

Eerie, Indiana

US TV series : 1992 : dir. Joe Dante, Tim Hunter, Sam Pilsbury : Braveworld : ? x 30 min
prod: Walter Bennett, Gary Markowitz & Jose Rivera : scr: : dir.ph.:
[Omri Katz](#); [Justin Shenkarow](#)
Dick Miller; Mary-Margaret Humes; Francis Guinan; Julie Condra; Henry Gibson

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Americans are WEIRD, as Omri Katz is about to demonstrate to the world at large

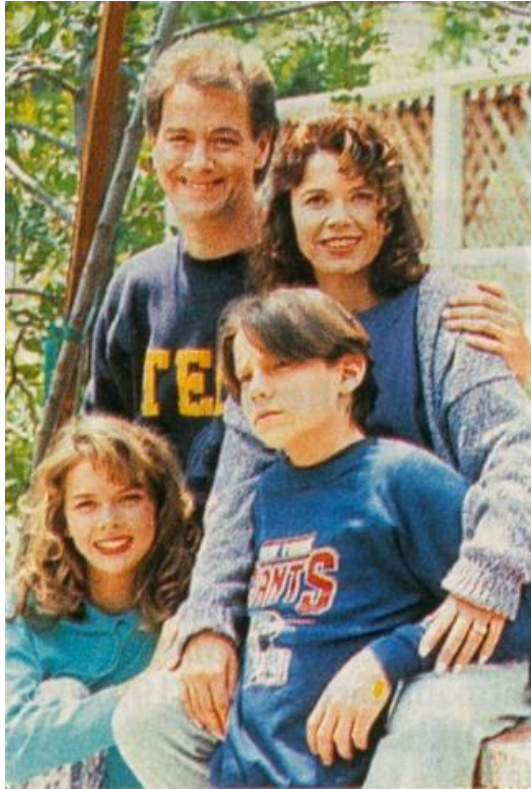
Source: Radio Times

Time Out review:

"Since **"BLUE VELVET"** and **"THE STEPFATHER"**, the Suburban Surreal has been such a consistent seam in the American imagination that it's become a fixture of the mainstream. **"Eerie, Indiana"** makes all the observations about mid-American hyper-normality that we're used to in the wake of films like **"THE 'BURBS"**, **"PARENTS"** and **"EDWARD SCISSORHANDS"**. But however thoroughly pre-tested for hipness, it's inventive fun. And the fact that the great Joe Dante is

aboard as creative consultant and as director on some episodes gives it an undeniable dash of screwball cred.

Omri Katz plays a regular kid in a regular town, but which, for complex geographical reasons, happens to be the Centre of Weirdness for the entire world. With next-door's cute moppet [sic] as his Watson, he investigates one weirdness after another - a sinister Tupperware-type conspiracy, the menaces proffered by dentists and school nurses, the mysteries of what dogs are really



Marshall (Omri) hasn't sensed anything weird about his own TV family, but that doesn't mean that we can't
Source: Radio Times

thinking. Some episodes out of this sample six [in a preview screening] - the whole series is due for TV screening next year - are more convincingly demented than others, but the in-jokes come thick and fast, and guest stars from the Dante camp - Henry Gibson and the peerlessly slack-jawed Dick Miller - add to the fun.

Gross enough - and anti-grownup enough - for kids, postmodern enough for adults suffering from "Peaks" withdrawal."

Radio Times review:

"Ever since David Lynch's camera plunged through the grass and found a severed human ear in **"BLUE VELVET"**, American film-makers have been much preoccupied with the strangeness beneath the cultivated façade of small-town America. The latest peek beneath the lid of not-so-normal America is **"Eerie, Indiana"**, set in a fictional Mid-western town and created by a team that includes **"GREMLINS"** director Joe Dante.

Marshall, the new kid on the block, regards the outwardly normal Eerie as "the centre of weirdness for the entire planet", and then proves it by unearthing a sinister cult of kitchenware fanatics and twins who have been artificially kept in the seventh grade for 30 years. Marshall is played by Omri Katz, who grew up in big-town America playing JR and Sue Ellen's son John Ross in **"Dallas"**. Katz, now 15, is dismissive of any suggestions that he is similar to the alienated Marshall. "He's very intelligent, kind of a detective" says Katz. "He sees strange things that no-one else notices. I prefer not to go and look for adventures; I'd rather hang out with my friends."¹

"Moving stories - a relocation for the Teller family brings a few surprises."

"An American mystery series, with echoes of **"Twin Peaks"**, set in a fictional Midwestern town. When teenager Marshall and his family move from crowded New Jersey for a better life in Eerie, Indiana, they encounter time warps, an alien explorer, a humanoid computer, and dogs who want to take over the town. Director of this [ie: **"Foreverware"**] and a number of episodes is Joe Dante, who made the movie **"GREMLINS"**. Producers: Walter Bennett, Gary Markowitz & Jose Rivera."

What's On TV note:

"Tales of US small-town weirdness."

¹ Yes, but then you **are** in the TV world, Omri dear, are you not?

Episodes – in alphabetical order:

“America's Scariest Home Video”

“A baby gets zapped into a TV screen and a mummy gets zapped into a living room - still wearing its bandages. This is what happens when lightning strikes with a mind of its own.”

- Radio Times

“Eerie goings-on: is lightning likely to strike twice in America's weirdest town?”

- Radio Times

“The ATM with the Heart of Gold”

“After the town is declared bankrupt, Simon has to confess that an automatic cash dispenser has been showering him with \$20 bills.”

