

= Rock & Chips =

Rock & Chips is a British television comedy @-@ drama and a prequel to the sitcom Only Fools and Horses . Set in 1960s Peckham , it focuses primarily on the lives of Del Trotter , Freddie Robdal and Joan and Reg Trotter . Nicholas Lyndhurst , who played Rodney in Only Fools and Horses , plays Robdal alongside James Buckley (Del Boy) , Kellie Bright (Joan) , Shaun Dingwall (Reg) and Phil Daniels (Grandad) . The Shazam Productions and BBC co @-@ production was written by Only Fools and Horses creator John Sullivan , directed by Dewi Humphreys and produced by Gareth Gwenlan .

The 90 minute production was conceived in 1997 and commissioned in 2003 , with the premise established in the final episode of Only Fools and Horses in 2003 . It was shelved and Only Fools and Horses spin @-@ off The Green Green Grass was developed ; its success led to the prequel being recommissioned in July 2009 . Filming began in October in London and the production was first broadcast on BBC One and BBC HD on 24 January 2010 . It was the second most watched programme of the day and gained mixed reviews from critics .

= = Plot = =

The story starts in February 1960 , by setting up the characters . Joan Trotter (played by Kellie Bright) is in an unhappy marriage with the work @-@ shy Reg (Shaun Dingwall) , whose father Ted (Phil Daniels) has just moved in . Her 15 @-@ year @-@ old son Derek , often shortened to Del Boy , (James Buckley) and his friends Boycie , Trigger , Jumbo Mills and new @-@ in @-@ town Denzil (Stephen Lloyd , Lewis Osborne , Lee Long and Ashley Gerlach) are still in school , following an increase in the school leaving age . She works at the local cinema with Trigger 's aunt Renee Turpin (Emma Cooke) and Raymond (Billy Seymour) for cinema manager Ernie Rayner (Robert Daws) , and at the Town Hall as " a part @-@ time filing clerk who sometimes makes the tea " . Convicted thief Freddie Robdal (Nicholas Lyndhurst) has just been released from Dartmoor Prison and returned to Peckham with explosives expert Gerald " Jelly " Kelly (Paul Putner) .

At the Town Hall , Joan asks Mr Johnson (Colin Prockter) about applying for a flat in the new high @-@ rise estate ; she is told she is unlikely to get a tenancy , as preference will be given to those with young children . At the Nag 's Head , Freddie and Reg meet , and Reg invites him to his house to continue drinking . After meeting Joan and buying her a drink , Freddie realises that she is a Trotter , a family he has a dislike for . After they return to the Trotters ' house , Freddie shows his affection for Joan .

At the cinema , Joan is promoted to part @-@ time assistant manager and Rayner tells her that the safe sometimes contains over £ 2 @,@ 000 at weekends . She later tells Freddie , after he goes round to her house to offer Reg some work (Reg was not at home as Freddie told him to meet him at the pub) . They talk about art , and he invites her (and Reg) to his house @-@ warming party . In March , Joan has a Marilyn Monroe hairstyle and the safe at the cinema is broken into . Ahead of the party , Freddie gives Reg the use of his car , to return unused decorating materials to Guildford and he takes his father , Renee and her boyfriend Clayton Cooper (Roger Griffiths) with him . They run out of petrol on the way , leaving Freddie and Joan the only ones at the party . They dance , and Freddie admits that he wanted to be alone with Joan so they could talk about art . They end the night by sleeping together .

In June , Renee accompanies Joan to a pregnancy testing clinic , while the boys are on the Jolly Boys Outing to Margate (providing Freddie and Jelly the opportunity to burgle a jewellers) . On their journey home , Renee tells Joan about Freddie 's time in prison and she realises he burgled the cinema . After Freddie tells Kelly he thinks he 's in love with Joan , Reg announces her pregnancy in the pub . While Joan is completing a housing request form , Freddie goes to see her and she fails to acknowledge the baby is his .

The Trotters ' housing application is successful in August , September sees them view a flat in the new Sir Walter Raleigh House , which they have moved into in October . In November , Joan has her baby , which she calls Rodney (after the " handsome actor " Rod Taylor , and to the surprise of

everyone else) . The closing scene sees Joan enter the balcony of her flat with Rodney in her arms . After telling him that Del will be very rich one day , Joan sees Freddie on a balcony in a tower opposite ; she shows him Rodney and nods her head , to his delight .

