

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 small 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 slams the door shut and walks the room to the front door. He slams it shut.

The female silhouette pauses, then walks closer and closer to the middle of the room, stepping 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.

She finally builds herself slightly back together and kneels down to Randy, putting her hand on his shoulder.

He looks up at her.

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, or 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 same 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

LATER,

The clock reads "4:25".

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

The TV screen now 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, rubbing her eyes.

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, with titles that include "The Cinema of Alfred Hitchcock" and "The Great Movie Comedians".

Randy, now 17, lankier and his head finally caught up to the rest of his body, lays asleep on the bed in his street clothes, with an untitled book covering 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 bring himself awake.

RANDY

Come in.

The door opens and Susan, now 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.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Did you sleep well, honey.

RANDY
A little. I was up 'till three
reading this new book.

He looks around for the book, finally picking it up off the floor.

SUSAN
I can see that--

She notices Randy's shoes on his feet.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
(tapping at his shoes)
Shoes.

Randy kicks off his shoes as Susan picks them up and lays them next to the bed.

She takes the book off the bed and opens to the front page.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
(reading)
"Films in My Life by
Fran...Frankois Truffat" - Truffat?

RANDY
Truffaut.

SUSAN
Oh, okay.
(mutters to herself)
Truffaut. Truffaut.

She hands him the book.

RANDY
It's pretty good so far. He says
that Chaplin used his physical
similarity to Hitler to poke fun at
him and make him look less
intimidating.

SUSAN
I forget, Chaplin's the one with
the little mustache, right?

Randy nods, dismissing her comment. He returns to the book.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Anyway, are you excited about
school?

RANDY
I guess.

A moment.

SUSAN
You promise you'll do better this
year--

RANDY
I will.

SUSAN
You will?

RANDY
I will! I passed all my classes
last year.

SUSAN
I'm not saying you didn't but just -
I don't know - focus on your
studies a bit more this year.
That's all I'm saying. Just don't
get too distracted.

RANDY
I won't. What's there to distract
me?

He returns to his book. Susan attempts to say something, but
can't muster up the words.

She picks up the last piece of clothing and, laundry basket
in hand, walks out of the room.

INT. BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Class is in session.

A lean, mustached man walks across the front of the
classroom: MR. ANDREWS (41). The embodiment of no-nonsense.

Randy sits in his desk with a composition notebook in front
of him, scratching away in his own world.

MR. ANDREWS

Welcome back to another year of education and enjoyment. I hope you're all glad to see me again.

VOICE (O.S.)

Bullshit!

MR. ANDREWS

Bobby! What did I say about profanity?

He shakes this off.

MR. ANDREWS (CONT'D)

Anyway, I hope you all received my letter about our upcoming new program called the Senior Thesis. This assignment will designate about 30 percent of your grade and will focus on a six month long community based project, shadowed by a mentor of your choice.

Randy continues to write away in his notebook. Mr. Andrews proceeds to walk down the classroom as he talks.

MR. ANDREWS (CONT'D)

You will report back to me every month with well organized notes on your project, and by the end of the project, you will turn in a nine page paper that showcases your findings and tells us why your project represents community.

He makes it to Randy's desk. He stands over him as Randy continues to write.

Randy finally looks up at Mr. Andrews, who takes Randy's notebook off his desk.

MR. ANDREWS (CONT'D)

(reading)

"Interior, classroom, day. A lone figure sits in the back of the classroom and listens to the loud, laborious belting of a monotone man with a bushy John Holmes mustache."

He looks down at Randy.

MR. ANDREWS (CONT'D)

Autobiographical?

RANDY

You could say that, mostly about
the mustache.

A modest laugh from the rest of the classroom.

He motions two fingers between his eyes and Randy's, in an
"I'm watching you" manner, and walks back to the front of the
room.

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The front door opens and Randy, backpack over his shoulder,
enters the living room.

He swings his bag off his shoulder and twists a knob on the
TV, before plopping down on a nearby seat. His attention
rests on the TV screen.

Susan emerges from the nearby kitchen, a wire whisk and a
bowl occupying her hands.

SUSAN

Hey, buddy. How was school?

RANDY

It was alright.

SUSAN

Good, good. Did you enjoy your
teachers?

RANDY

Yeah. In fact, I think they're
starting to like me as well.

Susan smiles as she exits once again, still whisking away in
her bowl.

Various KITCHEN SOUNDS bleed into the conversation.

SUSAN (O.S.)

Do you have any plans for this
weekend?

RANDY

Not really, why?

SUSAN (O.S.)

Well, the Stephensons are having
yard sale this Saturday--

RANDY
(half responding)
Uh huh.

SUSAN (O.S.)
And I figured maybe that would be
something fun to do.

RANDY
Eh, I don't know. I mean - aren't
they the ones with all those
ceramic cats in their front lawn?

SUSAN (O.S.)
I like those ceramic cats.

RANDY
Yeah, but...I'm probably gonna pass
on this. Maybe next time.

Susan reemerges, wiping her hands with a dish towel. She
appears somewhat concerned.

SUSAN
It'll be fun, I promise.

