

= EastEnders Live =

" EastEnders Live " is a live episode of the British television soap opera EastEnders , broadcast on BBC One on 19 February 2010 . The episode was commissioned as part of the show 's 25th anniversary celebrations , and was the first EastEnders episode to be broadcast live . It was the series ' 3952nd episode , and was written by Simon Ashdown , directed by Clive Arnold and produced by Diederick Santer . The episode concludes a " whodunnit " storyline about the murder of Archie Mitchell ( Larry Lamb ) , revealing his killer to be Stacey Slater ( Lacey Turner ) . It also sees the exit of Charlie Clements as Bradley Branning , who dies after falling from the roof of The Queen Victoria public house .

Turner only learned that Stacey was Archie 's killer half an hour before the episode aired , in a bid by the production team to maintain the storyline 's secrecy . 51 EastEnders cast members appeared in the episode , with several expressing trepidation about performing live prior to the broadcast . Cast members had two weeks to rehearse the episode , with one rehearsal filmed in case of any serious problems during transmission . When Turner fell ill with the flu on the day of broadcast , it was feared the producers may have needed to use the pre @-@ recorded tape , but in the event she recovered enough to appear .

" EastEnders Live " was Santer 's final episode as EastEnders ' executive producer . He expressed his pleasure with the episode , despite several errors during transmission , including mis @-@ delivered lines and some problems with sound and camera shots . Viewers gambled on the identity of the killer , with bookmakers Ladbrokes experiencing record levels of gambling on a television series , and William Hill taking £ 500 @,@ 000 , surpassing the amount placed on the outcome of Dallas ' Who shot J.R. ? storyline in 1980 . The episode was watched by 19 @.@ 9 million cumulative viewers , becoming the most watched show of the year to date . EastEnders Live : The Aftermath , a documentary which followed the episode on BBC Three , was seen by 11 @.@ 6 million viewers , drawing the station 's highest ever ratings . " EastEnders Live " received mixed reviews from critics . It was described as " a triumph " by Shane Donaghey of The Belfast Telegraph , praised by Tom Sutcliffe of The Independent for including stunt work , and commended for Clements and Turner 's acting by Tim Teeman of The Times . In contrast , however , The Guardian 's Nancy Banks @-@ Smith felt that viewers would be " incredulous " with the episode 's outcome , and Cate Devine of The Herald criticised problems with lighting and sound effects .

= = Plot = =

In the wake of his wedding to Stacey Slater ( Lacey Turner ) , Bradley Branning ( Charlie Clements ) is urged to flee Walford by his father and uncle after becoming the prime suspect in the investigation of the murder of local landlord Archie Mitchell . Bradley 's father Max ( Jake Wood ) distracts the police while Bradley and Stacey attempt to escape from Albert Square . Elsewhere , Archie 's youngest daughter Roxy ( Rita Simons ) suspects that her sister Ronnie ( Samantha Womack ) is the murderer . She accuses Ronnie , who tells her that their father raped Stacey , and confesses that he did the same to her when she was a child . Ronnie and Roxy 's cousin Phil ( Steve McFadden ) ransacks the home of Ian Beale ( Adam Woodyatt ) , believing that Ian has in his possession a cufflink which would implicate him in Archie 's murder . He exits without finding it , leaving Ian and Dot Branning ( June Brown ) to watch an old videotape of their family and friends from the past 25 years , reminiscing about the past .

Phil 's mother Peggy ( Barbara Windsor ) is accused by Janine Butcher ( Charlie Brooks ) of attempting to frame her for the murder . As Janine prepares to flee Walford , Peggy finds Roxy and Ronnie fighting . She tells the girls that she too was present the night Archie was killed , arriving to find him injured but alive , however left without calling for medical help . Outside , Bradley and Stacey are about to take a taxi to St Pancras railway station when Bradley realises he has forgotten their passports . He tells Stacey to wait and hurries back home to collect them , but is spotted by the police . A chase ensues , and Bradley climbs onto the roof of The Queen Victoria public house in an attempt to escape . He shouts for Stacey to run before losing his footing and falling from the roof .

He dies from his injuries as a distressed Stacey reaches him and the residents look on in horror . Stacey is comforted by Max , and confesses that she is the one who killed Archie .

