

The Monitor

a short teleplay
by Robert Locke

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FADE IN:

INT: An Apartment

It is night. We are peeping into the bedroom of a neighboring apartment. The window frames the scene like a TV. JESSE, a beautiful woman in a sheer negligee, is preparing for bed. As she brushes her hair her breasts roll tantalizingly beneath the thin fabric. She puts down her brush and, a worried expression her face, begins to massage her breasts. Rather, she is palpating them, searching.

JESSE

Maria?

CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal that we are situated in our own darkened apartment looking through our window at Jesse's window.

SOUND OF KEY TURNING in a lock, a door opening and closing. Lights come on and WILL passes in a blur before our camera just as Jesse, in b.g. framed by the two windows, calls again.

JESSE

Maria?

Will ducks back into the fame, looks out our window and sees Jesse across the way in her provocative posture and deshabelle.

WILL

(under his breath)

Jesus!

He darts across the room and the lights in our apartment are turned off. He comes back into the frame and pulls down the shade. The screen is momentarily dark.

JESSE

(O.S.) Maria?

MARIA

(O.S., further away)

What?

JESSE

(O.S.) Could you come in here a minute?

MARIA

(O.S., closer)

What?

JESSE

I want you to—

MARIA

Wait a sec. I can't hear you.

Will turns on a dimmer light in the apartment. He's a good-looking man, just going gray at the temples. He quickly goes to a closet, opens it, revealing a mirror on the inside of the closet door. He takes out his videotaping equipment and sets it up in front of the shaded window, then uncovers a hole he has pre-cut in the shade and focusses his camera through the hole. He goes quickly to his monitor and turns it on.

Jesse is on his monitor, still sitting on the edge of the bed and palpating her breasts.

JESSE

Maria, you gonna take all—

MARIA

What, what, what? I'm here.

MARIA comes into the frame. She is Latin, dark, with raven hair and a fiery and humorous disposition.

JESSE

How can you tell if you've got something wrong?

MARIA

What do you mean?

JESSE

If you've got a lump, and it's a bad one?

MARIA

What? Have you got a lump?

JESSE

Well, that's what I'm saying. There's something, but it's like always been there, I think, but how do you know?

Jesse has continued to palpate her breasts all this time. Maria, without quite suspecting it herself yet, has found this rather exciting. Now she slips her hand into her own sheer negligee and begins palpating her own breasts, not missing her nipples, not missing a certain sensuality.

Will zooms his camera in to catch all this action on his monitor, also some rather keen facial expressions.

MARIA

Well, let's see, mine feels ... oh ... Oh! Mine feels ... just ... smooth.

JESSE

Yeah?

MARIA

And round.

JESSE

Yeah.

MARIA

And full, you know?

JESSE

Does it squish?

MARIA

Squish?

JESSE

Yeah.

MARIA

No, it more ... rolls.

JESSE

Could I feel?

Will's camera zooms close on Maria's face. She is surprised, but hot. It sounds pretty good to her.

MARIA

I guess so.

Still innocent, Jesse rises from the bed and approaches Maria. They are close enough to kiss. She slips her hand under Maria's negligee.

JESSE

Oh!

Maria closes her eyes, restrains herself.

MARIA

Oh.

JESSE

Yours is ... so different.

MARIA

Is it?

JESSE

Yours is like ... Your nipple is so ... hard.

MARIA

Oh, yeah?

JESSE

Is it always like that?

MARIA

Well, not always, but ... sometimes ... when I'm ...

JESSE

And it's all so firm.

MARIA

Well, yours ... look firm.

JESSE

Maria, would you do me a favor?

MARIA

Well, um ... I guess.

JESSE

Would you feel mine? See if you find anything funny?

Will readjusts his focus to Jesse's breasts. His other hand has slipped down inside his pants where he is doing some palpating of his own.

Maria slips her hand inside Jesse's negligee.

JESSE

Oh!

MARIA

Oh, I'm sorry. Is it ... tender?

JESSE

No, you just surprised me.
(finally wising up a bit)

Oh!

(and heating up)

How does it feel to you?

MARIA

Good.

JESSE

Yeah. Ooooh. Do you fell anything funny?

MARIA

Well, hold on a sec. There's just this ... next to your nipple and ... boy, talk about hard nipples.

