

"Buried Pleasure"

by

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FADE IN:

"RAIN DOGS" - TOM WAITS Begins to play.

EXT. MANOR ROAD. STOKE NEWINGTON. LONDON. EARLY MORNING.

A mangy brown dog noses through an old fried chicken box. It noses the box along the curb trying to get its snout further inside until it comes up against an equally mangy brown coat.

BERNARD (58) and BERNIE (60), two gentleman of the road, down on their luck, sit by the curb, a bottle of John Power whiskey between them like the fulcrum of a see-saw.

Bernard shoos away the dog and looks inside the chicken box. It is empty.

BERNARD

Cold.

BERNIE

Isn't it just.

They both reach for the bottle at the same time. Bernard is there first.

BERNARD

A little nip against the nip.

BERNIE

Nip? Where? I don't see anyone?

BERNARD

The cold.

BERNIE

Yes. It is.

Bernard passes him the bottle and Bernie takes a long slug. He no longer pulls a face with the swallow.

BERNIE

First of the morning. Here's to Bernie Taupin.

BERNARD

Who?

Bernie places the bottle at his feet.

BERNIE

Elton John's wordsmith.

BERNARD

Cunt.

A Transit van pulls up against the curb. Bernie moves the bottle at the last possible minute to avoid it, having no care for his own legs.

The dirty white van door slides past his nose like a soiled handkerchief.

The window winds down and KEITH (50) leans across from the driver's seat and shouts in a loud southern Irish accent.

KEITH  
House clearance. £20 cash in hand.  
Take about five hours. You game,  
gents?

Bernie looks at Bernard, then up at Keith with a stained toothy grimace.

They stand up as one and both reach for the passenger door handle at the same time. Bernard is once again there first.

EXT. OLD TERRACE HOUSE. FINSBURY PARK. LONDON. MORNING.

The van pulls up next to a reasonably well-to-do row of Victorian houses.

INT. TRANSIT VAN.

Bernie leans out of the window and looks up at the old red brick buildings.

BERNIE  
Smart.

BERNARD  
Nice neighborhood.

Bernie coughs and hocks up some dislodged tobacco mucus onto the pavement.

BERNIE  
We'll fit right in.

EXT. FRONT DOOR. OLD TERRACE HOUSE. FINSBURY PARK. LONDON.

Keith fumbles in his pocket for a set of keys.

KEITH  
Alright gents. You know the score.  
I don't want no pocketing or  
thieving, you hear? I'm paying  
you a score for a fair bit of graft.

They both nod.

Keith turns to open the door and Bernard rolls his eyes to Bernie.

Bernard mouths silently and points at Keith.

BERNARD

Taupin.

Bernie doesn't understand.

Bernard mouths again.

BERNARD

A cunt.

INT. FRONT ROOM. OLD TERRACE HOUSE.

Bernie and Bernard lean against the wall. The room is dusty and in disarray. It is clear from the memorabilia and style that someone old lived and probably died in here.

A collection of records rest against an dirty record player. A mug of coffee on top of the perspex lid.

Bernard lifts the mug.

BERNARD

Cold.

BERNIE

Isn't it.

BERNARD

The coffee... cold as the grave.

He thumbs through the records revealing Music Hall 33rpm records. One cover has a woman in a pink feather boa swinging on a trapeze.

Bernard continues flicking through with gnarly tobacco stained fingers and pulls out an Elton John LP. He flips it round in his hand and looks at the notes.

BERNARD

You were right. Bernie Taupin.

BERNIE

I know.

The slamming of a van door is heard outside.

Moments later Keith enters the room. He sees Bernard with the record.

KEITH

Now look. I told you's lot. No thieving. Put that down.

Bernard obliges.

KEITH

You're only to move the big stuff,  
understand? Or has all that terps  
rotted your brains.

Bernard straightens up and pushes his dirty hair back.

BERNARD

Sir. My business partner and I  
don't touch a drop.

Keith shakes his head, reaches into his pocket and pulls  
out a bag of luminous yellow stickers.

Walking up to Bernie he flaps them under his nose.

KEITH

I don't care. All you gotta do  
is go round the house putting a  
sticker on anything bigger than  
this.

He holds out his hands about a meter upwards and downwards.

KEITH.

I've put the back of the tailgate  
down. Give us a shout when you're  
done then when I've inspected,  
you can fuck it all in the van.

Keith reaches into another pocket and pulls out a pouch  
of tobacco. He begins to roll a cigarette.

Bernard watches his nimble fingers twist the paper and  
looks as if he is about to say something.

Keith sees him.

KEITH

No chance... get going.

INT. BEDROOM. TERRACE HOUSE.

Bernard sits on the bed, an old musty quilt part-covering  
a yellow-stained electric blanket. He pulls out his bottle  
of whiskey and watches Bernie put stickers on a variety  
of furniture.

He comes to a dresser, on which stand three silver picture  
frames. Each faded black and white picture shows a young  
girl in the 1930's performing a Burlesque type show.