- Radio Times

“Foreverware”

“Marshall has to save his family from the clutches of a cult of kitchenware fanatics who seal themselves in vacuum containers in order to preserve their youth.”

- Radio Times

“The Hole in the Head Gang”

“Simon and Marshall are exploring the local haunted mill when they discover a strange grey-haired boy and the ghost of a bank robber.”

- Radio Times

“Simon and Marshall explore a haunted mill.”

- TV Times

“Marshall and Simon come across a strange boy with grey hair, who seems to have no memory of his past. * ”

- Sunday Times

“The Losers”

“Marshall discovers why things persistently go missing in Eerie, and why lost goods keep the world's economy afloat.”

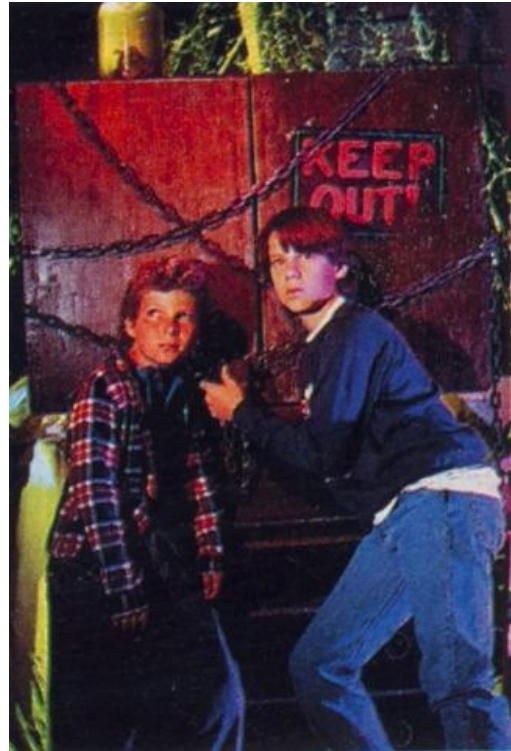
- Radio Times

“More surreal goings-on in a small US town. Marshall discovers the truth about where all the world's lost items end up.”

- What's On TV

“Marshall finds out where all the missing things go.”

- unknown



Simon (Shenkarow) and Marshall (Katz) trespass boldly where no kid has trespassed before, in “The Hole in the Head Gang” Source: Radio Times

“Mr Chaney”

“Every 13 years, Eerie elects a Harvest King to ensure continuing prosperity. When Marshall is chosen, he finds out why the elected always disappear.”

- Radio Times

“Marshall is elected as the town's Harvest King after the previous holder of the title suddenly disappears.”

- Radio Times

“Marshall is selected as the Harvest King of Eerie.”

- TV Times

“No Brain, No Pain”

“The forces of evil are after a tape made by the homeless Chappy Furnell, once the smartest man in the world.”

- Radio Times

“No Fun”

“Marshall and Simon are sent to the school nurse. After an eye test, Simon changes character completely and becomes a workaholic drone. Is the nurse on a mission to remove the children’s sense of fun, and can Marshall outwit her?” - Radio Times

“Marshall thinks the school nurse is removing the kids sense of fun.” - Guardian

“Tornado Days”

“A killer tornado is heading directly for town.” - TV Times

“Zombies in PJs”

“Most of Eerie’s inhabitants are turned into “shopaholic” zombies.” - TV Times

“ ? ? ? ”

“Tonight, the story of Eerie’s secret lodge.” - What’s On TV

“ ? ? ? ”

“Melanie’s jealous heart (gained in a transplant) causes romantic problems.” - What’s On TV

“Marshall and Melanie want to become sweethearts.” - Guardian

“ ? ? ? ”

“The kids learn there's more to life than UFOs when Professor Zircon’s Travelling Museum of the Parabelievable comes to town.” - Daily Mirror

I caught only two or three episodes of this series, and that eight years ago, so detailed comment is not possible. It rode in on the popularity of the “**Twin Peaks**” series, but there’s no indication it was given a second season (in the UK at any rate). Less obviously, it belonged to a trend in adolescent television for savvy kids narrating to camera on the absurdities of adult life about them, although needless to say the viewpoints and the criticisms were scripted for them by adults. “**Eerie, Indiana**” certainly afforded its makers an opportunity to lampoon aspects of complacent mid-western community life, but they did so from within the constraints of US television, without David Lynch’s sour, unsympathetic eye. The result was like a cross between “**The Wonder Years**” and “**The Addams Family**”.

See also “**THE MONSTER SQUAD**”, made in Canada, about the infiltration of a small midwestern town by the Universal movie monsters of yore. As weirdness goes, however, you have to get up a fair head of steam to beat Don Coscarelli’s “**PHANTASM**”, in which a young boy discovers his local funeral parlour is reanimating the corpses, shrinking them to dwarf-size, canning them and shipping them for slave labour to a parallel dimension. And that’s just for starters.

Omri Katz, 14, appeared the previous year in “**DINOSAURS – THE MOVIE**”, and in 1993 he made “**MATINEE**”, with John Goodman as a gimmicky horror movie promoter in the William Castle vein. Nothing else is known of Shenkarow. Neither are listed in *The Moving Picture Boy*.

See subject index under **DOGS, GHOSTS & HAUNTINGS, HORROR, KID DETECTIVES, MOVING HOME, SCIENCE FICTION, TV SERIES, TWINS / LOOKALIKES** and lord knows what else.