

BREADLINE BRITAIN 1990s

PROGRAMME 1

POST-FILMING SCRIPT

FINAL MASTER: 26.03.91

TITLES: BREADLINE BRITAIN 1990s

SUB-TITLE: GOING WITHOUT

Richard Wyness upstairs

RICHARD

In Robert's room here there's only one bed, one wardrobe, no carpets at all. The curtains are second-hand. As we go in to the daughter's room, as you can see, one chest of drawers, very little carpet again. As you can see, it is absolutely bare.

JULIE (ACTUALITY)

I always have to do my washing in the bathroom, with the shower water, because I can't afford the launderette, because the cost of

a washerette is astronomical, it really is. You can't possibly afford it on pension. I have a 50 pence meter, because I couldn't afford a big electricity bill. When the 50 pence has gone, the meter just clicks off and if you haven't got another one, you've got to just...go to bed. There's no light and there's no heat and there's no water.

YVONNE (ACTUALITY)

As you can see, in the bedroom you've got a build-up of condensation. You can actually see how damp it is. Sometimes the window is actually very wet, and you've got the curtains sticking to the window. In the toilet you get a lot of condensation on the window. I think it's more damp than condensation. You get water dripping off the window; you get

a lot of fungus. And plus the paper is lifting off. In the winter it's very very cold.

JOHN (ACTUALITY)

I got my cooker off you know, the rag and bone man, off the cart, and I got it for free. I think the cooker is definitely dangerous; I mean I can be out for most of the day, come back in, and it stinks. But I can't tell the Gas Board because if I do they're going to condemn the cooker and I won't be able to use it, you know, for cooking meals.

PAULA

(INAUDIBLE COMMENT TO JIMMY)

Before Jimmy had the accident and he was working, we could afford most things. But now, on the money we're on you just can't go out and buy what you want or what you need. It's a case of...like you'd say, going into debt and

getting, or doing without. So most of the time we have to do without.

KIM, V/O

Basically, if I can't beg and I haven't got any money from the Social or whatever, that means I could die or something like that I reckon, because there is nothing to eat.

I mean, you can't knock on...it's not like Oliver Twist days, you can't knock on someone's door and say

SYNC

'Can I have some more porridge' because they're just going to kick you out and tell you to get lost.

Spare any change please mate?

Thanks anyway.

Compilation

(all 6 families)

COMM

This six-part series is about the poor in Britain today. It updates a similar series of Breadline Britain made in 1983.

Amidst the growing affluence of the 1980s, how have the poor fared?

These families lack the things that most of us take for granted. But is their living standard unacceptably low for the 1990s? Are they poor?

The first question is, where do we draw the poverty line?

Continue previous sequence:

JIMMY, SYNC, 199/1, p.25

Depends on what you say is poor.

What is poor? Where do you draw the line at poor? If you can't pay for anything, if you class that as poor, we are poor. We find it very difficult; and you don't...like you said, everything

is run by money, rules, everything. When you've got nothing, well, by the time you've paid everything out you've got nothing to either save or buy things, if that's what you call poor, that's poor, that's the way we are. It's where you draw the line I suppose.

Jimmy & Fam. (add)

COMM

Once poverty was seen to be about just physical survival. Now, it's accepted that a minimum standard should allow for much more than this.

So what today are the necessities which no-one should go without?

Street scenes

This is ultimately a matter for the judgement of society at large.

We commissioned a major survey of 1800 people. They were asked which of a wide range of items

are essential to a minimum living standard in Britain today, and which everyone should be able to afford.

GRAPHIC:

ROLLER

(all 44 items)

To establish the extent of poverty, we also asked which of them they had to do without because they couldn't afford them.

Through comparison with a similar survey for the 1983 series, we have charted trends over the decade.

Kim

First we asked about housing and heating.

KIM, V/O W/T I/V, Roll 81, p.1

(INAUDIBLE FIRST WORDS TALKING TO MAN)

I've slept in all types of places you know, like parks, car parks, doorways, outside churches, bus stops, bus shelter things, loads of places.

Kim bedding down
for the night

COMM

Kim Stevens is 17. She has lived on the streets of London for 2 years. She has no money and no home.

Bring forward from p.7

KIM, V/O SYNC, 788/1, p.10

If you get a cold it tends to last a lot longer you know, and if you do eventually get to a doctor's they just tell you to wrap up and keep warm, when you can't really. So it's quite difficult if you're on the street. And like I've had like stomach ulcers before and that, and it's difficult to get them seen to 'cos you know, you haven't got a doctor or anything like that. But like, you can't eat enough food and all the sort of things you're supposed to do, you know, what the doctor tells you to do. So basically you just stay ill for a long time.

YVONNE

Time for bed. I want no playing,
just straight to bed.

