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Review: The Search For Simon (Gooch, 2013)

Filed Under: comedy, drama, sci-fi

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The Search For Simon

Rating: ★★★★★ 3.5

Martin Gooch's second feature film, an off-kilter comedy/drama *The Search For Simon* ([imdb here](#)) revolves around David (played by Gooch), a UFO hunter who is searching for his brother, whom he believes was abducted by aliens twenty years earlier. The search has been an obsessive part of Simon'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 as all he does is talk about Simon.

Continuing to work with what he describes as "kitchen-sink weirdness" following his feature debut "After Death" ([review here](#)), in "The Search for Simon," Gooch presents a world of UFO obsessives, Re-enactment societies, tabletop game players, government conspiracies and more as Simon goes about his hunt for his missing brother. Being misdirected to Denmark by a skype contact and fellow UFO seeker "Arctus The Alien", Simon meets psychiatrist Eloise Eldritch who is writing a book on obsessive behaviour. 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.

There's a lot going on in *The Search For Simon*. With references to Doctor Who, Douglas Adams, Monty Python and more, Martin stakes his claim to a very English kind of film, blending science fiction, drama and comedy in a charmingly off-beat manner. As with his debut "After Death" ([review here](#)) it is great to see a writer/director striking out and doing something original and quirky.

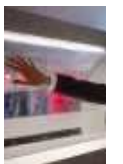
That's not to say that *The Search For Simon* is perfect by any means – the comedy is be gently amusing rather than laugh out loud funny, and occasionally misfires, but the story of Simon and the overall



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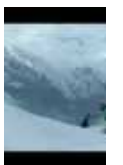
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narrative create a poignant - and unexpected – payoff. The Search For Simon has a lot of sympathy with its main character, refusing to make fun of him because of his UFO obsession. It would have been easy to make David an object of ridicule – the typical “socially inept UFO anorak obsessive” – but thankfully this isn't the case. Martin 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, the blend *is* a little uneasy at times with jokes about government conspiracies over aliens and UFOs not quite matching up to the more serious story that The Search For Simon ultimately presents. There are some very, very silly moments (the mushroom spaceships being a personal favourite), but The Search For Simon often feels as much of a character study (although a very off-beat character) as it does a comedy. The Search for Simon is an often fun watch, and hopefully we will see more of what Martin can do with his unique brand of “kitchen sink weirdness” in the near future.

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