

ODYSSEY TAPES

coming soon to a screen near you

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 “Neighborly Living 03 Cooking for Your Community Pure-White Extreme”
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 “Visit Starlight Kingdom!”
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“Happy Jack 06 Duress Signal? Pure-White Pretext?”

This tape is an episode of *Happy Jack the Lumberjack & Friends*, a children’s show that aired on TV Odyssey. The episode opens on a scene where Happy Jack, a crude wooden puppet wearing a flannel shirt and knit cap—a plastic axe taped to his hand—is comforting his friend Lucy, who is portrayed by a crying twelve-year-old girl.

1. **Paint the Scene:** The episode is supposed to be taking place in the forest where Happy Jack works, but the set appears to be someone’s poorly decorated basement. What do you see in the background that would be out of place in a real-world forest?
2. Happy Jack explains that Lucy is sad because her parents abandoned her in the forest. What did Lucy do to make her parents stop loving her?
3. Happy Jack suggests Lucy should take revenge on her parents when she finally gets home. He demonstrates the manner of revenge on another puppet character, Sylvester the Squirrel. What does Happy Jack do to Sylvester?
4. The episode ends and the screen fades to black, but audio can still be heard. Lucy whispers something to anyone who might be watching. What does she say?

“Neighborly Living 03 Cooking for Your Community Pure-White Extreme”

This tape is an episode of *Neighborly Living*, a lifestyle and home improvement show that aired on TV Odyssey. The episode opens on Paula Palmer, a middle-aged housewife, wearing a hot pink blouse and blue pencil skirt, as she arranges a bouquet of flowers in a glass vase before welcoming the viewers to her program.

1. **Paint the Scene:** The set is carefully modeled after an idealized 1980s suburban home. Despite this, it’s obvious that her house occupies no real street. What shoddy attempt has been made to hide the more glaring flaws?
2. The episode begins in Paula’s kitchen for a cooking segment. Paula stresses the importance of sharing good food with your neighbors. As she prepares her family’s famous casserole, how do we know she not-so-subtly resents these neighbors for shallow reasons?
3. Paula has invited her new neighbors—the Galdersons—over for dinner. The family is composed of mother Tracy, father Richard, and their two adorable children, Billy and Veronica. What minor trespass of etiquette do the children make, and in what overdramatic or hostile way does Paula respond before putting on the mask of hospitality again?
4. It’s dinner time. From the head of the table, Paula is grinning wide and addressing the camera about the joys of communal dining. Richard and Tracy are barely in the frame, their heads slumped face-first into the dishes in front of them. They are not moving. From off camera, the children are crying. What closing remarks does Paula offer the viewer, before she grabs the serving knife and slowly advances out of frame?

“Affirmations 04”

The tape is an episode of *Daily Affirmations with David Tilbert*. It opens with a shot of David seated on a couch in his living room; the room is tastefully decorated and has sand-colored carpets and wallpaper. David is staring directly into the camera, a slightly-too-wide smile on his face. A soundtrack featuring soothing piano can be heard.

1. **Paint the Scene:** David is trying to convey a sense of financial success and easygoing positivity to his audience. How does his appearance reflect this?
2. The theme of today’s affirmation is body positivity. What is David’s message to his audience?
3. Something keeps leaking or crawling out of David’s facial orifices—mouth, nostrils, tear ducts, ears—and it always takes him a few moments to realize it’s happening. What is it, and what does David do whenever he finally notices?
4. David thinks the camera is off, but it’s still recording. He’s no longer in frame, but he can be heard chastising someone (or something) off screen. What is he saying?

“Visit Starlight Kingdom!”

An extended commercial featuring behind-the-scenes previews of Starlight Kingdom, a local theme park that never opened. Transitions between each segment feature a disorienting fractal animation of vivid sparkling colors.

