

"NINE YEARS OLD"

by

Chris Messineo

Off Stage Films, LLC
293 Charnwood Road
New Providence, NJ 07974
CMessineo@OffStageFilms.com
(908) 578-570

"NINE YEARS OLD"

FADE IN:

EXT. WOODED ROAD - DAY

A staple gun fires.

The county road cuts through the late winter woods.

It fires again.

Wind rustles the treetops.

Another shot.

A lone car approaches and slows.

THOMAS, late thirties and solemn, rolls down the passenger window and looks toward the side of the road.

JENNY, nine years old and quiet, sits in the back seat, her face resting on the glass.

THOMAS

Get in the car.

The sound of the staple gun is the only reply.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Please, stop that, and get in the car.

Sarah, early thirties and melancholy, turns to face her husband. In one hand, she holds a staple gun, in the other, a stack of papers.

SARAH

Go home.

Sarah walks away.

Thomas stops the car and gets out.

THOMAS

Are we going to go through this every year?

Jenny is out of the car and standing in the middle of the road. She looks at her Mother.

SARAH
You don't understand.

THOMAS
I understand perfectly.

Thomas grabs his wife by the arm and pulls her back towards the car.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Come on, we're going home.

SARAH
Let go of me.

His grip tightens.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Let me go!

Sarah drops the sheets of paper. Posters, with the face of a younger Jenny and the word "Missing", are scattered on the street.

With her free hand, Sarah slaps Thomas across the face.

Thomas, stunned, releases Sarah.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I see her.

THOMAS
You see her?

SARAH
I see her.

THOMAS
Where?

SARAH
Everywhere.

Jenny runs playfully through the woods as Sarah watches her.

SARAH (CONT'D)
She's all around me. Growing
older. Watching me.

She twirls through the woods in slow motion.

SARAH (CONT'D)
And then, just as fast, she's gone.

Jenny fades away.

Sarah turns to her husband.

SARAH (CONT'D)
It's her birthday today.

THOMAS
I know that.

SARAH
She would have been nine.

Thomas gently puts his arm around her.

THOMAS
Let's go home.

Sarah and Thomas get back in the car. Thomas reaches over and buckles his wife in. She turns to him, touches him.

SARAH
Do you, do you ever see her?

Thomas turns away, looks out the window. His daughter stands there looking at him through the glass.

He sees her.

He turns back to his wife.

THOMAS
No, no I don't.

Sarah lowers her head, Thomas starts the car, and they drive away down the wooded road.

Jenny stares out through the back window.

Dozens of missing posters hang on the trees and quiver in the breeze.

FADE OUT.