"BUSKERS"

Written & Directed by

Ian Power

87 Shanagarry
Milltown,
Dublin 6
Tel: 01 496 8159 / 087 22 17 339

FINAL DRAFT

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"BUSKERS"

OPENING TITLES.

WE HEAR A YOUNG BOY CLEARING HIS THROAT.

FADE IN:

A runny nose.

PULL BACK SLOWLY TO REVEAL:

PACKO, a seven-year old Irish boy. His clothes are dirty and his hair is matted. His face is blotchy with muck. It is a dry-cold day and he is blowing valuable hot air out of his skinny body with every breath.

CUT TO:

AN OLD TAMBOURINE in his small hand.

CUT BACK TO:

PACKO almost lost on a busy city street as people rush by to get to business meetings and Christmas shops with discount prices.

PULL BACK FURTHER TO REVEAL:

A DODGY LOOKING MAN selling watches out of a briefcase on PACKO'S LEFT. He is looking over his shoulder and down the street, getting more uncomfortable by the second…

AND:

TO PACKO'S RIGHT, a WOMAN WITH A BUGGY who stops to small

talk with A PASSING FRIEND. HER YOUNG SON, who is walking along side the buggy, lets go and moves forward to get a better look at PACKO. His MUM finishes her small talk and walks off, not noticing that she has left her son behind…

A SECOND WOMAN WITH A BUGGY, going in the opposite direction, passes the YOUNG BOYS MOTHER on her way. As she passes the YOUNG BOY, he matter-of-factly grabs the moving buggy and heads of down the street with the wrong woman…

AND PACKO STARTS TO SING AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS…

PACKO

I- met- muy girrrrrrl,
By the gas works wallll,
'Dreamed a dream by di ould
canal,
'Kissed my girrrrrrl,
By de factory wall,
Dirty ould town,
Dirty ould town…

As PACKO finishes the first verse, the DODGY LOOKING MAN SNAPS closed the briefcase and tears off down the street…

…He is swiftly followed by TWO WOMEN pushing prams down the street at top speed leaving a trail of four-for-a-pound chocolate bars and wrapping paper behind them…

…A young boy spilling lighters and rolling tobacco in his wake is on their point…

…AND CLOSE BEHIND HIM…

…FOUR GARDAI chasing after them all like THE KEYSTONE COPS.

FADE OUT:

INT. BLOCK OF COUNCIL FLATS. DAY

Morning sunlight can’t reach either of the windows in PACKO’s DA’s Flat but it brings redness to both rooms that he has come to know as morning.

CUT TO:

THE BEDROOM and PACKO asleep on his bed which is a mattress on the ground. He sleeps in his clothes with a stained blanket for cover.

CUT TO:

PACKO. CLOSE UP as he rolls onto his back, yawns and rubs his eyes. He looks at the ceiling and smiles.

CUT TO:

U2, smiling back at him under THE JOSHUA TREE on the ceiling.

CUT TO:

PACKO, still smiling. He sits up and fumbles with his jumper, which is inside out.

DOLLY FORWARD TO:

THE DARK BRUISES on PACKO’S little back, but only for a moment before WE…

JIB UP TO:

LAST YEARS ADVENT CALENDAR, which PACKO has re-stuck with sellotape and hung on his wall. He stands up and opens a new window and smiles as he tries to make out the picture. He carefully counts out the days left to Christmas.

CUT TO:

UNDER THE MATTRESS. PACKO carefully lifts one end of the mattress and smiles.

CUT TO:

THE TAMBOURINE under the mattress. PACKO delicately removes it and wraps it up in the blanket. He tiptoes to the doorway of the bedroom and peers around the corner carefully.

CUT TO:

STUBBLED LIPS in cold sweat on a linoleum floor.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

THE GRIMIEST LOOKING MAN IN A SANTA CLAUS COSTUME YOU EVER SAW lying facedown between the uprights of the front door. It’s PACKO’S DA. He is a scrawny man with matted hair like PACKO. He is snoring and dribbling a pool of saliva onto the dirty linoleum.

CUT TO:

PACKO as he holds his breath. He creeps out of the bedroom and steps over DA carefully.

CUT TO:

DA’s hand as it moves toward his face. He stretches out a thumb…

and picks crumbly snot out of his nose.

CUT TO:

PACKO. Frozen. He waits for DA to snore again. Slowly, he stretches a foot toward the doorway and his shoulders follow.