Yvonne calling
kids to bed

COMM

Yvonne is a single parent.
Separated from her husband, she
is bringing up their 3 children
alone on State benefit.

They have a home - a small flat
on a run-down estate in
Birmingham. But it's riddled
with damp.

YVONNE

The reason for all of us staying
in one room is because we've got
no heating in the other two
rooms; we've got no beds; there's
a build-up of condensation; it's
very cold and damp. And that's
why we all have to stay in one
room for comfort and to keep
warm, and because there's only
one convector heater in here. So

I've got my son, I've got my daughter, I've got myself, sleeping in one bed, and I've got the baby in the cot.

Take out high shot

You two all right? Good. Right but before you go to bed we'll read a story, yes? OK.

CHILDREN

Jimmy Roberts

(getting out of bed and downstairs)

COMM

Jimmy Roberts was partially paralysed by an accident at work 4 years ago. He lives with his family in Birkenhead on Merseyside. They now depend entirely on State benefit.

JIMMY

The water's heated by electric, so we have to be very very careful how much electricity we use. I would like to have a couple of baths a day, but, financial wise we just couldn't.

Because if I lie in a boiling hot bath, it eases slightly, so the benefit I get from it is fantastic. But, upstairs it's absolutely freezing like, not having any carpets down; we ain't got no heating upstairs at all.

SYNC

So, we actually freeze during the night. And of a morning, I'm very very stiff and I can't move some mornings because the cold gets to me that much.

YVONNE, V/O I/V, pp.4/5

(FEW WORDS OF YVONNE READING BOOK

'Go down now and tell the people...)

My kids constantly have colds, and it lingers for a very good time; sometimes up to two, three months they've got a cold, because we haven't got adequate heating. My daughter, she suffers from asthma, and she was hospitalised last year. She has

constantly got colds.

(END WORDS OF BOOK '...instructed
the people')

GRAPHIC:

CAPTION:

Housing & Heating

COMM

In the Breadline Britain survey,

- a damp-free home, and
- heating

were at the top of the list of
necessities;

- separate bedrooms for children,
- a decent state of decoration,
- an indoor toilet, and
- a separate bathroom

were also overwhelmingly seen as
necessities.

The survey found that 10 million
people in Britain today lack one
or more of these necessities,
because they cannot afford them.

John working

JOHN, SYNC, SL.188

I eat a lot of beans, because you
know, they're high in protein. I
can only like, you know, afford

one meal a day; and I can't really afford cheese, and meat, and fish, stuff I would like...like to eat. And if I have the bread, I'll have bread with it, but most of time I don't have bread, so I don't have it.

COMM

John Malone is 23. He lives alone in Stockton, on Teeside, an area of high unemployment. Out of work since he left school, he lives off £28.00 a week State benefit.

JOHN, SYNC

I would like more than one meal a day like, I would like at least three meals a day, but I can't do it, so I make do with what I get. So sometimes I get up a little bit late so I don't have to have my breakfast.

COMM

Joyce Wyness lives in Moss Side, Manchester. With her husband, Richard, unemployed for 7 years, they and their 2 children live off £74.00 a week State benefit.

ACTUALITY DIALOGUE

Well we come here every week, so, to Kwik Save and see how much we've got left. And if we're lucky we have tins or whatever we can afford. If we can't, that's it, so... But the money I'm getting is not enough. Sometimes the lad has to go to his nanna's to get fed.

TO CHILD: Right, that's your bread.

You've got to pick and choose because she's on a special diet, she's got to have fish. She has something wrong with her bowels, it gets blocked up, and she's got to have fresh vegetables and fruit, which we can't afford. It might be, what, say about once a

week I can afford it. Most of the time she does without.

JOHN, SYNC

I get hungry quite often, my stomach starts to rumble, and I get nervous, I get uneven, I shake a little bit.

If normally when I've had a good meal, and, you know, like we're having a laugh with normal friends or something, they can take the mickey out of me and we'll just have a good laugh, but if I've had nowt to eat I just can't cope with it.

(DRINKING SOUNDS) I drink a lot of water, to help to fill my tummy up a bit, so, bloat me out a bit.

More John

COMM

The Breadline Britain survey found that a large majority of the population think that everyone is entitled to a better and more varied diet than this.

GRAPHIC:

The food items that were

CAPTION:

considered necessities are:

Food

- 2 meals a day;
- meat or fish or the vegetarian equivalent every other day;
- a roast joint or its vegetarian equivalent once a week;
- and fresh fruit and vegetables every day.

The survey found that 5 million lacked one or more of them.

John washing up
(5 secs)

John is worse off than most. He lacks every one of the food necessities.

Julie looking at

Julie Smith is a 77-year-old widow.

clothes shops

She lives in Birmingham, on a pension of £55.00 a week.

