

# GFF 2014: Night Moves (Kelly Reichardt, 2013)



Night Moves is an example of a film that works so tremendously well using very little. Set in an isolated American town, it uses a sparse landscape and accomplished cast in presenting a film that slowly burns its wick, choosing to avoid sparking up dynamite.

*Three friends band together in the hopes of bringing down a local dam in an act of eco-terrorism. On the surface, it would seem all had been thought through, but there's one thing they did not even begin to consider.*

It feels all very real and not at all contrived. As these three characters converse, their words seldom steer towards a clichéd use of condemning words for the government. That dialogue is there, but it *is* used sparingly, surrounded instead by something that feels familiar; as if these activists are just normal rather than preachy.

Dakota Fanning subtly shines alongside Jesse Eisenberg, whose quiet, irregular voice differs from the usual rambling character he usually depicts. Both give wonderful performances, especially Fanning, who must be on her way to getting some Academy recognition at some point. It all feels and looks very natural, and that intrinsic feeling is down to two things: its performances and its cinematography.

The subtlety doesn't last much past the first half of the film, after a torrid realisation hits the group. It suddenly steers away from being tense and gorgeous to something strangely psychotic and overly dragged out. It's a real shame, considering the first half is so striking.

Night Moves is undoubtedly worth seeing due to its subtlety and enchanting cinematography in the first half, but as soon as the surprise hits, it's a little bit more self indulgent.