Throughout , the story tells of Del 's strained relationship with his father and his affection for his mother ; Reg 's affair with the barmaid at the Nag 's Head ; Del and Jumbo selling goods from the docks out of the back of a van ; Del and Boycie 's attempt at dating Pam and Glenda (Jodie Mooney and Katie Griffiths) ; Joan fending off advances from her perverted boss and provides an introduction to Roy Slater (Calum MacNab) and Albie Littlewood (Jonathan Readwin) .

= = Production = =

Writer John Sullivan had the idea for a prequel to the sitcom Only Fools and Horses in 1997 ; its commission was announced in 2003 and the premise for the series was established in the final Only Fools and Horses episode " Sleepless in Peckham " in 2003 , where Rodney discovers a photograph of Freddie Robdal from 1960 . His uncanny resemblance to Rodney confirmed that he , and not Reg , was Rodney 's biological father . A lot of the groundwork for this had been both laid and explored in the Episode " The Frog 's Legacy " the 1987 Christmas Day hour @-@ long special . In the episode Rodney goes to ask about his father to which Albert diplomatically replies ' They 're rumours Rodney . That 's all . Rumours . ' The proposed prequel , was to be titled Once Upon a Time in Peckham , it would see young versions of Del , Boycie , Denzil and Trigger , and Sullivan said " Joanie will be a key character , and during the film will give birth to Rodney . " However , the prequel was shelved , and spin @-@ off The Green Green Grass was developed to follow secondary characters , Boycie , Marlene and their son Tyler , as they escape the London Mafia and attempt to live in the Shropshire countryside . It was reported in January 2009 that the prequel was being considered again , following the success of The Green Green Grass . In April 2009 , Sullivan told The Mail on Sunday that he had started writing the prequel , and that Lyndhurst was " keen " to play Robdal , a local criminal and Rodney 's biological father , although the production had yet to be commissioned .

On 3 July 2009 , the BBC announced that the prequel had been commissioned as a 90 @-@ minute comedy drama , titled Sex , Drugs & Rock ' n ' Chips , to be co @-@ produced by the BBC and Sullivan 's production company , Shazam Productions . Originally scheduled for August , filming began in October 2009 in London , lasting 19 days . Nicholas Lyndhurst , who played Rodney in Only Fools and Horses , would play villain and art connoisseur Freddie Robdal in a reprise of his role in the " Sleepless in Peckham " photograph , Kellie Bright (Bad Girls , The Archers) would play the " glamorous " Joan Trotter , her husband Reg would be portrayed by Shaun Dingwall (Soldier Soldier) , and his father by Phil Daniels (Quadrophenia , EastEnders) . James Buckley (The Inbetweeners) , would play the teenage Derek , Joan and Reg 's son , portrayed by David Jason in Only Fools and Horses . Dewi Humphreys (The Green Green Grass) would direct . It was announced in January 2010 that the production would be shown on 24 January on BBC One with the title Rock & Chips .

Sullivan said when the production was announced that it would " give us a bit of an insight into why Del and Rodney turned out they [sic] way they did " in a period " before The Beatles and Mary Quant made London the coolest place on the planet " when " the staple diet was rock salmon and chips and the flicks offer the only hint of glamour " . Expanding further on the basis for the prequel , he said :

... the most important person in the flat [in Only Fools and Horses] was never , ever seen ; it was the spirit of Del 's (and Rodney 's) beloved mother Joan who had passed away 17 years before , and throughout the run of the series Del constantly referred to her and past events within the Trotter Family But much of his historical information was at best contradictory , and at worse [sic] outright lies . We were left with a situation where the only person who really knew what had happened was an unreliable witness , so I decided to return to those misty days of 1960 to meet all those characters we 'd only ever heard about ...

. The ' Nags Head ' pub used in the pilot episode is a de @-@ furbished version of the existing '

Pelton Arms ' pub in Greenwich , SE10 9PQ which maintains the ' Only Fools And Horses ' look , style and ' feel ' .

