

# Reviews by Amos Lassen

Books, Movies and Judaica and Random Thoughts About Whatever

## “THE SEARCH FOR SIMON”— Looking for His Brother



**“The Search for Simon”**

**Looking for His Brother**

**Amos Lassen**

30 years ago, David' Jones's (writer/director Martin Gooch) younger brother Simon disappeared without a trace and has not been seen since. David is still looking, and the search for Simon has become his life. The brothers were boys when David disappeared and Simon really believes that he was abducted by aliens. When he shares this with writer/psychiatrist Eloise Eldritch (Noeleen Comiskey), she acts interested, although mostly because she sees this as a template for an obsessed character in her next novel. Eloise does wind up introducing David to a nice girl, Sally (Millie Reeves) yet by talking to David's alcoholic mother Irene (Carol Cleveland), she believes that there may be more answers than David gets when he takes trips to UFO hot spots.

The film seems to be some kind of black comedy where nearly everybody acts mockingly or patronizingly toward David, and it's okay to laugh at him because he acts so ridiculous. Gooch in his direction and the way he interprets the role sees David as both sympathetic and ridiculous and this is a very difficult balance to maintain.

The search has been an obsessive part of David's life ever since his brother went missing, leaving him unable to form close relationships – even the few friends he has can barely stand to be around him because all he does is talk about Simon.

Gooch presents a world of UFO obsessives, re-enactment societies, tabletop game players, government conspiracies and more as David searches for his missing brother. Being misdirected to Denmark by a Skype contact and fellow UFO seeker "Arctus The Alien", David meets psychiatrist Eloise Eldritch who is writing a book on obsessive behavior. Deciding that Simon will make a perfect subject for her book, she gets drawn into his strange world, whilst at the same time Simon seems to be forming his first real relationship.

Gooch blends science fiction, drama and comedy in a charmingly off-beat manner and it is great fun to see a writer/director striking out and doing something original and quirky.

"The Search For Simon" is not perfect by any means – the comedy side is be gently amusing rather than laugh out loud funny, and occasionally misfires, but the story of Simon and the overall narrative create a sweet and unexpected payoff. There is a lot of sympathy with its main character, refusing to make fun of him because of his UFO obsession. It would have been easy to make David an object of ridicule – the typical "socially inept UFO anorak obsessive" – but thankfully this isn't the case. Gooch presents his main character as a troubled soul who we can't help but root for and whose ultimate storyline is actually quite moving.

As much an off-beat drama as it is a comedy, and there are some very, very silly moments. "The Search For Simon often feels as much of a character study (although a very off-beat character) as it does a comedy". It is often fun watch, and hopefully we will see more of what Martin can do with his unique brand of weirdness" in the near future.



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