



### My Sweet Prince

Director: Jason Bradbury  
UK 2019  
12 mins

### Sweet Sixteen

Director: Ken Loach  
©/Production Companies: Sixteen Films,  
Road Movies Filmproduktion GmbH,  
Tornasol Films, Alta Films  
Presented by: Scottish Screen, BBC Films  
Presented with the support of: Filmstiftung NRW,  
Glasgow Film Office  
Presented in association with:  
Diaphana Distribution, BIM Distribuzione, Cinéart,  
ARD, Westdeutscher Rundfunk  
Developed with financial assistance from:  
Scottish Screen National Lottery  
Producer: Rebecca O'Brien  
Co-producers: Ulrich Felsberg, Gerardo Herrero  
Line Producer: Peter Gallagher  
Production Accountant: Elizabeth Hurley  
Production Co-ordinator: Abigail Howkins  
German Production: Luke Schiller,  
IPS International Production Service  
Production: Sally Grant, Louise Saunders,  
Shuna Froom  
Road Movies Team: Joanna Ashton-Jones,  
Denise Booth, Frank Graf, Hailon Li, Valentina Lori,  
Karin C. Müller, Volker Otte, Rainer Pyls,  
Ute Schneider, Kai-Peter Uhlig  
Location Manager: Brian Kaczynski  
Location Assistant: Beverley Syme  
Production Assistants: Beverley Murray,  
Leigh Pickford  
1st Assistant Director: David Gilchrist  
2nd Assistant Director: Michael Queen  
3rd Assistant Director: Elaine Mackenzie  
Script Supervisor: Susanna Lenton  
Screenplay: Paul Laverty  
Script Consultant: Roger Smith  
Director of Photography: Barry Ackroyd  
Focus Puller: Carl Hudson  
Clapper Loaders: Julie Bills, Julia Robinson  
Stills Photography: Joss Barratt  
Special Effects: Wolf Bosse, Werk AG  
Editor: Jonathan Morris  
1st Assistant Editor: Anthony Morris  
2nd Assistant Editor: Paul Clegg  
Production Designer: Martin Johnson  
Art Director: Fergus Clegg  
Assistant Art Director: Julie Ann Horan  
Costume Designer: Carole K. Millar  
Costume Assistant: Deirdre Johnstone  
Make-up: Sarah Fidelo  
Titles Design: Martin Butterworth,  
Creative Partnership  
Titles: Cineimage  
Music: George Fenton  
Music Performed/Produced by: George Fenton,  
David Lawson, Simon Chamberlain  
Soprano Saxophone: Jamie Talbot  
Music Recorded by: Steve Price  
Sound Recordist: Ray Beckett  
Sound Assistant: Kieran Boyne  
Boom Operator: Pete Murphy  
Sound Re-recording: Graham V. Hartstone,  
Mark Sheffield, Pinewood Studios  
Supervising Sound Editor: Kevin Brazier  
[Sound] FX Editor: Wayne Brooks  
Foley Artists: Julie Ankersen, John Fewell  
Foley Re-recording Mixer: Robert Brazier  
Research: Pamela Marshall

## ACTING HARD: WORKING CLASS MASCULINITY IN BRITISH CINEMA

# Sweet Sixteen

**SPOILER WARNING** The following notes give away some of the plot.

*Contains strong violence.*

*Sweet Sixteen* is set in Glasgow in a working class area once home of the great Clyde shipyards and, though never acknowledged in the film, the heart of the famously radical Scottish trade union movement. The area is now largely poverty-stricken projects, product of de-industrialisation and decline, and this painful coming of age tale follows young Liam's adventures in the drug trade. The film immerses us naturally in this world with a thoughtful narrative structure, evocative casting and rapid-fire dialogue. Loach, a masterful actor's director, elicits wonderful performances, particularly from the young inexperienced actors. As in many American films, dealing drugs is presented as an entrepreneurial response to, and embodiment of, the neo-liberal times. For the immiserated lumpens left behind by Thatcherism, drugs seem to offer solace to some. To others, dealing offers economic survival, and the only route to class mobility still open. Liam's motives are painfully ironic and touching; as so often in Loach's films there is a difficult and complex family history. He is trying to get enough money together so his Mom, in jail taking the rap for her no-good drug dealer boyfriend, can start a new life with Liam when she gets released... on his sixteenth birthday. To raise the money, Liam has to show a real talent for dealing drugs, betraying his friends and manoeuvring with the refined but ruthless 'rich cunts' who really run the business.