RANDY
(shrugging)
Eh.

SUSAN
Besides, they might have some old
books or movies they don't want
anymore.

RANDY
I guess.

She walks over to Randy, towel still in hand, and gives him a
peck on the forehead. He mildly resists, but nonetheless
allows it.

SUSAN
This'll be great. Y'know, get you
out of the house a little bit.

Randy looks at Susan. He considers her words for a little
bit, almost obligatory, before--

RANDY
Alright, I'll go.

Susan smiles again as she ruffles his hair.

EXT. STEPHENSON HOUSE - DAY

A finely prepared, yet otherwise ornate household.

Three long wooden tables line up across the front lawn, each one occupied to the fullest with boxes, various knickknacks, and, yes, even ceramic cat figurines.

Susan, standing next to an obviously disinterested Randy, observes one of these cats.

SUSAN
(to herself)
'76 design. Not too shabby.
(to Randy)
What do you think - not too shabby?

RANDY
(faintly)
Yeah, looks real...yeah.

Susan continues to observe the items around her. Randy grows increasingly impatient, looking around the surrounding area. No escape.

RANDY (CONT'D)
How long are they having this?

SUSAN
'Till about three, I think.

Damn. This seeps in for Randy, as he looks at the line of ceramic cats that lay in front of him, almost mockingly.

RANDY
I think I'm gonna roam around a
little bit.

Susan continues to observe the ceramic cat, but otherwise acknowledges Randy.

SUSAN
Okay, knock yourself out.

Randy walks away, practically in somewhat of a sense of relief.

He approaches another table and starts to peruse through one of the boxes.

Nothing but baseball caps. No luck.

He finds another box and searches inside.

Stuffed bears and animals. Still no luck.

He looks down at the ground and notices another box, folded up and sitting next to the table.

He kneels down and opens it up, revealing stacks upon stacks of disorganized Beta Max tapes, VHS tapes, books, and magazines.

A bit shoddy, but this still grabs his attention.

He flips through each object, with an occasional mild interest with some, and an obvious "hell no" reaction with others.

He reaches his hand to the bottom, digging through without actually taking anything out.

After a few seconds of struggle, he finally pulls something out: a VHS tape, decorated in overblown sci-fi illustration on the clamshell case. Men in space helmets reacting to the unknown, indistinguishable, shadowy silhouettes, lasers, etc.

A title on the front reads, in a slapped together font, "DIVINELY CONQUERED".

Randy looks at every detail of this tape with initial intrigue, from the illustrations to the crude title font.

A middle aged woman, MRS. STEPHENSON (53), walks up to Randy.

MRS. STEPHENSON

Interested in buying something,
sweety?

RANDY

Um, sure. I guess this will be it.

MRS. STEPHENSON

Five dollars.

Randy pulls out a five dollar bill and hands it to her.

MRS. STEPHENSON (CONT'D)

May I interest you in one of my
cats--

RANDY

No, no, I'm good. Thank you.

Randy walks away, still looking over the illustration.

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Randy opens the clamshell case and slides the VHS tape in the VCR deck.

He presses PLAY on a remote and sits on the couch.

On the TV screen, a simple title card appears, reading "PANTAMELLO PRODUCTIONS". It soon fades away into a LOUD lightning bolt sound and visual effect.

Randy jumps back, apparently caught off guard.

The lightning bolt transitions to a three piece orchestral beat playing adventurous, swashbuckling romp, followed by the familiar DIVINELY CONQUERED title card, in the same font style as the clamshell.

The title card fades to black, as the view tilts down to what appears to be a green painted Styrofoam ball on fishing wire. A subtitle reads "PLUMBUS: 250 LIGHTYEARS FROM EARTH".

Randy winces slightly at this.

A downtrodden, stern VOICE narrates over the footage.

VOICE (V.O.)

We were at peace. We didn't even consider the possibility of enslavement. But it happened.

Randy perks up slightly.

VOICE (V.O.)

The Enchons robbed us of our freedom and shipped us away from Plumbus, but not before destroying our planet.

The Styrofoam planet suddenly explodes in a small flame, leaving only the blackness of "space". Randy's eyes widen.

VOICE (V.O.)

Now, all we have left is each other. For now.

The blackness fades to a empty, sandy area - obviously, the beach.

One by one, a group of chained men, wearing rags and tribal green paint on their faces, walk in a straight line.

They are led by a monstrous half human, half "lizard" BEAST, whip in hand.

BEAST

March!

A crack of the whip.

BEAST (CONT'D)

March!

Randy nods. He's drawn in.

LATER,

Randy continues to watch, sprawled out on the couch. At his most comfortable.

On the screen, two CHARACTERS, male and female and both in tribal green paint, silver jumpsuits and bloody scars, hold one another amid bodies among bodies in the sand.

FEMALE CHARACTER

Don't go, please - I won't let you!

MALE CHARACTER

It's too late for me.

FEMALE CHARACTER

But, but--

MALE CHARACTER

Hey...

He puts a bloody finger to her lips, pausing her words.

MALE CHARACTER (CONT'D)

We did it.