BERNIE

It's sad innit? She looks happy here. She probably went home with someone that night and thought it'd last for ever. All her worries, all her dreams, what was it all for? Now she's gone. No-one even knows she was around.

He looks over at Bernard with genuine concern.

BERNIE

What about us Bern? Who'll give a shit when we croak? Who'll even remember that we were.

He looks back at the photo.

BERNIE

We're like the skid marks on washday.

Bernard drains the last of the bottle just as Bernie turns round again, hand outstretched.

BERNIE

Here, give us a go on that bottle.

Bernard throws it to the ground, empty.

Bernie gives a disapproving tut and opens the doors to an old wardrobe.

He riffles through the old clothes and pulls out a pink feather boa.

He walks over to Bernard and drapes it round his neck.

Bernard laughs.

Bernie returns to the wardrobe and sticks his head full in.

A grunt of fear is heard.

Bernard looks up to see a flattened fox flying towards him.

He falls off the bed.

Bernie appears from the wardrobe laughing his arse off.

The 1920's fox stole lays on the floor next to a confused Bernard.

Bernie is back in the wardrobe.

BERNARD

We got a good deal here, don't balls it up.

He looks into the hollow eyes of the dead fox stole.

BERNARD

As my old mum used to say, you  
can shear a sheep many times, but  
skin it only once.

Bernie is heard, muffled in the wardrobe.

BERNIE

Yep, you know all about a cheap  
skinful. You've been up the  
Jacob's Creek without a paddle  
enough times, eh?

Bernie reappears out of the wardrobe wearing a pearl tiara.  
He sits on the floor, leaning against the old burlesque  
clothes in the open door.

BERNARD

Real?

Bernie takes off the tiara and bites into one of the  
plastic pearls. It can be heard shattering in his mouth.

He spits the word and contents onto the floor.

BERNIE

Paste. Reckon the old girl had  
any liquor stashed away?

Bernard looks round the room as he gets back onto the bed  
and stretches out against the headboard.

BERNARD

If she has it'll be sherry I'd  
wager. Can't stand sherry. Gives  
me the royal shits.

Bernie is staring fixedly at Bernard.

Bernard becomes aware of it. He turns and looks behind him  
to a shelf just above his head.

A large bottle of Chanel no.5 perfume sits ancient and  
dusty next to another photo of a lady dancing in a feather  
boa.

Bernard reaches behind him and pulls down the bottle with  
both hands. It is still nearly full.

BERNARD

She must've been a classy bird.

Bernie nods.

BERNIE

A proper lady.

BERNARD  
Do you know how much this stuff  
costs? It's like liquid gold.

BERNIE  
Let's have a sniff.

Bernard looks suspicious.

BERNARD  
Pork. Qwar?

BERNIE  
It reminds me of my old mum.

BERNARD  
Bollocks. Your old mum smelled  
like a skunk.

Bernie raises his fists, then lets them fall.

BERNIE  
Half each?

BERNARD  
Half each... down the hatch.

He lifts out the glass stopper and drinks down a huge amount.

Bernie is on his feet and quickly takes the bottle from  
Bernard before he even removes it from his mouth.

Bernie raises the perfume bottle to the picture in salute  
and drains an equally large measure.

CUT TO

Title: 10 minutes later.

CUT BACK TO

INT. BEDROOM. TERRACE HOUSE.

Bernard is romancing the fox stole, cradling it in his  
arms and crying.

Bernard's rotting shoes are seen sticking out of the  
wardrobe. He is banging the inside back wall.

His voice is slurred yet urgent.

BERNARD  
(o/s)  
I'm telling you. Wardrobes this  
old lead to Narnia. It's...

He cracks the back of the wardrobe.

BERNARD

(o/s)  
...Fucking...

Another crack.

BERNARD

(o/s)  
...here...!

A final crack and a ripping sound is heard.

BERNARD

(o/s)  
See!

Bernie and the fox lean against the side wall and peer behind the wardrobe.

Bernard's hand is seen grasping at air through the jagged hole.

BERNIE

There's something there!

BERNARD

Is it Mr fucking Tumnus?

BERNIE

Papers. Go on...

Bernard wiggles his hand some more until it connects with the loose sheets of paper.

BERNARD

Come here Tumnus!

He pulls the paper viciously back through the hole, tearing most of it as goes.

Bernie has lost interest and is back at the dressing table, looking at the silver framed photo of a woman in a burlesque show, the fox stole around her neck.

He sniffs the air.

BERNIE

Mother!

He begins to cry blind drunken tears.

Bernard has emerged from the wardrobe clutching the crumpled paper.

BERNARD

Treasure map. Buried Treasure.

Bernie is lost in the picture.

BERNIE

She was my treasure. I never said  
goodbye. Never told her how I felt.

Bernard puts a sheet of the A4-sized paper on the floor  
and straightens it out with his fingerless-gloved hand.

They begin to talk at cross-purposes. Bernard as he reads  
the crumpled letter; Bernie as he studies the photo.

BERNARD

Pirate ship..?

BERNIE

Private shit, I couldn't face it...

