

BREADLINE BRITAIN 1990

PROGRAMME 4

POST-FILMING SCRIPT

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TITLES

SUB-TITLE: No Place Like Home

Dressing Ricky

ALISON, V/O, 649/1, p1

This is my 7th month.

It's...it's just horrible.

ALISON, V/O, 649/1, p4

I've got no privacy and nor has he. And if he like misbehaves I've got nowhere I can go on my own; he's got nowhere he can go.

ALISON, SYNC, 649/1, p5

And just living how...how I'm living, it's just...degrading really to think that...I have to live, I have to live like this before I can get my flat from the council, otherwise they won't

give me a flat.

In B&B

COMM

Alison Childs is 21. With no home of her own, she lives with her 2½ year old son Ricky in this bed and breakfast hotel in Bayswater, London.

ALISON, V/O, 652/1, p15

He doesn't like sharing. He's backwards on his talking. And he's just very hyperactive. If he had more people, like children, to play with, he could get rid of all that energy he's got. But he just can't, he's just got so much of it.

Kim & Keisha

KIM, V/O

sleeping at night
It is dangerous sort of sleeping out on the street. There's some weird people around, you know. I mean when you're freezing cold and you really are cold and you're like shaking and someone

comes up and asks you for a cup of coffee and you can stay at his house or you can sit in his car for a while.

KIM, V/O, p4

Perverts like take advantage of you, especially if you're homeless, you know what I'm saying. And they give you money and then they ask you to do 'em favours back and things like that, you know.

COMM

Kim Stevens is 17. Brought up in care, she's been sleeping rough in London for two years.

KIM, V/O, SYNC, 492, p16

Sleeping rough is really difficult because like we used to sleep up Dean Street, and free car parks we slept in, and we got moved on from each one. Wherever we sleep, sometimes especially up the West End, Soho, you sit down

somewhere and they move you on before you even get your sleeping bag out you know. And if you're sleeping somewhere sometimes they wake you up about 3 in the morning, and then 6, and that's all, you don't hardly get any sleep. And especially when you're nice and warm in your sleeping bag, and you're cuddled up in your sleeping bag and that, and you're nice and warm and then they come and kick you in the ribs and tell you to get up and so you get all cold and wet again.

Yvonne walking into
her block

YVONNE, V/O, 634/1, p25

Most times there is a lot of rubbish piled up at the bottom of the stairs, before you actually come into the block. And I mean, sometimes the smell is terrible, because you've got dogs around the area. But the smell is very high. And I mean, it's not very pleasant having to come in. One, the smell's there, the rubbish is

there, and another thing is going up the stairs, all you can see is a lot of graffiti on the wall, and it's very messy. So obviously, the first impression you get when you walk into the block, if anybody was to see it, when they actually come to your house they might think it's the same way that you keep your place.

Cutaway of estate

Estate shots

COMM

Yvonne Barnett is a single parent. She lives in a small flat on this large, run-down council estate in Birmingham.

YVONNE, SYNC, 634/1, p23

I mean, it's not very pleasant. You know, you just don't feel relaxed to invite anybody in, or...into the block as well as into the place.

Compilation:

COMM

Single parent

These are among the 11 million

Yvonne

people found to be in poverty by

Kim

a special survey commissioned for
Breadline Britain. They all fall
below the minimum living standard
laid down by society at large.

This is a rise of 3½ million
since the first Breadline Britain
survey in 1983.

This found a third of those in
poverty had housing problems.

Since then, Government housing
policy has been radically
changed.

So what effect has this had on
the housing of the poor?

RUN ACTUALITY

KIM/RACHEL I/V, 515/1

RACHEL:

How's it going, all right?

KIM:

(.....??) It's still too cold.

RACHEL:

I know.

KIM:

It's getting worser.

COMM

Kim, like other people living on the street, can sleep from time to time in a hostel. She sought help at New Horizon, a day centre for the homeless.

Ride up Actuality

ACTUALITY

RACHEL:

You know about most of the emergency night shelters. Have you been...what ones have you been in? You've been in Centre Point, haven't you?

