

CLANK BOOM BANG

written by

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inspired by

"10-minute SFX documentary w/ Sound Designer Ben Burtt on Star Wars, Indy, E.T. & more!"

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FADE IN:

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

Rain SHOWERS on a dark alley.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL APARTMENT - MORNING

Bacon SIZZLES on a frying pan. The sound of the rain storm was the bacon all along.

The apartment is small, plain, and scattered with various objects for sound effects.

BEN BURTT (27), a sound designer who looks like he's always listening carefully, is wearing a tank top, boxers, and chunky headphones. He is using a shotgun mic to carefully record the bacon.

SUPERIMPOSE: "Los Angeles. 1976."

Ben's wife, MARY ANN (27), walks through the apartment door. She is wearing a formal dress. It is clear she is dressed up for something. She is immediately shocked by Ben's clothing or lack thereof. Ben has not noticed her entrance.

Mary Ann quickly tries to get his attention, but is unsuccessful. She turns to hold the door open for guests as she grimaces.

MARY ANN  
(Loudly to get Ben's  
attention) Come on in!  
Here is our humble abode.  
I swear it normally looks  
nicer when my husband is  
wearing pants.

Ben looks up from the bacon. He is surprised and confused. He smiles timidly.

MR. WILHELM and MRS. WILHELM (50s), a quaint, old fashioned couple, walk in to tour the apartment. They immediately notice Ben's lack of pants.

MRS. WILHELM  
Oh. What a ... wonderful little  
home.

MR. WILHELM

Yes. Beautiful, err, trim.

MARY ANN

This is my husband, Ben. He is a sound mixer.

BEN

Hello, it's nice to meet you. I'm a sound designer.

MARY ANN

Ha ha ha...

(Quietly to Ben)

You are unbelievable. Get dressed.

Ben, with mic and spatula still in hand, goes to put clothes on.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

Let's take a look at the guest room, shall we?

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Mr. & Mrs. Wilhelm are about to leave. It is clear that they are uncomfortable despite the fact that Ben is now wearing a collared shirt and slacks. Mrs. Wilhelm sees an electronic keyboard in the corner.

BEN

(Nervously)

It really feels much more spacious than it really is. Although the walls are a tad thin...

MARY ANN

I'm sure the neighbors will adore you two moving in. Thank you for stopping by! Let us know if you have any quest-

MRS. WILHELM

Oh a keyboard! Do you play?

She presses a few keys, but produces different pitches of screams instead of piano noises. She does not know what to say.

BEN

Not exactly.

Mary Ann shows the couple out and talks to them as they leave.

MARY ANN

Sorry about that. We are willing to negotiate our price! Goodbye!

The door closes and Mary Ann gives the stink eye to Ben.

INT. BEDROOM

Their small bedroom is being used as a meeting room.

MARY ANN

Are you shitting me? We can't afford to live in this dump. Do you want to move in with your parents? You're welcome to leave anytime. I know you're immensely busy making laser noises all day, but is it too much to ask you to listen to me more than your breakfast?

BEN

I'm really sorry. I promise this movie is important, and it won't-

Ben remembers the bacon.

BEN (CONT'D)

Breakfast.

The fire alarm starts BLARING.

MARY ANN

You cannot focus on a single important thing!

INT. KITCHEN AREA - CONTINUOUS

The kitchen area is smoking due to the burnt bacon. The fire alarm is still deafening.

Ben turns the stove off and tries to chisel the burnt char into the trash with a fork. He is flustered and embarrassed.

BEN

You know, sounds don't create themselves. Someone actually had to create the sounds for our fire alarm...

(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)

I know I'm not the director or anything, but I think this movie will let us move into a bigger place. If you trust me, you can forgive me?

EXT. CITY BUS STOP - LATER

Ben holds his luggage, keyboard, and boxes of sound effect items and he awaits the three o'clock bus on the corner of a city road.

He looks at his box full of balloons, chain, spoons, shoes, a boxing glove and other random items to make sounds. He looks at the trash can next to him. He considers dumping his stuff out of anger. He decides not to.