The male character slumps, going limp and lifeless. The female character becomes hysterical, bursting into tears and tightly holding his body.

A generic "THE END" title card superimposes on the footage, as sweeping adventure music plays it out.

Credits begin to roll, starting with "WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY OSCAR BENTLEY".

Susan, in flannel pajamas, walks in and looks at the screen.

SUSAN

(yawns)

Whatcha watchin', sport.

RANDY

I don't know, but whatever it was -
wow.

Susan nods, rubbing her eyes.

SUSAN

Well, don't stay up too late. Go to
bed soon, promise?

RANDY

Yeah, promise.

She starts to head off, before stopping to look back at the
screen. A title card reads "FILMED IN NEW HAMPSHIRE".

SUSAN

Huh, it was shot down here. That's
pretty neat.

Randy perks up a little.

RANDY

Yeah. Yeah, it is.

Susan walks off.

Randy looks over his shoulder as soon as Susan is out of
site. He hits REWIND on the remote as the credits scroll
backwards.

He finally hits pause as one title, flickering with static,
catches his eye.

"WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY OSCAR BENTLEY".

RANDY (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Oscar Bentley...

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

A thick phone book slams in the center of a kitchen table.

Randy flips it open, thumbing through page after page,
finally landing at "Ben".

He lands his finger on the page and drags it down, name by
name.

Bennett. Benjamin. Benson. Benton.

He looks back and forth between Benson and Benton.

No Bentley. Damn.

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Randy sits on the edge of his bed, with several of his books scattered next to him.

He flips through the pages of one book: "Cinema in the 70s".

His eyes scan every word. No luck.

Frustrated, he slams the book shut.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

A few scattered BOOKWORMS here and there.

Randy sits at a table with a few books, with either "film" or "New Hampshire" in the title.

He lays down one book and picks up another. He opens to one page and quickly scans it, before thumbing through several more.

He drops the book down.

RANDY

Dammit!

BOOKWORM

Shhh!

Randy catches himself, and gets out of his seat.

INT. BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Randy sits in his desk, his eyes buried in his notebook. Pencil in hand, he sketches the Divinely Conquered title logo.

Mr. Andrews sits on his desk, waving a book in his hand as he speaks.

MR. ANDREWS

What Thoreau tells us on page 32 is that he left for the wilderness to live deliberately, to live without distraction and to live, in what he referred to, as the "essential facts of life."

Randy shakes his head.

MR. ANDREWS (CONT'D)
 You have to think to yourself, what
 would make a man strip himself of
 luxury and live in the woods? I
 don't have any plans to do it
 myself, but you gotta think, what
 would it take?
 (to Randy)
 Thompson, tell me.

Randy doesn't budge. In his own world.

MR. ANDREWS (CONT'D)
 (firm)
 Thompson.

Again, Randy doesn't move, stuck in his notebook.

MR. ANDREWS (CONT'D)
 Thompson!

Randy snaps his head up.

RANDY
 Yes, sir?

MR. ANDREWS
 We were talking about Thoreau.

RANDY
 Oh, yeah. Trees, living life -
 gotcha.

He returns to his notebook. Mr. Andrews shakes his head.

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Randy sits on the couch. A bowl of chips in his lap and a
 spiral notebook lay beside him, written with various names.
 Many are scratched out.

"Divinely Conquered" plays on the television.

On the screen, a lean, muscular black man in a silver
 jumpsuit, ISSAC ROBERTS (35), wrestles with the lizard beast.

He jumps back to his feet.

ISSAC

You cannot keep us down, you Enchon
scum! Not on this planet or the
next!

The lizard beast wipes away blood from his lips.

BEAST

Maybe not on this planet, but you
forget - you don't have a planet
anymore.

On the couch, Randy sits up. He looks at the screen and
ponders.

He looks back at his notebook. One name, "ISSAC ROBERTS -
ACTOR", remains unscratched.

He jumps off the couch, notebook in hand, and heads to the

KITCHEN

And pulls out the phone book from a nearby drawer.

He flips briskly through the pages before he gets to
"Roberts".

He scrolls down and finds it. "Roberts, Issac. 255 Phillips
Avenue".

Randy beams ecstatically, then scribbles the address into his
notebook. He rips the name out of the page and folds the
strip.

EXT. ROBERTS HOUSE - DAY

A spotty, seemingly white house surrounded by knee-high weeds
curled by a wire fence.

Randy, with the "Divinely Conquered" tape in one hand, reads
the paper strip in the other.

He wearily eyes the house up and down before stepping up to
the front door.

He knocks.

A few seconds go by before the door opens.

Issac, covered in thick stubble and supporting a beer belly
in a wife beater t-shirt and slippers, pokes his head out. A
cigarette barely clings to his lips.

This sight practically makes Randy blush. Issac is not amused.

ISSAC
(slightly buzzed)
Can I help you?

Randy hesitates, overcome with words. He finally lets out--

RANDY
Yes, um...I know this may be kinda weird, but I was watching this movie the other day--

He holds the tape up.

RANDY (CONT'D)
And I was wondering--

Randy doesn't finish his sentence before Issac slams the door.

Randy stands at the door, shocked and a little put off.

