfully.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Everything's gonna be okay. I
promise.

She leans in and gives him a kiss on the top of the head. She opens her door, as does he.

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The walls are blank and empty. No vibrance, no personality.

Sprawled out in bedsheets, Randy, dressed in flannel pajamas, stares up at the ceiling. CRICKET CHIRPS from outside detract from the silence.

He finally kicks out of the sheets and stands out of bed, tiptoeing to the bedroom door.

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Randy creeps in closer to the living room, making his way to the tube TV. He occasionally looks over his shoulder as he tiptoes closer and closer.

He twists a knob on the TV as fuzzy static fills the screen. The loud sound of the static catches him off guard, as he twists another knob to lower the volume.

He grabs the bunny ear antennas and starts to twist and bend them until the static disappears.

Slowly but surely, the image of Groucho and Harpo Marx performing the famous mirror scene from "Duck Soup" appears on the screen.

Randy sits back, quizzical, yet intrigued. As the scene plays out, he gradually begins to laugh, starting as small chuckles before becoming massive belts.

A clock sitting on a nearby wall reads "11:42". A few hours later

THE CLOCK READS

"2:18".

Randy lays on his stomach, glaring at the TV screen with absolute attention.

The TV screen now depicts a battered and bloody Marlon Brando limping down the dock ramp in "On the Waterfront."

Another few hours go by and

THE CLOCK READS

"4:25".

Randy, still laying on his stomach, rests his head on the floor, asleep.

The TV screen plays SMPTE color bars and a monochrome beat that rings throughout the living room.

A nappy headed and half asleep Susan, dressed in her nightgown, walks into the living room.

She looks down to see Randy splayed on the floor. She sighs and twists a knob on the TV, shutting off the color bars.

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

Susan, carrying Randy on her shoulder, walks into the bedroom and gently lays him on the bed, tucking him under the covers.

She kisses him on the forehead and scruffs his hair before turning around and heading out of the room.

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY (1983)

TITLE: TEN YEARS LATER

Several movie posters cover the once blank walls, varying from "The Wild Ones" and "On the Waterfront" to "Mary Poppins" and "Duck Soup".

Book shelves on the opposite side of the room display rows upon rows of Super 8mm films and books, thin to thick. Titles include "The Cinema of Alfred Hitchcock" and "The Great Movie Comedians".

Randy, (17), lankier and his head finally caught up to the rest of his body, lays asleep on the bed in his street clothes. A book rests on top of his chest.

A KNOCK on the door. A familiar voice calls out to him.

SUSAN (O.S.)

Randy?

No response, followed by a more aggressive knock.

SUSAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Randy?

Randy finally jolts up, knocking the book off his chest. He slowly brings himself up, trying to stay awake.

RANDY

Come in.

The door opens and Susan, (41), with visible tire yet expressive liveliness, comes in with a laundry basket under her arm.

SUSAN

Morning, Sleepy Head.

Randy nods, stretching and rubbing his eyes.

Susan walks around the room, picking up miscellaneous pieces of clothing.