

FOLKESTONE ROAD

A short film
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BLACK

Sound of travel. Hubbub. High pitched whine. People in transit.

An intense crescendo then just click, click, click...

(SOUND CONTINUES)

1. Ext. Street - Day

Close up on the wheels of a large battered suitcase as it moves across paving slabs.

2. Ext. Street - Day

A young FAMILY stand outside a terraced house. A MOTHER and her two sons - Brothers. OLDER BROTHER and YOUNG BROTHER, thirteen and eight years old

They are accompanied by a man, MARTIN, dressed in a dated suit. He holds some files and folders under one arm. A photo card identity pass dangles from his neck on a lanyard.

3. EXT. FRONT DOOR - DAY

MARTIN pulls out a key from his pocket.

MARTIN

Here you go. Number ten.

4. INT. HOUSE - DAY

Locked-off shot inside the empty house looking towards the front door.

5. EXT. FRONT DOOR - DAY

MARTIN opens the door and lets them through. They step over a large pile of post on the floor.

6. INT. HOUSE - DAY

MOTHER, OLDER BROTHER and CASEWORKER stand in the entrance looking around.

YOUNGER BROTHER pushes through. Close-up on his face, looking around.

It's a modest terraced house, magnolia walls and plastic doors. Cheap carpets and minimum furniture. Nothing hangs on the walls apart from woodchip paper and some notices and instructions on a cork notice board by the front door. It's basic.

Winter sun shines in at a low angle through stale, dusty air.

MARTIN

Bedrooms upstairs. Here's the meter for the leccie. I'll sort out a payment key for you tomorrow. And under here is where....

7. INT. HOUSE - DAY

Dialogue fades as we tour the house from the YOUNG BROTHER'S POV. Tentative at first, he opens doors to empty rooms. Flicks on light switches. Checks views through windows. From the back door he checks out the small, bleak garden with its abandoned rubbish.

YOUNG BROTHER now races around the house dodging past the grown-ups, as MARTIN talks at MOTHER, and OLDER BROTHER helps her understand what's being said.

MARTIN

And don't forget the 6th January. I'll leave all the info in this envelope here.

Martin pins an official looking letter to the notice board. There's no address on it just the date and the words 'STATUS HEARING'.

8. INT. HOUSE - DAY

MARTIN stands by the front door awkwardly. The family group stand together at a distance down the corridor.

MARTIN

OK then. I'll leave you to it. You've got my number...

MARTIN shuts the door as he leaves.

9. INT. HOUSE - DAY

The family are in the near empty front room. A tight tableaux. Caught in the fading sunlight, they stand there with tatty luggage at their feet. YOUNG BROTHER walks over to the light switch and turns it on.

Sound of loud jeering, shouting and chanting from a crowd. We can't make out the words but it's slightly aggressive.

10. EXT. - DAY

(Sound continues)

We slowly pan across the faces in a crowd, mainly men, shouting and jabbing fingers towards the camera. Towards something unseen to us. The faces are contorted red with anger and disbelief. It's full on and unsettling..

11. EXT. PARK - DAY

(SOUND CONTINUES)

The family walk with purpose on a path lined by trees on the edge of a park. A kids' football match is taking place. Saturday morning stuff. Dads shouting. Kids getting cold.

The aggressive shouting is in the background now and much calmer.

The two BROTHERS watch the game as they walk past, captivated. A loose ball hurtles out of play towards YOUNG BROTHER.

The ball rolls and stops near YOUNG BROTHER's feet. He picks it up and holds it. A red-haired boy runs over to retrieve it.

RED-HAIRED BOY looks at YOUNGER BROTHER. There are calls and whistles from the pitch. Mild verbals from the fathers wanting the ball back in play. YOUNG BROTHER hands the ball to the RED-HAIRED BOY.

RED-HAIRED BOY
Thanks...

The family continue on their way, the BROTHERS looking over their shoulders, following the game as it plays out.

12. EXT. HIGH STREET - DAY/NIGHT

Same Day

The family progress down a busy high street. It's Christmas. Street lights and decorations everywhere. Lots of noise. It's an attack on the senses. All alien.

As the high street scene progresses they seamlessly move from tacky shops, carol singers, badly costumed Father Christmases and Food aisles bursting with produce etc, into a winter wonderland Christmas fair with a magical feel to it - bright lights, rides whizzing round, fake snow. It's magical.

All through this the family are spectating, soaking up all the new sights, smells and sounds.

13. EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

A quiet dark side-street. The family are on their way home.

14. EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The family stop outside a town house. The house's bay window overlooks the street and the light from within illuminates the family as they stand gazing in.

Inside is like a scene from a Dickens novel or an idealised Christmas movie. A family are having fun decorating their Christmas tree. The decorations are a mix of traditional favourites and newer additions.

A father helps his young children attach things to the tree. A mother fusses about in the background. The atmosphere has a rosy glow.

The family outside watch in silence, unseen by those inside.

15. INT. KITCHEN - DAY

MOTHER stands at the kitchen sink washing dishes, staring out of the window. YOUNG BROTHER appears at the kitchen doorway from the hall.

16. EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

At a crossroads there is a temporary Christmas tree stall. It's half on the street and half behind a wooden fence in a disused yard. All sizes of trees are there. It's a Christmas Tree Wonderland.

From behind a wreath a big bearded man appears, dressed in a tatty green jumper. TREE MAN. He pulls holly out of his hair as he steps forward.

The family approach and survey the trees. YOUNG BROTHER makes the selection: not too big, a bit wonky and thin, but just right.

17. INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The TREE stands at the end of the front room, bare and undecorated.

18. INT. FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

The BROTHERS are sitting at a table in the front room. The TREE is in the background.