= = Cast = =

= = Production = =

= = = Origins = = =

On 15 September 2009 , the BBC announced plans to broadcast the first ever live episode of EastEnders , to celebrate the show 's 25th anniversary . The air date was set for 19 February 2010 , with the episode to be broadcast from the BBC 's Elstree Studios in Borehamwood . EastEnders ' executive producer Diederick Santer initially refrained from discussing the episode 's plot , but commented that it would resolve a " big storyline " which would " keep the audience ( as well as the cast and crew ) guessing until the very last moment . " EastEnders storylines saw Archie Mitchell , landlord of The Queen Victoria public house murdered on Christmas Day 2009 , with many characters considered potential suspects in the crime . Santer confirmed that the killer would be revealed in the live episode , and that their identity would be kept secret until the night of broadcast , even from the cast member playing them . Another aspect of the episode is the remarriage of characters Bianca Jackson ( Patsy Palmer ) and Ricky Butcher ( Sid Owen ) . Santer deemed it the " soap wedding of the year ? and perhaps the soap wedding of the decade " , commenting that playing the romance against the " thriller " of the " whodunnit " storyline provided a balance he hoped audiences would be " gripped by and satisfied with . "

= = = Cast = = =

In November 2009 , actor Charlie Clements , announced that he would be leaving the soap in 2010 . It was rumoured that Bradley would be seen to commit suicide during the live episode , but this was refuted by an EastEnders spokesperson . It was later revealed that Bradley would make his last appearance in the live episode , urged to flee Walford by his father Max and uncle Jack ( Scott Maslen ) after becoming the prime suspect in the investigation into Archie 's murder . Bradley 's motive for murder came from the discovery that Archie raped his partner Stacey . In an interview with daytime television show This Morning , Clements stated it was possible that Bradley was responsible , but was unsure whether he " [ had ] it in him " , though felt that it would be " quite historical to go down as the one who killed Archie Mitchell " . In the event , Bradley exited the soap by falling to his death from the roof of The Queen Victoria public house during the live episode . Immediately after filming , Clements stated that he was " drained " , referring to his character 's death as " a big way to go out . "

In total , 51 EastEnders cast members were involved in the live broadcast . Several cast members expressed trepidation at the prospect of the live episode . Before details of the episode 's plot were confirmed , Turner hoped that she would not be involved in it , deeming herself " awful " at performing live , unable to even deliver speeches . Neil McDermott feared that he would lose his composure and laugh during the broadcast , while Palmer hoped that the episode would not turn into a pantomime , commenting : " I hope we 're a bit more professional than that . " Simons stated that she was looking forward to the challenge the episode presented , though she would be happier once she had seen the script . Clements denied any apprehension , likening the performance to acting in theatre , and Nina Wadia stated that she was " really looking forward to it " , enjoying experiences with an " adrenaline rush . " Once the script was released , Wadia was " disappointed yet relieved " to learn she did not have a speaking role , explaining : " You want to be in it , but not to mess it up . " She expected to feel " uncomfortable " during the broadcast , as the episode is set the day before her character Zainab Masood gives birth , necessitating the wearing of a body suit with a

large " baby bump " sewn in .

= = = Rehearsals = = =

The EastEnders cast and crew had two weeks to rehearse the episode prior to its live transmission . The script was issued on the afternoon of 5 February 2010 , written by series consultant and lead show writer Simon Ashdown . The first read @-@ through took place on 8 February 2010 , though producers held back the part of the script revealing Archie 's true killer . Eight different possible endings were rehearsed , with Santer reiterating that the actor playing the killer would only be told so on the night of broadcast . He revealed that the actor playing the killer would be informed of their actions at 7 : 30 pm on 19 February , 30 minutes before the episode 's transmission , with their reaction filmed for the documentary EastEnders Live : The Aftermath , which aired on BBC Three immediately after " EastEnders Live " was broadcast , narrated by Lamb 's son George .

Santer explained that the killer " may be revealed to the audience rather than the Square " , preserving secrecy as the crew began filming episodes to be transmitted after the live broadcast . Actress Charlie Brooks , who plays Archie 's former lover Janine Butcher , found the secrecy difficult to work with , explaining : " In the episodes to be shown afterwards , you 're being told to look or speak a certain way , but not why . " Santer confirmed that the cast found the episode challenging , stating : " They are as desperate to know who did it as the viewers " , though believed they were all capable of coping with the pressure of the live episode . He explained that the cast typically film scenes in one take anyway , and observed that several EastEnders actors had formerly appeared in live broadcasts for other series . Cast members had just two dress rehearsals in advance of the live episode , and only one read @-@ through of the entire episode .