116-119

JULIE, V/O, p.37

It's years since I bought anything new, really brand new, because, you just couldn't afford it. I mean, when you think, and a lot of my clothes are really old, you wouldn't believe, but they keep coming out, using them year in, year out.

JULIE, V/O, p.38

I really would like to buy myself a complete new outfit; I know just what I would buy. I would love to have the money, to go into a big shop and say, 'I'd like that and that and that and that', and match it all up and have it all beautiful.

JOHN

This used to be a good pair of jeans I used to have, but they're ruined now, totally knackered. I've got a few shirts, which are really too small for me like. I

get a lot of my stuff given when I go out like, maybe once every five or six weeks, very rare I go out. But I can't go out like pubbing, not like that like, because I just haven't got the gear, and I haven't got the money to get there.

In Spastics shop sifting through clothes

Sl.127

ACTUALITY DIALOGUE

JULIE, 152, p.112

I come in here very often to get dresses because..anything really, because the prices are absolutely extortionate in the town. I mean that wouldn't...it's been 2.50 now reduced to 1.85. You see if I had to buy these things new they would be such a lot of money. It's just a matter of...you can't do anything else, you've just got to either come in here and have them or go without. And I go to the cheapest shops and go about looking for bargains, and...it's just a matter of existing really

on what you've got. I mean to my mind it's a very poor pension, for any old age pensioner it's a struggle.

GRAPHIC:

COMM

CAPTION:

A majority agree that John and

Clothing

Julie should be able to afford new clothes.

- a best outfit;
- a waterproof coat;
- and 2 pairs of all-weather shoes, are also seen as necessities.

Yet 7 million lack one or more of these.

Change shots to Julie
in Spastics shop

Over the last 7 years rising living standards have influenced the public's views. In 1983, a best outfit was not considered a necessity. But it is today.

Richard Wyness
(showing us around
the house)

ACTUALITY DIALOGUE

RICHARD WYNESS

Roll 112, ST 64, SI.431/1

Well I bought this television
five year ago, it's black and
white portable like you can see.
There's furniture, the carpet,
which doesn't actually fit the
room properly but it's the best
we can do at the moment. The
chairs, the two chairs as you can
see are second-hand.

SI.354/355 Tk2

RICHARD, V/O, 431, p.5

It is degrading sometimes, when
you can't invite people in,
because you know, with having no
carpets you can't invite your
friends or relations, or nothing.

TO WIFE: ...watching now; not
watching Brookside. What
about...Cell Block H.

WIFE: You're in it, aren't you?

So.

COMM

The public agree that Richard and Joyce shouldn't have to live with so little basic furniture.

GRAPHIC:

The household necessities are:

CAPTION:

Household Goods

- carpets;
- a refrigerator;
- a washing machine;
- beds for everyone;
- a television;
- and a telephone.

Yet 6½ million people miss out on one or more of these basic items.

Having coffee

JULIE SMITH, SYNC, 154, p.15

Usually on a Thursday when I pick my pension up, I go into the cafe, the Carousel in the town, which has just...not long been open, and I have a really nice cup of coffee.

JULIE, V/O, 154, p.16

Really, it's a little treat, you know; once a week it's a treat, and I think well, I'm not going to do without that.

JULIE, V/O, 152, pp.9/10

I would like a little more money to be able to say, well I'll have a weekend away at the seaside. But I've no desire to go to Spain or places like that, I love England, and I would like to go to more places by the sea and have a holiday.

COMM

The survey also looked at the overall quality of life, including leisure and social activities.

JIMMY ROBERTS, SYNC, 198/1, p.21

We couldn't possibly afford a holiday. We just never get the money to be able to pay for one.

V/O

So, holidays are out, have been out for the last four years.

PAULA, V/O, New I/V, pp.11/12

It hurts deep down because you hear...hear of other children going on good holidays, and allowed to play in the sand and things like this, and your...your children just can't do it.

Because, even if you can take them out to the beach, then they're gonna ask for buckets and spades, and they're gonna ask for ice creams. And, you just can't afford to buy them. How can you tell a child no, when everybody else has got them?

CHILD: I bet you can't do that one Daddy.

JULIE, SYNC, V/O, 154, P.28

You've got to sort of look at every penny; for your own son's birthday you've got to buy a pair of slippers, or a little thing like that, you know. I mean, and for children, you can't go out and buy things for your little children friends. I've got lots of friends with little children, and I would love to spend money on them, but I just can't do it, I mean it's an impossibility.

(from next page)

(replace flowers & walking shots with indoors)

COMM

People believe that a minimum living standard should allow for more than mere physical needs and material goods.

In today's Britain, everybody should be able to participate in basic social and leisure activities.