Maris's palpating loses any scientific flavor it may ever have had and moves now into full-scale lascivious massage. Jesse responds with low moans until, suddenly coming to her senses, she pulls away and drops weakly onto the bed.

JESSE

Oh!

Maria is still standing, very worked up but trying to contain herself. She now knows what she wants, but because it is new to both of them, she doesn't quite know how to go about getting it.

JESSE

What a relief. I mean ... you didn't feel anything ... unusual, I mean, did you?

MARIA

No, it felt ... fine.

(she massages her own breasts again)

They were very much like mine. Do you want to feel mine again? To see?

JESSE

Uh, no, I think you're right. I think they're ... just alike.

MARIA

Hey, you know what I've got?

JESSE

What?

MARIA

Can I use your TV machine?

JESSE

Sure.

Maria rushes out of the frame. Jesse gets weakly up from the bed and comes to the window to take deep gulps of air. She slips her hand under her negligee again, feeling her breasts, and then she slips her hand down to her crotch with more urgency.

Will, with fierce concentration is watching his monitor and working on himself. He is very red in the face and breathing hard.

On the monitor Maria comes back into the room. She turns on the TV which faces the window. It comes to life showing a commercial for a TV manufacturer. For one brief moment we see on Will's monitor Jesse's TV showing the manufacturer's TV showing TVs inside TVs.

Then Maria slips a cassette into the VTR and we see the credits for "Three To Get Ready".

JESSE

What's this?

MARIA

It's something Joe gave me. I haven't seen it yet, but I can just bet what it is.

JESSE

What?

MARIA

Oh, he said it was real weird, real far out, and I can just bet.

On Jesse's TV monitor, we see a woman lying in bed, leering lubriciously into the camera, her mouth a smear of scarlet lipstick. CUTAWAY to a sailor, trim, handsome and muscular, watching her with steamy eyes. CUT TO the woman who moans and feels herself and cries out in passion as she writhes for the sailor.

JESSE

What IS this?

MARIA

Oh, I knew this was what it would be. Can you believe Joe gave me this?

CUT TO the sailor who strips off his shirt.

MARIA

God, is he built or what!

CUT TO the woman. She writhes even more on the bed and rips open her blouse. She is in a lacy black bra.

CUT TO the sailor. Button by button he undoes his trousers where a mighty spirit is making itself evident.

JESSE

He is so good-looking!

MARIA

Oh, gee, look at that! I've never -

CUT TO the woman. Her hands are wild all over herself. Her body is nearly completely exposed. In her lust she has ripped away most of the black lacy undergarments. Her moans are ever louder, ever more sensual.

MARIA

Oh, my God, and her!

The sailor approaches the woman slowly. She is in an ecstacy of agony. He mounts her. They embrace and entangle in a violence of passion.

CAMERA PANS SLOWLY away from the rutting couple and discovers a young boy standing in the doorway watching them with a mixture of sorrow, disgust and disillusionment. He turns and makes his way down a hallway.

JESSE

(O.S.) Oh, that poor sweet little boy. Do you suppose she's his mother?

The boy stops at the door to the kitchen. Just inside is a chop [ing block. On it is a gleaming butcher knife. The boy reaches his hand toward the knife.

MARIA

(O.S.) Oh, no, honey don't!

The boy takes the knife, and cuts in half the peanut butter sandwich beside it. Then he proceeds into the living room.

The sounds of the copulation swell. He turns on his TV. It is tuned to a love scene, the moans from the screen indistinguishable from the moans coming from his mother and the sailor. He flips the channel. It's a western; there's a gunfight; but even over the noise of the guns comes the noises of his mother's lovemaking. The boy goes to the radio, turns it on loud and spins the dial; talk, talk, talk, all talk. Finally he hits on a station playing "The Hungarian Rhapsody, Number 2" and he turns it up full blast.

He goes back to the TV and flips more channels, finally arriving at a kiddy channel which is running the old Academy Award winning cartoon from 1947 with Tom and Jerry, "The Cat Concerto" where Tom is a concert pianist playing "The Hungarian Rhapsody Number 2" and fighting Jerry who lives inside his grand piano.

It's a mishmash of Franz Liszt as the radio and TV vie with their two versions of the Rhapsody. The boy is intent upon the TV screen but without response. We shift ANGLES between CLOSE-UPS of the boy and Full SCREEN SHOTS of the cartoon on his TV screen.