1. **Paint the Scene:** The opening shots feature park visitors laughing together and gazing upward over the camera with joyful expressions. The twinkling lights of an amusement park stretch behind them in soft focus. What impossible or highly unlikely features of the park are advertised in the animated captions?
2. Footage of the amusement park in early stages of construction. A cheerful narrator mentions that this former mining site boasts the highest number of meteorite discoveries in the region. The footage disintegrates into static as the camera zooms in on a large foundation pit but there is a brief glimpse of activity. The workers appear to be doing something very different than construction. What is it?
3. An appearance by Paul Greco, the would-be founder of Starlight Kingdom. With a plaster smile and a manic, unblinking stare, he explains that all reports of alien encounters are actually angelic visitations. What about his body language shows he is listening to or trying to ignore an invisible presence in the studio?
4. Interviews with starry-eyed visitors after a preview showing of the park, each account more superlative than the last. How do their expressions suggest some kind of hypnosis or hallucination?

"Astral 09 Pyramid Passage Pure-White Contact"

The tape is an episode of *Voyages through the Astral with Lunaria Gomez*. The show's neon pink title card scrolls up the screen as a synth-y, space-y soundtrack plays. Lunaria Gomez appears on the screen, walking in the desert. She's wearing a white kaftan and sandals; her long, dark hair has feathers and beads strung through it.

1. **Paint the Scene:** Despite the age of the tape, the image on the screen is remarkably clear. In what ways does the desert environment seem even more real on the tape than it would in life?
2. Lunaria reaches a towering sandstone arch, a structure she calls "the First Gate." As she passes beyond it, what makes you think—for just a moment—that she is no longer in our world?
3. The tape cuts to a scene of Lunaria seated in lotus position atop a large, flat rock. How has her appearance changed from the previous scene?
4. The tape cuts to the last scene: Lunaria is walking toward a great mesa. A series of black and white concentric triangles appears on the screen, a seeming gateway into the mesa. What happens when Lunaria walks through them?

"BLAM! 03 Everybody BLAM!"

This tape holds an episode of *Blam!*, an educational show for kids. It features a rotating cast of "Blammers" who participate in short book discussions, cooking demos, performances, interviews, and more.

1. **Paint the Scene:** The episode opens on a cavernous black room with giant colorful letters spelling out "BLAM" in the background. The Blammers introduce themselves through a cheerful song. Each child says their name and strikes a pose. Something is... *off* about one of the kids. What is it?
2. It's time for BLAMtalk, in which the Blammers discuss an audience question. Today's question is, "Are you ready for BLAMarama?" What about the cast's response tells you they're dreading BLAMarama?
3. Today's BLAMgame is Hot Potato. The Blammers circle up and start passing a ball around. A shrill, rhythmic beep comes from somewhere off-camera. It speeds up as the kids pass the ball as quickly as they can, growing visibly terrified. The beeping reaches a crescendo, then stops. What happens to the Blammer who is holding the ball?
4. The final segment of this episode is BLAMlab. Two kids in lab coats hold beakers filled with dark, sludgy liquid. They bring the beakers to their lips in unison and drink until nothing but a slick residue is left. A third child walks into frame holding a bin of labware overflowing with more of the fluid. The camera drifts to the side before abruptly cutting out. What does it reveal as the source of the liquid?

"Sculpt Box Socrates Caller Warning"

The tape contains an episode of *Let's Sculpt, Box, and Read Socrates!*, hosted by Marcy Trueblood, a manic woman in her thirties who encourages viewers to make the most of their time on earth while pivoting between activities. After shadowboxing, exhausted panting slows her delivery, but not her enthusiasm. Larry, an assistant, mans phones and puts callers on the air.

1. **Paint the Scene:** What about the set makes it obvious that Trueblood has zero budget for this show?
2. Marcy, taking a hammer and chisel to a big rock "sculpture," gives out the phone number, which is on-screen. What stupid prank does the first caller pull before a laughing Larry hangs up on them?
3. "Michelangelo said there's an angel in the stone and you just have to cut away everything that's not angelic," says Marcy. What disturbing feature is visible when she holds her work-in-progress towards the camera.
4. A call-in voice is heard, though Larry looks confused because the phone hasn't been picked up. What natural disaster does it say will wipe Degoya County from the earth?