= = = Directing = = =

Arnold was initially sceptical when approached about directing " EastEnders Live " , but agreed once it was explained that the impetus for the episode was motivated by the " whodunnit " storyline . He explained : " We pre @-@ record TV drama for lots of very good reasons and doing a live episode can sometimes come across a little gimmicky , so for me , story is the one and only reason a drama should go live . " Direction of the episode differed from typical episodes of EastEnders , whereby actors briefly run through their lines , block the scene to be filmed , then begin shooting with the director on the studio floor . For " EastEnders Live " , cast and crew had two weeks to work on the episode , rehearsing , blocking scenes and discussing the characters ' journeys at length .

Once technical rehearsals began and cameras were added in , Ashdown moved from the studio floor to an outside broadcast truck . All cameras on set were cabled to the truck , allowing Ashdown to oversee the entire episode remotely . Ashdown approached the episode as though it were a theatrical performance , explaining : " We can work on performance and blocking early on , discussing issues and discovering the text as we go . Actors know to save their energy when technical rehearsals are taking place and then it 's quite magical when all elements are combined close to the first performance . Of course , our theatre company will have it 's [ sic ] opening and closing night on Friday , February 19 ! "

= = = Filming = = =

In case of any serious problems during transmission , a rehearsal for the episode was filmed , including each version of the reveal scene . Santer explained that the tape would not be used for minor problems such as cast members forgetting their lines , in which instance : " we 'll power on using our improvisational skills . It 's really just for technical backup in case of a proper crisis . " The live broadcast took 400 camera shots to film , and 36 camera operators . Typical episodes of EastEnders utilise just four camera operators . Two outside broadcast trucks were hired to remotely direct and monitor the episode from , and three golf buggies were used to transport cast between sets , as the minimum length of time actors had to move from one set to another was just 131

seconds .

Ashdown explained that filming " EastEnders Live " to look like a typical episode of EastEnders was difficult , giving the example of a scene involving a ringing mobile phone . In a usual EastEnders episode , the viewer would see a shot of the phone and know who was calling . In the live episode , the caller would have to be visually or audibly obvious , as a result of the camera set @-@ up and inability to edit scenes . He described the episode 's biggest limitation as the weather , explaining that " EastEnders Live " begins with a direct pickup from the previous episode of EastEnders , with the same characters in the same outside location , leaving the crew hoping for a dry night . Sound was also a problem , as sound quality is better using boom rods than radio microphones , but booms often dip into shot during the filming of EastEnders . Ashdown commented that the production crew would be using booms where possible , but that all cast members with dialogue would be given a radio microphone as backup .

= = = Broadcast = = =

On the day of broadcast , The Mirror reported that EastEnders producers may have to re @-@ write the episode or run a pre @-@ recorded rehearsal tape rather than go ahead with the live transmission , as Turner was suffering from the flu and was unable to speak . In the event , Turner recovered enough to appear , though was given permission to whisper her lines if necessary . She was able to deliver her dialogue as planned , however was too ill to appear on EastEnders Live : The Aftermath following the episode . Turner commented that nothing could have stopped her from appearing in the episode , as the cast had worked so hard on it , and it was " such a big part of TV history " . Several errors were made during the transmission . Barbara Windsor as Peggy incorrectly called Janine " June " and Maslen stumbled over several of his lines . During the final scene , a camera was visibly jostled , sound became muffled and some zoom shots " misfired " . Following Bradley 's fall , Wood was observed inserting his fingers into his throat to help him retch . The script called for Wood to be sick , though there was not enough time for him to put the liquid into his mouth , and he stated that a person would put their fingers into their throat anyway , " to get it all out " . During a scene in which Roxy and Ronnie argued in the Minute Mart , Womack took a bottle of paint stripper from the shelves , but forgot to stop at the counter to pay for it before exiting .

