

PERSMAP

NA
I, DANIEL BLAKE

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
**ONE OF KEN LOACH'S
BEST FILMS**
SCREEN DAILY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
BRILLIANT
THE GUARDIAN

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
**TOTALLY UNMISSABLE
CINEMA**
THE HOLLYWOOD NEWS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
POWERFUL
VARIETY

SIXTEEN FILMS IN WHY NOT PRODUCTIONS PRESENTATION

PUBLIEKSPRIJS
BESTE EUROPESE FILM
SAN SEBASTIAN FILMFESTIVAL

OFFICIELE SELECTIE
COMPETITIE
CANNES FILMFESTIVAL

**SORRY
WE MISSED YOU**

REGIE **KEN LOACH** SCENARIO **PAUL LAVERTY**

CASTING: KRIS WITZHEN, BEBBIE HONEYWOOD, RHYSS STONE, KATIE PROCTOR, SIXTEEN FILMS, WHY NOT PRODUCTIONS, WILD BUNCH, BEI, BOC FILMS, LES FILMS DU FLEUVE, FRANCE 2 CINÉMA, CANAL+, FRANCE TÉLÉVISIONS, LE PACÉ, CINÉART CINÉ, +100 AND BE TV
PRODUCTION DESIGNER: FERGUS O'LEGG, PHOTOGRAPHY: ROBBIE RYMAN, EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: PASCAL CAUCHETEUX, GREGOIRE SORLAT, VINCENT MARAZAL, SCREENPLAY: PAUL LAVERTY, PRODUCER: REBECCA O'RIEEN, DIRECTOR: KEN LOACH
COSTUME DESIGNER: JOANNE SLATER, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: DAVID GILCHRIST, LINE PRODUCER: EMMA HEAR, MCMANUS, EDITOR: JONATHAN MORRIS
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www.cineart.nl

VANAF 14 NOVEMBER IN DE BIOSCOOP

SORRY WE MISSED YOU

Een film van Ken Loach

SORRY WE MISSED YOU is de nieuwe film van tweevoudig Gouden Palm winnaar Ken Loach (I, DANIEL BLAKE). De film vertelt een eerlijk en ontroerend verhaal, over een gezin dat zich staande probeert te houden in het hedendaagse Engeland.

Ricky (Kris Hitchen) en Abby (Debbie Honeywood) wonen met hun kinderen, hun 15-jarige zoon Seb en 11-jarige dochter Liza Jane, in Newcastle. Sinds de economische crisis worstelt het gezin om rond te komen. Abby werkt lange dagen in de thuiszorg, Ricky heeft zijn baan in de bouw verloren en verdient bij met verschillende klussen. In een poging hun financiële situatie te verbeteren en weer stabiliteit terug te krijgen in het gezin, besluit Ricky een franchisedeal te sluiten met een groot postorderbedrijf. Als eigen baas gaat hij aan de slag als pakketbezorger. Maar al snel is de werkdruk torenhoog en raakt hij verstrikt in regels en protocollen. Wat een kans op een betere toekomst had moeten zijn, hangt als een molensteen om de nek van het gezin.

SORRY WE MISSED YOU is na een omvangrijk oeuvre de laatste film van de Britse regisseur Ken Loach. Hij won in zijn carrière twee keer de prestigieuze Gouden Palm op het Filmfestival van Cannes: in 2006 voor het oorlogsdrama THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY en in 2016 voor het door publiek omarmde I, DANIEL BLAKE. SORRY WE MISSED YOU werd eveneens geselecteerd voor de hoofdcompetitie van het Filmfestival van Cannes.



Speelduur: 100 min. - Land: Verenigd Koninkrijk, Frankrijk, België - Jaar: 2019 - Genre: Drama
Releasedatum bioscoop: 14 november 2019

Meer over de film:

<https://www.cineart.nl/films/sorry-we-missed-you>

Persmaterialen:

<https://www.cineart.nl/pers/sorry-we-missed-you>

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KEN LOACH - BIOGRAFIE

Ken Loach was born in 1936 in Nuneaton. He attended King Edward VI Grammar School and went on to study law at St. Peter's Hall, Oxford. After a brief spell in the theatre, Loach was recruited by the BBC in 1963 as a television director. This launched a long career directing films for television and the cinema, from *Cathy Come Home* and *Kes* in the sixties to *Land and Freedom*, *Sweet Sixteen*, *The Wind that Shakes the Barley* (Palme d'Or, Cannes Film Festival 2006), *Looking for Eric*, *The Angels' Share* and *I, Daniel Blake* (Palme d'Or, Cannes Film Festival 2016).



GESELECTEERDE FILMOGRAFIE

- | | | | |
|------|---|------|---|
| 2019 | <i>SORRY, WE MISSED YOU</i> | 2000 | <i>BREAD AND ROSES</i>
Temecula Valley International Film Festival
Jury Award, Best Feature Film |
| 2016 | <i>I, DANIEL BLAKE</i>
Cannes Film Festival - Palme D'Or
BAFTA Film Award - Outstanding British
Film of the Year | 1998 | <i>MY NAME IS JOE</i>
Cannes Film Festival - Best Actor, Peter
Mullan
British Independent Film Awards - Best
Director |
| 2014 | <i>JIMMY'S HALL</i> | 1996 | <i>CARLA'S SONG</i> |
| 2013 | <i>THE SPIRIT OF 45</i> | 1995 | <i>LAND OF FREEDOM</i>
César Awards, France - Best Foreign Film
Cannes Film Festival - Prize of the
Ecumenical Jurys |
| 2012 | <i>THE ANGELS' SHARE</i>
Cannes Film Festival - Jury Prize
San Sebastián International Film Festival -
Audience Award | 1994 | <i>LADYBIRD, LADYBIRD</i>
Berlin International Film Festival
Prize of the Ecumenical Jury |
| 2011 | <i>ROUTE IRISH</i> | 1993 | <i>RAINING STONES</i>
Cannes Film Festival - Jury Prize
Evening Standard British Film Awards - Best
Screenplay |
| 2009 | <i>LOOKING FOR ERIC</i>
Cannes Film Festival - Prize of the
Ecumenical Jury | 1991 | <i>RIFF-RAFF</i>
Cannes Film Festival - FIPRESCI Prize |
| 2007 | <i>IT'S A FREE WORLD</i>
Venice Film Festival - Golden Osella - Best
Screenplay | 1990 | <i>HIDDEN AGENDA</i> |
| 2006 | <i>THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY</i>
Cannes Film Festival - Palme d'Or
European Film Awards - European
Cinematographer
Irish Film and Television Awards - Best Film | 1986 | <i>FATHERLAND</i> |
| 2004 | <i>AE FOND KISS</i>
César Awards, France - Best European
Union Film | 1981 | <i>LOOKS AND SMILES</i>
Cannes Film Festival – Special Mention of
the Ecumenical Jury |
| 2002 | <i>SWEET SIXTEEN</i>
Cannes Film Festival - Best Screenplay | 1979 | <i>BLACK JACK</i> |
| 2001 | <i>THE NAVIGATORS</i>
Venice Film Festival - Children and Cinema
Award | 1971 | <i>FAMILY LIFE</i>
Berlin Film Festival - FIPRESCI Prize |
| | | 1969 | <i>KES</i> |
| | | 1967 | <i>POOR COW</i> |

INTERVIEW KEN LOACH

Where did the idea for *SORRY WE MISSED YOU* You come from?