"I Want My Video Beat"

This tape is an episode of *Video Beat*, a show that plays music videos. People who remember *Video Beat* can never quite recall the names of any of the bands or songs featured on the show, only that they were "obscure." In fact, the bands do not exist and have never existed: any attempt by the Latchkeys to do an internet search for the bands featured in this episode will fail to find any information. The episode opens with the host and VJ, Ray Gun Rosales, breakdancing in a room decorated with Memphis design wallpaper and chairs. Ray Gun's schtick is to announce the name of the upcoming video and then blast the screen with his "ray gun" fingers, an action accompanied by a cheesy laser blaster sound, at which point the screen fades to white and the video plays.

1. The first video is from The Meow Meow Meows, a Minneapolis-based funk/R&B band that does not exist, lead by charismatic frontman Marvin "Stray Cat" Struthers. The totally nonexistent song featured in the video is called "Pussin' Boots." What is the song about, and how does the video depict this?
2. The second video is from Copenhagen, a nonexistent soft rock band from Berlin. The song is a romantic ballad called "Pillow Whispering." The video was shot in a city that doesn't exist anywhere on Earth, but feels vaguely European. How so?
3. The third video is from The Ulterior, a new wave band, featuring their song, "Saturday You and Me." Something is a little... *off* about The Ulterior. What is it?
4. The fourth video is from Pyramid. The song is called "Embrace the Void." This "music video" features neither music nor video. What does it show instead?

"Calamity Raccoon 06 Big Bad - Pure-White Ultimate - Highest Level Warning"

This tape is an episode of *The Musical Adventures of Calamity Raccoon*, a Saturday morning cartoon about a fabled "pizza farm" that aired on TV Odyssey. The opening credits, backed by a catchy theme tune, introduces the scraggly Calamity Raccoon and his Barnyard Band: Farmer Roy, Clarice the Cow, Pig Daddy, and Vincenzo the Italian Pizza Chef.

1. **Paint the Scene:** A smiling sun rises over the technicolor fields and pastures of the pizza farm. What absurd, light-hearted hijinx does the Barnyard Band get up to today?
2. Meanwhile, Pig Daddy's three little nephews—Figgy, Wiggy, and Po—are lazing about their cozy cottage while dark clouds blow in from the west. A long shadow creeps up the path to the porch and darkens their doorstep. A great, furred paw knocks thrice. How does the wolf, Mr. Big Bad, graphically murder the three little pigs?
3. As Mr. Big Bad continues to terrorize the countryside, Calamity resolves to defeat the wolf and bring peace back to the pizza farm. Unfortunately, the rest of the Barnyard Band seem content to run about screaming in panic. What song does Calamity sing to rouse their courage?
4. The Barnyard Band confronts Mr. Big Bad, gluttoned and napping after a fresh kill. What do they do to bring about his ruin? As the episode ends with an iris-out shot, what detail does the ever-dwindling focus linger on that suggests Mr. Big Bad will return?

"My Collection"

The sole episode of *My Collection*, a series of spliced-together home videos featuring unusual antiques and thrift store finds. The narrator, an elderly woman with a raspy voice, gives brief descriptions of each item and what a bargain it was. We never see her face.

1. **Paint the Scene:** The camera is trained on a cluttered coffee table, with a retro glass bowl of hard candies and stacks of magazines. A group of antique "holiday figurines" are placed on a stained doily one by one as the narrator describes them. What unsettling features make you question what kind of holidays the figurines are supposed to represent?
2. A vintage *Don't Wake Grandma* board game. The narrator says she hasn't been sleeping well since she brought it home, but it's got to be worth something. She lifts the pieces from a worn box—a plastic bed and alarm clock with a button, a brightly-colored game board, cardboard standees of terrified-looking children—and a veiled, featureless figure folded in the bed. What horrifying consequences does the game describe for the children if Grandma wakes up?
3. The shag carpet of a dark living room. The narrator's voice is tired, distracted. She tries to describe an unusual statue that was, incredibly, just sitting by a dumpster with a FREE sign. She says it makes her feel funny if she tries to move it, so it'll have to stay where it is for now. The shaky camera lifts to show a dimly lit kitchen doorway, where a squat, shadowy figure of pixelated static stands in the corner. What shape materializes in jerky, flickering movements?
4. Footage of plush slippers shuffling over cracked linoleum, and then down paint-splattered stairs. The narrator is mumbling about a discovery in her basement. A bare ceiling bulb illuminates a heap of trash bags and fallen boxes, shoved aside to reveal a secret doorway. The narrator is breathing heavily now, stumbling into a corridor lined with shelves, each containing rows of statues... and a large, throne-like chair at the end. What sits on the chair, stirring from its rest as the camera falls to the ground?

