

“Uncle Raymond Drops By” Synopsis

“Uncle Raymond Drops By” is a short drama set in suburban Britain during the summer of 1966. It tells the story of twelve-year-old cricket obsessed Danny and an encounter with his estranged uncle, Raymond. Danny is the son of Jewish German émigré Henry, who along with his brother Raymond, fled Nazi persecution as children in the 1930s. The film is told from Danny’s point of view, a non-Jewish school boy who is unaware of his family past and the true state of his uncle’s mental health (Raymond is now suffering the effects of PTSD) and how Danny tries to process these events.

Home alone after school cricket practice and still wearing his whites *Danny* is trying out his brand-new transistor radio. He is sat on his bedroom window sill, trying to find the Test Match Special broadcast, but with not much luck. The hiss of radio static fills the air, punctuated by the odd beat of a jazz number or beat combo as he cycles through the stations. The crunch of feet on the gravel drive way distracts him, a figure wearing a threadbare old trench coat is moving towards the house.

Danny opens the front door to his *Uncle Raymond (late 30s)*, who proclaims *“I was just on my way to Brighton, so I thought I’d drop by”*. Not living anywhere near Brighton, Danny finds this statement a little odd. Danny tells his uncle that his parents are out: Mum is at the shops and Dad is still at the office.

In the back garden, the sounds of early summer fill the air; *Old Bob* next door is mowing his lawn and the swifts perform aerobatics above. Danny and Uncle Raymond sit on a garden bench drinking milk. Danny watches his uncle’s erratic behaviour and his unkempt appearance. Raymond asks his nephew about school but seems distant and distracted. From the house a phone rings.

Danny answers the phone. It’s *Henry (Early 40s)* his father, calling from his office. Danny tells him about the unexpected arrival of his uncle. Henry explains; *“I’ve had a call from a man named Huckstep, it’s his job to look after Uncle Raymond in the special place where he lives. He says he couldn’t find him and he thought he might have come to see me. So now I know he has and that’s good. The man’s coming to collect him and he might get there before me. So, if Mr. Huckstep comes to the house and says he’s looking for Uncle Raymond you’re to let him in do you understand?”*

Danny goes back outside to find Uncle Raymond has vanished. The sounds of muttering and crashing about can be heard coming from the old garden shed, the words “Y-Worry” daubed in bright yellow paint on the door.

The shed door opens with a creak. His eyes adjust to the light, beyond the stacks of old Eagle and Girl comics, the cobwebs and the garden tools Danny can make out Uncle Raymond, he is stood in the darkened corner with his back to the door. He is muttering to himself in Hebrew, steam rising from the bag of gravel onto which Raymond is pissing. He finishes and turns to Danny *“Hello old man. I went for a stroll.”* Danny can hear his father shouting out for him. He calls back *“We’re in Y-Worry Dad”*.

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The three walk back to the house across the lawn. Henry comforts his younger brother, who is now crying. The pair talk together in Hebrew. Danny follows, trying to understand this strange language his dad and uncle are speaking.

Back inside the house, Danny sits in the kitchen eating a ham sandwich whilst his *Mother (late 30s)* tidies away the shopping. He watches his father cradle his catatonic Uncle in the next room. His mother closes the door and hugs Danny tightly, making him cry out.

Danny is back at the window in his room with the transistor radio. In the drive below, a private ambulance is parked. His parents are talking with *Mr. Huckstep* and a nurse is helping Uncle Raymond into the back of the ambulance. Finally, Danny finds what he is looking for and the sound of Test Match Special emit from the speaker. He looks down at his uncle sat in the back of the ambulance, their gazes meet for a brief second and Uncle Raymond waves at his nephew. The doors are closed shut.