BERNARD

My great grandfather buried the  
treasure...

BERNIE

...buried pleasure deep beneath  
the surface, hidden away...

BERNARD

He was buried in Abney Park  
Cemetery, by another...

BERNIE

My mother buried alone in Abney  
Park Cemetery...

BERNARD

...friend, the treasure buried  
with him...

BERNIE

...Couldn't attend... too painful,  
too drunk...

BERNARD

...Grave robber...

BERNIE

...poor bugger...

BERNARD

...my chance...

BERNIE

... a second chance...

BERNARD

Only one thing for it...

BERNIE

Yes, only one thing for it...

They both look at each other with conviction and speak as one

BERNARD & BERNIE

We must go there and...

BERNIE

...say goodbye.

BERNARD

...dig 'im up!

BERNIE

Yes... no... what?

BERNARD

Put that bloody photo down,  
Haven't you listened?

Remaining on his knees, he waves the handwritten letter up at Bernie's face.

BERNARD

We're gonna be rich! This old  
girl's great grandfather was a  
pirate. Buried treasure in his  
grave!

He jumps to his feet excitedly, but the sudden movement is too much.

He leans forward against the dresser and quickly pulls out the top drawer.

He lets go the contents of his stomach into the drawer before slamming it shut, causing the photos on top to fall over.

BERNARD

I was hoping to keep that down.  
It tasted like Paris.

Bernie is at the window, looking out into the back garden.

BERNIE

Here Bern, I bet you that's a  
tool shed down there.

EXT. ABNEY PARK CEMETERY. DEAD OF NIGHT.

The sound of a metal spade being dragged along shingle.

The flat edge of the tool leaves a long line behind it in the semi-darkness.

Stone angels look down disapprovingly at their silence disturbed.

Bernie and Bernard stumble slowly but purposefully, weaving along the midnight path.

Bernie is dragging the spade.

Bernard stops periodically to place one of the luminous yellow stickers on a grave stone each time they take a turning.

BERNARD  
Mustn't get lost. The dead are  
watching us now.

Bernie is at a grave flicking a small cigarette lighter. In the guttering light the name "GERALD GODOT" can be read.

BERNIE  
No.

He turns to Bernard, his face looks haunted in the half-light.

BERNIE  
What was the name?

Bernard unfolds the crumpled page from his jacket pocket and beckons Bernie closer.

Bernie flicks the light onto the paper, shielding the flame with his gloved hand.

The page is written in ball-point pen. At the top the name "MICHELLE GREEN. 4S" is visible.

Bernard scans the page.

BERNARD  
Ah-ha! Here. Josiah Green.

The flame has caught the edge of the faded paper and ignites in sudden whoosh.

Their faces are momentarily lit in the orange glow, before Bernard drops the charred paper.

BERNIE  
I've seen that name before. I'm  
sure of it.

Bernard pulls out the large Chanel no.5 bottle from the nap-sack on his shoulder and takes another long pull.

He offers the bottle to Bernie who does the same.

BERNIE  
I remember, I recall. I see it  
all now. Follow me...

He begins to flail his arms and run off into the bushes.

BERNARD  
I've gone blind.

BERNIE  
(o/s)  
This way... this is pirates alley.  
The raven told me.

EXT. A GRAVESTONE. ABNEY PARK CEMETERY. 1AM.

The grey gravestone is eerily lit in the moonlight. The name "JOSEPH GREENE" visible above the date "1964".

From behind the stone the sound of retching is heard.

Bernie's head rises above the headstone, his chin coming to rest on the top.

BERNIE  
I don't feel too good Bern.

The sound of spade digging into scalping.

Bernard is digging into the colored marble on top of the grave.

BERNARD  
You always were a lazy sod. Come on. By the time the sun rises we'll be rich.

Bernie's head slides off the gravestone and he falls sideways to the floor. His arms reach out to a nearby cherub.

BERNIE  
There's only one spade, Bern.  
Sleep. Cold.

Bernard slams the spade once more into the loose stones.

BERNARD  
Bastard!

CUT TO

EXT. ABNEY PARK CEMETERY. SUNRISE.

The morning sun catches the side of a stone angel's face. Long shadows appearing from her wingspan in the weak yellow rays. The world is coming alive.

CUT TO

A milk-float trundles down a side road.

CUT TO

A man is walking his clean healthy dog amongst the gravestones.

CUT BACK TO

Bernie is asleep. His arms wrapped round a stone cherub.

Next to the cherub the broken spade is seen, its wooden handle splintered.

Bernard is still digging, maniacally with his hands. He is only about a foot into the earth.

BERNARD

Treasure's here, I tell you. It  
has to be!

A jogger runs past him unnoticed by the obsessed tramp.

The jogger reaches into tracksuit pants and pulls out a cellphone.

Bernard's hands are caked in mud. He rips at the sodden earth.

BERNARD

Just once. Just once in my life...

The gentle sound of a police siren is heard. Getting closer.

RAIN DOGS - TOM WAITS mixes in with the siren.

FADE OUT.