After we'd finished *I, DANIEL BLAKE*, I was thinking, "Well, maybe that's the last film." But when we were going to the food banks for our research many of the people that were coming in were working – part time, zero-hours contracts. This is a new type of exploitation. The so-called gig economy, the self-employed or agency workers, the casualised workforce just continued to feature in mine and Paul's [Lavery] ongoing daily conversations. Gradually the idea emerged that maybe there was another film that might be worth making – not exactly a companion piece to *I, DANIEL BLAKE* but a related film.

Were you always thinking that there would be two strands to this story?

No, I think what grew in Paul's mind was not only the level of exploitation for the individual worker but the consequences for family life and how everything refracts into personal relationships. The middle class talk about work-life balance; the working class are stuck with necessity.

Is this a new problem or is it an old one in a different guise?

It is only new in the sense that it's modern technology that's being used. The most sophisticated technology is in the driver's cab, dictating the routes, allowing the customer to know exactly where the parcel is that they've ordered and its estimated time of arrival. It will arrive, if it's a so-called 'preciser', within a certain hour. The consumer is sitting at home tracking this vehicle all round the neighbourhood. It's an extraordinarily sophisticated piece of equipment with signals bouncing off a satellite somewhere. The result is one person knocking themselves out in a van going from pillar to post, from street to street, running to meet the demands of this equipment. The technology's new; the exploitation is as old as the hills.

How did you research the film?

Paul did most of the research, then we met some people together. Drivers were often quite reluctant to speak: they didn't want to risk their jobs. The depots were difficult places to get into. A very helpful man from a depot not too far away from where we were filming, who was the manager, gave us very precise advice in setting up the depot itself. The drivers in the film are almost all current drivers or ex-drivers. When we were doing those scenes, they knew the game; they knew the process, how it worked and the pressures of getting it done fast.

What struck you most from your research?

I think what is surprising is the hours that people have to work to make a decent living, and the insecurity of their work. They're self-employed, and in theory it's their business, but if something goes wrong they take all the risk. Quite easily something can go wrong with the van and they get the equivalent of the sanctions on Daniel Blake if they're not there to deliver the service. Then they can lose a lot of money very, very quickly. For care workers like Abby it's the idea that they can be out doing visits for 12 hours but only get six or seven hours pay on the minimum wage.

Introduce us to the characters in *SORRY WE MISSED YOU*.

Abby's a mother in a good marriage – she and Ricky are friends, there's affection between them, they trust each other and they both try to be good parents. Her problem is trying to care for her kids in the way she'd like to: she's working so hard that she's not there, so most of the time she's having to give instructions to the kids over the phone. Of course, that tends to go wrong because kids are kids and she's not back till late at night. She's relying on buses, which are not that frequent, so a lot of time is spent hanging around at bus stops.

Who is her employer? Where does the pressure come from?

The employer is an agency. The care work is sub-contracted by the local council through an agency or a private healthcare company. They get the contract because they put in a low price. The authorities turn a blind eye to the fact that the low price is based on exploitation of the people doing the work. It's much harder for the people who are working for a private healthcare company to get organised into a union than workers who work for a local authority and have proper contracts.

Who is Ricky?

Ricky's a grafter, as he says himself. He was a building worker, probably served his time in one of the trades, probably plumbing or joinery. He was doing quite well – they'd saved enough for a deposit for a house. That coincided with the collapse of banks and building societies that left people like Ricky and Abby unable to get a mortgage. The building trade suffered, Ricky lost his job, and since then he's gone from job to job. He can turn his hand to anything. When we meet him, Ricky decides he wants to work as a delivery driver, where it seems that you can make a lot of money. The family's still in rented accommodation, they are not making enough to get out of debt, they've been existing hand to mouth for a few years, so this is a chance of working like hell for two or three years, get a deposit for a house, and then be able to live a normal life again. That's his plan. He's an engaging guy, very easy to get on with, and being from Manchester, he's a Manchester United fan, committed to making a success of his new job. People in Ricky's position have to exploit themselves, no need for a foreman to crack the whip. They have to run themselves into the ground to make a decent income: the ideal situation for an employer.

What is Abby and Ricky's family set-up?

There are two kids. Seb is 16 and neither parent is there to keep an eye on him. He's going off the rails. He's got talents, artistic and creative, that they don't know about. What they do know is that he's bunking off school, and he is getting into trouble. The sparks fly between father and son. Ricky is a bit old school – he just tells Seb what to do and expects him to do it, and of course Seb doesn't. A confrontation is bound to happen. Then there's Liza Jane. She's a very bright kid. She's the peacemaker in the family with a quirky sense of humour and red hair like her dad. She just wants everyone to be happy. She tries to keep the family together when it's all firing off in different directions.

How was the shoot in Newcastle?

As usual we shot it in sequence. The actors didn't know how it was going to end. Each episode was news to them. We rehearsed the family beforehand so that they had worked out something of the relationships between them. After that we shot it pretty quickly, in five and a half weeks. One of the main challenges was getting the parcel delivery depot right. We

had to know the exact process and for everyone to know exactly what their job was and then we shot it like a documentary. We worked out who were going to be the people who received the parcels when they first came in, the sorters, who were the drivers bringing their vans in, what happened at each stage, the whole chain of events. Fergus and the design team did a brilliant job to enable that to happen. Choreographing it was a challenge because it was a big, echoey working depot in an industrial estate. But the guys were terrific. They got stuck in and did it with a real relish. I hope that in the shots you can see that they know what they're doing, they're doing it fast, they're doing it under the eagle eye of the depot manager who cracks the whip. Everything had to be authentic. Nobody had to pretend. We wanted the urban landscape of Newcastle to be present in the film but not so that it looked like tourist shots, not just to show off the city. I think you do get a sense of the landscape: you see the old terraces, you see the tower blocks and you see the city centre with its classic architecture.

What questions do you think are posed by *SORRY WE MISSED YOU*?

