



The Cinematic Life of Boxing

TwentyFourSeven

TwentyFourSeven

Director: Shane Meadows

©/Presented by: BBC Films

Production/Presented by: Scala Productions

Executive Producers: Stephen Woolley, Nik Powell, George Faber, David Thompson

Producer: Imogen West

Line Producer: Sally French

Production Accountants: Nigel Wood, Lita O'Sullivan

Production Co-ordinator: Winnie Wishart

Unit Location Manager: Rob Jones

Post-production Co-ordinator: Lorraine Armstrong-Esther

Post-production Delivery: Stephen Law

1st Assistant Director: Gus MacLean

2nd Assistant Director: Gareth Williams

3rd Assistant Director: Ben Rothwell

2nd Unit 2nd Assistant Director: Pauline Oni

Script Supervisor: Cathy Doubleday

Casting Director: Abi Cohen

Script Editor: Robyn Slovo

Written by: Shane Meadows, Paul Fraser

Director of Photography: Philip Rowe

Camera Operator: Ashley Rowe

2nd Camera Operator: Nigel Willoughby

Camera Trainee: Edward Wright *

Special Effects: John Markwell

Editor: Bill Diver

Production Designer: John-Paul Kelly

Art Director: Niall Moroney

Costume Designer: Philip Crichton

Wardrobe Supervisor: Theresa Hughes

Chief Make-up/Hair Designer: Pebbles

Additional Make-up/Hair: Scott Beswick

Title Design: Creative Partnership, Blam

Titles/Opticals: Capital FX (London)

Laboratory: Rank Film Laboratories

Original Music/Music Producers: Neill MacColl, Boo Hewerdine

Music Performed by: Neill MacColl, Boo Hewerdine, Roy Dodds, Robert Brooks, Graham Henderson, Olly Blanchflower

Engineered by: Jock Loveband

Recorded @: Intimate Studios

Sound Design: Simon Gershon

Sound Mixer: Rosie Straker

Additional Post-production: Roger Brown

Boom Operator: John Coates

Dubbing Mixer: Pete Smith

Dubbing Editor: Simon Gershon

Sound Re-recorded @: Videasonics

Dialogue Editor: Dave McGrath

ADR Recordist: Paul Harris

Foley Artists: John Fewell, Julie Ankerson

Foley Recordist: Jeremy Price

Foley Editor: Jeremy Price

Boxing Adviser: Derek Groombridge

Special Thanks [includes]: Big Arty, Jenne Casarotto

Stunt Co-ordinator: Ginger Keane

Animals: Prop Farm Ltd

Cast:

Bob Hoskins (*Alan Darcy*)

Mat Hand (*Fagash*)

Sun Hand (*Jordan*)

Sarah Thom (*Louise*)

Sammy Pasha (*Jimmy*)

Gina Aris (*Sharon*)

James Corden (*Tonka*)

Frank Harper (*Ronnie Marsh*)

Anthony Clarke (*Youngy*)

Justin Brady (*Gadget*)

There is an extraordinary moment half way through Shane Meadows' *TwentyFourSeven*. Darcy (Bob Hoskins), the thickset trainer at the boxing club, dresses up in a smart suit and takes his elderly aunt Iris (Pamela Cundell) to the dance hall. As the unlikely couple waltz to the strains of Strauss, the hall is bathed in light. The gentleness and lyricism with which Meadows handles the scene, which is filmed in slow motion, comes as a surprise. This, after all, is a story set in a town which Darcy himself acknowledges has died – a place where (as his voice-over puts it) the furniture cries out second hand and poor, and the inhabitants have lost touch with their origins.

The title itself seems to herald another grim social-realist drama: the townsfolk are caught in the same monotonous grind 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We first see Darcy as a crusty old tramp. When the camera shows the local housing development – 2000 people in an area which should house 200 – the air of demoralisation is almost palpable. Into this environment is set a simple tale about an old bruiser (Hoskins) who decides to help local kids gain some self-respect by opening a boxing club, a tale which is very acute about the need to control violence.

TwentyFourSeven may have been made with a budget of £1.5 million, but it retains the freewheeling exuberance of Meadows' earlier work. To try to pigeonhole it as a latter-day counterpart to Ken Loach's *Looks and Smiles* or as the inheritor of the kitchen-sink tradition is to miss the point. Unlike Richardson, Schlesinger et al, Meadows comes from the community whose stories he is telling. Unlike Loach, he is not a polemicist.

