

The background image shows a person sitting at a desk in a dimly lit room. The wall behind them is decorated with various posters, including one for 'ARDO', a skateboard with a graphic, a clock, and a poster for 'ROMA'. A desk lamp is visible on the left, and a desk with some equipment is on the right.

BREEKPOINT

[BREAKING POINT]

by Sofia Delga

“Exhausted by a hostile and overstimulating school environment, fifteen-year-old Benjamin reaches a breaking point that finally forces his mother to see the severity of his pain.”

Genre: Drama

Duration: 25-30 minutes

SYNOPSIS

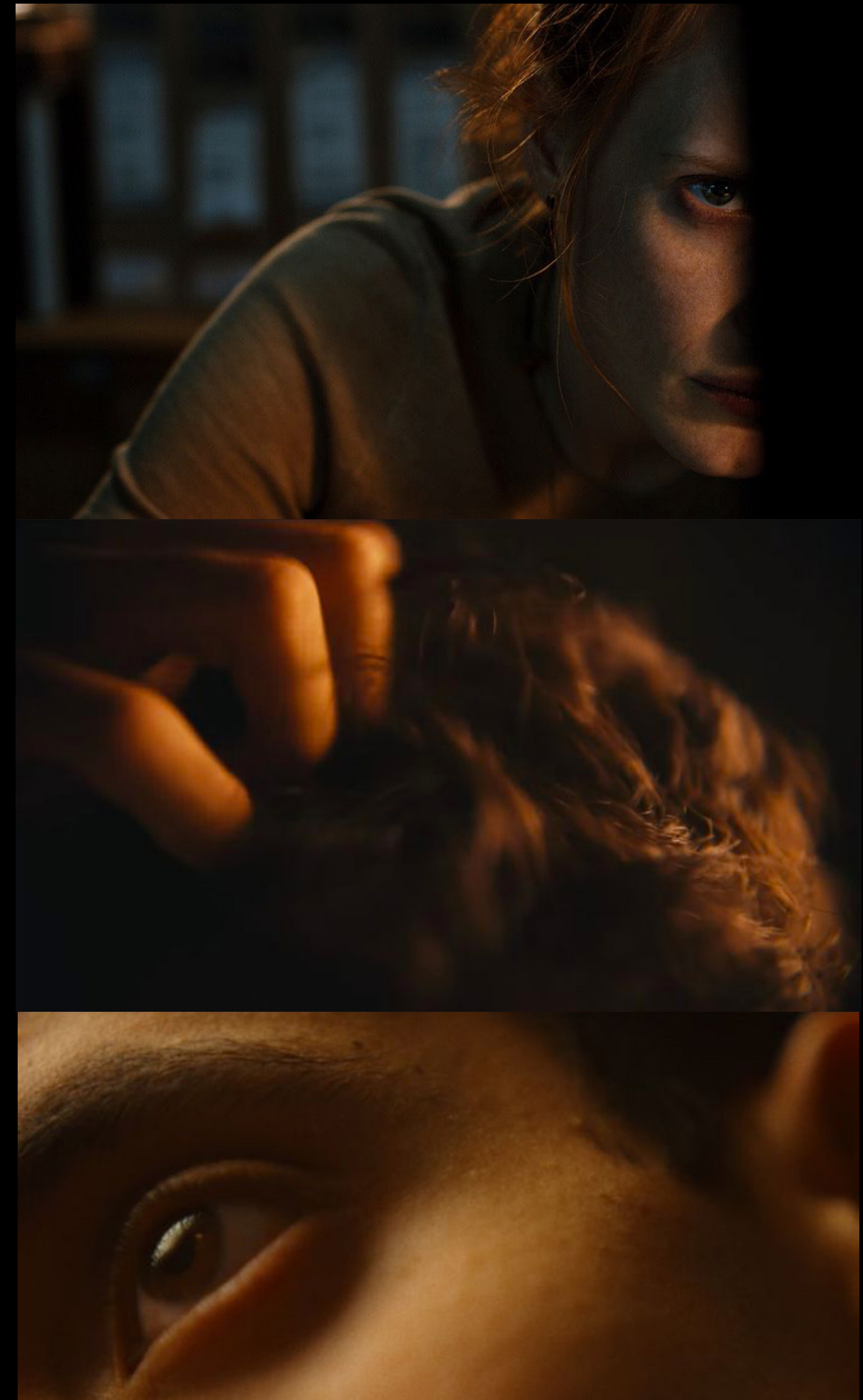
This entire story takes place inside Benjamin's house only. Benjamin (15) shields himself from an overstimulating and hostile school environment by withdrawing behind technology and the walls of his room. This isolating coping mechanism has created tension with his overworked mother, whose attempts to connect with him often clash his distant attitude.