Is this system sustainable? Is it sustainable that we acquire our shopping through a man in a van knocking himself to pieces 14 hours a day? Is that, in the end, a better system than going to shops ourselves and talking to the shopkeeper? Do we really want a world in which people are working under such pressure, with the knock-on effects on their friends and their family and the narrowing of their lives? This is not the market economy failing – on the contrary, this is a logical development for the market, brought about by harsh competition to cut costs and maximise profit. The market is not interested in our quality of life. The market is interested in making money and the two are not compatible. The working poor, people like Ricky, Abby and their families, pay the price. But in the end, all this counts for nothing unless the audience believes in the people on screen, cares for them, smiles with them and shares their troubles. It is their lived experiences, recognised as authentic, that should touch us.



INTENTIEVERKLARING PAUL LAVERTY (SCENARIO)

I found the notebooks. One page had a question. What if... we have a family that sleeps in the same house; they are only a few feet away from each other for hours on end. But they hardly see each other at all. At least during the daylight hours.

The Turner family felt like they lived a safe distance from Daniel Blake, although in the same city.

I remember sitting beside Ken some 20 years ago as we gave interviews. He said there was “something of an iceberg about a film; you might not see it all, but you sense its weight under the surface.” It has always stuck with me.

The endless doodles, nonsenses, and possibilities in notebooks before the writing are for me the presence under the surface; sometimes they will never reach the script, never mind celluloid, but somehow they are there, even if we eventually work against them, or contradict them.

I found the following snippets as characters and bones of a story emerged through the mist. And they changed through time.

Liza Jane, age 10 or 11. Sometimes she feels like David Attenborough looking for signs of human existence in the stillness of the house. She loves nature programmes and has a flying imagination that keeps her company on the long hours she is by herself. She knows her family are out there somewhere... signs of half eaten food (dirty plates from breakfast) cast off skin (sweaty t shirts). Both Mum and Dad have to go out hunting, a long and laborious task that leaves them, just like the big cats, often grumpy, empty-handed, and licking their wounds...

Seb, aged 15, has his head inside a hoodie, even when he's not wearing it. His secret wish is invisibility. Give me peace, no sermons, just let me work things out for myself. Seb and Liza Jane are close, and most evenings they eat together alone watching videos. Some make them laugh, but some leave them empty.

Seb is much more insightful than he appears. He has his sister's brains— they are both sharp, but he is determined to hide it. It gives him deep satisfaction to see how this riles his father, Ricky; he knows the buttons to press and often does. He can't resist the impulse and doesn't know why. At least when his Dad is shouting at him, he's present. A few years back they laughed a lot. He won't admit it, but he misses his quiet chats with Abby who seems to sense what he feels without ever asking. Seb is consumed by his passion, graffiti, after flirting with parkour. As he heads into the night he can burn off the anger fizzing inside. He feels free, and wild, everything his father isn't. He thinks in images, not words.

How does Seb feel when one of his closest mates disappears out of his life?

Ricky and Abby remember that first night they met at a rave in Morecambe. Instant connection. Ease.

Northern Rock Building Society: how the financial crisis ended their hopes of owning their own home. If Northern Rock had collapsed just one month later, it would have been a life changer. Abby cried her eyes out the entire night their mortgage fell through. That house was theirs, and her first child would be born there. But it wasn't to be. It still seems out of reach as moving from one rented house to another has gnawed away at her sense of security. Some people dream of winning the lottery. Abby dreams of decorating a house one day in her favourite colours. Her choice, not a landlord's. And never moving again.

Ricky: a hungry searching quality to him; he has never really found his spot. His last job was the last straw: an assistant landscaper... he worked at twice the speed of his fellow worker who got promoted to supervisor. That's fucking it! Told them to stick it. He's an impulsive man who takes pride in being a grafter, and never having taken a penny off the State. Just as well. If he was forced to the Job Centre, some security guard would be likely to get a punch in the gub.

In a rattling old van full of labourers dozing off after a day's work, Ricky would imagine Seb at Uni. The first in his family, followed by Liza Jane, top of her class. They won't have hands like mine.

Abby has always admired Ricky's independent streak. There was always a whiff of danger behind the banter; she could sense his loyalty to her. But as time moved on, and life impinged, she could feel annoyance in her gut; sometimes he doesn't notice what is going on in front of his eyes. Misses the signs. Leaps before he thinks.

Compassion runs through Abby's veins as much as blood. Where did that big heart come from? Even the most demented of her patients can sense it; how else could they comb her hair. (The secret to her working life is revealed in a flash of anger at a bus stop to a total stranger).

Over these past months she has been haunted by a dream.

She often feels she spends more time in other peoples' houses than her own. Is that it, for the rest of her working life? Will it always feel so tight, so little choice; how she loved her little car, how she misses it. Not just for herself; she feels that the old people she works with have the right to see the same face for their last days. For some of them she is the single most important person in their lives. She tries not to miss their funerals when the time comes. But how she misses time at home with her kids.

She can't bear swearing; conflict reminds her of her own childhood.

Another character emerged. The heavy-duty van with more comfort, more load capacity than competitors.

The van gets the job done.

Ricky can feel his spirits rise. No more constipated bosses, no more lazy slackers to slow him down. He will work like a dog, outperform; he'll be on that road with his van – a freelancer, a warrior.

William Blake warned us of “the mind-forg’d manacles.”

The gobbledygook contractual language of the new workplace that Ricky has to sign.

The scanner; in the palm of a hand... a mind-blowing piece of sophistication and brilliance from some of the sharpest brains in the world. For what purpose?

Enough.

In other words, a story is one big dumping ground; we have to sieve it, interrogate it, challenge it, tie it all up and make connections, both inside the house and outside that front door.

We do that at every stage of the film, from our first daydreams over a coffee, to layers of talent coming on board and making it their own. From a glint in a child’s eye, to the faintest hint of minimalist sound.

It always feels like one long wrestling match with a giant slippery eel.

The Turners. Only four of them, but each family is an ocean of possibilities.

It all feels very fragile, and at the end of the day it is a bet, never a thesis.

INTERVIEW REBECCA O’BRIEN (PRODUCENT)

How did Sixteen Films get from *I, DANIEL BLAKE* to *SORRY WE MISSED YOU*?

We didn’t expect *I, DANIEL BLAKE* to have the impact that it did, but with over 700 community screenings and a continued desire for people to talk about it, and to use the film as a fundraiser, it became a sort of totem. It was discussed in parliament and became a point of reference. People recognised themselves or people they knew in that film, and I think that a lot of people had been afraid to talk about the humiliation that the system put them through. It made it possible for people to feel that they weren’t alone in their situation. We did so many talks and discussions about *I, DANIEL BLAKE*, met so many people who spoke of their experience, that it gave us the impetus to make *SORRY WE MISSED YOU*. The conversations between Ken and Paul continued. Paul particularly got into the issues around insecure jobs and realised that there was another story to be told. What fitted so well was that whereas *I, DANIEL BLAKE* deals with the world of benefits and welfare, *SORRY WE MISSED YOU* is about the world of work and the people Theresa May would call “just about managing.” Then Paul wrote the characters of Ricky, Abby and their two kids.

