

ISS_Overs

Written by Luka Vukos

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1. EXT. House - Afternoon

C.U of ANTENNA on a suburban house. Antenna slowly rises and rotates. Sounds of static and wind swell up.

INT. House/Study - Afternoon

An elderly man sits in his study, surrounded by BOOKS, a couple GUITARS, a couple FAMILY PICTURES, a COMPUTER, and a HAM RADIO SET -- this is PAUL THOMPSON in LOCKDOWN.

He puts on his HEADPHONES and turns a dial on the radio set.

Catching an audio feed from the International Space Station, he hears a Q&A between the American astronauts and school-children:

INT. ISS - V/0

'That's a great question. I've used the Astrobee robot several times, and they are very interesting. Uh... I actually,

--this becomes our VOICEOVER for the remainder of the film's montage.

CONT'D

DISSOLVE TO:

'seven years ago, worked with the first generation... uh, kind of the - uh... *parent* of Astrobee, which was called SPHERES. And those were interesting as well: we had students just like you who could write the computer code and manipulate with it (*sic*) and advancing technology, it can be very helpful for us on-board the International Space Station. Over.'

[...] *click*.

'Well, our diet is very much normal, as we can try without... we don't have fresh fruit and vegetables all the time. Occasionally we have-we get delivered fresh fruit and vegetables on a cargo ship that uh... arrives and those are the first things we pull out and we

CONT'D

2. INT. Kitchen - Day

Paul takes a tin of MINESTRONE from the cupboard and opens it with the help of a KNIFE.

He pours the minestrone into a BOWL and puts in the MICROWAVE. And dials in the time on the digital clock - 3 minutes.

He looks at his WATCH.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. Study - Earlier

Turning from his computer back to the radio set, Paul turns a dial here and there - something went wrong for a second. But we're back with a--

CUT:

INT. Kitchen - Day

BEEEP!

The microwave gate opens, and Paul plays hot potato as he takes out the bowl with his bare hands.

By the window light, C.U. of dropping CROUTONS into the BOWL of steaming soup.

'eat them as quickly as we can before they go bad. But the bulk of our food is made in food laboratories in Moscow and in Houston, where they prepare the food and then package it. Sometimes we need to add water to the food to rehydrate it to make it edible, and other times it's just regular food put into a can or bag and we just open up the can or bag, and eat it. And there's meat, fish, chicken, vegetables of all kinds, desserts and cookies, and candies, coffee, tea, milk, juices - [*interference*] uh... we have [*interference*] a variety of foods. Over.'

[...] *click*.

'Hi Ivan. Uh... I don't think it affects our thinking, the weightlessness aspect of it. We're up here - we are living in our workplace much like you guys now with - uh... COVID stay-at-home rules, you're living in your workplace. And uh... you, you sometimes - uh... get - I don't wanna say *forgetful*, but you you start seeing the same

CONT'D

We watch Paul eat his supper - slurping it up, sometimes wincing at the heat. He's got a couple of slices of BREAD by the side, and a GLASS OF MILK.

At one point, he takes a sip of the milk, and realises it's been a while...

PAUL

Yeuucchhh!

MOMENTS LATER:

Finished his meal, Paul sits quietly at the table, looking at the lonesome FORK that he's put out for no reason.

3. INT. Study - Day

Push-in on Paul sat on his lounge chair, hunched over a JUMPER on his lap. Alternating between a FORK and a COMB, he's trying to get all the little wool clumps that have formed on the jumper.

He gives up. And looks out the window. Getting bored, his eyes opt for the ceiling, and he lays back in the chair.

CONT'D

'things and - uh uh... so, what affects your thinking is more the fact that you never leave the same building, and - uh... we work very hard, so we try, we try to maintain our sleep schedule as best we can, and we do have a day off on Sundays so it's nice to uh... to rest. We take rest very seriously, so that our thinking is sharp and we stay ready to do our work at peak performance. Over.'

[...] *static.*

'Well David, we have lots of things to do, many of which you can do on Earth. Uh... watch movies, watch a show, read a book, talk with our friends. If you like music, there's several musical instruments up here - a keyboard, a ukulele, a harmonica. That kind of thing.'

Time ticks away on the radio set
DISPLAY - we see Paul's REFLECTION in the glass of the radio set's rotator dial.

LATER:

Paul wakes up from a doze. He looks around again and picks up the old GUITAR in the corner. A smile registers - the sweet salvation of music. He starts tuning it, moving from peg to peg.

LATER:

Almost finished, Paul anxiously tunes the final high-E string:

Higher, Higher, HIGHER --

SNAP!