KIM:

Yeah. Dean Street, No. 1 Greek Street I've been in, River Point. I've been in them all. But like I've got to wait till next month before I can get in any of them again.

Over more chat

COMM

Kim is one of 6,000 people sleeping rough in Britain today, compared with only a few hundred in 1983. Inundated, the few hostels there are can only offer a bed for a part of each month.

RACHEL:

Well we can make a couple of phone calls. Now let's try....

SYNC On phone

Hello. Could you tell me if you've got any female vacancies please for tonight? OK, right, OK. Thanks very much anyway, all right, bye bye.

No, they're full. The only option could be, because I've made other phone calls today and I know they're full, you could try one of the...I don't know, most of the DSS ones are going to be no good for you anyway. Let me just try...Greek Road again.

On phone

Hello. Could you tell me if you've got any female vacancies

please for tonight? Right. Do you know when you might have anything coming up? OK, OK thanks, I'll try then. All right, bye bye.

COMM

So Kim is back on the streets for yet another night.

(OR find another sentence of Rachel)

RACHEL, V/O, SYNC, SI 518

Most of the hostels system is silted up. In the last couple of years it's been increasingly more difficult to get people into hostels. I think, certainly over the last six months, you know, you could go through the entire London Hostels Directory and find that, you know, there were maybe one or two vacancies, if that, a week.

Alison waiting in queue

ALISON, V/O, SYNC, 650/1, p9

You can explain it to a certain extent but, unless you've lived

in it, you can never understand what that person goes through. I'm very short tempered anyway but since I've been here I can't take him crying much. I just...I put him to bed. I don't like taking it out on him but it's just this place, it gets me really depressed. But when you tell the council that, they just tell...they just turn round and say to you, 'Everyone's in the same boat'.

Alison at Lambeth

Town Hall

Slates 693-701

COMM

The prospect of decent housing has also declined for a second group of the poor. 45,000 families now live in temporary accommodation such as bed and breakfast hotels. This compares with only 9,000 in 1983.

Alison makes repeated visits to Lambeth Town Hall in south London to keep up the pressure for a flat of her own.

Alison (on Alison)

ACTUALITY I/V WITH SHEILA

ALISON, 702/1, p2

So can you tell me how long I'll wait before I...before I even get an offer?

On Sheila

SHEILA, 705/1, pp10/11

You have approximately another six months to wait before your first offer is made, before we can arrange your first offer. So you'll have quite a long wait.

S1 705/1, p11

ALISON:

So it'll be before say, August...July, August when I get my first offer?

SHEILA:

That's approximate; it may even be a bit longer.

ALISON:

What...even longer than that?

SHEILA:

It could be over a year. I mean because of the situation, you're not able to cope in bed and breakfast. Everybody knows bed and breakfast is not ideal

but...we don't really have any alternative than to offer you bed and breakfast when you approach us homeless.

ALISON:

Because like, he's got no room to play or anything, you know what I mean, in one room.

SHEILA:

No. The bed and breakfast isn't really good for anybody.

ALISON:

I just open the door and let him play on the corridor 'cos of the stairs up and the stairs down.

So, can you tell me roughly why I have to wait so long?

SHEILA:

Well the simple answer to that is really the supply and demand of the properties. We get a very high number of new cases applying to us each week. We do not have sufficient property to meet that demand. So the wait now is becoming longer and longer.

COMM

The pressure on local councils has risen sharply.

DOROTHY QUEST, 709/1

V/O

At the moment the average number of people that we accept on a weekly basis for temporary

SYNC accommodation is round 60. 10 years ago there was about just one third of that. At present people are waiting about 18 months in temporary accommodation before their first offers. 10 years ago they would have only waited 6.

DOROTHY QUEST, V/O, 708/1

Over Alison leaving

It really is very frustrating. People who are homeless come down here and they expect to go away with something, not just advice or a bed and breakfast booking. They expect to go away with a home. And we can't offer them that.