INT./EXT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - LATER

Ben arrives at the large, unextravagant studio. The film's director, GEORGE (30), is waiting for him. He's a geek who looks like he has probably not slept for a couple days.

GEORGE

Ben! There you are. I need to talk to you.

George and Ben walk into the building and down hallways and up stairs as they talk.

BEN

Listen, George. I'm really sorry that I didn't get a chance to finish the sounds for the 1st act. Something came up-

GEORGE

A lot of things have been coming up here. The guy playing C-3PO had a heat stroke in Tunisia.

BEN

Is that the flamboyant robot or the short robot?

GEORGE

The flam... the tall droid. He was out for a week and a half. Anyway, we are now even more behind schedule. Oh and we aren't going to make a fucking dime off of this sack of shit.

Ben freezes. He is shocked to hear this news from George.

BEN

What? What do you mean?

GEORGE

I held a screening for some of our footage. Brian De Palma laughed at me. Right to my face. He is such an asshole.

Ben is internally panicking. George begins walking away.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Tell me when you get the sounds done.

BEN

Wait, George. I have some questions about the script. Half of these sounds don't exist!

GEORGE

(Still walking away)  
If only we had someone to **design** them.

Ben angrily walks into an audio room and SLAMS the door.

INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

An empty room with various sound and technical equipment scattered around.

Ben is attempting to create sounds as DEREK (20s) the disinterested sound mixer records him. Derek looks as nerdy as Ben with worse personal hygiene.

DEREK

Chewbacca, happy walk.

Ben stomps on the ground with a smile on his face while he wears fuzzy slippers near a mic.

BEN

I am freaking out. I thought it would be nothing but rocket ships and alien talk.

DEREK

It is certainly a challenge to overcome. Han Solo, cocky.

Ben walks in some leather shoes with a confident look on his face.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
 However, you have a great ear. I believe that you will prevail.

BEN  
 Thank you.

DEREK  
 Leia, pissed off.

Ben walks angrily in a pair of women's flats.

BEN  
 Alright. Let's make some noise.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

A) INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

DEREK  
 R2D2. Take 1.

Ben plays some computerized bleeps from a tape recorder.

BEN  
 How lovable ...

B) INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

BEN (CONT'D)  
 Laser sword. Take 2.

Ben HUMS in a kazoo and he flails his arms around like he is holding a sword. He is disappointed.

C) INT. STUDIO HALLWAY - NIGHT

Studio hallway with a vending machine.

Ben sneaks his sleeping bag next to one of the vending machines and gets in his bag to sleep for the night.

D) INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

DEREK  
 Blaster. Take 5.

BEN  
 Pew pew pew. Pew pew. Pew pew pew  
 pew.

Derek shakes his head "no".

E) INT. SOUND STAGE - NIGHT

BEN (CONT'D)  
 (Various baby noises)  
 Goo goo boo boo bee bo wee wah.

DEREK  
 Uh, baby talk mixed in with  
 computer noises. Take 1.

Ben and Derek produce the sound of R2D2.

Ben and Derek look at one another impressed.

F) INT. LOUNGE - DAY

A lounge for the cast and crew with chairs, a couch, and a television.

Ben walks past the tv, but then looks at it. He grabs a mic and records the FEEDBACK he gets from putting the mic near the back of the tv.

G) INT. SOUND STAGE - LATER

BEN  
 Hum of tv, hum of projector, take  
 1.

Ben hits play on two tape recorders at the same time to produce the sound of a lightsaber. He smiles.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

Ben has headphones on as he listens to audio while Derek adjusts levels on a mixing board.

SUPERIMPOSED: "3 Months Later"

George bursts into the room unexpectedly.

GEORGE  
 How the hell did you make those  
 sounds? They were incredible.

BEN  
 Thanks... thank you, George.



GEORGE

How did you make the lightsaber  
noise?

Ben lifts a mic near a tv and sways it around like a sword  
creating the sound effect.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

What about Darth Vader?