Gradually we leave the boy altogether and HOLD ON his TV screen as the cartoon comes to an end with Tom collapsing onto the piano. COLONEL CANDY comes on the screen with his wrap-up talk to the kids at home.

COLONEL CANDY

And so, boys and girls, stay tuned for more cartoons and more fun. We'll be back in just a few minutes with Zuppo the Clown!

CAMERA ANGLE changes and we see the TV studio. The stage crew begins rerigging for the ZUPPO program. Lots of bewildered kids are being herded here and there into seats for the clown show.

Colonel Candy escapes from in front of the studio camera and, nearly running over one ADULATING BOY in his path, heads for the john where he pukes into the toilet.

CELIA, the production manager, comes to the door of the john and watches with distaste as Colonel Candy cleans himself up.

CELIA

Where were you last night?

CANDY

Busy.

CELIA

I'll bet.

(waits, nothing more)

They're waiting for you. They want a decision on Jane.

CANDY

I don't have time.

CELIA

They want it now.

CANDY

I've got to make up for Zuppo.

CELIA

Lenny, bring the Zuppo makeup to the screening room.
Come on, Candy, they're waiting.

CANDY

I've got to get some—

CELIA

They're waiting.

Candy follows Celia out through the studio and its mayhem of scared kids into an adjoining room. On their way, again the adulating little boy gets into the way like a puppy. Candy gives the little boy a preoccupied, gentle shove into the hands of one of the crew who ushers the kid back to the gallery.

In the screening room are several producer types. As Celia brings Candy in, quick greetings are dispensed and the screening begins. We discover through incidental dialogue from the production people that they are looking for a woman to go with Colonel Candy on his show and on the Zuppo Program to give the shows a beautiful young mother image. She will be called "Jane".

The screen tests of the actresses called back for Jane are being viewed. Under the dialogue of the screen tests, we hear the dialogue of the production people assessing the qualities and lack of some of the candidates.

We cut from the screen to Candy's face as his Zuppo the Clown makeup is being put on by Lenny. Candy and Celia continue their own dialogue sotto voce over the dialogue of the screen tests and production people.

CANDY

There's no reason for me to be here anyway. They don't care what I think.

CELIA

It's a courtesy to you. You should be grateful.

CANDY

I can't get it up for Zuppo today.

CELIA

You'll do it.

CANDY

I'm sick

CELIA

You should have thought of that last night. Who is she this time? Do I know this one?

The screen test changes. We now see a blonde, JANE if there ever was one. Candy's eyes open up; this one he remembers. Celia sees his expression, is hurt.

This Jane has at once a motherlike beauty and a husky quality in her voice and a childlike innocence in her manner.

She is intense and enigmatic and gentle. As her interview with Candy continues on the screen, the under-dialogue from the production people shows a favorable evaluation.

CUTAWAYS to Candy as his Zuppo makeup is being applied by Lenny. Candy is intently watching the screen test and Celia is intently watching Candy. The CAMERA stays more and more with the interview until finally we no longer cut back to the screening room at all. We are completely with Candy and Jane in their interview. There is a lot of flirtatious subtext under the next exchange.

CANDY

Do you like children?

JANE

Oh, yes. I'm crazy about them.

CANDY

Do you have children of your own?

JANE

Not yet, Candy. But I hope to have. I want a little boy first, then a little girl. Or the other way, whichever, but one of each, I think, don't you?

Candy

Are you married?

JANE

No, but I have hopes.

CANDY

Then you have a boyfriend?

JANE

Well, not exactly. No, I guess I wouldn't say that.

DIRECTOR

Cut. Good, sweetie, you've got a great voice. Now I want to get some shots of you with the kids.

The DIRECTOR brings up some kids and begins working with them with Jane. Colonel Candy falls back and watches Jane keenly. ZOOM SLOWLY INTO ECU of Colonel Candy's eyes. FLASH CUT INTO HIS IMAGINATION.

IN CANDY'S IMAGINED SCENES, he and Jane are sharing a bottle of champagne before a flickering fire. They are on the floor, intimate. They toast each other and sip.

CUT BACK TO THE INTERVIEW. Jane is wonderful with the kids.

JANE

Oh, you sweet things. I just want to take you all home with me!

CUT TO ECU OF COLONEL CANDY'S EYES -- In his imagination they take another sip of champagne, then he leans forward and kisses her gently.