There is no stirring rhetoric to answer the film's bitter ironies and unresolved contradictions. The film concludes sadly, there are no epiphanies, no slogans. Perhaps, there is an optimism of the spirit in the feeling that this memorable Liam could still make his own story in this perilous place and time. Loach offers us clear-sighted and unsentimental – but deeply emotional and generous – pictures of how contemporary capitalism is making and remaking class and how working class people, heroes of a kind, sometimes fight back, sometimes just endure.

Scott Forsyth, *CineAction*, 2003

*Sweet Sixteen* is sure to be written off in some quarters as Ken Loach beating the same old drum, and that's perfectly true. The movie is so classical an instance of his committed realist cinema that it's practically a curriculum vitae. Economy is destiny as always, but the grim determinism in the atmosphere chiefly recalls *My Name Is Joe* (1998), with its context of chronic mass employment and its ear-straining Scottish idiom. 'Every fuckin' choice stinks doon here,' Joe cried out in anguish at his ruined dreams, and it isn't hard to imagine that Liam, the aspiring hero of *Sweet Sixteen*, exhibits Loach's archetypal proletarian at an earlier stage, before the bitter lesson has quite sunk in (screenwriter Paul Laverty indeed proposes the film as a sort of prequel to *Joe*). While he's less sensitive and far more pragmatic, fifteen-year-old Liam also naturally conjures up Billy in *Kes* (1969), capable of finer things but hamstrung from the start. Billy's taming of the kestrel connotes a human potential beyond his preordained drudgery in the coal pit, and Liam has an iconic object too. The riverside caravan where he plans to live with his shiftless mother lean is the street kid's version of an Arcadian idyll – plentiful fishing and plastic flowers on the doorway. In either case, it's the merest glimpse of freedom, for the iron laws of necessity soon kick in to extinguish all hope.

**Stunt Co-ordinators:** Paul Heasman, Jim Dowdall  
**Stunt Performers:** Stuart Clark, George Cottle,  
Dave Fisher, Richard Hammatt, Derek Lea  
**Cast:**

Martin Compston (*Liam*)  
Annmarie Fulton (*Chantelle*)  
William Ruane (*Pinball*)  
Michelle Abercromby (*Suzanne*)  
Michelle Coulter (*Jean*)  
Gary McCormack (*Stan*)  
Tommy McKee (*Rab*)  
Calum McAlees (*Calum*)  
Robert Rennie (*Scullion*)  
Martin McCardie (*Tony*)  
Robert Harrison, George McNeillage, Rikki Traynor  
(*Tony's gang*)  
Jon Morrison (*Douglas*)  
Junior Walker (*Night-Time*)  
Gary Maitland (*Side-Kick*)  
Scott Dymond (*Davi-Vampire*)  
Mark Dallas, Stephen McGivern, Robert Muir  
(*pizza boys*)  
Matt Costello (*motorbike policeman*)  
Sandy Hewitt (*truck driver*)  
Mercy (*three-legged dog*)  
Lily Smart (*barmaid*)  
Bruce Sturrock (*caravan site manager*)  
William Cassidy, Robert McFadyen,  
Stephen Purdon (*muggers*)  
Tony Collins (*cold pizza man*)  
Marie Shankley (*woman on stairs*)  
Louise Anderson, Jackie Baker, David Charles,  
Donna Clark, Robert Cowan, Samuel Cowan,  
Tracey Cowan, Anastacia Davies, James Doherty,  
Daniel Donnelly, Sally Fisher, Lynn Gardiner,  
Elizabeth Gatens, Christopher Graham,  
Michael Graham, Martin Gribbin, Darnell Hooks,  
Thomas Hopkins, Jean Keenan,  
Anne-Marie Lafferty, Ann Lynch, Gina McGee,  
Tommy McKinla, Theresa McNeil,  
Daniel McDermid, Donald McPhil,  
Robbie Meldrum, Maryanne Melvin,  
David Miller, Len Mullen, Summer Murray, Eileen  
O'Connor, Catherine O'Donaghue, Sharon Owens,  
Craig Park, Jean Robertson, Kieran Rowe,  
Mary Scott, Kenneth Shand, John Simpson,  
James Storey, Brian Strachan, Cherenay Strand,  
Jackie Sutherland, Kyle Turner, Chris Walker  
UK/Germany/Spain/France/Italy 2002©  
106 mins  
35mm

