

# CHRISTMAS WITH DAD

PRESS PACK :: FEBRUARY 2009



<b>Title:</b>	Christmas with Dad
<b>Genre:</b>	Short Documentary
<b>Completion Date:</b>	April 2008
<b>Country of Origin:</b>	UK
<b>Length:</b>	11' 43"
<b>Shooting Format:</b>	HDV
<b>Master Format (PAL):</b>	DigiBeta / DVCAM / DVD
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Ratio:</b>	16:9
<b>Director:</b>	Conor McCormack
<b>Producer:</b>	Sarah Tierney
<b>Executive Producers:</b>	Scottish Documentary Institute, Sonja Henrici and Noe Mendelle
<b>Camera:</b>	Becky Bell
<b>Editor:</b>	Matt Meech
<b>Music:</b>	Theo Weywood
<b>Production Company:</b>	Clarity Productions Ltd.
<b>Address:</b>	4 Stables Yard, Argyle Court, 1103 Argyle Street, Glasgow, Scotland, UK, G3 8ND
<b>Telephone:</b>	+44 (0)141 221 8821
<b>Fax:</b>	+44 (0)845 299 1171
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:info@producingclarity.com">info@producingclarity.com</a>
<b>Company Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.producingclarity.com">www.producingclarity.com</a>

# CHRISTMAS WITH DAD



## SHORT SYNOPSIS

(Tag Line / 50 words)

"Christmas with Dad" follows 23-year-old AJ as his family prepare for the festive season and the arrival of an eighth child. With remarkable access and insight, the film reveals a young man struggling to define his role as a father, haunted by his own childhood and facing an uncertain future...

## FULL SYNOPSIS

(180 words)

Directed by new filmmaker Conor McCormack, "Christmas with Dad" is the story of a young man struggling to define himself through fatherhood. AJ is just 23-years-old but already a father to seven children, five from his partner's previous relationships. They live on a sprawling council estate on the outskirts of Bristol: an area plagued by unemployment, drugs and anti-social behaviour, where fewer residents go to university than in any other area of the UK...

AJ's tough exterior conceals a sensitive young man, living through some of the defining moments in his life. The family home is full of noise and conflict as seven children compete for space, but amid the chaos young lives are forming. Filmed entirely within the physical setting of home, "Christmas with Dad" follows this most unusual family as they prepare for the festive season and ready themselves for the arrival of an eighth child. With remarkable access and insight, "Christmas with Dad" reveals a young man struggling to define his role as father, haunted by his own childhood and facing up to a very uncertain future...

## PRODUCTION NOTES:

"Christmas with Dad" was funded through 'Bridging the Gap': the UK's only documentary new talent initiative for cinema, offering training linked to production. Running since 2003, the scheme is funded by Scottish Screen National Lottery fund, Skillset Film Skills Fund and supported by Edinburgh College of Art. It is open to all UK-based filmmakers. Bridging the Gap operates an annual themed call for entries from across the UK, from which 12 projects are selected for a development period in which filmmakers attend a series of training workshops and masterclasses based in Edinburgh. Seven 10-minute documentaries are then commissioned intended for distribution in cinemas and international festivals. Bridging the Gap shorts have so far screened across the world's festivals including Amsterdam, Sundance, Tribeca, LA FF and many others, picking up numerous awards. For more information please visit: [www.docscene.org](http://www.docscene.org)

"Christmas with Dad" premiered at the 62<sup>nd</sup> Edinburgh International Film Festival 2008 where it was named the winner of the Scottish Documentary Award. The Jury commented on the very impressive overall quality of the

nominated films, particularly "...the extremely high technical standard and the stunning cinematography". The jury felt that the winning film "Christmas with Dad" told: "...a beautifully structured story, introducing the viewer to a situation through subtly observed scenes and gradually revealing unexpected details that combined to produce an unforgettable portrait of a modern family."

Director of the Scottish Documentary Institute, Noe Mendell, commented: "We are delighted that a Bridging the Gap film is awarded at the Edinburgh International Film Festival. 'Christmas with Dad' is a fine example of a new talented directorial voice nurtured in Scotland". Company Director and the film's producer Sarah Tierney comments: "Clarity Productions is delighted to have been recognised for our commitment to promoting new directing talent. This win follows our BAFTA Scotland Best Short Film Award in November 2007 for Alice Nelson and a BAFTA Scotland New Talent nomination for Alia Ayub in March 2008".