CANDY

Did you get Matt and Janie to bed?

JANE

Um hmm. They went right off to sleep.

CANDY

The firelight is so beautiful on your face.

JANE

Um hmmm. We could be cave people.

CANDY

Or in the jungle. Me Tarzan. You Jane.

He kisses her again, more passionately, embraces her, slips his hand into her dress. Clothes begin to come off. Perspiration seeps out and they begin to glow in front of the flickering fire. They come to a sweet lull in their lovemaking where he begins to explore her face and eyes gently with his fingertips.

CANDY

You are so lovely

JANE

(rising) Just give me a minute. I'll be right back.

He watches her as she moves naked across the room and goes out the door. He rolls back and stretches happily. He is about to pour another glass of champagne when he senses a subtle change in his environment. He puzzles for a moment. Then he turns slowly to look over his shoulder to the source of the flickering. It is not the fire at all. It is a TV set.

WHAT WE SEE -- Candy is lying on the floor, turned now with his back to us looking at the TV monitor. On the monitor is a picture of him lying on the floor before another monitor. On the monitor within the monitor is the same picture, and on down the line, monitor within monitor until infinity.

Candy reaches out and turns off the TV.

CUT TO CLOSE-UP of Candy. He is startled and confused.

PULL SLOWLY OUT OF CLOSE-UP and we discover that we are back at the interview, back from fantasy, and Jane is still playing with the children.

DIRECTOR

Cut. That was great, baby. You're a natural with the kids. Please wait outside, okay?

CONTINUE TO PULL BACK until we have a WIDE SHOT of the screen in the screening room. The projector flickers off and the production people turn to each other to make their final decisions on a Jane. Candy is now completely in his Zuppo the Clown costume and makeup.

PRODUCER

All right, so we're decided? We go with the redhead?

CANDY

But ... what about the blonde?

CELIA

Yeah, Candy, what about the blonde?

CANDY

I liked her.

CELIA

They like the redhead.

(pulling him up softly, like a mother herself)

Come on, Candy. It's time for Zuppo.

It's a matter for hurry to get from the screening room back to the studio, but at the john, Candy must stop and throw up what's left of his guts. Then he rushes into the studio just in time. The Zuppo Show is about to air.

The children are in order now in the gallery and, at the prompting of the crew, they begin to applaud and cheer wildly. The Adulating Boy sits wide-eyed with delight and confusion.

COLONEL CANDY

(now as Zuppo the Clown)

Welcome boys and girls! Welcome to the Zuppo Show! Now let's see, who do we have with us today ... ?

As Candy continues with his Zuppo act with great energy, CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal that we are now again in the TV BOY's living room. The boy is lying now in front of his TV but with his head heavy on his arm, no longer watching his TV. He has been crying a long time and has now lapsed into sobs. The "Hungarian Rhapsody #2" on the radio is just finishing up.

Subtly under the sound of Zuppo, under the sound of TV BOY's sobs, and under the sound of the end of the Rhapsody swells the sounds of sexual moans. The boy raises his head to listen. These are not the moans of his mother and the sailor; these are cries from two women.

The boy puzzles a moment then turns quickly and looks straight into the camera. CAMERA PULLS BACK, back out of Jesse's VTR, back to discover Jesse and Maria both naked on the bed and in ecstasy over each other's body.

Jesse's and Maria's cries subside a bit and another noise slowly surges. It is a man moaning, sighing, crying out in rapture. The two women hear it and get up from the bed to locate

the source of these moans. They come to the window and look straight into the camera.

CAMERA PULLS BACK, back out of Will's monitor. PAN to reveal Will sitting on his chair by his camera at the window. His left hand is still focussing the lens through the shade, his right hand is still jerking himself off in a frenzy. His moans grow louder as he reaches climax. It is the ultimate orgasm, for as it racks his body, he gives one last, great gasp and slips crumpled to the floor.

Slowly PAN away from Will's lifeless body to discover the door of the closet still open. In its mirror we can see one last camera and, in the shadows behind the camera, one last camera operator.

CAMERA CONTINUES TO PAN to discover one last monitor, the monitor of its own image. As CAMERA COMES TO FOCUS IN THE CENTER OF ITS OWN MONITOR, the picture goes into kaleidoscopic video feedback.

TITLES ROLL OVER the ever-changing patterns in the kaleidoscope.

FADE OUT
THE END