

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

by
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ORIGINAL SHORT FILM SCREENPLAY

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INT. ELEVATOR LIFT - DAY

JANICE SMITH (early 40's), looks up at the ascending floor numbers while clutching onto her heavy shopping bags.

The elevator stops at the fourth floor.

The doors open.

Janice steps out into..

EXT. BALCONY CORRIDOR, COUNCIL ESTATE - DAY

She walks the length of three flats before putting down her shopping bags on her front door mat.

Rummages her coat pockets to find the door key.

Inserts the key into the door, but her eyes are distracted across the concrete landscape to the SKATEBOARD PARK, a distant of a stones throw from the balcony.

She focusses on a YOUNG BOY (11) standing by the edge of the Park.

Janice rests her tired body against the balcony wall.

Pays more attention to the boy - with an Afro hair of a mixed white/afro-CARIBBEAN ancestry, still in his school uniform, watching the other SKATERS take turns down the ramp.

A Telephone RINGS(OS)from inside the flat.

Janice lifts her shopping bags. Walks into her home.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She reaches for the Ivory receiver of the Telephone .

JANICE
(into phone)
Hello?... Yes, that's me, Janice
Smith.. Yes, I know,.. Yes..
Sorry, I haven't got around... I
will. I will.

Hangs up, but holds onto the receiver, clutching it deep into her bosom, next to her heart.

Sinks into the sofa.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Janice puts her shopping away in the cupboards.

A RADIO blares by the folded kitchen table.

She takes a can of BASS SHANDY out of one of the shopping bags.

Caresses it.

Then opens a cupboard on a higher level. Gently pushes the can into it, adding to the pile of Shandy cans already in there.

Her attention is drawn to the RADIO, staring into it.

RADIO

(song)

*There was a checkpoint charlie
He didn't crack a smile
But it's no laughing party
When you've been on the murder
mile
Only takes one itchy trigger
One more widow, one less white
nigger
Oliver's army is here to stay
Oliver's army are on their way
And I would rather be anywhere
else
But here today
Hong Kong is up for grabs
London is full of arabs
We could be in Palestine
Overrun by a Chinese line
With the boys from the Mersey and
the Thames and the Tyne
But there's no danger
With just a word in Mr.
Churchill's ear
If you're out of luck you're out
of work
We could send you to Johannesburg*

Quickly switches it off.

INT. A BOYS BEDROOM - NIGHT

The mixed race boy from the Skateboarding Park, PAUL, sits on the edge of a lower part of a bunk bed, doodling in the margins of his School Maths book.

Switches off his mock football lamp.

Watches the shimmers of a moonlight flood in through the sides of drawn curtains.

He pulls them open.

Finds a full moon stare back at him.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Janice lifts the receiver from the Telephone.

DIALS a number reading from her notepad.

She listens into the receiver.

A PHONE RINGS on the other end.

But there is no answer. She hangs up.

DIALS the number again.

It remains unanswered. Hangs up.

Looks at her television screen - switched off.

INT. FACTORY CANTEEN - DAY

Janice sits by herself in her factory uniform, smoking, staring into empty space.

A couple of her CO-WORKERS walk towards her with their lunch trays.

She picks up a newspaper, pretends to read it.

EXT. SKATEBOARD PARK - DAY

From a playground adjacent to the skateboard park, Paul dangles his legs from a swing, watching the SKATERS.

The Skaters take their turn and dare each other as they dive into the ramps.

A Skateboard GIRL in her skin tight jeans with bleach blond hair, approaches him.

GIRL

Paul! Paul! Have you heard from Jason? When's he coming back?

PAUL

By Christmas.

GIRL

Christmas?

She goes back to take her turn.

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Paul leans across the upper bunk of his bed. Tidies the folds. Makes sure the pillow is in place and perked up.

He looks across the bed at a photograph frame hanging from the wall, of a YOUNG NAVAL CADET, (17), white caucasian, with blond hair.