He knocks again.

The door opens, and Issac pokes his head out again.

RANDY (CONT'D)
Hey, me again. I just--

Issac slams the door, more aggressively than before.

Randy takes a step back. Pissed.

He motions to turn around, before he spins back to the door. He knocks three more times and holds his hand over the peep hole.

Pounding FOOTSTEPS leak from the inside, before the door swings open. A steaming Issac reemerges.

ISSAC
Get your greasy ass hands off the peep hole, boy.

Randy stands his ground, despite hiding back some intimidation.

RANDY
Look. I'm here to talk to you about "Divinely Conquered". And--

Issac budes the door. Randy holds it tightly.

RANDY (CONT'D)

--And I thought that maybe we could chat, that's all.

Issac eyes Randy up and down. He takes a puff from his cigarette.

ISSAC

You like the movie?

RANDY

Well, yeah - loved it.

A brief pause.

Issac drops his cigarette on the door mat, putting it out with his slipper.

ISSAC

Come on in. But briefly. A scrawny white boy chillin' in a brother's house raises eyebrows 'round here.

He opens the door wider, as Randy steps inside the

LIVING ROOM.

Very lived in, to the point of being ancient. Half empty beer cans and newspapers flood the inside. Piles of TV Guides and magazines rest on the sofa, almost like pillows.

Issac shuts the door, as Randy presses onward, careful of each step.

ISSAC

Anything I can get you? Water?
Orange juice?

RANDY

Oh, no. I'm fine, thank you.

ISSAC

Good. I don't have either.
(waves to the couch)
Have a seat.

Randy pushes aside a few magazines and makes a spot for himself on the couch.

Issac sits at a nearby armchair.

An awkward pause ensues, before--

ISSAC (CONT'D)

You want me to sign that for you,
kid?

RANDY

What?

(looks at the tape)

Oh, yeah, sure. We can do that
later.

Issac nods. Another awkward pause.

Around the corner, a massive pitbull, BOSCO, runs up to Randy
and claws up his shoes.

ISSAC

Bosco, quit! We got company.

RANDY

No, he's good.

Issac snaps his fingers a few times before Bosco finally
subsides.

RANDY (CONT'D)

So, what was it like working on it?

ISSAC

It was, uh...fun, you could say. It
was a little fun.

Randy perks up slightly.

RANDY

Really? You got any stories to
tell?

ISSAC

Not really.

Randy's demeanor dims.

RANDY

Do you have any stories about Oscar
Bentley?

ISSAC

Bentley?

(scoffs)

Fuck 'em.

RANDY

(taken aback)

Excuse me?

ISSAC

Don't worry 'bout him. Left New Hampshire around the time the movie premiered.

RANDY

Big premiere?

ISSAC

There was a few people, nobody really famous. Although, I hear Melvin Van Peebles might have seen it, so that's somethin' to walk away with.

Randy shrugs modestly.

ISSAC (CONT'D)

But Bentley, he's an old hat. This business is nothing but a bean counter, and if you don't got enough to feed the market, you don't got enough to feed yourself.

Randy nods. He turns his head and sees a nearby coffee table, covered in piles among piles of brass bounded screenplays.

He spins back around. He's got something.

RANDY

You write?

ISSAC

Nah, those are just offers. Turned 'em down cause I didn't see any substance - nothing to really shook me to the core.

RANDY

I see.

In the distance, a phone RINGS in the kitchen. Issac stands up.

ISSAC

Well, that's my cue, so I guess our time's up. But, I'm a man of my word, so--

Randy stands up, as Issac walks to the coffee table and grabs a pen. He points to the tape, as Randy hands it to him.

ISSAC (CONT'D)

What's your name?

RANDY

Randy. Randy Thompson.

Issac scribbles on the clamshell case.

ISSAC

"To Randy. Live long and fight the
Enchons. Issac Roberts."

He finishes with a swirly dash and hands the tape back to Randy.

ISSAC (CONT'D)

There you go. Now, have a nice day.

He disappears to the kitchen, as he picks up the phone and walks to the back.

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

You got Issac.

(listens)

Again? But I covered for him last
week! What's the reason?

A pause. Randy stands in the center of the room, not sure what move to make.

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

That's the fifth fuckin' time he's
had to ball out cause of that dog.
No, I'm gonna shoot the
motherfucker and leave it on his
doorstep so he can get his ass back
to work.

Randy looks back at the coffee table and eyes one of the scripts. Something catches his eye.

He looks closer at it, pushing some of the others off to make out the title: "CINDY AND MELINA".

He reads further down.

"BY OSCAR BENTLEY".

Randy's eyes widen as he straightens up.

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

He can grieve all he wants. I'll
buy him a turtle instead. Make less
of a medical disaster than this
cockamamie fuckin' dog.

Randy looks over his shoulder, then the other. No Issac.

His fingers tremble as he hesitates.

Finally, he swipes the script and exits.

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Randy lays on his bed, the script in front of him. Last page.

His eyes flow from the top to the bottom, taking in each word.

He closes the script and sits quietly.

He looks back at his bookcase, where the newly signed "Divinely Conquered" tape sits at the forefront.

