

ROCK



Presskit



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Production Notes

Director
Writer
Producer

Brian Challis
Matthew Stokoe
Laina Cheung

15 mins

16mm

Colour 1:1.85

Dolby Digital

Log Line

Grieving the death of his father, a young boy withdraws into a fantasy world where his only friend is a pet rock.

Synopsis

ROCK is a story about Ralph, an eight year old boy who is grieving the recent death of his father. Emotionally withdrawn from his mother, Ralph lives in a fantasy world where his only true friend is his pet rock – Rocky.

Director's notes

When I first read Mathew's script for ROCK what first interested me was the isolation of Ralph. A boy surrounded by people but totally alone. I think it fits with the themes of my other short films that deal with characters that are geographically isolated.

I'm interested in making films about (New Zealand) males who deal with the world by not talking about issues, who run away or sulk, and can't communicate unless completely enraged. It was interesting to consider a situation where a pet rock might be better equipped to deal with a young boy's trauma than his equally traumatised mother. ROCK ends just before the consequences of Ralph's actions would have been discovered. Did he do it on purpose? Or was it an accident? I like situations and characters that are ambiguous.

When you're a kid you accept that your environment is your entire world. Everything is an adventure you experience in a dream-like state. Kids find something beautiful no matter what; in Ralph's case it's Rocky. In the shooting of the film Adam (DOP) and I tried to reflect this in the initial outdoor scenes which have a warm afternoon glow about them, green and blue dominate but the apartment building always lurks behind Ralph. Given that it's a dark story I thought that it was important to only hint at what might lie ahead.

Director's notes cont...

They say never work with children or animals, luckily Ralph had a pet rock. The best and worst thing about shooting with children is that you get to go home early. We never did any of those huge short film days that you hear about. The problem was that everyday we slipped further behind schedule, which eventually resulted in pick-up days that Laina (producer) was somehow able to cover.

Working with a child is hard, it's slow, it's difficult technically and taxing on the other actors but when Riley was on he was absolutely magical. This was balanced by Rocky who was always able deliver a consist level of performance. Both our adult actors, Scott and Dra were great with Riley. Dra and Riley were old friends Dra really helped Riley focus when they were working together. Turning up on set with Scott in a ditch was strange it felt like we were paying homage to our own short THE HOLE.

Initially we had trouble finding a location, we scouted Auckland and Wellington Eventually settling on Wellington with a location that was almost perfect for our needs. It allowed us to shot all our exteriors in one location and meant the apartment building could be shot as a character that plays in the film. We shot our interiors in a studio set built by our set designer Simon Harper and art director Ian Ruxton I prefer to shoot on a set because you don't have to compromise. It's a great set and I defy anyone pick that it wasn't real.

I enjoyed the challenge of making ROCK and hope we have created a film that will last in an audiences mind long after the curtain closes.

Director's biography

ROCK is Brian Challis third short film. His first short screened at over 15 international short festivals amongst them Clermont Ferrand, Edinburgh, Melbourne, best film prize at the Drifting Clouds Film Festival in New Zealand. and the highly commended award at the Cork Film Festival. Brian's second short, which also screened at a number of international festivals - including Montecatini and St Tropez - was a finalist in the 2000 NZ film awards, a finalist in Nestle short film competition and received the best actor award for Scott Wills at the Drifting Clouds Film Festival.

Brian is currently co-writing a feature film script with writer Mike Hudson as well adapting a book with producer Scott Wills. He also directs television commercials.

Credits

Cast

Ralph	Riley Brophy
Mum	Dra McKay
Road Worker	Scott Wills

Crew

Director	Brian Challis
Producer	Laina Cheung
Executive Producer	Trevor Haysom, THE Films
Production Company	Magnanimous Productions Ltd
Writer	Matthew Stokoe
Cinematographer	Adam Clark
Production Designer	Simon Harper
Composer/Sound Design	Craig Sengelow
Editor	Jonothan Woodford-Robinson