Why did you choose to return to Newcastle to make it?

Newcastle is compact and comparatively easy to get around. That does make a difference: whereas in some cities you might take an hour to get from one place to another in Newcastle that journey might take 15 or 20 minutes. Also, it’s got a very strong cultural identity, while at the same time representing all of Britain in microcosm: it’s a city with the highs and lows, good things and bad things about it that any British city might have. Because

we got to know it through *I, DANIEL BLAKE*, it made it much easier for us to come back here. We know the infrastructure and the people to work with, and value the warmth of their welcome and enthusiasm.

Is *SORRY WE MISSED YOU* a specifically British story, or is it universal?

Britain is certainly not the only country that is instigating zero-hours contracts and operating systems like our care system. 'Precarious working' is to be found across the whole of Europe. We all buy things online, get them delivered by courier and everybody knows somebody who has been through the care system – a granny or a mother or a sister or a brother. We've seen it both being wonderful and terrible. We hope this film will show what both of those systems do to the children of overworked parents who don't have enough time for them.

What bearing does the global financial crisis of 2008 have on the story?

It's our backstory. I think in 2008 our couple might just have been able to get their mortgage together, but then banks and building societies collapsed and those who suffered were the most vulnerable. Where they might have had a mortgage, and might have had a place of their own, instead they're stuck living in temporary rented accommodation. The other way it affected them is in the austerity programme. Abby and Ricky are both working, they should be fine, but they are underpaid. Ricky is desperate to break through and make something more for himself, so he can provide more for his family.

How has *SORRY WE MISSED YOU* been financed?

Once again it has been a co-production with the wonderful Why Not and Wild Bunch in France, who've both been incredibly supportive. BBC Films have come back on board again, as well as the BFI. Also, thanks to the BFI's Locked Box scheme we were able to recoup some money from *I, DANIEL BLAKE* which has been invested in *SORRY WE MISSED YOU*. It's a great way to recycle lottery money and it means *I, DANIEL BLAKE* has helped to pay for this film.

Is it becoming harder to get films like yours off the ground?

It is getting increasingly difficult to make independent British films. The audience has dwindled globally for independent films in recent years. That's another knock-on effect from the financial crisis, because after 2008 sales halved. People are far more risk-averse now. Films are having to be funded through all sorts of deals, equity breaks and patchwork funding. Luckily, with Why Not and Wild Bunch as partners that's not been the case with our recent films: I'm in a very privileged position as a producer. It would be much more difficult to be starting out and doing the same thing.

You often work with the same crew. What does that bring to the production?

In terms of the look, the production design, the editing and the music, having those creative elements coming from the same sources does give a continuity. There's a shared vision of how the film should be that is consistent. Overall, I think it helps to have the look being similar, because if you put Ken's films together it is one long story of our lives. I would like to think that in 200 years' time, if somebody wanted to have a look at the social history of our era, they might get something out of seeing 50 years' worth of Ken Loach's and the writers' films.

INTERVIEW KRIS HITCHEN (RICKY)

Introduce us to Ricky...

Ricky's a hardworking bloke who just wants the best for his family. When we meet him it's a very tricky moment because he's just started out in a new business venture and there are things going on with his son Seb and with his family in general. He's always been the boss of the household and the main breadwinner – he always thinks he's got the answers. But now he's reached a point where he's starting to doubt himself and question whether the decisions he's made were the right ones for his family. It means he's coming apart at the seams a little because for the first time he's starting to ask himself what's it all about? What's the point?

What's Ricky's background?

He's done a lot of labouring jobs, semi-skilled building work, always worked in a team on building sites and done some landscape gardening. He can turn his hand to anything really on a building site just to make a wage. He's living in Newcastle – he came up here from Manchester after falling in love with Abby when he met her at a rave club and then they ended up having two children. A large part of his story is he's gone through the gamut of trying to get his own house and get a mortgage but obviously it's not worked out because of the Northern Rock collapse. When the delivery job idea comes along it's like this is his chance, a second bite of the apple. He's getting older so he's got to do it now, he feels – a few years' hard graft to sort him and his family out.

What does he think he's getting into when Maloney, the depot manager, makes him the initial offer to work as a driver?

He kind of walks into it blindly because he's heard good stories from his mate who works at the same depot and he thinks that it's going to be a really good deal for him. With the work ethic he's got, if he can get stuck in then he can generate the finances so that he can get his own house. Then he can finally get his family to move forward in the direction that he's always wanted for them.

As the story moves on, what are the pressures that start closing in on him?

It's the pressures of the job to start off with because he's constantly on the move, doesn't have a minute, has to deal with the traffic and has to deal with customers that for want of a better word are all dickheads. Then there's his son who's been getting in trouble at school. Seb has fallen in with the wrong crowd but Ricky's not home much so there's not much he can do about it. Also, his wife's working day has now become longer because she's no longer got a car to get to her care work jobs – and it's all connected because Ricky has sold the car in order to buy his van.

He's kind of created this clusterfuck without even meaning to create it. He's going into it with every good intention and it's just backfired. Now it's one situation after another and they just keep piling up. Ricky's attitude is that if there's a problem then if he works harder that will fix it. But it's not that simple. The system, in a way, has failed him and now it's failing his son too.

How did you get the role?

I began acting seriously when I turned 40. I'd almost paid off my mortgage by then and I'd put my shift in doing 20 years as a self-employed plumber. I'd grafted for years to get my family into a position where I could do this and I asked my wife if it was okay – I had to have her blessing because she had to carry on working. She's ended up doing six days a week so that I could start doing this.

When this job came I had already seen it on Spotlight but they were looking for Newcastle actors only. Then out of the blue my agent got in touch with me and said they're looking for somebody from Manchester or Bolton. Well that's me: I live in Bolton but I'm from Manchester and I have the building background. I went to the auditions, I started chatting with Ken, I thought I blew it and then I got the call to go back and I just went all guns blazing – you only get one shot, don't you? After that it was a really fast process. I got the phone call and I remember I had just been paid for some boilers as well. The last boilers I will ever fit, hopefully.

How have you found the shoot?

I'm really good friends with Steve [Evets, *LOOKING FOR ERIC*]. He's been giving me support. He said, "It's not going to be what you think it's going to be; it's nothing like any other job. You're going to have to think on your feet and deal with what comes at you. Just make sure you keep yourself fit, keep your wits about you, make sure you switch off and have time for yourself." And that's exactly what I did.



INTERVIEW DEBBIE HONEYWOOD (ABBY)

Who is Abby?

Abby's a care worker. She's working every night apart from three nights a week, and she's struggling to get to work because her husband's sold her car. That's a big deal for a care worker living in a city. She's also trying to bring up a family. She's got two school-age kids, so she needs to be there. She's got that mum guilt. Put it all together and Abby's on the edge. She's constantly feeling guilty and she wants to do the best for everybody because she cares

about everyone. She wants to look after the people she cares for in her job, although her priority is her kids and her husband, but she can't do it all.