He turns back to the script.

RANDY

Holy shit.

INT. BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

An empty classroom, with the exception of Randy, sitting at a front row desk. He keeps his head down.

Mr. Andrews walks up to him. Stern, almost fatherly.

MR. ANDREWS

I'm worried about you, Thompson.
We're not even a month into the semester.

RANDY

It's just a little slip. I promise,
I'll make it up.

MR. ANDREWS

It's not just now. This trend's
been going on since last year and
you were just barely able to come
out of it okay.

RANDY

I know, I just get distracted, is
al.

MR. ANDREWS

That's been established.

RANDY

Dude--

MR. ANDREWS
Don't call me that.

RANDY
(sighs)
What do you suggest? A makeup test
or something like that?

MR. ANDREWS
Doubt it. With the senior project
on its course, there's gonna be a
drop in assignments.

RANDY
Is that my only option?

MR. ANDREWS
It looks like it. And I gotta be
honest - it's gotta be something
good.

Mr. Andrews walks to his desk, packing his supplies into his
leather case.

Andrew sinks in his words, and finally lets out--

RANDY
What if I told you I was gonna work
on a movie?

MR. ANDREWS
Lying's not gonna help, Thompson.

RANDY
No, no, I mean it, like an actual,
legitimate film.

Mr. Andrews turns around.

MR. ANDREWS
Legitimate?

Randy nods.

MR. ANDREWS (CONT'D)
What's it called?

RANDY
It's an indie pic. It's called
"Cindy and Melina" - a lesbian love
story set in suburbia.

MR. ANDREWS
Is this a porno?

RANDY

No, pure drama. Heavy stuff. Made by one of the best independent filmmakers out there. Oscar Bentley.

MR. ANDREWS

Oscar Bent--Now, I know you're making this up, Thompson.

RANDY

I swear! Look, look--

Randy digs through his backpack and pulls out the script. He hands it to Mr. Andrews.

RANDY (CONT'D)

It's on paper. We're in pre-production stages at the moment.

Mr. Andrews flips through the script.

MR. ANDREWS

And this Bentley guy's the real deal.

RANDY

One of the best. He's like the new Cassevetes.

Mr. Andrews nods, somewhat doubtfully. He flips through a few more pages of the script, then glances back to Randy.

MR. ANDREWS

Alright. Just get his signature and your parent or guardian's, and you should be squared away.

Randy beams, as he starts to pack up.

MR. ANDREWS (CONT'D)

And Thompson, one more thing, and this is strictly as a teacher to a student.

Randy leans in. A pause.

MR. ANDREWS (CONT'D)

Do not fuck this up.

Mr. Andrews grabs his leather case and walks away.

EXT. ROBERTS HOUSE - DAY

Randy, backpack over his shoulder, walks up to the doorstep.
He knocks a few times.

The door swings open as a large, black hand pulls Randy

INSIDE

And presses him on the other side of the door by the collar.
It's Issac, steaming at the face.

ISSAC
What the hell is the matter with
you?

RANDY
(panicking)
What?

ISSAC
You steal one of my scripts while
I'm on the phone? Are you outta
your rabbit-ass mind?

RANDY
Okay, that was bad, and I'm sorry--

ISSAC
Where is it?

RANDY
It's right here in my bag, I swear.

Issac looks at Randy, then simmers down. He lets him go.

Randy pants as he quickly digs through his backpack. He pulls
out the script, as Issac quickly yanks it out of his hands.

RANDY (CONT'D)
I thought you didn't want it.

ISSAC
I never said you could just waltz
up here and snatch it, boy. Shit's
still private property.

Issac tosses the script on the nearby coffee table, with the
other scripts. He walks to his armchair and plops down.

Randy walks over to the coffee table and picks the script up.

RANDY

I don't understand. This script is genius.

ISSAC

(lighting a cigarette)
Stop it.

RANDY

I mean it! It's beautiful, it's insightful, it's taboo.

ISSAC

It's shit.

RANDY

And Oscar Bentley wrote this?

ISSAC

I told you to give it up. Bentley's gone.

RANDY

We've gotta make this.

ISSAC

We?

RANDY

Yes, we! You're pretty much his spiritual predecessor and we're the only two know about this script.

ISSAC

Who's gonna direct it? Bentley's gone and New Hampshire ain't exactly Tinsletown.

A pause. Randy appears stuck, until--

RANDY

You direct it.

Issac blows a huge ball of smoke.

ISSAC

Excuse me?

RANDY

You've directed something before, haven't you?

ISSAC

Well, I done a few shorts back in the day, but--

RANDY

Then, there you go! Same principles, except on a more elaborate scale.

ISSAC

Kid, I haven't directed since the seventies. I'm rusty. And besides, how's a grocery bagger like me supposed to work up the bread to make this?

RANDY

I'll help you. You can consider me one of your producers.

ISSAC

More like associate.

RANDY

See, you still got the knowledge. Now, just apply it.

ISSAC

Forget it.

RANDY

But, Issac--

ISSAC

I said forget it!

Randy sinks a little.