With its boxing scenes and all-too-familiar central protagonist, the tramp with a heart of gold, Meadows' script is hardly original. (Even he admits that its resemblance to Jim Sheridan's *The Boxer* is freaky.) But he attacks his material with such energy that there is never time to dwell on the clichés – Annette Badland, who appears in the film as a battered wife, describes Shane as a 'force of nature'. He has a real knack for comedy, too – whether Darcy's flailing attempts at being a goalkeeper, the shots of the lads running amok in the Welsh hills, or the snatches of wry conversation between the mourners at the funeral. Meadows elicits an immensely warm-hearted performance from Hoskins, a memorably surly one from Bruce Jones as the violent father of one of the boys, and some likable ensemble acting from the rest of the young cast, many of whom have appeared in his earlier films.

Shane Meadows on 'TwentyFourSeven'

British films have earned a reputation in certain quarters for looking like they're made for television. I think people associate black and white with cinema, and I wanted the film to have a dignity. There are two types of black and white: there's the gritty, 'we had to make it on 16mm black and white because it was cheaper', and there's the black and white which is more expensive, shot on 35mm through a bleach by-pass process. This type is quite beautiful, and it's what I was going for.

Bob Hoskins is a big star. Your friends whom you've worked with before on your short films and on Smalltime obviously are not. How did you manage to get them to work so well together?

Ladene Hall (*Pob, Daz's girlfriend*)
James Hooton (*Knighty*)
Jo Bell (*Jo*)
Colin Higgins (*Adrian, Knighty's dad*)
Maureen O'Grady (*Janet, Knighty's mum*)
Jimmy Hynd (*Meggy*)
Dena Smiles (*Lesley, Meggy's girlfriend*)
Darren Campbell (*Daz*)
Johann Myers (*Benny*)
Karl Collins (*Stuart*)
Pamela Cundell (*Auntie Iris*)
Annette Badland (*Pat, Tim's mum*)
Danny Nussbaum (*Tim*)
Bruce Jones (*Geoff, Tim's dad*)
Toby (*Woody, the dog*)
Krishan Beresford (*young Alan Darcy*)
Lord Dominic Dillon of Eldon (*court security man*)
Ian Michael Smith (*prosecutor*)
Tanya Myers (*Sally the judge*)
Tony Nyland (*Gadget's dad*)
Paul Fraser (*photographer*)
John Baxter (*man outside shop*)
Lord Shane Meadows of Eldon
(*man with saucepan on head*)
Ben Rothwell (*man selling flowers*)
Ron Bissell, Mick Bleakley, Derek Osborne
(*the boxing match judges*)
Derek Groombridge (*Staffordshire coach*)
Liam Walsh, Kevin Wallace (*Staffordshire boxers*)
Dave Miller (*Phil 'The Animal' Yates*)
Ginger Keane (*Stephen S. Stephenson Jr*)
UK 1997©
96 mins
Digital (remaster)

Remastered by the BFI

The screening on Tue 21 Apr will include a Q&A
with director Shane Meadows

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Really, it was down to the environment. What I had with my short films was very much a family environment – I did a lot of the cooking and that sort of thing. Obviously I can't be standing around cooking people's dinners on a feature film, but I did want to transfer that lack of pressure on to the set. One way of doing that was to get a huge contingency on the stock. So I set myself a target of 15:1. I said to everybody, 'Look, we've got absolutely fucking heaps of stock. If we need it, it's there.' So that pressure of money is time didn't apply. We used to play football every dinner time – a little match between the cast and the crew. It gave us something to focus on other than the film. A bad environment can hinder the performances. I try to create an environment where anyone can deliver a really good performance.

Hoskins is from the south of England. Were you worried about his ability to get Darcy's accent – and why did you choose him?

My short film *Where's the Money Ronnie!* won the Channel One shorts award. By then I'd started to work on the script for *TwentyFourSeven*. I said to my producer Stephen Woolley that I wanted Hoskins to do the film and that I was writing the script with him in mind. I spoke to my co-writer, Paul Fraser, and he'd been having exactly the same thoughts. It's the shape of the man. In the film, Darcy goes around in a tank top – and Bob has hairy arms, as well as a stockiness and bullishness combined with a capacity for sensitivity and intimacy. His face just fitted the picture. Woolley showed him *Where's the Money Ronnie!* and he loved it. Then he showed him the *TwentyFourSeven* script and he jumped on board right away. I'd never worked with any name actors before, but I didn't treat him any differently. Some of his Hollywood films don't use his capabilities, but I'd seen his theatre work and his early television work – things like *Pennies from Heaven* – and I knew the guy was incredibly talented.

When it came to filming the fights, where did you put the camera?

My main thing was to steer as far away from Hollywood as I could. The lads in the film were real people. Some of them have gone on to become boxers and have stayed in the club we were filming in. What I wanted was to make sure that they felt real. The film is about a redundant visionary, a man who tells the lads that it doesn't matter whether you're rich or poor, when somebody punches you it really hurts. You're on your own then. Boxing gives you a certain dignity – the fact that you're standing up and fighting for something.

Article and interview by Geoffrey Macnab, *Sight and Sound*, March 1998