How did Abby and Ricky end up in this situation?

Ten year ago the Northern Rock crash happened. Ricky was in the building trade. He got made redundant. They had got a mortgage promise on the house but that fell through. Then he just went from job to job. They were just renting, moving from here to there. As for Abby, she's just had this care job where you only get paid for your visits. Together they're just making ends meet, but no more.

How did Abby and Ricky meet?

We met at a rave when we were both very young. I used to come down from Newcastle, he'd come from Manchester. One day I couldn't get back so he took me home in his battered old van, and he charmed his way in, I think.

What is their relationship now?

I think it's like everyday life: in real-life relationships when you're working really hard, everything gets in the way. Everything else becomes a priority. When they do have time to even talk, let alone see one another? I don't know.

How did you come to be cast as Abby?

I'm a learning support assistant and I work in North Tyneside. When I was 40, I joined the agency NE1 4TV because on my bucket list I'd said I wanted to be on the telly. I got a background part on Vera. Then they asked me back and I got five words and that's it. I'm still on the list. Jobs come up all the time. This job came up and it described a woman in her 40s with two teenage kids who's softly spoken, tough, but people all like her. I showed my husband and he said, "It sounds like you, go for it." And as he did that, one of my best friends sent it to me at the same time!

I had to send a little video message on my phone to Ken and then I met him for a drink and then I had audition after audition. I didn't know what part I had until right at the very, very end. I have to say I swore several times when they told us it was one of the leads. I couldn't believe it. It was only a matter of weeks later that we were filming.

Did you meet people who work in care?

Yes, I went to a care home and I started helping out a little bit and asking the girls loads of questions. They sent me on a proper training course, so I trained with proper care workers so that I knew what to do, when and how. When I pushed the ladies that I met – it was all women – most of them have always done that job; it's a vocation, it's important to them. The women that I met are angels. They're like nurses that do everything and to be honest, at some points I was quite shocked at what they do for what they get paid. It was a massive learning curve for me. One thing I did realise is that in the film, when Ricky sells the car, Abby's lost. Because she just hasn't got time to get from place to place and she's not being paid when she's travelling.

What was the shoot like for you?

Well, I'll be dead honest: first week I kept thinking, "Is this really happening? Is this really me?" Second week, panic. Third week, "Okay." It's like a roller coaster. I cannot really

compare it to Vera where I was just in the background washing some glass pipes in the forensic lab. It's been very emotional because I'm a mum, I've got a teenage boy. When you're a mum and it's about a kid, I can feel it because I think, "What if it was me?" My husband was made redundant after the Northern Rock crash. We had just bought a house. I work with kids whose parents have divorced. I've seen all sides of this situation.

How has it been working with Ken Loach?

It's very different because we don't get given everything up front. I get given a scene, I learn what I can, but as time goes on, the story, my bit of it, unfolds. It's all a surprise – sometimes quite literally, like when I've been caring for someone and they throw in a joke, and I wasn't expecting it. But when you understand the way that he [Ken Loach] works, and way he teaches you to work, it's really amazing. I couldn't have had a better person to learn from. I don't know, this could be it for my acting. But I hope not. I'd love to do more.

INTERVIEW RHYS STONE (SEB)

Who are you playing ?

I'm playing Seb Turner. I've got bright ideas that people don't understand. Especially my family, and so there's a bit of scuffling between the family, rows and stuff like that. His family and that don't understand what he's got in store and what he thinks about and all the things like that. He has this talent for spray painting, spraying graffiti. It shows off his creative side. But he's not been going to school so he can do the spray painting. And then there's a bit of arguing with the dad and stuff towards the end.

What's his relationship with Ricky, his Dad?

Just always at each other's throats. I don't know the exact reason. All I know is that the dad doesn't see Seb's point of view. And it gets worse when his Dad isn't there, doing the delivery job. Then it's only him and Liza Jane left in the house by themselves – and Seb's always out. I mean, there's some good moments between the Dad and Seb. Obviously they do love each other, but they're just always at each other's throats.

How did you come to be in this film?

I worked with New Writing North. They helped me get this. I think Ken just came into my school. I met him, shook his hand, said, 'Y alreet?' and this and that. I went to another meeting and it was explaining certain things and then I went to the auditions. Every time I got there, I was giving it my best, and then somehow I got the main lead when I wasn't meant to get the main lead. I was meant to get like the secondary, but I got the main instead so I'm grateful for that, to be honest with you. That's a good step-up, isn't it?

How have you found the process, the way that Ken makes films?

It's good. It's more relaxing. There's less stress on the actors and stuff like that. Less stress on the crew and stuff. It's best to just give your best to be the best really, isn't it? Just to respect the man for what he does. Just pay attention and stuff like that. We did one scene and it was that close to home that I broke down. If it really connects with you that's a good experience to have. That was a big step-up for me.

Did you have to learn graffiti?

Yes, it's me doing it on screen. I had to do a couple of sessions practicing how they do it properly, but I picked it up no problem. This guy called Jim, I think it is. He taught me how to do it. He taught me the difference between the cans and how good they are. Less pressurized. What nibs to use. How quick to do it to get your lines spot-on and things like that.

What's your relationship like now with Debbie, Kris and Katie?

It feels like we're a genuine family. It literally feels like we're a genuine family because I get along with Katie like she was my little sister. I get along with Kris, but there's less shouting! It's more like jokes and stuff like that, and me and Debbie are dead close as well.

What's it like to have to go through several weeks where you don't quite know where it's all going? You haven't seen the full script, so you don't quite know what's going to happen...

It's exciting. It gives you more energy to get up and learn what's happening on that day. Yes, you may be tired or stuff like that, but just because you haven't seen the whole script that doesn't mean you can't pull it off. And you get some good surprises. There was one scene where we were all eating curry together and Kris [Hitchen] said a random line that just came out and it was funny. Obviously, it made me laugh. That's like a genuine emotion instead of being forced because if it was forced, it'd just sound stupid, wouldn't it?

INTERVIEW KATIE PROCTOR (LIZA JANE)

How did you come to be cast in *SORRY WE MISSED YOU*?

Well, my teacher came into my Spanish lesson, and she was like, "Are any girls in here acting?" Originally, I didn't put my hand up, but she knows me, and I've done school plays and stuff, so she was like, "Come on, Katie. I know you like acting." Then we went through and we were interviewed kind of, questions about me and Newcastle and stuff. Then they were interested in me and a few other girls, so we got took through to another audition, met Ken, and then that lead to another and after about four auditions I was told I was in. I didn't know who Liza Jane was at the time.

Where were you when you found out that you got the part?