ISSAC (CONT'D)

What's the real reason, kid. This whole "this script touched my heart" shit can't be the only reason.

Randy remains quiet. He finally relents.

RANDY

It's for a school assignment.

ISSAC

See, I knew you was sneaky.

RANDY

But, that's not the only reason.
This kinda stuff doesn't just fall
in your lap everyday. This is about
as close to filmmaking as I'm
likely gonna get. You said it, this
ain't Tinsletown.

Issac takes another puff. He's not moved.

RANDY (CONT'D)

But it doesn't have to be.

Issac's cigarette droops a little as he starts to soften.

RANDY (CONT'D)

I don't know how much "Divinely
Conquered" cost, but it got made.
Like it or not, it's still a movie
and it still got through.
(holds up the script)
This is different. This isn't
aliens and explosions. It's people.
It's real, and it can be made.

Issac lets go of his cigarette. A breeze of
soft smoke as he thinks.

Randy's eyebrows furrow, almost dog-like.

SILENCE, before--

ISSAC

Let's do it.

Randy practically jumps in excitement. He extends his hand,
as Issac shakes it.

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Randy, Issac, and Susan sit around a dinner table, taking
bites out of miscellaneous pieces of food.

The sounds of CHEWING and SILVERWARE CLATTER take up most of
the conversation.

Issac finally chimes in.

ISSAC

These mashed potatoes are nice.

Susan nods.

SUSAN

Thank you.

She returns to her plate, as does Issac. The silence returns.

Randy's eyes dart between Susan and Issac, before--

RANDY

So, I'm really excited for my project.

ISSAC

(to Susan)

Yeah - oh, yeah, we're gonna get the ball rollin' on this pretty soon.

SUSAN

Really?

RANDY

Yeah! Think about it - an *actual* movie set. Real cameras, real actors. It's a stepping stone.

SUSAN

You're excited for this?

RANDY

Of course!

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out two folded sheets of paper.

RANDY (CONT'D)

And all I need is just a signature.

He hands the sheets to Susan. She looks it over, as Randy gets out of his seat.

RANDY (CONT'D)

I'll be right back. Just gonna hit the bathroom.

He exits. Issac looks over his shoulder and waits to hear a DOOR CLOSE. He turns back to Susan, who resumes to her food.

Issac sits nervously, drumming his fingers on the table. He looks up at Susan and catches himself.

ISSAC

Sorry. I just--

SUSAN
No, it's fine.

Issac puts his hands in his lap. He tries to muster something to say.

ISSAC
Your son - he's a good kid. Real good kid.

SUSAN
Yeah, he is.

ISSAC
Real smart, good head on his shoulders. He's really--

SUSAN
Good?

Issac halts his response.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
My son's very interested with you, Mr. Roberts.

ISSAC
Really, now?

SUSAN
So, you'll understand why I'll have to step in if things get outta hand.

ISSAC
Cross my heart, he's in good hands. Like a vice.

Issac boasts a smile while Susan refuses to return one. His smile sinks.

SUSAN
I won't mince words. I don't care what kinda movies you make. If you leave my son any less than what he is going into this, you'll answer to me. You understand?

Issac nods.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
He's already had one man walk out on his life.

ISSAC
Look, Susan--

SUSAN
Ms. Thompson--

ISSAC
I'm not here to replace his father.

SUSAN
I know that, and he knows that. But that doesn't change the fact that you're the closest thing he has.

Issac lets the words sink in, as Randy returns to his seat.

RANDY
So, what'd I miss?

SUSAN
Just a little chit-chat.
(pulls out pen)
Isn't that right--
(to Issac)
Issac?

ISSAC
(sheepish)
Yeah. Just a little talk.

Susan unfolds the two sheets of paper and starts to sign.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

A few scattered customers line up in front of a register. Issac, in uniform, stands at the end, shoving groceries into paper bags.

Randy stands next to him, notebook in hand. He scribbles between conversation.

ISSAC
I don't know what you're gonna learn from this, 'sides from stickin' soup and eggs in the same bag.

RANDY
I have to take notes on everything we do, on and off-set.

Issac hands a customer their bag.

ISSAC
Have a nice day.

RANDY
(to Issac)
What's our first step in this?

ISSAC
Well, the script's air tight by this point, so now we move on to pre-pro. That means gettin' the bread to make it.

RANDY
How do we do that?

ISSAC
I've gotta few dollars stashed somewhere from this gig, but just short of blowin' Scorsese, I dunno what to do.

Another customer, offended, grabs her bag from Issac.

ISSAC (CONT'D)
(to customer)
Have a nice day. Sorry bout the language.

A balding, stocky man, WARREN (51), emerges around the corner and approaches Issac.

WARREN
Issac, talk on your off-hours and speed up the baggin'.

ISSAC
Sorry, Warren. Just a little business discussion.

WARREN
Well, keep the idle conversation to a minimum, understand?

RANDY
(to Warren)
Hey, he's still doin' his job. It's all cool.

WARREN
Aren't you supposed to be in school?

It hits Randy.

RANDY
Oh, damn!
(to Issac)
I gotta run, but I'll catch ya
later.