He lifts another frame from the chest drawer, of the same young Cadet, now in Uniform posing with his Skateboard aboard the deck of an Aircraft Carrier.

He rummages through a chest drawer, amongst old batteries and junk to find another frame of the same young man, but this photograph is against the Skateboard Park.

Paul opens a wardrobe door. Finds a Vans Backpack.

Opens it to find Skateboarders knee pads.

Tries them on his own knees, but they are twice the size.

Tries the elbow pads. Again, a size large.

Rummages the bag to find a crushed can of Bass Shandy at the bottom.

His attention gets drawn to a pile of RECORDS.

Flicks through them to pick an EP size sleeve.

Paul reads the message on the back.

"Happy Birthday, Jason! Your first record, Dad"

He turns the sleeve - Elton John - DANIEL.

Takes the EP out of the sleeve.

Carefully puts it onto the record deck.

Switches it on.

But the cartridge is missing.

INT. BUS - DAY

Janice stares out.

The bus stops at the lights by a Men's Fashion Brand Chain shop.

She looks at the fashion clothing items displayed on mannequins of young handsome men.

INT. PHONE KIOSK - DAY

Janice DIALS the same number from her notebook.

The PHONE rings on the other side.

But there is no answer.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

She takes the shopping out of the bags.

Lovingly puts the Bass Shandy can next to the others in the cupboard.

INT. JANICE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She slips under the covers to cower into a foetal position.

But the night sky is too distracting through the window. She fully opens the curtains, stares at the moon shaping a shadow on half of itself.

EXT. SKATEBOARD PARK - NIGHT

Paul runs up and down the ramp with arms stretched wide, mimicking as if he was on a Skateboard.

He stops to stare at the half-moon.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Janice sits at her kitchen table with a mug of tea.

The Telephone RINGS in the living room.

She looks towards it.

Lets it RING,

But then decides to rush to it.

LIVING ROOM

Picks up the receiver.

JANICE
(into phone)
Hello. .. Yes, I know. I will,
definitely, tomorrow. At the
barracks? Yes, I will.

INT. FACTORY CORRIDOR - DAY

She lifts the receiver of the pay phone.

Waits for the DIAL TONE.

Inserts a coin in the slot.

DIALS the same number from her notebook.

The phone RINGS on the other side.

Eventually it gets answered.

WOMAN'S VOICE (PHONEVOICE)

Hello?

Janice hesitates.

JANICE

(into phone)

Hello. Is Charlie there?

WOMAN'S VOICE

Charlie? No, love, he's not here.

JANICE

Can I leave a message for him?

WOMAN'S VOICE

Well, you can love, but I'm not sure it'll get to him. He's not around me anymore. Don't know where he's gone off to.

JANICE

I see. I am sorry to hear that.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Who is this?

JANICE

It's Janice. Look, if he calls, could you tell him, it's about his son.

WOMAN'S VOICE

I know for sure he won't be calling.

JANICE

Okay. Bye for now.

She hangs up.

Adjusts herself to walk back towards the factory floor.

EXT. ELECTRONICS GOOD SHOPS - DAY

Paul walks by the shop front.

Stops to look at the record players.

Steps into the...

INT. ELECTRONICS GOOD SHOPS - CONTINUOUS

He approaches the record player. Studies the cartridge arm.

A SHOP ASSISTANT approaches him.

But Paul shies away.

Walks hurriedly out of the shop.

EXT. SKATEBOARD PARK - DAY

Paul sits by the edge of a ramp watching the SKATERS.

The skateboard Girl comes by to sit next to him.

She lights her cigarette.

Offers one to Paul. But he shakes his head.

She pulls a 'BOOMBOX' towards her. Switches the PLAY button, only to discover it doesn't start.

She checks the BATTERIES. Throws them out.

GIRL

Don't you want to skate?

PAUL

I haven't got the gear.