BEN

Maybe some sounds are best left as  
a mystery...

GEORGE

Derek, how did he do it?

DEREK

Old scuba mask.

BEN

Come on, Derek.

GEORGE

Also, I have some bad news. We are  
two million dollars over budget.

Ben and Derek look at George, shocked.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Also. Only 40 theaters have agreed  
to play the movie. Your sound  
budget is done. I hope you idiots  
have enough recordings of lions,  
tigers, and bears to keep making  
the wookie talk.

BEN

Umm, it's actually l-lions, seals,  
and bears.

GEORGE

Yeah whatever. We have three weeks  
to turn this bitch around.

EXT. FIELD - LATER

A big grassy field. A lighting stand holds a head of red  
cabbage on a string.

Ben is wearing a boxing glove. He talks angrily into a mic  
held near the cabbage.

BEN  
Punch. Take 1.

Ben proceeds to beat the cabbage senselessly as he gets his anger out.

INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE

George's extremely messy and disorganized office that is covered with everything from props to empty pizza boxes. Ben and Derek sit across from George as he talks at them.

GEORGE  
I thought you said you were done.  
This movie will come out on May  
25th.

BEN  
We just need to finish the blaster  
sounds. That's it.

George takes a bite from his pizza.

GEORGE  
Okay. I can't afford to keep both  
of you on the payroll. Which one of  
you will work for half of your  
salary?

Derek raises his hand. Ben is dumbfounded.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
(Pointing to Derek)  
Welcome aboard.  
(Pointing to Ben)  
You're fired.

Ben is outraged. He tries to finally stand up for himself, but he can't quite form actual words.

George stares at him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
I'm going to need you to leave.

Ben gets up and walks out of his office. He can only hear ringing in his ears.

He stands outside of the room. He takes a breath. He walks back into George's office.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Ben, get the fu-

Ben grabs a slap of his recording from George's desk. He holds them above his head in order to smash them.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

No. No. Don't do that.

Ben looks directly at his director.

BEN

I want my salary. I want the money I am contractually obligated to receive. I want to work on the sequels. I want you to stop treating me like I'm nothing. You know your movie is a piece of garbage without the sound I created. I want what is coming to me, Lucas.

George looks at him angrily. Then he looks at the ground for a moment. He looks back at Ben. He knows he has been beat.

GEORGE

Fine. But if you don't get me that laser gun sound I will end your career.

BEN

Deal.

GEORGE

You have 5 hours.

INT./EXT. L.A. STREETS

Ben runs furiously through the city with headphones on and mic in hand.

INT./EXT. APARTMENT

Ben arrives at old apartment, but it's locked. He knocks on the door. Mary Ann answers.

MARY ANN

You think you're welcome here? Get out of my-

BEN

I need to get something.

Ben barges into the apartment and runs into the bedroom. Mary Ann is shocked.

MARY ANN  
What is wrong with you?

Ben reaches under the bed to find a slinky. He stretches it out.

BEN  
Can you please hold this for me?

MARY ANN  
What? No. Why?

BEN  
Please. This is important.

Mary Ann thinks about it for a minute. She sees how serious Ben is. She grabs it and holds it over her head as it hangs near the ground.

Ben takes a paper cup from the bedside table and jams it into the side of the slinky. He taps the bottom. It produces a laser gun noise.

Ben smiles at his wife and she cannot help but smile back at her husband.

EXT. MASON

A large, expensive home. It is clear that Ben made a lot of money.

Ben stands outside of his new house wearing a suit.

George, also in a suit, walks over to Ben to pour him a glass of Champagne.

GEORGE  
Ben. I wanted to apologize.

BEN  
Yeah right.

GEORGE  
Okay. I actually just wanted to ask how you made the Death Star explosion.

BEN  
I'll need more Champagne before I tell you that.

GEORGE  
Prick.

George walks back into the house. It is clear that Ben is having a party. His wife waves to him from the open doorway.

Ben holds the glass to his ear so he can hear the BUBBLES.

THE END