He shuts his notebook and runs off in the opposite direction.

RANDY (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Son of a bitch...

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The phone rings.

Randy enters through the front door, backpack on his shoulder. He plops it down.

He notices the phone ringing and picks it up.

RANDY
Hello?

INTERCUT

INT. ROBERTS HOUSE - DAY

Issac, on the other end. He sits at his couch, a newspaper on his lap.

ISSAC
Yo, Randy. It's Issac. Any trouble
at school?

RANDY
Nothin' really. Just a slap on the
wrist. What's up?

ISSAC
I might have a solution to our
budgetary problems.

RANDY
That's awesome, man. What'd you
have in mind?

ISSAC
Alright, check it. How's about a
screening of Divinely Conquered
this Friday at the Bauregard?

RANDY

No way! You think people would be down for that?

ISSAC

Absolutely. There's a market out there for nostalgia. Plus, it's sci-fi, so they'll rip it up at the box office.

RANDY

Awesome. Wait, what does Bentley think of the whole thing?

ISSAC

Don't worry bout him. Motherfucker owes me a solid, so royalties and shit won't be a problem.

RANDY

Sweet. Well, I'll see you Friday night, man.

ISSAC

See ya there.

They both hang up.

EXT. BAUREGARD MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

Randy, notebook in hand, walks down the street, looking both ways for Issac.

Off in the distance, he finally spots him in front of the theatre. He holds a stack of fliers in his hand.

Randy walks closer. A few passersby walk around Issac, who tries to hand them a flier.

ISSAC

(to passersby)

Super Sci-Fi Friday! Come all, come conquered!

He spots Randy and approaches him.

ISSAC (CONT'D)

Randy! How's it goin'?

(hands him a few fliers)

Here take a few of these.

Randy thumbs through he pile. They read, in crudely drawn font, "SUPER SCI-FI FRIDAY PRESENTS: 'DIVINELY CONQUERED'. FRIDAY AT 8, DON'T BE LATE!"

RANDY
Hand made?

ISSAC
The mind never sleeps, amigo.
(to passerby)
Super Sci-Fi Friday! Come at 8,
don't be late!

Randy looks up at the marquee. Title's vary from "Return of the Jedi" to "Easy Money".

RANDY
We're not listed on the marquee?

ISSAC
Manager said it would've had to
cost a couple extra pennies. So, I
figured we'd keep expenses down.

Randy nods, if not a bit puzzled.

Issac checks his watch.

ISSAC (CONT'D)
It's about a quarter till.

He hands Randy the rest of the flyers.

ISSAC (CONT'D)
I'm gonna go set up. Can you finish
passin' these out?

RANDY
(unsure)
Sure...

Issac smiles and slaps Randy on the back. He disappears into the theatre.

Randy tucks his notebook under his arm and holds out fliers to passersby.

RANDY (CONT'D)
Sci-fi...super? Super Sci-Fi?

INT. BAUREGARD MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

Showtime.

Randy enters the theatre. He eyes around the inside.

Almost empty, with only six people seated in scattered areas of the theatre.

At the far end, Issac sits. Asleep.

Randy walks up the stairs and approaches him. He shakes him by the shoulder.

RANDY

Issac?

Issac jolts up. He finally recognizes Randy.

ISSAC

(groggy)

What's up, bud?

He checks his watch, as he rubs his eyes.

ISSAC (CONT'D)

Well, let's get this pony show started.

He stands up and walks down the stairs, stretching and trying to wake himself up along the way.

He makes it to the front of the theatre and addresses his "audience".

ISSAC (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, we'd like to thank you for showing up tonight.

A modest response from the audience.

ISSAC (CONT'D)

Tonight's movie is called "Divinely Conquered." It was, what you'd say, a labor of love making it and I hope you enjoy.

He motions to the projection booth and exits the front. Another modes response from the audience.

He sits down next to Randy.

ISSAC (CONT'D)

Money in the bank.

Randy looks around at the six audience members, then back to Issac.

The theatre dims, as Randy stares nervously back at the screen.

EXT. BAUREGARD MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

Randy and Issac exit the theatre - Issac beaming more than Randy.

ISSAC
(sighs)
Brings back memories.

A pause, before--

ISSAC (CONT'D)
That went well.

A confused Randy looks up at Issac.

RANDY
There were six people. And a walk out.

ISSAC
So? That's one outta six - that's still five people.

RANDY
I guess.

ISSAC
And what that means is those five people are gonna tell five more people, and those five'll tell five more. So on and so on. It's just more fuel for the gravy train.

At that moment, a young COUPLE, both in their '20s, storm out of the theatre.

WOMAN
I'm pickin' the movie next time.
That was garbage.

MAN
But, baby, I thought it'd be fun.

WOMAN
Super Sci-Fi, my ass! I told ya we shoulda seen "Jedi".

The couple disappears down the street as a distressed Randy watches them leave.

He turns back to Issac, who tries to hide back any sign of disappointment.

ISSAC

Well, it's gettin' late. How's about we call it a night, kid.

RANDY

Yeah, I gotcha.

They both shake hands, almost avoiding eye contact, as Randy walks down the street.