A peaceful morning reveals their real connection, but its quickly crushed from another day at school. Benjamin wakes with a terrible headache, but his hurried mother still forces him to leave the house. He comes home agitated, and a care-less comment from his mother triggers him into a meltdown. Benjamin locks himself in his room and leaves his mother helpless in the hallway. His older brother, who seems to have buried himself behind his computer screen all this time, ignores the fight.

The next day, acting out of rebellion and a desire to fit in, Benjamin invites classmates over while skipping school. But the visit quickly becomes chaotic. In between the already overstimulating music, cursing and vaping, a shove accidentally breaks a cherished family photo. Benjamin explodes, throws them out, and is left alone with the mess of his attempt to fit in. At dinner, his mother's anger switches to speechlessness as Benjamin unleashes his deep hatred for the school system. When she stops him from saying more, he feels unheard once again.

The next morning, he returns home with a black eye and a bloody lip. Consumed by anger, he trashes the living room and runs away from home. His mother soon realizes her son is gone, sending her into panic- Benjamin is missing. The empty house is filled with worry and guilt that forces her and his brother to confront where they have failed Benjamin. In his absence, they finally understand the severity of his pain.

After two days, a call: Benjamin is found. He returns unharmed, yet when his mother hugs him tightly, his eyes reflect pain, not relief. But this time, she doesn't let go. In a much-needed conversation, she finally listens to him, her care creating a fresh start for them. A newfound peace settles in the house that evening. His brother looks at his little brother, in his gaze is a deep promise to himself: I will do better. Watching from the kitchen, their mother silently promises the same. Later, for the first time, welcomed by the warm light of sunset in his room, Benjamin feels a sense of hope and rest.



CHARACTERS

DEBORAH/MOTHER (45)

A single mother with a 9-to-5 job, Deborah is constantly overworked. Her neat suit and makeup are quickly replaced by mismatched pyjamas and smudged mascara. She sees her son struggling and inbetween her own chaos she tries to help, but her own exhaustion leads to mistakes in their interactions, so she and Benjamin clash often. But Deborah loves her son, she never stops trying to show him that.



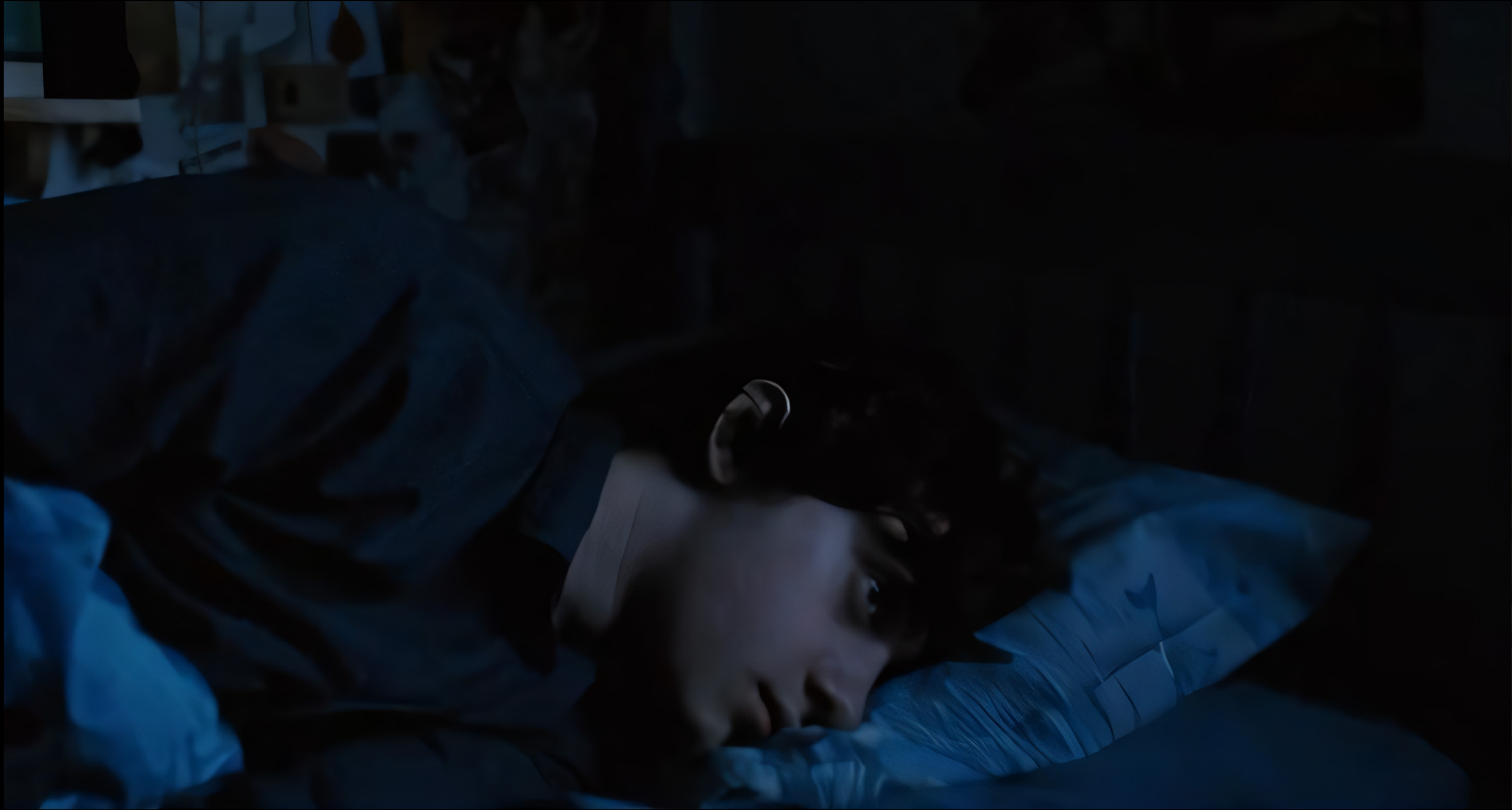
BENJAMIN (15)