Santer , who stood down as executive producer after the episode 's transmission , succeeded by Bryan Kirkwood , commented that he was happy , relieved and proud with the broadcast . Santer stated : " I just think everyone did brilliantly tonight ? the cast , the crew , everyone . It 's everything I wished for and more . I 'm thrilled with how it went . It was quite remarkable . Everything went to plan . I spotted a couple of little wobbles but what I was proudest of was the recovery . The technical crew , the cast ? every time we maybe veered slightly off course , they pulled it back round . " Santer explained that he had always intended for Stacey to be revealed as Archie 's killer , and was never tempted to air a different conclusion , despite at least ten characters having strong motives . Turner was surprised to learn that Stacey was the killer , and hoped that viewers would sympathise with her character , observing : " She not only has to deal with the guilt of what she did but she also knows that she 's inadvertently responsible for Bradley 's death . I think that 's going to hurt her more than anything . "

= = Reception = =

= = = Pre @-@ broadcast commentary = = =

In the weeks preceding the transmission of " EastEnders Live " , the episode prompted a series of retrospective articles in the British print media , examining EastEnders ' development over its 25 years of broadcast . Critical commentary was mixed . The Guardian 's Dan Sabbagh observed that the storylines which will culminate in " EastEnders Live " ? Ricky and Bianca 's remarriage and the Archie Mitchell " whodunnit " ? have seen the show undergo a revival , overtaking rival soap opera

Coronation Street in the ratings for the first time in over three years . Tim Teeman of The Times highlighted the Archie storyline as representative of male characters in EastEnders offering an " essential foil " to their female counterparts , who he appraised as being " key " to the show 's success , using the example of Archie 's relationship with his wife Peggy and daughter Ronnie . He felt that the episode deserved high viewership , deeming EastEnders " a brilliant drama " .

Conversely , Alison Rowat of The Herald felt that the current storylines indicated " the best days of EE are over " , commenting : " Contrast it with the ever sprightly Coronation Street , where the scenes featuring Gail ? Black Widow ? McIntyre and her lucky white heather husband have been perfect soap fare . What does EastEnders have ? Another murder investigation in a place that has a higher homicide rate than The Wire 's Baltimore . Andrew Billen of The Times refuted claims by the BBC that " EastEnders Live " was not a " gimmick " but in fact proof of the soap 's " innovative vigour " . Billen deemed the live episode a " reactionary move " , observing that Coronation Street had aired a live episode for its 40th anniversary in 2000 . He reminded readers : " live television drama is nothing new but rather harks back to the earliest days of television and , beyond them , to theatre itself . " The Mirror 's Jane Simon hoped for multiple errors during the transmission of " EastEnders Live " , commenting : " It 's time EastEnders gave us a laugh . "

= = = Gambling = = =

In a world first , online gambling company Bodog offered live odds during the episode , allowing viewers to continue to bet on the identity of Archie 's killer as events unfolded . Although " in @-@ running " betting is common during sports events , it had never before been offered for a soap opera . Odds on the killer 's identity changed frequently in the fortnight preceding the transmission of " EastEnders Live " . On 5 February , the clear favourite was Stacey , with odds at Bodog of 2 / 1 . By 9 February , Stacey 's odds had shortened to 6 / 4 , though the character dropped into third place by 12 February , usurped by her brother Sean Slater ( Robert Kazinsky ) at odds of 9 / 4 , and Ben Mitchell ( Charlie Jones ) at 7 / 2 . On 14 February , the unlikely favourite became Tracey the barmaid ( Jane Slaughter ) , a background character whose odds shortened considerably from 40 / 1 to 11 / 4 . Sean moved back into first place on 16 February , with odds of 2 / 1 , and remained there until the eve of broadcast .

Bookmakers estimated that over £ 1 million would be spent gambling on the outcome of the storyline . Ladbrokes experienced its busiest ever 24 hours of gambling on a television series ahead of the episode 's transmission , taking £ 100 @,@ 000 in bets on 30 different characters , while William Hill took £ 500 @,@ 000 , surpassing the amount placed on Dallas ' Who shot J.R. ? storyline in 1980 . Spokesman Rupert Adams commented : " The BBC were amazing keeping this quiet . We have broken even which in a market like this is amazing . We have had a roller @-@ coaster but have enjoyed every minute . "

= = = Ratings = = =

" EastEnders Live " was watched by a cumulative audience of 19 @.@ 9 million viewers . Its original screening averaged 16 @.@ 41 million viewers , attaining a 57 % audience share . Three repeats on BBC Two and BBC Three in the week of broadcast lifted the televised total to 18 @.@ 8 million viewers , with a further 1 @.@ 1 million watching the episode on BBC iPlayer . The episode became the most watched show of the year to date . EastEnders Live : The Aftermath drew a total of 11 @.@ 6 million viewers . It was watched by 4 @.@ 54 million people on its initial airing , attaining a 15 @.@ 9 % audience share and becoming BBC Three 's highest rated programme ever , as well as the most @-@ watched multichannel programme of the day . The documentary drew a further 6 @.@ 6 million viewers over four repeat broadcasts , and 0 @.@ 5 million viewers via iPlayer . The original broadcast was the third highest rated television episode of 2010 in the UK , beaten by a 2010 FIFA World Cup match between England and Germany , and the final of the seventh series of The X Factor .