CUT TO:

PACKO. IN THE HALL and breathing safely. He moves for the cement staircase and smiles. As he reaches for the rusted banister…

CUT TO:

PACKO'S DA.

DA
Packo!

CUT TO:

THE HALLWAY. PACKO bites his lip. He can feel DA's breath raise the hairs on his small neck but DA is still laid out on the tiles.

PACKO
(Carefully)
Wha?

DA
Where are you goin'?

PACKO
(almost to himself)
Where d'ya think?

DA
What…

DA is painfully hung over. PACKO waits for him to swallow hard in his dry mouth.

DA
What did you say…?

PACKO
Nothin… I'm going tappin' Da, you told me I had to be up early.
(pause)

CUT TO:

DA pulling himself up off the floor.

DA
C'mere!

CUT BACK TO:

PACKO. He steps forward.

PACKO
No.

CUT TO:

DA. Now on his feet. Only one of his eyes will open properly.

DA
Packo!

CUT TO:

PACKO, running down the stairs. He expertly jumps the last three steps of the first flight and turns the corner to begin the next descent.

DA's voice BELLOWS into the funnel of the dark cemented staircase as PACKO nears the bottom.

DA
…forty quid Packo, come back with less than forty quid an' I'll' burst ya, d'ya hear me?…
(louder now)
DO YOU HEAR ME?

CUT TO:

DA. He was a bit loud with the last scream and is holding his head now as he walks back toward the flat. He stops a moment and then turns again to shout into the staircase.

DAD
(continuing)
…and no fuckin' singin'.

CUT TO:

PACKO. He's on the street now and running full pelt through the city wind.

PACKO VOICE OVER
Tara Stree' Station is by far the best place for tappin'. I always get dere early- while de junkies are still ourav i'. You can make a fortune from people off the DART…

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION. DAY

The ground in front of the train station is soaking wet but it has stopped raining.

PACKO
(continuing)
…Still, I hate it. I'm gonna be a singer… -like Bono, ourav U2. Graftin Stree' 's really the place for singin'- that's where I go in the afthernoons…

CUT TO:

PACKO. He turns the corner into the station close and smiles. He finds a piece of dry cardboard beside a bin, dusts it off, and puts it on the ground beside the entrance.

PACKO
(continuing)
Me Da hates it bu'- only 'cause I make way more money for him tappin'… He'd murder me if he ever caught me on Graftin stree', but I don' care…

PACKO sits on the cardboard and wraps his blanket around him. Commuters rush by. He holds out a foam cup and looks up solemnly, but his eyes are smiling.

CUT TO:

MILOS, a chubby ten year-old kid with jet black hair and sallow skin as he walks past PACKO. He is taller but wears a more innocent, almost stupid look on his face. He is carrying a BIG, BLACK, WORN-OUT-LOOKING LEATHER CASE, which he puts on the ground and sits on.

CUT BACK TO:

PACKO, as he notices the other boy.

CUT TO:

MILOS. He produces a blanket and wraps it around himself.

CUT TO:

PACKO. His eyebrows sharpen.

CUT TO:

MILOS HAND. CLOSE UP as he raises a new looking foam cup.

CUT BACK TO:

PACKO. Already on his feet.

PACKO
Hey!

CUT TO:

MILOS as he raises his big head slowly, grins, and blinks a smile at the smaller boy in front of him.

PACKO waves his hand and shouts at him.

PACKO
Hey! -Dis is my spo’.

MILOS says nothing but he’s still smiling. PACKO shouts louder.

PACKO
Hey!
(still nothing)
Hey! Are ya deaf?

PACKO pushes MILOS' shoulder. MILOS stands up. He is about three inches taller than PACKO. PACKO doesn't seem to notice.

PACKO
Dis is my spo', find somewhere else.

The boy begins to say something in Croatian.

PACKO
What are you?… A imgrint or somethin'?

PACKO points at the gate. He speaks slowly now.

PACKO
Get… ourav… here…

He rattles his fist before he continues.

PACKO
(continuing)
D'ya hear me? …Speaky English?

MILOS
No… Romania.

PACKO
…Well ya have ta go…
YOU…

CUT TO:

PACKO'S finger pushing into MILOS' chest.

PACKO
(continuing)
…HAVE TO…

CUT TO:

PACKO. Pointing at the gate again.

PACKO
(continuing)
…GO!

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP. MILOS' big mouth as he smiles innocently.

MILOS
No…
(pause)

Not go.

CUT TO:

PACKO. He drops his head.