The table is covered in cereal boxes and pieces of paper, takeaway menus, junk mail, foil, loo rolls, pages from colour magazines. The BROTHERS are cutting things out and gluing them together. They are making Christmas tree decorations. The results are mixed - an interpretation of what they have seen. None of it looks quite like any Christmas decorations we would know, but great care is taken as they then hang them on the TREE.

19. INT. FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

Multi-coloured tree lights are switched on. The TREE stands resplendent and radiant.

20. INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

We see YOUNG BROTHER framed in the doorway looking at the TREE. He's on his way to bed. The lights in the room are off, but the tree lights have been left on, creating a magical scene of shadows up the wall and a multi-coloured glow everywhere.

21. INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

YOUNG BROTHER is tucked up in bed, awake. His head is turned towards the door.

The multi-coloured glow of the TREE lights cast through the open door and speckle the bedroom ceiling faintly.

22. INT. FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

The TREE stands there with its lights on. Close-up of the various decorations in detail, including an odd fairy at the top which looks strangely like MARTIN.

23. INT. FRONT ROOM - DAY

The BROTHERS are eating breakfast and watching television. The TREE stands behind them.

24. INT. FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

TREE stands there, lights on. Activity happening off screen. The sound of Big Ben and fireworks.

25. INT. FRONT ROOM - DAY

The BROTHERS are absorbed in a project at the table. The TREE is in the background.

BLACK

We hear the sound of tank tracks grating over hard ground. Engines turning over, gears grinding. Distorted radio traffic.

(SOUND CONTINUES)

26. EXT. DAY

The camera is very low to the ground, moving slowly through a trench created by cardboard boxes. They line up on each side of the camera, creating a passage leading into the short distance.

The sides of the boxes are decorated with A4 paper on which are barely decipherable crayon drawings of stick men, -women, -children, houses, a sun, clouds, rolling hills, and stick men holding guns to other stick men's heads as dead stick bodies float in a pond. The sound of the tank moving continues.

The camera pulls back to reveal YOUNG BROTHER holding a small toy truck running it along the ground between the boxes making sounds. He's lost in his own world.

27. INT. BACK DOOR - DAY

Unseen, MOTHER stands watching YOUNG BROTHER at play in the bleak back garden.

28. INT. HALLWAY - DAY

From the notice board at the front door MOTHER unpins the official-looking letter and, with the OLDER BROTHER, exits through the front door.

29. EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Sensing something, YOUNG BROTHER pauses at play and turns towards the back door.

30. INT. HOUSE - DAY

YOUNG BROTHER passes by the open doorway to the front room. He stops and observes the tree. The tree has changed for the worse - scrawny, having shed half its needles.

31. EXT. STREET - DAY

A street, pavements littered with discarded Christmas trees for the bin men to dispose of.

32. INT. OFFICE - DAY

MOTHER, OLDER BROTHER AND MARTIN sitting at a table opposite three sharp-dressed suits.

33. Ext. STREET - DAY

YOUNG BROTHER is walking past discarded trees and wheelie bins overflowing with Christmas waste. He looks puzzled. In the distance a solitary BIN MAN is throwing old trees into organised piles for disposal.

Close-up on YOUNG BROTHER's worried-looking face.

34. EXT. STREET - DAY

YOUNG BROTHER breaks into a run - observed by RED-HAIRED BOY as he crashes through his game of football taking place on the street.

35. EXT. OFFICE - DAY

MOTHER, OLDER BROTHER and MARTIN are seen through a window. No sound. Lots of defensive body language in the room.

36. INT. FRONT ROOM - DAY

YOUNG BROTHER races in to the front room.

The TREE is still there.

37. EXT. OFFICE - DAY

More shots through the window - now both sides of the table arguing, nothing resolving.

39. EXT. BACK GARDEN - DAY

YOUNG BROTHER is digging a hole in the middle of the back garden.

40. EXT. BACK GARDEN - DAY

YOUNG BROTHER plants the TREE in the hole and pats down the earth to secure it. He steps back to admire his work.

To him the TREE stands tall, a beacon in its new environment.

41. EXT. BACK GARDEN - DAY

As YOUNG BROTHER stands back admiring his work, there's a sound behind him and he turns to discover MOTHER, OLDER BROTHER and MARTIN looking on from the back door.

MARTIN
Sorted! All good.

Martin nods and winks at YOUNG BROTHER. MOTHER and OLDER BROTHER look a bit confused at the tree but.....

42. EXT. BACK GARDEN - DAY

There's a yell off screen, swiftly followed by the sight of a football arching across the sky and hitting the TREE with a thump. The force pushes the tree over, displacing the soil around it. Where the roots should be there's just bare earth and a bald stump.

43. EXT. GARDEN - DAY

The family look on. The TREE lies prostrate.

44. EXT. GARDEN - DAY

There's a sound from where the ball came. They all turn to see RED-HAIRED BOY appear. He walks over to the tree and collects the ball.

A puzzled look on his face, he surveys the scene, then motions to YOUNG BROTHER with his thumb over his shoulder.

RED-HAIRED BOY

(Beat)

Want a game?

45. EXT. GARDEN - DAY

MOTHER and two BROTHERS face RED-HAIRED BOY, smiles play across their faces.

46. EXT. STREET - DAY

Everyone is out on the street playing football between the cars. It's joyful, noisy, and good natured. Young and Old. Boys and Girls. RED-HAIRED BOY and BROTHERS.

Close-up, YOUNG BROTHER is immersed in the game.

Sound off screen of bin lorry braking hard; the compactor pistons squealing. YOUNG BROTHER hears the sound, now oblivious to the game around him. Close-up on his frightened face. He dare not turn round.

(Fade in sound of tanks grinding over ground)

BLACK

(Tank-grinding sound continues)

END