PAUL

Fuuuck!!!

String broken, he lays the guitar to the side, unsure now what to do, sighing and staring at:

A HARMONICA in the foreground.

CUT TO:

Paul rolls the thunder of a 12-bar blues on the harmonica, effecting an elder statesman

'But what I like to do is just look out the window, because that's something you can't do on Earth, and uh... *is* watch Earth go by. And so what most of us do to entertain ourselves is enjoy the beautiful view out the window. Over.'

from the Mississippi Delta.

DISSOLVE TO:

4. INT. Bathroom - Day

C.U. Running water - Paul is washing his hands:

PAUL

One elephant, two elephants,
three elephants, four
elephants, five elephants, six
elephants, seven elephants,
eight elephants, nine
elephants...

CUT TO:

EXT. Kitchen Window - Day

Paul is looking out the kitchen window - seemingly in deep contemplation of man's incapacity to control those larger forces of Nature and History, of an uncertain Future, of the unsolvable existential mystery of Life - then looks down in some kind of defeat.

CUT TO:

`[Paolo], yes. Uh... it's looking down at a planet from here, you just see the... the twirling colours of blues and browns and white clouds, and uh... all mixed together to-to form our planet. And, off on the horizon, you see the [scale of the?] atmosphere that is keeping us all alive. And it makes you realise that Earth is a spaceship for 7 billion astronauts, and y-you are uh... several of them. Uh... so it may... it gives me this perspective that we must take care of Earth like it's our spaceship, just like we are taking care of *this* spaceship [*interference*] where we are right now. Over.'

[...] *brief static.*

`What inspired me most about... to become an astronaut was the... the-the excitement of the career. That's what first lured me to it. I thought it would be really neat to put on a spacesuit.

CONT'D

INT. KITCHEN - Day

Paul is scrubbing the external forces of Dirty Dishes - PLATES and CUTLERY - and drying them with a TOWEL, and stacking them on the SHELF. Cleaning out the OVEN and HOB.

LATER:

Clean kitchen: Paul pats the towel over his shoulder and admires his handiwork. But some obsessive compulsion irks at him...

CUT TO:

INT. Bathroom - Day

Running water - Paul washes his hands again...

PAUL

One elephant, two elephants,
three elephants...

CUT TO:

INT. Kitchen -- Day

Paul sitting at the kitchen table again, with nothing but a CUP OF TEA and some BISCUITS in front of him; he's thinking.

'Then I met somebody who had been an astronaut, and-and I became even more motivated uh... But it wasn't until I-I uh... really got serious about the application did I learn more, that uh... what I liked is that every... every day is different. You're training a lot, many days you're training. You're in Houston, you're in uh... Japan, you're in Russia, you're in uh... Europe, Canada. And uh... and we have many international friends, and international travel, and training in all those places. And I find that... I was very excited about that, and I do enjoy this very much about the job. Over.'

[...]

'Hi Antonio. Uh... up her on the International Space Station, we have uh... several exercise devices: a bicycle, a treadmill, and a weightlifting machine. They all have acronyms that stand for certain things but that's that's what they are. The weightlifting machine is our most important piece of equipment to keep our bones healthy. We need to put uh... a load

CONT'D

5. INT. Study - Late Afternoon

Images of his father - simple, smiling portrait - and another of Paul in his youth. Images of the ID codes of other amateur radio operators from around the world, on the wall of the study.

C.U. of Paul's own ID plate.

Paul standing, looking out the window, maybe at the garage. Sun is still out.

CUT TO:

6. EXT. Garage -- Late Afternoon

Paul opens up the garage door to reveal:

a MOTORBIKE.

Paul puts on a green BOMBER JACKET, and straps on his BIKER HELMET.

He clears out some stuff in the garage and dusts off the bike, and also packs a BAG with supplies for the odyssey ahead.

CONT'D

'on our bones so that they stay fit and strong. If we did not, our bones would become frail and brittle and we'd be susceptible to breaking... breaking bones . We exercise... It takes about one hour to do the weightlifting each day. And we do thirty minutes on either the bicycle or the treadmill. Over.'

'*[interference] - [speech unclear - breaking up]*.'

[...] Hands scrambling against the desk. Loss of Signal. Click.

Packed and ready, he leads it out, hops on, and starts revving. It takes a few goes.

CUT TO:

Paul rides out - killing the quiet of the estate road. Free - a fire-bird.

CUT TO:

INT. House -- Late Afternoon

Hands scrambling against the desk. Loss of Signal. Cut.

END.