I was at gymnastics and my mum kept on phoning us. My ringtone is Hotline Bling, so we were joking and all my gymnastic friends were laughing because I was like dancing along to the tune. Then my coach said, "You can go answer it if you want," and I was like, "It's my mum." She says, "You got the part," and I was over the moon. I had only told one friend so I shouted over to her, "I have the part." She ran over and gave me a hug. Nobody else knew what I was talking about.

Had you heard of Ken Loach before this?

I've heard his name before but I hadn't seen any of his films because my mum said they were a bit too adult kind of for me – like more drama and stuff. My mum had seen them so she was telling us about them.

After you found out that you got the part, what were you told about Liza Jane?

I was just told she's a bit younger than you, not smaller but kind of a bit more babyish than I am personally, and just things like that. We're both 12 but her personality is a bit younger than me.

What is Liza Jane's life like?

I'd say she has a bit of a sad life but it's okay. She's got a roof over her head and she can always get food and stuff but it's just a bit sad sometimes. She has a good relationship with her mum and dad. She gets to go out in the van with her dad so that was a good laugh, driving around Newcastle with Kris [Hitchen, Ricky]. She sees less of him once he's started this job as a delivery driver and that probably makes her a bit more sad.

How have you found the process of filming with Ken?

He just wants you to be normal. When I'm on the camera, I don't think like, "What would Katie do?" I think more like, "I'm Liza Jane. What would I do?"



INTERVIEW ROSS BREWSTER (MALONEY)

Who is Maloney ?

He's Ricky's boss at the delivery depot. And if I can use bad language, he's a bit of a prick. He's no nonsense, very straight forward. He makes it very clear what he expects and what he wants, which is for people to do the job and do the job well. If there's a problem, it's up to them to fix it, not to come to him with problems. That's not what he's there for. He's there to get the best people for the business. Then it's up to them to go and do deliveries on his company's behalf, so they can be number one in the country. He doesn't want to hear complaints. He has an "If you don't want to be here, there's the door," kind of attitude. He's quite ruthless.

How did you come to be cast?

I've got absolutely no idea. I was signed up with this NE1 4TV agency and they sent out an email "Looking for serving or retired police officers." With me still being a serving cop, I was like, "I can do that." It didn't say what it was for. I replied to that just saying who I was, where I worked and what I had done within the service. After that I went to meet the casting director and that was how it all happened. When they offered me the job I was still thinking I was going to be playing a policeman. They said, "You're going to play the part of the lead character's boss." I was just like, "What?" From doing absolutely nothing ever before, I'd landed this fantastic role of Maloney in this feature film, which I was just completely blown away by.

Why do you think they were looking for a police officer for the role?

Possibly they wanted somebody who has that capacity I guess internally to switch it on when they need to, to be that bit of a bastard, which is what Maloney is. "My van's broken down." "Well, get it fixed." "I can't." "Well, get somebody else in. I'm not interested." Sometimes you have to be a bit tough like that as a police officer.

What was it like on the shoot?

I'm well aware that there will be very well established actors in the film industry who would give their right arm to work with Ken. I'm very lucky that he's picked me. As a director he's very comforting. Very patient. Very tolerant. Very appeasing. Somebody would come up with an idea, and he'd be like, "That's a great idea, we'll do that." Things would just veer off one way or the other and it would be like, "Right, we're changing this." Then he would be like, "Okay, fine." I don't have anything to compare it to but it was all very relaxed. I wasn't stressed, or worked up about it, or anything at all. It was fantastic: this guy was really brilliant.

What did you think of the gig economy beforehand and how has being involved in *SORRY WE MISED YOU* changed your opinions?

I didn't have any idea about the gig economy, because I'm fortunate enough to be in a career where I'm employed on a full-time basis. I haven't had to have the worries, the fears, the concerns about being self-employed. From what I learned from the film, my God, not a chance. Not if you're going to have a boss like me, Jesus! Or if you don't have that support of a good employer, and a good welfare based system, and occupational health, and your counselling services and everything else that goes on with modern day life... to be on your own, standing on your own in that gig economy with a franchise with only you to care for yourself and you've got your family to provide for. I tell you what, I wouldn't want to do it.

INTERVIEW FERGUS CLEGG (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)

What were the challenges in the script for production design?

The big thing is the scale of the warehouse because the question is where do you pitch it? You've got the mega companies like Amazon and the people that deal with all their products. So, where in the scale of distribution do you angle it? Rather than having something small scale, we wanted to pitch it in the middle somewhere – there are lots of companies around who do distribution for the big companies and we based it on their model. We got as much information as we could from their working methods in terms of the size of the units because they're all quite localized – a company may have two depots in Newcastle that cover half of the city each. They break it down in to areas and then you'd have a warehouse of a certain size that serves that part of the city. We found that location.

What sort of research did you do?

We got some very useful help from a contact who came and helped us plan the mechanics of the operation. He said, "A place like this, I'd have the vans in this arrangement and the process would be this." He talked us through the practices and the layout of the space. We expected it to be much more high tech because you look at images online of these big warehouses and there's lots of conveyors and that sort of stuff, but we're at a much lower level. It's much more manual. You're using trolleys perhaps to move things around but it is pretty much hard graft. It comes in on a big truck, comes off on these tall supermarket trolleys and then everything's man-handled. You see it broken down into postcode groups and then scanned.

How important is the scanner?

The scanner is the key because that's the technology that governs the whole process, in terms of the postcodes, the tracking of the parcels, telling the driver what to do, telling him the route he has to go. That's the boss in the cab that's relaying all this information back to the head office. If they stop for a period, head office can say, "Why has he stopped?" "You're not on track to make that delivery." If there's a before 10:00 or before 12:00 delivery, they know whether they're going to hit it or not, based on that scanner. It's just such an all-encompassing system.

How did you get hold of the scanners themselves?

To buy them new they're over £1,000 each and that's just the hardware. I found a company based near Liverpool who trade in second-hand gear. We hired some equipment from them, in terms of the large scanners that scan the items into the depot and the smaller hand-held devices that the drivers take with them everywhere. Those scanners... They're like a poisoned chalice. Without them, the drivers are lost. But with them, the scanner is their boss. They're notorious. You see stuff online of them freezing and having to be rebooted and that takes 20 minutes and in that time the drivers can't work. Technology is fine when it works, but obviously, when it goes down, everyone's stuffed, and the scanners mean the drivers are having to react to the demands set by head office.

Did your scanners actually work?

Yes! We had to make 2,000-plus parcels and boxes and then table them with barcodes and addresses that could be scanned by the handheld device scanners. We also had to get software specially written to enable the scanners we rented to read the barcodes we had specially printed and bleep (an important element of the incessant nature of the process) so that it felt like they were fully functioning and linked to a complete system. It's all part of Ken's drive for getting as close to reality as possible.

To what extent did you want Newcastle itself to be part of the film?