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Randy enters his bedroom. Sluggish, practically disappointed.

He drops his notebook on his bed and faceplants on the mattress.

His arms dangle off the side of the bed, before he pulls out a folded flier out of his pocket.

He unfolds it and scans it. He finally drops it to the ground and lays his head down.

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Morning.

Randy lays on his bed, face down. Silence.

A phone, sitting on a nearby night stand, rings. Randy snaps up and finally picks it up.

RANDY

(yawns)
Hello?

INTERCUT

INT. ROBERTS HOUSE - DAY

Issac, on the other end, hunches on his couch. He scratches through a script with a pen.

ISSAC

Randy? Issac.

Randy bites his lip.

RANDY
Oh, hey. What's up?

ISSAC
You upset about last night?

RANDY
Nah, it was nothin'.

ISSAC
Bullshit. I'm gonna be honest, kid.
I ain't never doin' that shit
again.

Randy almost dozes off.

RANDY
Sure, gotcha.

ISSAC
But, when there's a will, there's a
way, and kid, I've found a way.

RANDY
What do you mean?

ISSAC
I got the money.

Randy straightens up.

RANDY
What - you got the money?

ISSAC
Yep.

RANDY
How? We didn't make shit last
night.

ISSAC
Don't worry. I did a few last
minute arrangements. It's all
squared away.

RANDY
(beaming)
That's great! I mean - where do we
go from here?

ISSAC

We wait. Now that the money's rolled in, we gather the rest of the cast & crew and it'll come along like gangbusters.

RANDY

Awesome!

ISSAC

Yep. So, hold tight for a while, kid. I'll let ya know any updates.

INT. BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - SIX WEEKS LATER

Randy stands by Mr. Andrews' desk, as Andrews thumbs through several notebook pages.

MR. ANDREWS

(reading)

Nice. Pretty nice.

Randy looks at Mr. Andrews, hopeful.

Mr. Andrews closes the notebook pages.

MR. ANDREWS (CONT'D)

I like what you have so far, but you still need to dig deeper. So far, you just have miscellaneous side stories, but nothing really relating to community.

RANDY

Don't worry, that'll be handled fairly soon. We're just now going into principal photography.

MR. ANDREWS

And that's still going to be community related?

RANDY

Of course. No one but the community is going to be involved.

MR. ANDREWS

I see.

He hands Randy the notebook.

MR. ANDREWS (CONT'D)

Keep it up and you should be fine.

RANDY

Thank you.

Randy turns to leave, as Mr. Andrews returns to a few papers on his desk.

Randy turns back around.

RANDY (CONT'D)

You're starting to warm up to me,
aren't you?

MR. ANDREWS

About as warm as Alaska.

Randy sinks slightly. He finally exits the classroom.

As soon as the door closes, Mr. Andrews pulls out a cigarette. He lights it.

MR. ANDREWS (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Kid's gonna drive me up the fuckin'
wall.

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Randy enters through the front door.

RANDY

I'm home!

Susan pokes out from the kitchen and nods. She flips through a stack of letters and packages in her hands.

RANDY (CONT'D)

Anything for me?

SUSAN

No, don't see any - wait, no, you
do.

She takes a manila package out of the stack and hands it to Randy.

Curious, he opens it up.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Who's it from?

RANDY

I dunno. There's no return address.

He pulls out a thick script, titled "CINDY AND MELINA REVISED DRAFT".

RANDY (CONT'D)
Oh, my god...

SUSAN
What is it?

RANDY
It's a script...it's *the* script!

He digs deeper in the package and pulls two sheets of paper.

RANDY (CONT'D)
He even gave me a call sheet!

Randy beams, along with Susan.

SUSAN
Wait, there's a note, too.

Randy looks at the other paper.

RANDY
(reading)
"I heard you're involved with my movie, thanks to an old friend of mine back home. I'm impressed. Do me a favor and make me proud. Signed, Oscar Bent--"

It hits him.

RANDY (CONT'D)
Oscar Bentley sent this! Holy shit!

SUSAN
(stern)
Language--

RANDY
Sorry, just - I can't believe it!

SUSAN
Well, I'm proud of you, honey.

A pause.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
What's this movie about?

RANDY
 (like a showman)
 It's called "Cindy and Melina" and
 focuses on two married housewives
 that fall to the temptation of each
 other.

Susan thinks it over, before--

SUSAN
 Is this a porno?

RANDY
 What - no! Why does everyone think
 this is a porno?

SUSAN
 I'm just saying, if this is a
 porno, I think I should know.

RANDY
 I swear, it's not.

He flips through the pages.

RANDY (CONT'D)
 It's not a porno.

INT. TOWNSEND HOUSE - DAY

Nice brick layering, trimmed grass. The symbol of suburban
 Americana.

Randy walks up to the front door, notebook in hand. He leans
 his ear in and hears muffled conversation.

He knocks gently on the door.

Issac's voice booms from the other side.

ISSAC (O.S.)
 Come in!

Randy enters

INSIDE.

Set lights, C-stands, floppy flags decorate the inside, each
 occupied by a pair of hands.

Paradise.