GIRL

What about Jason's?

PAUL

He took it with him.

GIRL

He'll be back soon. By Christmas.

PAUL

D'you want me to get some batteries for ya?

GIRL

You got some?

Paul nods. Jumps up.

She watches him run towards his estate block.

INT. JANICE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Recoiled in a foetal position on her bed, Janice hears the telephone RING.

She doesn't move.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Janice sits at her kitchen table with a mug of tea.

The Telephone RINGS in the living room.

She lets it RING. It eventually stops.

INT. FACTORY CANTEEN - DAY

Janice sits smoking in an empty corner.

From the corner of her eye, she spots her co-workers walking towards her, empty handed.

More and more of the co-workers join the semi-circle growing around her. Concern and compassion pour out from their expression.

She finally looks up at them.

Tears stream down her cheeks, her lips quiver.

INT. BUS - DAY

Janice sits next to Paul.

They stare out.

EXT. ARMY BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

She walks into the gates with Paul by her side.

INT. BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

A NAVAL OFFICER hands Janice a large Naval bag full of various items.

Paul spots a SKATEBOARD amongst them.

He watches Janice being asked to sign on a document.

Another OFFICER enters to present a folded UNION JACK flag to Janice. The Flag has a commemorative plate - LOST AT SEA

Then they salute her and Paul.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Paul stares at Jason's Skateboard.

Caresses it.

EXT. SKATEBOARD PARK - DAY

Just as the sun is about to set, Paul finds the park empty.

He steps on Jason's skateboard.

Skates down the ramp.

Falls.

Tries again.

Falls again.

GIRL (O.S)

Keep going!

Paul spots the Girl walking towards him.

He tries again down the ramp.

Finally makes the up slope.

Against the sunset, the Girl watches Paul continue skating up and down the slopes of the ramps.

FADE IN WITH
SOUND

SONG

*Daniel is traveling tonight on a
plane
I can see the red tail lights
heading for Spain
Oh and I can see Daniel waving
goodbye
God it looks like Daniel, must be
the clouds in my eyes
They say Spain is pretty, though
I've never been
Well Daniel says it's the best
place that he's ever seen
Oh and he should know, he's been
there enough
Lord I miss Daniel, oh I miss him
so much
Daniel my brother you are older
than me
Do you still feel the pain of the
scars that won't heal*

(MORE)

SONG (cont'd)

Your eyes have died, but you see
 more than I
 Daniel you're a star in the face
 of the sky
 Daniel is traveling tonight on a
 plane
 I can see the red tail lights
 heading for Spain
 Oh and I can see Daniel waving
 goodbye
 God it looks like Daniel, must be
 the clouds in my eyes
 Oh God it looks like Daniel, must
 be the clouds in my eyes

The sun has set. Paul stops to look up at the night sky rising from the horizon.

He spots a crescent moon nestling the red planet of Mars in its arms.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE TO BLACK
WITH SOUND

SONG

Is it worth it?
 A new winter coat and shoes for
 the wife
 And a bicycle on the boy's
 birthday
 It's just a rumour that was
 spread around town
 By the women and children
 Soon we'll be shipbuilding.....
 Well I ask you
 The boy said "Dad they're going
 to take me to task, but I'll be
 back by Christmas"
 It's just a rumour that was
 spread around town
 Somebody said that someone got
 filled in
 For saying that people get killed
 in
 The result of this shipbuilding
 With all the will in the world
 Diving for dear life
 When we could be diving for
 pearls
 It's just a rumour that was
 spread around town
 A telegram or a picture postcard
 Within weeks they'll be re-
 opening the shipyards

(MORE)

SONG (cont'd)
And notifying the next of kin
Once again
It's all we're skilled in
We will be shipbuilding.....
With all the will in the world
Diving for dear life
When we could be diving for
pearls.

FADE OUT WITH
SOUND

**Songs by Elvis Costello and Elton John*