Being neurodivergent, Benjamin experiences the world differently. His school environment feels exhausting and hostile. He doesn't fit in and can't understand why. To cope with the frustration around this, he almost always wears his headphones and locks himself in his room. He often seems distant or becomes aggressive. But Benjamin is a bright and normal boy, it is just his environment that pushes him to behave this way.

OLDER BROTHER (20)

Suddenly revealed in the middle of Benjamin's story is his older brother, who's hidden behind his monitors in the darkness of his room. He uses gaming and the internet to cope with his depression and insomnia. This lifestyle has left him completely detached from everything, from his family and himself. Despite it all, he has a good heart, just having a really hard time. He sees much of himself in his little brother.





DIRECTORS VISION

This film is a door into the life of Benjamin, a teenager who feels misunderstood and alone with a neurodivergence that hasn't been diagnosed. The uniqueness of this story is that the camera never leaves Benjamin's house. It never shows the bullying or overstimulation at school, but only the aftermath of it. It focused on his exhaustion, frustration, and the (unhealthy) ways he copes. This singular location pushes the audience to feel and focus entirely on the damage and severity of the impact, instead of entertaining the events themselves.

Benjamin's condition will never be specified but only shown through small but telling details in his characteristics. This allows the audience to understand him as a whole person and not only seen underneath the stereotypical ideas of a label, and also makes his experience universal for any child who has ever felt they didn't fit in, neurodivergent or not.

The camera techniques will visually connect with the characters inner worlds. For example, when showing isolation, a wide lens will make characters appear small and swallowed by their surroundings. In general, the film will have a still and quiet tone, which symbolizes the home's lack of connection in the family. This stillness will be broken when Benjamin is overstimulated and the image will become blurry and shaky, contrasting the mostly static shots of the entire film and amplifying the pressure Benjamin feels. The disconnect between Benjamin and his mother will further be shown by using a color palette of contrasting orange and blue tones. The orange tones represent the idea of family comfort and a warm house on a winter day, while the (intruding) blues represent the reality of what they feel instead- cold and alone.

The film offers the audience a chance to sit, feel along, relate, or become aware of the issues of mainstream education and the (silent) fear children can be facing daily because of it. But the story also captures a wider problem. His violent classmates, his isolated brother, and his overwhelmed mother are all facing the same struggles: dealing with pressure in a world that offers little support. This is why the ending does not wrap up with an unrealistic "happily ever after" solution. It shows that life will stay difficult, but that through being there for the people we love, in a world that won't be there for us, we can find hope and rest.



MOTIVATION

Out of all the memories from my school years, the clearest one is that terrible dread. I remember the exhaustion of facing another day in a system where I felt invisible and different. I walked the hallways alone, even with friends, and even the teachers looked at me like I was an alien. I was a normal kid with good grades, so why couldn't I be treated the same as others?

Due to the pandemic, my mental state plummeted and even when I sought for support and advice, most teachers turned their heads. The realization hit that if you can't show "what's wrong with you" on paper, many education systems couldn't care less about any of your struggles.

This is the core motivation for my short film, showing the effect of this exact problem. Now as adults, we might have grown, healed and moved on since high school as it was a long time ago, but I know there are children right now, who are suffering under school systems like that. Even when diagnosed, many education systems still lack in supporting children. As do the parents.

In this story, I show the impact of a common and flawed education system. Through Benjamin, his mother and older brother, I show pieces of my friends, my family and myself, that have all suffered within mainstream education. I write these characters as real as possible, flawed and human, and I write Benjamin not just labeled and defined by neurodivergence, instead as a normal boy with a rich personality of its own.

With this short film I want people to become aware, parents to realize, and others to feel understood. No child deserves to feel they have to take on the world all alone.





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BREEKPUNT