Yvonne shows us
around the house
Slates 593-599

ACTUALITY DIALOGUE

Right. The whole house has a problem of damp and condensation, and from that the actual paper is lifting off the wall. As you can see, on the ceiling we've got a lot of fungus up there. Then going on into the toilet, you get a lot of condensation where a lot of water is built up; it's mouldy, you've got the papers lifting off.

COMM

The third major change has been the growing concentration of the poor in sub-standard public housing.

Yvonne has a flat, but she lacks two of the key Breadline Britain housing necessities: a damp-free home and separate bedrooms for children.

YVONNE, 566/1

Personally it would be really

nice to have a warm house, rooms that the kids could have separately that they could sleep in; they could sort of, you know, feel relaxed and feel at ease in their own room, instead of all of us being, you know what I mean, huddled together.

YVONNE, V/O, p.26

I'm really disgusted over the matter. Having to be sharing the same room and doing the same things in one room is not very nice.

NEW

(more Yvonne)

YVONNE, NEW V/O for NEW I/V, p.12

Well, I definitely would like to move to a house with a garden, in a nice area; it would be nice.

COMM

So what's caused the worsening housing conditions of the poor?

First, demand has been rising. Over the 1980s, the number of low income households has been

steadily increasing. The number of separated or divorced single parents like Yvonne has risen by a third.

So there are more and more separate households seeking a home of their own. For some, even an estate like this is an improvement.

ALISON, 662/1, p.30

There is a risk that I'll get a flat what might have damp and...rain might come in, on a nasty estate. But...anything must be better than this. Anything has got to be better than living in one room, sharing cooking facilities.

COMM

On top of this, the number of unmarried single parents has risen by around 100,000.

ALISON, V/O, 650/1, p.12

I get really bad fits of depression and I...I've never had them before.

ALISON, V/O, 651/1, p.13

I get very tearful. I can be just talking to someone and they can say something and I can just feel like I want to cry. But I know now that other people feel the same way, 'cos they were in the same boat as I'm in.

ALISON, SYNC, 651/1, p.12

You go to someone's house and you can see what they've got; they've got a home. And when you come back to this room that is when it really hits you.

COMM

Like the other homeless families at this centre in Bayswater, Alison's chance of a home at all has declined sharply.

Successive post-war governments

had invested in public housing in order to keep pace with rising demand.

But since 1983, the number of new council houses has fallen dramatically from 35,000 to only 8,000 today.

And the sale of 1 million council houses has also reduced the number of properties available.

Establisher of

Peter Camp

Peter Camp is the Director of Housing in Lambeth, the council responsible for housing Alison and Ricky.

PETER CAMP, V/O, 711/1, p4

Local authorities were seen as the main provider for accommodation for the people in the lowest level of incomes in our society. Consistently over the '80s the ability of those people to get access to housing has reduced.

PETER CAMP, SYNC, 712/1, p9

This situation has occurred really because of the Government policies around right to buy, where we've seen the better properties sold off, and the lack of investment in our new build programme. So that the actual supply of accommodation has substantially reduced at a time when demand has been ever increasing on us.

Alison at Bayswater

COMM

The Government's aim has been for the private sector to step in to reduce the dependency on public housing.

A whole series of measures have been taken to encourage home ownership, especially among first-time buyers. But this option is way out of reach of the poor. On benefit, Alison struggles just to get by.

ALISON, SYNC, 658/1, p.23

I don't like saying it, but I am poor. The money the Social Security gives me is just not enough to go round. It's...I don't know how they expect someone with a child to live...live off of it because it's just ridiculous, especially if the baby's in nappies. Because it just doesn't go nowhere.

Yvonne in

COMM

council offices

Yvonne's problem is not the lack of a home, but its condition.

ACTUALITY CHAT

There's just a build-up of condensation; especially when the winter comes the toilet, the paper seems to come off, peel off. Then I've got fungus on top of my ceiling, in the hallway.

MAN

Right. It might be due to condensation and not damp.

YVONNE

Well, the toilet is pretty damp anyway, in the winter it's very damp.

MAN

And you get fungus on the walls.

YVONNE

Yes, get fungus on the wall, especially in the bathroom. You have to actually wipe the ceiling off. How long will it sort of take?