GRAPHIC:

The quality of life necessities
are:

CAPTION:

Quality of Life

- presents for friends or family
once a year;
- a holiday for one week a year;
- a hobby;
- and special celebrations at
times like Christmas.

21 million people cannot afford
one or more of these necessities.

Jimmy & Paula

JIMMY, V/O, New I/V, p.7

When I was working, you could put
money by, so when you get a bill
off the cuff you could afford to
pay for it, 'cos you've got
something saved. We'd love to
save, but we just...no way we
could...we just couldn't...
wouldn't be able to hardly live.

PAULA W/T I/V, p.15

You've got your rent, your gas,
your electric, the milkman - I
mean, even the milkman's a debt

to us. By the end of it there's no money left to save. I mean you haven't got enough money really coming in to pay your bills, so saving's just out of the question.

GRAPHIC:

CAPTION:

Financial Security

COMM

Financial security was also regarded as essential. The survey found:

- savings of £10.00 a week, and
- insurance of house contents to be necessities.

Yet 31½ million lack one or both of these.

Joyce Wyness and Tricia
in kitchen making
breakfast

Slates 357/353/358

ACTUALITY

JOYCE, V/O, W/T I/V

Well it's very rare we can afford new toys for the pair of them actually.

Inter with actuality
chat in kitchen

JOYCE

Most of the time I go around
charity shops, and pick a little
doll up for her, you know, 'owt
that she likes.

Tricia in bedroom

It's a bit disappointing that you
can't buy them brand new ones,
because they like every new toy
that come out today, and you
can't afford it.

JOYCE, 411, p.21, from

My boy wants everything he sees,
so does my little girl, and I
tell them they can't have it,
because I haven't got the money.
They say, "Well so-and-so's got
this at school." I say well,
his, you know, his mother or
father might be working, you
know, and not on Social, where I
am. So they can't have it.

Paula leaving house
with daughter

PAULA, V/O, SYNC, 246/1, pp.2/3

When Jimmy was working, we could afford...little day trips, or weekend trips, things like, I mean all that's stopped now.

TO CHILD: Put your hood up now?

OK.

SYNC

Anything the children needed we could go and buy that.

Just...it's just like your world's been turned inside out.

Kids having supper

PAULA, W/T I/V, p.11

Well...to go on an outing really, you've got to think about...bus fares, or coach fares. I mean, I rang up the zoo and it's 9, 10 pounds for families; there's no way we could afford that, because we just can't afford to take them on days out.

GRAPHIC:

COMM

CAPTION:

Children's Items

The necessities for children are:

- toys;
- leisure equipment;
- an outing once a week;
- children's friends round once a fortnight;
- participation in out-of-school activities;
- and 3 meals a day.

2½ million children lack one or more of these necessities.

More of children

Again, two of these items - an outing and children's friends round - have become necessities since the 1983 survey.

Over the last 7 years, the public's definition of a minimum standard has gone up in line with rising living standards. They are saying that the poor should not be excluded from the general rise in prosperity over the 1980s.

PAULA, 247/1, p.11

I think it's disgusting. I don't think we get enough. I mean, how can you say that the money we're on is enough if the children aren't getting what they need?

COMM

When the electricity metre runs out, Julie goes to bed. She rarely buys new clothes and can't afford a holiday or presents.

Her lack of necessities affects every aspect of her life.

JULIE

You just can't make things...you know, you can't make things go any further than the money.

COMM

So how many people are similarly affected?

We carried out a series of statistical tests on all the 32 necessities.

ROLLER:
32 necessities

Those who lack 3 or more form a distinct group whose whole way of life is marked by deprivation. This is where the poverty line falls.

GRAPHIC:

Today there are nearly 11 million people who fall below this minimum standard.

This is a big rise over 1983, when 7½ million were in poverty.

And of these, over 3 million are children, compared with 2½ million in '83.

Wynesses

The Wyness family is amongst the poorest of this group.

The whole family has a poor and unbalanced diet. The children have virtually no toys, and have never had a holiday.

They rely entirely on second-hand clothes and furniture.

JOYCE IN SHOP

...anyway, so you've had that.

Only small ones. It's going to be all right. What's this?

CHILD: A jumper.

RICHARD, SYNC

It's terrible at times, because you can't buy things that you want for your misses and your children; you can't say oh well, let's go out and we'll buy them so-and-so, a toy or something, or go away on holiday; you've no chance. Unless you're lucky, and someone leaves you something in their will, which is fairly

unlikely in my case. So otherwise, you're really on the breadline all the time.

COMM

Today, there are 3½ million people in severe poverty, lacking seven or more necessities. This compares with 2½ million in 1983. The 1980s have failed the poor badly.

END OF PROGRAMME 1