It was very much about Newcastle. *I, DANIEL BLAKE* was also set in Newcastle but in that film we didn't see much of the city because lots of it was set at night. But it's a fantastic city to look at. When you come in on the train, you've got that fantastic vista of the bridges and St James's Park. The whole place is visual, and as Ricky is out in the van, we get a good picture of the city. Ken wanted to see the variety of deliveries that were taking place, from better-off households down to people who are at the bottom end, all ordering stuff online. It's about the effect it has on the city, the effect it has on the High Street, and the effect of all these vehicles on the roads. It has a profound impact – every time you go up to Newcastle you notice another shop has closed. It's just far easier to shop online. We're all guilty of it.

What look were you after for the film?

It's always following the Ken ethos of keeping it very subdued and letting the actors and the story take precedence. We're secondary, in terms of what we do: the main object is just making the environment real. The Turner family home was quite a thing to find. It needed to be a rented property in an area full of other rented properties, so we went to Benwell, in the West End of Newcastle. We found landlords owning dozens of properties, renting them out to multiple occupancy tenants. It was once a tough area but now it's just about surviving. We found a type of property that is particular to Newcastle called a Tyneside flat. It's a Victorian maisonette that has two front doors side by side. One door goes to the ground floor, one goes up a staircase to the upper floor. That's something Ken settled on quite early: he thought that would be the typical dwelling for them. The landlords do the bare minimum in terms of upkeep so it's just one colour, the same carpet throughout, damp issues, maintenance always very poor, really. The state of the flat is what drives Ricky to want to get out, take on the delivery work and try and get a better place.

How did you approach showing Seb's talent for graffiti?

We got involved with a local graffiti group initially, and then we found a local scenic artist who works on films and TV productions who also does some graffiti. We got him to train Rhys and the other three members of the gang: we took them from having no skills whatsoever to being able to feel confident and actually doing the sequence where they spray the graffiti on the gable wall. Luckily, Rhys seemed to have a talent.

INTERVIEW RAY BECKETT (SOUND RECORDIST)

Why did you want to work on *SORRY WE MISSED YOU*?

I always find Ken's films a wonderful challenge, because you know he's not going to ever be looping anything and there's a good chance that what you do on set is what's going to actually emerge through the cinema speakers. I get a lot of personal satisfaction from managing to pick up the challenge every day from his scenes. On his side, he also organizes things so that I do have a fighting chance of getting the sound on location. No wind machines, cross dialogue or things like that. He knows that will get in the way of the sound.

What were the particular challenges of this script?

In the scene in the depot we've got all these big metal cages rolling around the floor. They were a nightmare generally, but there was one particular time when it was coming right across dialogue, one particular cage. I mentioned it to Ken and he completely changed the choreography of it so that we

got the dialogue in the gaps. It still looks natural, but he manufactured a gap for the sound to come through.

What's your general approach working on Ken's films?

I mic all the actors like any mixer would. I have a personal mic on all of the participants, including some who only have a couple of lines, just to make sure that you've got full coverage. Then once I've got that, I have a microphone away, back from the action, that doesn't pick up any dialogue, it just picks up the general atmos of the place. Like going back to the depot scene in *SORRY WE MISSED YOU*, I had a mic way back over the whole scene. It was a huge, cavernous, very live space. That paid off though, because generally it was getting the sound of the comings and goings of the vans and also the sounds of the trolleys and things mentioned above. But also when Maloney, the foreman, raises his voice, the whole space acted like an echo chamber. That worked out quite well.

A lot of the scenes are more intimate, in smaller rooms and flats. What are the challenges there?

In those scenarios again, it's just a personal mic to get the detail of the voices, but if it is a very, very quiet scene I like to use a boom mic over the top, just to give a warm sense of being right with them. In a way, some of those low dialogue scenes have been my favourite ones when I work with Ken, because when they work, they work really well. But then it's a high-risk strategy, because they're speaking so low and you've got so much gain on the mic that if a car goes by outside for instance it would sound like a tank. Again, Ken will organise things so we get a quiet street.

When you receive the script what stands out as challenges to be overcome?

With this script there were a lot of mobile phone calls. There aren't generally with Ken, but particularly in this one there are. It's very difficult to tap into a mobile phone call unless the person at the other end of the line is on speakerphone and you've got a mic there. One thing we had done in the past is have the person who's making the call have two mobiles. One goes to the actors on screen and the other one comes direct to me out of my phone. So it's two calls happening at the same time. That can work but it can be problematic for reasons beyond our control like the signal dropping out or outside noise. With this one we cheated a bit – we had the actor in a minivan close by so that I could get them on a radio mic. It was much more reliable and you can process that signal to sound like a phone later on.

Do you ever use sound to help facilitate Ken's notorious surprises?

Yes. There was one good scene on this film where the main character disappears into someone's garden to deliver a parcel. In the script there's a dog. It sounds like a rather large dog that barks at him in the garden and he rushes out in fear of his life. That turned out to be a recording of the dog we played through a very big loudspeaker in the garden. The first time we did it as usual Ken didn't tell anybody that the speaker was in there. It really freaked Kris [Hitchen] out!

You've worked on many of Ken Loach's films. How have they evolved?

I think the films have become more specific because the actual argument has become more specific. His early films were more generalized about injustice, but because of what's been going on with austerity I think he and Paul have had to become much more specific – dot all the 'i's and cross all the 't's about what's going on. I think that's probably why *I, DANIEL BLAKE* was so successful, because people could really identify with it. People will identify with this film too. We all get deliveries at our front door. Hopefully, when the film comes out, it will make people understand how insecure these people's lives are made by the gig economy.

INTERVIEW KAHLEEN CRAWFORD (CASTING DIRECTOR)

What was the casting process for *SORRY WE MISSED YOU*?

What Ken and I always do is we talk about the characters and what we're looking for in them. I then thought about people that I knew in Newcastle because of *I, DANIEL BLAKE*, and we talked about names of people that we'd met before that we might meet again. I always contact the agents via Spotlight and put out a breakdown. Initially it was a very general call out for a man in an age range and woman in an age range, the area we were shooting, the accents we were looking for. Then Ken started meeting people, had ten minute chats and if they weren't a fit for the main characters we'd think of them for something down the line.

What is it you're looking for?

Initially it's a very personal gut reaction to people. It's where they're from, where they grew up and how their life has gone in terms of choices they've made and jobs they've done. We do it entirely by chatting to them, just getting a sense of people. Ken just draws things out of people. He and I are always very aligned on who we think is right for this or that character. Once we know that there's something about a person that's drawing us in for this or that character you get them in a room with another actor who's auditioning for a different part. That's when Ken starts giving them scenarios. They're very straightforward and they're nothing to do with the film. That's when you start to see people's instincts coming out and that's when we start to build a picture of what would it look like if someone played this or that part. It's a 100% different way to how you cast most TV or films. We don't cast with a script, and we don't tell the actors much of the detail of a scene. They don't know the journey so they can't come prepared. It means when you're casting you're looking for a certain type of mind, a different skillset.