MAN

I can't promise you a time period. What they'll have to do is to send an inspector out, to look at what needs doing.

YVONNE

How long will it take for the inspector to come round?

MAN

They should be able to give you a better timescale than me.

YVONNE

OK.

MAN

OK?

YVONNE

Right, that's fine. Thank you

very much.

COMM

With the best council properties sold off under the Government's Right to Buy policy, and older estates deteriorating rapidly, the poor have become increasingly trapped.

PETER CAMP, SYNC, 711/1, p3

The conditions on the estates have run down, essential repairs we've not been able to carry out, improvement work we'd like to have seen has had to have been delayed. And which has meant a general deterioration of the quality and standard of living of the people living there.

ACTUALITY CHAT WITH KEISHA AND

KIM ON FLAT

KIM

If I get a flat, I'm going to get those...the coat(??) ones right

are not too bad; well, that's a bit dodgy. Coat(??) ones has got ice in.

KEISHA

Yeah.

KIM

Like it's really bad like. If I could get a flat, I just want to get a flat and then I could put things like this in.

KEISHA

Yeah. £23.50 for that coat(??) you know.

KIM

Yeah. Because even if we begged up the money like, we could like buy these things, but we've got nowhere to put them, and I really like...

COMM

The problem for the young street homeless stems from a number of different trends.

In the past, Kim and Keisha would probably have found shared housing in the private rented

sector.

The Government has tried to encourage Private landlords by lifting rent controls. While rents have soared, the number of private flats has continued to fall. They have been sold into home ownership for the better off.

RACHEL, SYNC

It's very hard for anyone to get into the private sector if you're on a low income or if you've got no money up front. You do need quite a few hundred pounds to get into a flat or a bedsit now. Some places won't take people who are unemployed. So it is difficult to get into the privately rented sector, and it's quite soul destroying, you know, over those years, to just keep trying and trying and trying, and getting nowhere.

COMM

And secondly, in 1988, private flats became totally out of reach when the Government withdrew benefits from most 16 and 17 year olds.

KIM, V/O, SYNC, 534, p.17

I haven't got any money,

SYNC

you know, there's nothing growing off trees.

COMM

Finally, access to breakfast hotels was restricted. Together with the benefit cut, this left more and more homeless.

PETER CANTOR, V/O, 510, p15

Over a short period we saw a rapid change in the way that people were surviving, shooting from 10 or 20 per cent sleeping out on the street, to something like 60, 70 per cent.

Kim begging

COMM

Slates 483-488(?)

The Government hoped the young homeless would return to their parents. But this is not a serious option for most of the single homeless. Kim was brought up in care.

KIM, W/T V/O I/V, p38

Spare any change please. I don't want to be in care or anything; I'd rather live on the streets you know. So, basically, even if it's snowing and thundering, and there's a big stormy gale, like there was ages ago, I was out in that, I'd stay out. Basically it's better than where I'm coming from originally.

PETER CANTOR, V/O, 509/2, p7

Over 40 per cent of the young people who use New Horizon at the moment come from a local authority care background. And they're not getting the support and advice or material

help to actually set themselves up as independent young people.

In terms of those coming from families, I think a recent survey done at a night shelter in the centre of London found that something like 80 or 90 per cent didn't have a home that they could go back to because they'd been evicted, they'd fallen out with their family; they'd suffered abuse of some sort.

YVONNE, V/O, SYNC

The place is very cold.

According to my doctor the kids' health would suffer if I didn't get more heating.

COMM

A major consequence of these worsening housing conditions has been to add to the already greater health problems of the poor.

YVONNE, V/O

My eldest daughter, she suffers from asthma; she constantly had very heavy chesty colds and coughs, and she had to use her inhaler.

Alison at clinic

COMM

Official figures on health inequalities are no longer published. But the consensus among experts is that they have widened over the 1980s.

SI 732+

ACTUALITY CHAT

LETTIE BLYTH

Does he stay healthy?

ALISON

Well except for the chest infections and the asthma.

LETTIE

Has he had those since he was born, or...