Santer was delighted by the viewing figures , stating : " To get this incredible response from the

audience is truly remarkable ? these numbers go far beyond what we ever hoped for . I am so proud of our cast and crew for their incredible performance last night . This rating is the icing on our silver anniversary cake . " Jay Hunt , controller of BBC One commented : " [ The ] extraordinary live episode was a fitting celebration of 25 magnificent years for EastEnders . The audience were clearly gripped by one of the greatest soap whodunnits ever . " Discussing the ratings for EastEnders Live : The Aftermath , controller of BBC Three Danny Cohen appraised : " It is an amazing testament to the EastEnders team and the brave and brilliant drama they provided . " Yorke responded to the high consolidated ratings with the statement : " The best birthday present EastEnders could possibly have is to know that 25 years in it can still grab the biggest audience in the UK . It 's a real tribute to the show 's creators that a quarter of a century on , everybody 's still talking about it . "

= = = Critical response = = =

The episode won in the " Best Single Episode " category at the 2010 British Soap Awards , and was nominated in the " Best Live Event Coverage " category of the Broadcast Digital Awards 2010 . It received mixed reviews from critics . Tom Sutcliffe of The Independent rated " EastEnders Live " 4 out of 5 , noting that there were " a couple of moments where the seams showed " , but that " half the fun in watching was seeing if you could spot them " . He praised EastEnders for not " playing safe " by including stunt work , and commented that Ian Beale 's line : " I wish we could go back and do it all again . Do it right this time . " could potentially have been " a horrible hostage to fortune " , however felt that : " in the end they more than got away with it . " Tim Teeman of The Times also rated the episode 4 out of 5 , calling the revelation of Stacey as Archie 's killer a " genuine surprise " , and commenting that " EastEnders Live " : " sometimes creaked under the weight of its own ambitions ? but who cares , gold stars for effort . " Teeman praised Clements and Turner , feeling that they " excelled themselves despite the odd strained pause " , though noted that in the aftermath of Bradley 's fall , " the perils of live TV became apparent " , commenting that : " The direction slackened at just the wrong moment , and you were left hoping someone would get to a bit of script to ward off any more bizarre shots of Jack and Max fighting to free themselves from a policeman 's soft grip . "

Mike Higgins of The Independent deemed the episode " a technical triumph " , praising the " smooth , almost flawless " and " fluent " production . Shane Donaghey of The Belfast Telegraph also called the episode a " triumph " , opining that it could not possibly have lived up to the hype surrounding the storyline , but that transmitting live gave EastEnders " an energy it normally lacks , with great violence , excellent direction " . He summarised : " the story gripped so well you forgot to look for the cock @-@ ups , before a genuinely shocking denouement that you never saw coming amid all of the hype . " Pat Stacey of the Evening Herald felt that revealing Stacey as Archie 's killer was " a slight let @-@ down " and " a little bit predictable " , calling the episode " a triumph of logistics over logic " . However , Stacey wrote that aside from the " damp @-@ squib " ending , " EastEnders Live " was " surprisingly enjoyable [ ... ] even for a committed ' Endersphobe like [ her ] self . " She felt that transmitting live " added a tangible layer of tension " to proceedings , lamenting : " If only EastEnders was this exciting all the time . " The Guardian 's Nancy Banks @-@ Smith similarly felt that transmitting live made for " tension , not clarity " , commenting that bookmakers would be " absolutely delighted " with the outcome , but that viewers would be " incredulous " . Cate Devine of The Herald was similarly critical , describing the episode as " 30 minutes of cheesy dramatic counterpoint " , and highlighting the " ropey lighting and poor sound effects . "

Bradley 's death was voted the third most emotional moment in television entertainment in a 2010 poll of 3 @, @ 000 British people conducted by Freeview HD .