## SCREENINGS:

62<sup>nd</sup> Edinburgh International Film Festival 2008 - **Winner, Best Scottish Short Documentary 2008**  
Encounters Short Film Festival 2008 – **Special Mention, Best of British 2008**  
Sheffield Doc/Fest 2008  
Future Shorts International Programme December 2008  
Current TV December 2008  
Glasgow Film Festival 2009

## SELECTED REVIEWS:

"...Connor McCormack has been granted enviable access to AJ's life on a rough housing estate. Here the kids compete for attention in a council house as the family prepare to Christmas. There's a whiff of poverty here, but when Christmas morning comes the house is awash with presents. This could have been a hatchet job, one of holding AJ's family up to ridicule or opprobrium. But McCormack's film digs a lot deeper than that. He allows AJ to tell his story, revealing how his own upbringing has shaped his opinions and showing that he is a much more thoughtful individual than a brief glance at his life might suggest. Not so much lifting the lid on AJ's life as shining a light on the audience's expectations and prejudices..." – **Eye For Film**

"...Resembling the work of a seasoned filmmaker, Conor McCormack is able to gain remarkable access to reveal a young man who struggles to define his role as a father while facing an inevitable and dark twist in his life..." – **Sheffield International Doc/Fest 2009**

"'Christmas with Dad' is a beautifully structured story, introducing the viewer to a situation through subtly observed scenes and gradually revealing unexpected details that combined to produce an unforgettable portrait of a modern family..." - **62<sup>nd</sup> Edinburgh International Film Festival, Award Jury**

## CREW BIOGRAPHIES:

### Director – Conor McCormack

Conor McCormack is an Irish filmmaker based in Bristol, working in both documentary and fictions that deal with contemporary social and ethnographic themes. Since he first picked up a Super-8 camera to make short film "Shoplifter", which screened at the 2000 Raindance Film Festival, he has gone on to write and direct a number of shorts and music videos that have screened at film festivals around the world, picking up several awards. He is currently developing a drama project, whilst working on several community-based documentaries.



## Producer - Sarah Tierney

Producer and Company Director Sarah Tierney combines a background in biological science with experience of documentary, drama and live-broadcast production on locations ranging from Russia to India to Ukraine. These have included several award-winning productions such as the 2005 Oscar®-nominated short drama "Little Terrorist" and 2007 BAFTA Scotland Best Short Film "Losing Myself: Annie". Sarah's projects have screened at more than 120 international film festivals, with work featured in The Sunday Times, The Big Issue, The Scotsman, 4Ten Magazine and Shooting People's Shooters Films. Sarah is a graduate of International EURODOC Programme 2006 and was nominated as Scotland's CEC Creative Entrepreneur of the Year 2007.

## Camera – Becky Bell

Becky Bell is a freelance DOP based in the South West of England and working worldwide on projects predominantly with a focus on social issues. Last year she was nominated for 'Best Cinematography' in the NAHEMI Awards at Brief Encounters Festival for short film "Out of the Game". Becky was also nominated in the 2007 Student Awards at National Film and Television Awards (UK) for short documentary "Life After Tsunami" shot in Tangalle, Sri Lanka. For the past two years she has been working with Bristol based company 'StreetScenes' and was part of the team who won the 'National Princes Trust Enterprise Award' in 2007.

## Editor – Matt Meech

Matt Meech is an award-winning freelance editor based in Bristol. His work ranges from blue-chip Natural History films to gritty urban dramas. He has been working with Conor over the last five years.

## CLARITY PRODUCTIONS:

Established in 2004 by Sarah Tierney, Clarity Productions is a BAFTA-winning independent producer of specialist factual with a strong focus on issue-based content. Through originality, unique access and innovation Clarity Productions aims to produce intelligent, engaging and surprising documentary. In 2007, the Company won a development deal with Channel 4 Television who described Clarity Productions as: "...one of Scotland's most exciting new production companies bringing strong investigative ideas to broadcast". For more information please see [www.producingclarity.com](http://www.producingclarity.com).

## CONTACT:

For more information, to obtain high-resolution film stills, or to arrange an interview please contact Martin McGale or Carina Wilson on:

Office: +44 (0)141 221 8821

Mobile: +44 (0)7837 559 987 / +44 (0)7845 030 215

Email: [martin@producingclarity.com](mailto:martin@producingclarity.com) / [carina@producingclarity.com](mailto:carina@producingclarity.com)

