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Family Life Ken Loach

Great Britain, 1971, 108 minutes

Colour/35mm

Production Company: Kestrel Films

Producer: Tony Garnett

Screenplay: David Mercer

Cinematography: Charles Stewart

Editor: Roy Watts

Principal Cast: Sandy Ratcliff, Bill Dean, Grace Cave, Malcolm Tierney, Hilary Martyn, Michael Riddall

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TORONTO INT'L FILM FESTIVAL

SEPT 5-14 '91

The overwhelming power of Ken Loach's *Family Life* stems from his strong belief in the societal causes of people's misery and his profound sympathy for his characters' predicaments. The film grew out of David Mercer's television play "In Two Minds" and is almost a case history of how a fairly ordinary young woman is driven into madness by her family and others who try to "cure" her rebelliousness. Found sitting helplessly on a subway bench during rush-hour, 19-year-old Janice Baidon is taken to a police station; she refuses to talk. She is eventually driven home by the police, much to the distress of her parents, who attribute her behaviour to the influence of "immoral hippie friends". Janice, who loves her repressive parents too much to hurt them by running away, is quietly forced into schizophrenia by their loving care. After being locked out of the house, she threatens her mother with a bread knife and is whisked off to a mental hospital. Under the care of a sympathetic group therapist, Dr. Donaldson, she seems slowly to be gaining a sense of her own identity. But when Donaldson's contract with the hospital is terminated, Janice is transferred to a regular ward and given electroshock therapy. With its cinema verite style, unconventional dramatic structure, and all too believable characters, *Family Life* is a harrowing — and controversial — indictment of traditional psychiatry.