

## INCIDENT AT SCHOOL

DIRECTED BY JACOB THOMAS PILGAARD

"Incident at school" is an extraordinary project, very profound and disturbing to watch, even if everything happens mostly at an unconscious level rather than a visual one.

The director placed his bet on this one, and we must say, he won that bet! With the help of a minimalistic perspective, this short gave us chills!

The idea of a mass shooting has undoubtedly got us thinking about Gus van Sant's "Elephant" (2003). From the very start, we're thrown right in the middle of the action, without having a lot of time to process what is happening, like we're directly put in the protagonist's shoes. And it works; we're there, we breathe simultaneously with her, and we keep the silence, almost like it matters if we're not breathing normally while watching this. We're driven by spontaneous anxiety and a lot of stress perfectly balanced through sound, a key element from this movie that also deserves some praise. Right from the first frame, we understand what is happening, and we must realize we have to keep an eye on the sound through the movie, so we don't miss important details. It's incredible how everything connects through little sounds of steps or lines that we feel more distant or much closer, and we pray, so our protagonist doesn't get discovered.

The actress does a remarkable job, and we can't even find the words to say how amazing her performance is. For a moment, we stopped and thought that she was so genuine that everything felt so real, and she was disturbed and in the moment. She deserves gratification for capturing the audience's attention for almost 20 full minutes, glued to the screen, and let us wonder what will finally happen with her. As the dialogue keeps going, even her relationship with her mother feels genuine, and like in real life, nothing is perfect. This particular detail made us resemble the relations between the characters from the HBO Series - "Normal People" (d. Lenny Abrahamson, Hettie Macdonald, 2020), so we highly appreciated the dialogues and how the script was structured.

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The director of photography did a marvelous job, along with the scenography, costumes, hair, and make-up (that we don't usually take a moment to appreciate, but in this case, they did their job straightforwardly and correctly). Everything is in harmony, and the point of view is just perfect for telling this particular story. The contrast, the bright colour that was well put in a good light in the colour grading phase, makes everything look useful and appealing. The attention to detail is terrific, and it makes us wonder how this project is so perfect and the final product just...spotless!

In conclusion, this project was an outstanding one that captured our attention and played with our understanding while assimilating the plot's complexity. The execution is spot on, and the effect it generates is so powerful that we can't but praise the crew, the director, and mostly the actress for her outstanding performance. We expect to see her in various film productions and the crew to make more film gems like this one!

**Ligia Prodan | Film Review Specialist**  
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**Review approved by Ciprian Iacob - Festival Director of BUCHAREST  
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