## ACTING HARD: WORKING CLASS MASCULINITY IN BRITISH CINEMA

**Blue Story** Thu 14 Sep 18:15; Sat 23 Sep 20:40

**Face** Mon 18 Sep 20:45

**My Beautiful Laundrette**

Wed 20 Sep 18:10; Thu 28 Sep 20:30

**Muscle + Q&A with director Gerard Johnson,  
actors Craig Fairbrass, Cavan Clerkin and Polly  
Maberly** Fri 22 Sep 18:00

**Beautiful Thing** Fri 22 Sep 20:40

**Sexy Beast** Sat 23 Sep 18:20; Mon 2 Oct 20:30

**Mona Lisa** Sun 24 Sep 18:20; Fri 29 Sep 20:30

**Govan Ghost Story** Mon 25 Sep 18:30

**Sweet Sixteen** Mon 25 Sep 20:40

**The Football Factory + intro by Danny Dyer**  
Mon 25 Sep 20:45

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Those who want British cinema to be light and fluffy have sometimes accused Loach of defeatism and complained that his working-class tragedies are rigged by melodramatic plotting. No doubt; yet from Zola to *Bicycle Thieves*, a long tradition links melodrama with realism. The coincidences and chance encounters in one (Liam finances the caravan through drug dealing until he sets foot on the wrong council estate) add up to a nemesis that conveniently doubles for the oppressive social structures in the other. A certain lack of novelty is the price Loach pays for his conviction that human misery is systemic. The basic rules of capitalism haven't changed, and he keeps plugging away at that unfashionable truth for the few who care to listen. In line with the most durable Marxist aesthetic, Loach and his writers seek out protagonists whose experiences are typical – not one-off overachievers like Billy Elliot – to feed the audience's syrupy fantasies, but the ordinary Joes and Liams trying to scrape together a decent life. While the method risks abstraction (as in *Bread and Roses*, where the people are agitprop mannequins representing the class struggle), it more often results in characters who feel rounded and concrete. With a touch of the 19-century realist, Loach steers a middle course between the particular and the universal, specifying psychological traits, yet refracting them through wider processes and institutions. You get a sharp sense of the emotional dialectic binding Liam and his mother – how her benign neglect spurs him on to ever greater possessiveness and need. At the same time, it's clear that the rootlessness motivating both in contradictory ways is their inevitable portion as the losers of history.

The dovetailing of the personal and the political can seem a little neat, which is to say that Loach's characters are short on mystery. There's never an impression of something left over that surpasses the understanding – Loach is too commonsensical and English to have truck with that brand of cosmic malarky. In the final scene, Liam gazes out over the river and faces his future like Antoine in *Les Quatre cents coups*. The difference is that for Liam the writing is emphatically on the wall. When the highest legitimate goal we hear about is a part-time job at a call centre, it isn't remarkable that he should be embarking on a career as a petty gangster. Laverty's script plus some cunning details in the *mise en scène* enable us to see the solid advantages of crime for the culturally dispossessed – not only the flashy cars and smart clothes, but behind them such spiritual goods as security, status, companionship and even self-esteem. Strangely, the total absence of ambiguity doesn't make the film less affecting, but more so. Like *Joe* or *Ladybird* *Ladybird* (1994), *Sweet Sixteen* can induce scalding tears because it offers a plain and inescapable perception of how material force operates to maim the soul of the individual. None of that would be possible, of course, without the observational skills Loach has been honing for close to four decades. By now, the illusion is complete, we are simply eavesdropping on these damaged lives, the camera appearing to follow rather than lead. Loach gives his people space, which renders their chains all the more unbearably poignant.

Peter Matthews, *Sight and Sound*, October 2002