"Static Woman Live Interview"

The tape is a man-on-the-street interview segment with host Lem Waters on the left side of the screen, identified by the lower third text overlay as "Host, Today In Dekalb." It's a bright day in a downtown area and the occasional pedestrian walks by on the sidewalk. Only the left half of the screen is clear: Lem is extending a microphone to the right side of the screen, which is entirely lost in colorful static, though a female form can be seen as the visual distortion bends.

1. **Paint the Scene:** Based on the half of a building you can make out behind Lem, where was this interview recorded?
2. Lem is asking people for their opinions about television-watching habits. Much of the static woman's response is unintelligible, save for a very familiar name. Whose name do you hear clearly mentioned?
3. As if summoned, you see the person mentioned appear behind Lem, walking into frame before stopping and staring straight into the camera. They speak to you and only you. What do they say?
4. The static woman's vague head shape turns toward the camera and "watch... more... television" can be heard through the interference. As the visual distortion spreads from the right half of the screen into the left, what does the woman-shaped static seem to be doing with its hands?

"The Wake Up - Commercial"

Something's gotten *into* the recording of this famous commercial... distorting a warm sixty-second spot into its own cold forever place. After you press play, there's soft piano music, with the faint sound of sleigh bells. The camera opens to a snow-covered Volkswagen Beetle, its front hood crumpled with a plume of smoke rising up. A man in his twenties wearing a letterman jacket walks through the front door of an idyllic brick home.

1. **Paint the Scene:** As if he's home from a long trip, the young man drops some boxes and a duffel bag next to the Christmas tree. How can we tell he's not actually "home?"
2. A young girl comes down the stairs, rubbing her eyes. "Peter?" she says. As she rushes down the stairs, her eyes grow wide and frightened. What subtle tell suggests to her that this Peter is not even human? How does she respond?
3. The commercial cuts to "Peter" in the kitchen, pulling a can of instant coffee off the shelf and beginning to brew. He seems anxious to drink a cup himself—and to share this pot with his family. What unusual ingredients does "Peter" stir into his steaming pour?
4. **Paint the Scene:** In the commercial's final shot, we see the family bound to kitchen chairs all in a row. "Peter" leans against the kitchen island, sipping his cup of joe and grinning. What about the home has changed? How has "Peter" turned the scene into his own space?

"Animal Kingdom Pure-White"

This tape is an episode of *PoetrySLAM*, a show that features professional wrestlers reading poetry as if they were cutting a promo. The poems are frequently interrupted by outbursts of over-the-top violence.

1. The tape starts with Ebenezer Scourge, whose gimmick is a Dickensian character who torments the poor, reading "Snake" by D.H. Lawrence. Describe the scene and then, in the voice of Ebenezer Scourge, read a few stanzas. Then, describe how Ebenezer's reading is violently interrupted by his rival, Teeny Tom.
2. The tape continues with the last known recording of heavyweight champion Johnny "the Howitzer" Hawley reading "Sow" by Sylvia Plath. Describe the scene and then, in the voice of the Howitzer, read a few stanzas. Then describe how the Howitzer is violently interrupted by his rival, Mad Dog Murray. How do we know Mad Dog is breaking kayfabe, that he intends to actually hurt the Howitzer?
3. The next segment features the Gravedigger, whose gimmick is that of a creepy necromancer/funeral home director, reading "A Noiseless Patient Spider" by Walt Whitman. Describe the Gravedigger's funereal lair and then, in his voice, read the poem. What special effects are used throughout the reading to create a spooky atmosphere?
4. The tape cuts to shaky cam footage of the aftermath of Mad Dog's attack on the Howitzer. What about the scene makes you think the Howitzer didn't survive the attack?

"Pepp016 :-(Final - Pure-White Pretext"

This is the final episode of *Pepp Talk*, a call-in show aimed at Degoya County teens that aired every Friday night. While kids called the show for advice, or to simply vent, *Pepp Talk* and its host, high school senior Pepper Daniels, were also often the target of prank calls and harassment.