ALISON

He's always been a very chesty baby, but the asthma he's got a bit worse since we've been in bed

and breakfast.

LETTIE

He runs about a lot, he seems quite energetic.

ALISON

He's hyperactive. Well what can I do? I can't...all the space he's got is in my room, because I can't let him outside because of the...I've got stairs down, stairs going down and stairs going up.

LETTIE

I know. It's...

LETTIE BLYTH, V/O, SYNC, 740/1

p2

In places where a lot of families with a lot of young children are fairly crowded together children do seem to suffer from a higher incidence of respiratory infection.

p3

Children get very upset and depressed at being very confined, understimulated, lack of space, and with parents who are under

considerable stress.

p6

So overall their whole life pattern is...is put back. And they often leave the hotel situation for permanent rehousing with a lot of stressful memories and behavioural problems which still need sorting out.

Sleeping

COMM

Sleeping rough also takes its toll on Kim's health.

KIM, 494, p22

Waking up several times during the night, you get really tired during the day, and sometimes you can't sleep in the day, so you get moody, like, you get headaches: I get headaches and I feel ill, and then you don't eat properly because you're too tired so you sleep instead of eating. You miss your dinners and meals and things, it's terrible. It just ruins your health basically.

And it's cold, you know, and I've caught a cold from being moved around all over the place. So basically it's useless like, it's bad.

DAVID CANTOR, V/O, SYNC, 509/2,

P.10

Well I think it's very noticeable that after somebody's been in London for a month or two, that they start physically to look ill; I mean quite often they start getting colds and flu, they're not eating as well. They certainly get to a stage where they're more outgoing in terms of trying to get what they want. They start off, they're very shy, and all the rest of it, and they are soon very frustrated, and start to get angry.

I mean, it's obvious that they're under a lot of mental stress.

Park sequence with Kim

ACTUALITY CHAT

KIM

Where did you sleep last night?

MAN

Oh, I slept in some doorway like.
The rest of the lads went down to
the car park, do you know what I
mean like, but I can't sleep in
there because of my chest, you
know what I mean. All the fumes
and that, I have to sleep in the
fresh air you know what I mean?
So I have my sleeping bag round
me...

Put COMM in middle

COMM

of ACTUALITY CHAT

Last month, new steps were

STARTS AFTER "I have

taken to reduce the soaring

to sleep in the fresh air"

number of people sleeping rough.

The Government provided funds for
more hostel places and temporary
flats for the homeless.

But it's come too late for Kim.

Her life has already been marred
by two years on the street.

MORE ACTUALITY CHAT

KIM

I was sleeping down the Strand right, me and the other guy, we were sleeping there and someone came and tipped loads of Coke over us. And we were just sleeping there, not doing nothing, and they just soaked us. People are just stupid.

COMM

Yvonne

And nothing has been done to improve Yvonne's chances of escape from her run-down estate. This would depend on much higher investment in new public housing.

ADD Dog Shot?

YVONNE, V/O, W/T

Change balcony shot

It is very depressing. I mean sometimes, when you've actually gone out, or when you've been to somewhere that looks nice and tidy, and in place and everything, and when you've actually had to come back to the

dump and the rubbish and everything, it is very distressing and depressing.

YVONNE, SYNC, 634/1, p28

Sometimes you do get down. I'd like to move eventually, and have a nice back garden for the children; somewhere where they can play.

Alison in flat

COMM

More public housing would also be needed to reduce the growing number of families stuck in bed and breakfast. But this is not part of the Government's plan.

ALISON, SYNC, V/O, 662/1, p28

I just can't take another 12 months living in this small room. And I don't really think Ricky can, 'cos if they're saying to me I'll be here another 12 months, Ricky'll be nearly 4 by the time I come out of it. And I can't -

it's not fair on him, a 4 year old, living in one room with his mother. I...when I explained to them they just said, 'Everything takes its time'. I am...they said everyone's in the same boat as me. So I don't know what I'm going to do; I just can't take much more living in bed and breakfast.

V/O over pan shot

END OF PROGRAMME 4