PACKO
Righ!

CUT TO:

PACKO'S FIST as it squares MILOS on the nose and he falls back over his leather case.

CUT TO:

PACKO above him with fists raised.

CUT TO:

MILOS. He gets up and wipes the blood from his eye…

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET. DAY.

PACKO'S FACE. CLOSE UP. His left eye is black and blue and some blood is crusted onto the end of his nose. He has a swollen lip but that won't stop him singing.

PACKO
Cloudes a driiiiftin' across de
moon,
Cat's a prowlin'
on der beat,
Springs a girl,
from de streets at night,
Dirty ould town,
Dirty ould town…

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION. DAY

Early morning. MILOS walks into the courtyard beside the door to the train station and smiles. PACKO is nowhere to be seen. His nose is bruised and he has a cut under one eye. He finds a dryish part of the courtyard and sits down with his foam cup and blanket. He gets comfortable and extends the cup.

The commuters from the first train arrive and MILOS' cup begins to fill.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION. DAY

MILOS has his head tucked into his shoulders. He is rocking back and forward dramatically with the cup extended.

CUT TO:

A small, mucky hand as it taps him on the shoulder. MILOS turns around…

CUT TO:

PACKO as he grabs the cupful of money that MILOS has spent the morning collecting and is out the gate before he has time to turn around. MILOS is fuming. He grabs his leather box and blanket and tears after PACKO.

CUT TO:

THE GATE. PACKO knocks into a ROUGH-LOOKING CROATION MAN as he rushes past.

CUT TO:

THE CROATION MAN. CLOSE UP. HE scracthes his oily stubble and growls after PACKO, then turns to move back into the train station close. He stops.

CUT TO:

MILOS. Stopped dead before the gates to the train station close and staring wide-mouthed at HIS ROUGH-LOOKING FATHER.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET. DAY

PACKO is smiling wickedly. He is singing again and banging his tambourine.

PACKO
I heard a siiiren from de docks,
Saw a traaain set de nite on fire,
I smelled the spring on de smokey wind,
Dirty ould town,
Dirty ould town…

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION. DAY

Misty rain sweeps into the courtyard. PACKO shivers with cold and pulls the blanket tight around his neck.

CUT TO:

A DROP OF RAIN as it slides off PACKO'S hair and trickles down the back of his neck.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER DROP OF RAIN as it falls into his foam cup and dribbles out the small hole he has made in the foam.

CUT TO:

PACKO as COMMUTERS run past. It is too wet to stop. PACKO follows them with puppy eyes until they reach the door into

the train station. As he turns to look back toward the gate…

CUT TO:

MILOS' wet fist as it squares PACKO in the jaw and he roles into a puddle on the ground.

CUT TO:

MILOS. Soaked to the bone. He is holding the BLACK LEATHER CASE in his left hand and shakes out the fist he has made with his right.

CUT TO:

PACKO'S FACE. MILOS is shouting now as PACKO'S empty foam cup rolls up beside his nose…

CUT TO:

MILOS. He raises his foot…

CUT TO:

THE FOAM CUP. CLOSE UP as it bursts open and a few coppers spill onto the ground as MILOS' foot comes crashing down.

CUT BACK TO

MILOS as he kicks the coppers across the courtyard and glares at PACKO on the ground. He turns around, and walks away.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CITY STREET. DAY

The rain has thickened into stingy droplets that burn PACKO's face as he sings.

WINTER RAIN bounces off the tambourine and soaks his trouser leg.

CUT TO:

A man running past after an umbrella.

CUT TO:

PACKO's replacement foam cup as it blows away.

CUT TO:

PACKO. He doesn't budge. Rain mixes with tears and rolls down his blue cheeks.

Up to now WE HAVE PERHAPS FORGOTTEN how young he really is.

PACKO
I'm gonna maaaaaake
-me a big sharp axe,
Shiny steeeel-
Tempered in de fiiiire,
I'll chop ya down like an ould
dead treeee,
Dirty ould town,
Dirty ould town.

DISSOLVE TO BLACK:

(beat)
(beat)
(beat)

EXT. TRAIN STATION. DAY

Sun has returned to the courtyard in front of the train station and the ground is dry. MILOS is wrapped in his blanket sitting on his BLACK LEATHER CASE. Commuters pass by and some money falls into his foam cup. A train arrives. The people from the train cram together in the courtyard before they filter out the gate. MILOS holds the cup out in front of him but the crowd is too busy pushing to notice. Finally, when they sift out, MILOS is left facing PACKO.