1. One of the first calls of the night is from an anonymous student at La Fresca High. What is the teenager's problem and how does Pepper's response hint at her own youthful inexperience?
2. *Pepp Talk* is eventually overwhelmed by prank callers who mercilessly taunt the show's host in cruel and vulgar ways. How do we see Pepper struggle to maintain her facade of composure?
3. Another caller rings in to *Pepp Talk*, but this one sounds older—far too old to be seeking the advice of a teenage girl. What does the caller say to put Pepper on edge and how do we see her facade finally crumble?
4. The older caller rings again, but the footage of their call—the final call of the night—is warped and obscured by bursts of static. When the distortion settles, how does Pepper sign off this episode of *Pepp Talk*, and how do we know that she has been irreparably changed?

"Deep Lake: Off the Beaten Path"

This tape is a montage of amateur footage from nature trails around Deep Lake. A solo hiker, Josh Ortega, introduces each segment by talking into a handheld camcorder about why each location is special, followed by clips of wildlife he spots on the way, or notable landmarks.

1. **Paint the Scene:** In an introduction to the Deep Lake area, Josh appears cheerful and upbeat, but there is something haunted about his expression. What details of the footage indicate he's been searching for something obsessively?
2. A breathtaking sunset view of Deep Lake from a mountain trail. Josh excitedly describes how the shape of Deep Lake crater creates an unusual effect at sundown, as if the lake is quickly filled by shadows. What looming shape do you see on the horizon, which cannot be explained by natural phenomena?
3. Footage of heavily damaged trees and strange patterns scarring the ground. Josh sounds nervous, rambling as he attempts to explain this phenomena—a lightning strike, probably. Maybe a bear tore those trees up. What do you see in the background that indicates some kind of ritual was attempted here?
4. Josh is stumbling frantically down a trail, a bank of storm clouds gathering in the background. Josh looks terrified, babbling about angels and omens. He glances over his shoulder, trips suddenly, slams to the dirt. An eruption of distorted screeching turns to static as the ground falls away. Josh screams as he is hauled into the sky. What final warning can you hear before the footage cuts out in a flash of lightning?

"Fit It Up! 07 Make a Splash"

This tape is an episode of *Fit It Up!*, an exercise and aerobics class that aired on TV Odyssey. Its workouts were always well-choreographed and accessible to all ages, even if the trainers were a bit quirky. The episode opens up on Tamra Owens, a young woman in a tight-fitting, neon bathing suit, standing in the shallow end of a swimming pool. Today's workout is the water aerobics class.

1. **Paint the Scene:** What about the pool and its surroundings seem overly clinical and sterile?
2. Tamra enthusiastically tells her viewers to start doing their warm-up stretches. How do we know that she is uncomfortable being so exposed?
3. The water begins rising. Tamra begins doing high knees, seemingly unable to leave the water. When does she begin to panic?
4. Tamra is now floating in the deepest portions of the pool, her face just barely above the surface. The lights are out, focusing just on her glassy eyes and bloated face. What does she whisper to the audience before she sinks into darkness?

"Fireside 01"

This tape is what appears to be the first episode of *Fireside Chats with Phineas Whateley*. Phineas, an old man with a heavily-creased face and tufts of white hair, wearing a red velvet smoking jacket, is looking down at the floor in grave contemplation.

1. **Paint the Scene:** The show, TV Odyssey's first, originally aired in 1977, when the station was built. What about the scene makes it seem like it was recorded many decades prior to that?
2. Phineas begins the show by making an apology to the viewer. He claims he did not want any of this to happen to you, and that if he could do things differently, he would. He never says what, exactly, he's referring to. What makes you think Phineas is in extreme distress?
3. As you watch the tape, you realize that Phineas looks just like someone you know from back home, an everyday acquaintance you share pleasantries with. Who is it?
4. Phineas spends most of the tape sitting in silence, occasionally glancing up at the camera with a sorrowful look. Except to you. To you he shares some wisdom about something going on in your life back home. What does he say?