How did you find Kris Hitchen?

Kris was suggested by his agent although I believe he might have emailed him himself too. Once we'd decided that Ricky could have come from Manchester, Ken went there, did his chats, did recalls and one of them was Kris. He was brilliant: he was the one out of several excellent actors that we felt was closest to the script as Paul had imagined it. Then we started to do the casting in Newcastle with some people we'd already met and it just didn't quite come together. We didn't quite see a family emerging so we decided to meet some people who hadn't acted before. I contacted some people who had been carers, as well as a fantastic agency in Newcastle that really gets Ken's work and I said, "Do you have anyone who's done some background work – maybe a line or two?" They pulled out a few faces, one of whom was Debbie Honeywood. Ken had a chat with Debbie and she walked into the room saying, "Why am I here? I don't understand what I'm doing." When she started doing the conversations her nerves disappeared, she was calm, clear and compassionate. She had all these things that we were looking for, it worked perfectly.

Is it harder casting teenagers and children than adults?

For Ken Loach? Yes. Teenagers are tricky because they're at a funny age. They become very self-conscious and they stop acting. Male teenagers are particularly difficult because they don't go to drama classes – there are far more boys doing sport and science and playing computer games than there are doing drama. When casting children you often come back to children who've been to theatre school. That's not what Ken wants. In this case Newcastle has a small population, they had to

have the right accent, they had to match the family and their voices had to make sense with each other – as well as being able to do the part.

We went to all the theatre groups we could find, we went to agents and asked them about kids, we contacted the high schools, the primary schools. We looked at maps and drew circles of areas in Newcastle to look at. We actively encouraged teachers to give us children who don't present themselves but have got the skills – the teachers are so important in this situation. Then we filmed a lot of chats, took their pictures and did the same thing we did for the adults. You're always trying to be as encouraging as possible. If we see any potential, child or adult, we give them another crack.

INTERVIEW EIMHEAR MCMAHON (LINE PRODUCER)

What was your role on *SORRY WE MISSED YOU*?

In a nutshell a line producer's job is to balance the creative ambition with the financial means. The line producer offers insightful budget directions and then ultimately the producer and director will decide what's best for the film. Because I was professionally 'born' at Sixteen Films I have a 360° perspective of Ken's whole process so that means that I'm very well informed to do my job, and to support Rebecca [O'Brien, producer] when she's making key decisions.

How does this film compare to previous films you have worked on?

Ken, Paul and Rebecca have always set out to capture this completely realistic truth of the story that they're telling. My job coming on at a very early stage is to understand what Ken wants to achieve. I already know how he likes to work so then what's important is making sure the cast and crew understand the process. We're very lucky to have worked with a lot of Heads of Department for a long time so they understand implicitly how he likes to operate. We shoot chronologically and we take our locations across a longer period in order to keep as much flexibility as we can in the telling of the story. Having made *I, DANIEL BLAKE* in 2015 we already had all of our connections in Newcastle and all of Paul's research had been done there, so we had these contacts to work with from the outset. In some ways this did feel like a continuation of *I, DANIEL BLAKE*, although there were some new faces too – we took on some local trainees and again we cast as many parts locally as we could in order to protect the sense of community that's very important to Ken's films. Star trailers, dining buses, big 'Film Unit' signs, hi vis jackets, etc are what people are accustomed to seeing on a normal shoot but that is absolutely what Ken recoils from. We try to operate in a sort of stealth mode throughout. It's much more economical from a budget point of view and it means you concentrate on your schedule; you're less likely to spill over. On this film Ken was sick on one day and we had to stand the crew down. But remarkably we didn't incur an extra day at the end. That demonstrates how in control of his process he is and how all the elements around him function to protect that control.

How early were you involved in the process?

Because I work in-house at Sixteen Films I was aware of the first whiff of an idea, if you like! I helped set Paul off on his early research: he goes away and is quiet for a while, you'll book little bits of travel for him and then one day he'll turn up with a notes document and very quickly after that there'll be a script. So I was aware loosely what the story would be but until I get a script we don't start work on it. It's actually Ken really who does the first schedule and he maintains that schedule throughout. Obviously it's scheduled chronologically, although some scenes can jump out of chronology if it doesn't impact other key parts of the narrative. Then off the back of that schedule I'll get my teeth stuck into a budget. With Rebecca, we'll set the budget level and talk through numbers of supporting

artists, the shape of the locations, what's doable and what isn't – there's a lot of driving in *SORRY WE MISSED YOU*, for example, and that can take time and be cumbersome. As it happened, we just shot it handheld in the front of the van and Ken was strapped in the back.

What were the particular challenges of this film from your point of view?

It was mostly to do with the setting up of the depot. We had to look for a unit that was free far in advance, and in a suitable environment, but also one that they would keep available for us, because there's such a high turnover of rentals in that area. Then it was making it look like a real depot: I think in the end everyone agreed we massively succeeded. Another challenge was working with some people who have difficult home lives or are from disadvantaged backgrounds. You just need to be sensitive to the fact that there are cast members who are not experienced actors. Then, finally, there are the things you just can't predict. We had a 75mm Master Prime lens nicked off the back of a Fedex delivery van. Talk about life imitating art – without knowing the context of a) what had been stolen and b) that we were making a film, the Fedex representative said to me, "Don't worry, the driver is an owner driver and therefore it's fully his responsibility." It just highlighted what a dire situation a lot of these drivers are in with zero protection.

How did this story affect you?

One of the most powerful things for me in the film is that it's not a family in destitution – I think they represent a fairly average family in the UK. I actually found it much more emotional than *I, Daniel Blake* because of the journey that the family goes on. The performances are fantastic and I feel like we all know families who are in this predicament – they're just a couple of pay cheques away from being in a very dire situation.



CAST

Ricky	KRIS HITCHEN
Abby	DEBBIE HONEYWOOD
Seb	RHYS STONE
Liza Jane	KATIE PROCTOR
Maloney	ROSS BREWSTER
Henry	CHARLIE RICHMOND
Freddie	JULIAN IONS
Rosie	SHEILA DUNKERLEY
Robert	MAXIE PETERS
Ben	CHRISTOPHER JOHN SLATER

CREW

Regisseur	KEN LOACH
Producent	REBECCA O'BRIEN
Scenario	PAUL LAVERTY
Executive Producers	PASCAL CAUCHETEUX GRÉGOIRE SORLAT VINCENT MARAVAL
Productiedesign	FERGUS CLEGG
Cinematografie	ROBBIE RYAN
Audio	RAY BECKETT KEVIN BRAZIER
Casting Director	KAHLEEN CRAWFORD
Kostuumdesign	JOANNE SLATER
Regie-assistent	DAVID GILCHRIST
Montage	JONATHAN MORRIS
Muziek	GEORGE FENTON