CUT TO:

PACKO as he steps forward.

CUT TO:

MILOS. Standing now with fists raised.

CUT TO:

PACKO.

PACKO
Don’t worry… I don’ wanna figh’.
(pause)
It’s just, me Da, dat’s all…

CUT TO:

MILOS looking confused.

CUT TO:

PACKO. He smiles.

PACKO
(continuing)
I’m really a singer… You know, like Bono…

Still nothing from MILOS.

PACKO
(continuing)
Bono… You know?
(pause)
(MORE)

(CONT'D)

…From U2.

CUT TO:

PACKO’S HAND. He rattles his tambourine. MILOS jumps.

CUT TO:

PACKO. He squints and breathes in.

PACKO
(singing)
DESIII o I o I IeRE…
(pause)

(still nothing)
DESIII o I o I IeRE…

(pause)

Ya know- singin'.

CUT TO:

MILOS. He lowers his fists and smiles. PACKO smiles back.

(beat)

CUT TO:

PACKO.

PACKO
(continuing)
…I only do this for me Da…

He coughs and explains professionally…

PACKO
(continuing)
…When I have time from the singin' of course…
(pause)

…an' well I thought maybe you have a Da like mine… So…
(pause)

…So it's alright by me if you want to do a bit a tappin aswell.

CUT TO:

MILOS. He looks confused again.

PACKO
(continuing)
Ya know… beggin'… with your cup… like me… it's okay.

MILOS is trying to understand.

CUT TO:

PACKO. He gives up and scratches his head.

(beat)

He smiles.

CUT TO:

PACKO. He raises his arm slowly and pushes his small hand out of its stretched jumper sleeve.

CUT TO:

MILOS. A huge grin bursts across his face. He grabs PACKO by the hand delightedly, shaking it violently. He mumbles some Romanian then steps forward and embraces PACKO.

CUT TO:

PACKO. Resuming his cool exterior and a little embarrassed.

PACKO
(continuing)
Alrigh', alrigh'… take it easy.

MILOS squeezes him tightly before he lets him go. They step apart and find themselves facing each other again. Silence. PACKO looks around awkwardly for something to say.

CUT TO:

MILOS’ BLACK LEATHER CASE.

PACKO
So what’s in the case anyway?

CUT TO:

MILOS as he looks down at the BLACK LEATHER CASE and then back at PACKO. He smiles again…

CUT TO BLACK:

(beat)
(beat)
(beat)

WE HEAR THE EDGE’S GUITAR pluck reverb into the darkness

CUT TO:

A TAMBOURINE. CLOSE UP. It starts to rattle.

CUT TO:

A BIG RED OLD FASHIONED ACCORDIAN. CLOSE UP. It squeezes a strong note into the air around it.

CUT TO:

PACKO. CLOSE UP, he coughs his throat clear.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

MILOS beside him, sitting on the LEATHER CASE, and in his arms the BIG RED OLD-FASHIONED ACCORDION.

PACKO
I have climbed, highest
mountains,
I hav-e ru-hun through the
fields
only to be with you…
only to be with you…

PULL BACK TO FURTHER NOW TO REVEAL THAT:

People have made a semi-circle around the boys, a street-stopping-semi-circle- the kind all good buskers get. They start to clap…

From the left of the semi-circle, A WOMAN PUSHING A BUGGY passes and the YOUNG BOY holding on to it (who is not her son) lets go to look at PACKO and MILOS.

HIS REAL MUM arrives- she screams relief and bends down to hug him into her cheeks, wetting his hair with tears of joy…

CUT TO:

THE KEYSTONE COPS, who are wrestling the DODGY LOOKING MAN, when they also notice the music, smile and stop, and fix the mans jacket around his shoulders. He stretches his neck like a chicken then starts to nod to the music like a bouncer outside a nightclub…

CUT BACK TO:

PACKO and MILOS.

PACKO
I have ru-hun.
I have crawwwl'd.
I have scael'd theeese city
wall's…
…theeeeese city walll's…
…only to be with you…
but I still haven't found what
I'm looking for…

MILOS
(in his best English and out of tune)
BUT I STIIIL HAVE NOT FOUND
WHAT I AM LOOKING FOOOR…

A big cheer goes up from the crowd and silver change finds its way into the little foam cup as the accordion blows notes into the winter air that mix with PACKO's voice as the boys talk for the very first time!

THE END