"Gone to Fur"

A field of stars rotates behind the title, before the image swipes to a studio stage. A black curtain with tiny holes poked into it—bright lights behind—mirrors the previous shot. Here, though, a balding professorial man sits in a cushy armchair next to four guests and their pets. The host, Edmund Wiles, has built a following as a reincarnationist specializing in animals. Guests appear on *Gone To Fur* in an effort to learn who their pets were in a previous life—and solve problems from this one.

1. A corgi named Elizabark Furley. Her owner claims she's stopped eating. As Edmund stares into Elizabark's eyes, he holds his hand over his mouth in disgust. Elizabark is the reincarnation of an historical general, who has become haunted by the aftermath of a fateful battle. What does Edmund reveal about the general? What does he recount of the battle?
2. A tabby cat called Skat. He apparently keeps running away from home. Edmund smiles, "Skat tells me, it's happening again..." Edmund glances over at the owner, grinning, but as he continues, his smile turns to a frown. Skat was a feudal serf. What activity did they witness their lord engaged in that made them flee the manor?
3. Boxy Boy, the turtle. "Oh, finally someone we'll all know," says Edmund—his mood visibly lightening as he senses the presence of a truly famous persona. Boxy Boy's owner interjects to explain that she really just wants to find out what happened to her mother's ashes, which have gone missing recently. What famous person has been reincarnated as Boxy Boy? What did they witness in regards to the ashes?
4. A labrador puppy who goes by Cooljo. Things seem to be going well. Edmund expresses some initial surprise at how recently Cooljo's former self passed. Apparently, the two knew each other, too. And then things turn. Edmund begins screaming at the puppy. What does he accuse the pet of doing in its past life? What terrible revenge does he swear on the puppy, even while the owner restrains him?

"Bobby G. Heaven's Glide-N-Ride"

Bobby G. Heaven was a familiar face on TV Odyssey, mostly due to the variety of terrible infomercial products he tried to sell: dinners ready in only a minute, workout equipment in sexually suggestive shapes, *Heaven's Self-Help for the Weary and Wanting*. Bobby, dressed in swim trunks, stands before Glide-N-Ride, a do-it-at-home waterslide kit complete with an opaque plastic tube slide.

1. **Paint the Scene:** Children surround Bobby, screaming as the music comes on. What makes it obvious that most of them do not want to be there?
2. Bobby demonstrates how easy it is to set up the Glide-N-Ride, hooking up the bizarre plastic contraption to a garden hose. What goes wrong in the assembly that he tries to brush off?
3. The first child heads up the ladder. The other children begin to chant, their indifference turning into reverent mania. What are they chanting?
4. The child heads down the slide. They do not emerge. The camera pans down into the slide, dark and wet and sloshing. What does it show before the shot fades into static and the music slows into silence?

"Lucky Lots 013 Ted's Storage Adventure"

This tape is a short segment from *Lucky Lots of Degoya County*, a series of antiquing vignettes that aired on TV Odyssey. It features a mix of informative transitional slides and handheld camera footage, shot by the new owners of the lots. In this segment, a man identified as Ted Nesmith is the lucky lot lottery winner of a unit owned by a recently deceased woman named Esther Whateley.

1. **Paint the Scene:** Ted is filming his first exploration of the unit's contents: boxes of books, old dresses, half-finished knitting projects, and other antique furnishings. What remarkably old relic does Ted find amongst the cozy knick-knacks and quaint bric-a-brac, and why is it unsettling to look at?
2. While holding the camera, Ted spends several minutes walking out of the unit, into the hallway, and back inside. Each time he stops, he pans the camera to meticulously examine every angle of the space. What does he see that suggests the inside of the unit is slightly bigger than the outside dimensions should allow?
3. The camera has been set down in a corner of the now-emptied unit. The interior has tripled in size from the last clip. Ted is standing at the far wall, cutting into it with an industrial angle grinder. What happens that causes Ted to suddenly stop, grab the camera, and flee?
4. The footage cuts to grainy, pitch-black darkness. Ted breathes heavily as he clicks on a flashlight, illuminating only the rust-red floor of what must be the storage unit, now cavernously vast. He walks further into the endless void for several minutes, until a circle of figures becomes visible at the edge of his light. Despite the poor quality, they seem to be wearing black robes and white masks, and chant unintelligibly. As they turn to look at Ted, what emerges from the blackness behind them, before the segment ends?