The drama was produced by Gareth Gwenlan , who worked on Only Fools and Horses between 1988 and 2003 . Speaking to the Western Mail , he described it as " essentially a love story " between Joan and Freddie , and he said that Lyndhurst " told me he thinks it 's the best thing he 's ever done " . Speaking about the casting of Lyndhurst , he said he " would make a marvellous villain , which is something people will never have seen him do on TV before " .

In an interview in the press pack for the production , Lyndhurst described Freddie Robdal as " a villain ? charming , but nasty " , and comparing him to Rodney , said that : " They 're from two entirely different suitcases as far as I 'm concerned . I didn 't want to bring into it anything that I 'd already done with Rodney and fortunately there wasn 't any opportunity to do so . They 're like chalk and cheese . " Speaking about the 19 day filming schedule and the " not great " budget , he also told Michael Deacon of The Daily Telegraph that :

I was very pleased it was made at all There were people who said , ' I don 't think we 're going to do this ' , and we had to wait months to get the green light . We thought , ' Well , we haven 't got the budget we want , we haven 't got the schedule we want , so we 're going to have to make it as brilliant as we can . ' It was a costume drama and it needed a costume drama budget , and it didn 't get that .

Speaking about continuing the story , Gwenlan said that the production was " run on the idea it 'll be turned into a series . This one lays the groundwork and John [Sullivan] has enough for about two more series . "

On 13 September 2010 , while promoting the third series of The Inbetweeners on BBC Radio 5 Live , James Buckley confirmed that Rock & Chips would return for two more specials , one for Christmas 2010 , and the other for Easter 2011 . John Sullivan died on 23 April 2011 , five days before the final episode was broadcast .

= = Reception = =

Overnight figures estimated Rock & Chips was seen by 7 @.@ 4 million viewers with a 28 % audience share , winning the slot against ITV 's Wild at Heart and the Dancing on Ice results show . It was the second most @-@ watched programme of the day , behind the first Dancing on Ice programme of the evening . Final figures showed it was seen by 8 @.@ 42 million viewers on BBC One and 279 @,@ 000 on BBC HD .

Sam Wollaston for The Guardian said he was missing the interplay between Rodney and Del Boy from the original , and that the only fun in the drama was " recognising the nods , working out who 's who and how it all fits into place . Otherwise , it 's pretty lame . " The Daily Mirror 's Jim Shelley didn 't find the storyline " interesting or convincing " , finding Lyndhurst 's performance as Freddie " laughable " and saying it was " bizarre " that the storyline " virtually abandoned its main character (the young Del Boy) and its best actor (the engaging James Buckley from The Inbetweeners) who played him " . In The Independent , Tom Sutcliffe said that " the narrative 's focus was blurred and the pacing weirdly off ? quite a lot of the time you were well ahead of the drama and hanging around for it to catch up with you " . Benji Wilson from The Daily Telegraph also wasn 't impressed saying the viewer would have been disappointed if they " tuned in wanting to be entertained , enthused , or anything in between " , and that it was an " ocean @-@ going stinker " .

However , The Scotsman 's Paul Whitelaw said that , despite a " disjointed " plot and it being " overstretched at 90 minutes " : " It was actually pretty good . Not great , not perfect , but a watchable production from which everyone emerged with their dignity intact . " He said that Buckley " delivered a charming performance in what was effectively a supporting role . Wisely choosing to suggest Del 's familiar mannerisms without opting for outright impersonation , he carried off a difficult task with modest élan . " Writing for The Stage , Harry Venning found the performances " top notch " and praised the script as " first class " , saying " the comic moments were of the highest quality and beautifully crafted into the narrative " . Andrew Billen from The Times described Bright 's portrayal of Joan as " winsome " , said Lyndhurst " produced a detailed performance " and that " Rock & Chips

was better than the sequel that preceded it . " Keith Watson in the Metro also praised the performances of Buckley and Bright , saying " They deserved a show all to themselves . " Although he found the period detail " squeaky clean " and " unconvincing " , he closed his review by saying : " Somehow it made me care about the Trotters in a way decades of Only Fools and Horses never came close to . "

= = Cast = =

= = Episode list = =

= = Home media = =

The pilot of Rock & Chips was released on Region 2 DVD on 5 April 2010 . The Christmas special " Five Gold Rings " was released on DVD on 28 March 2011 . On 2 May 2011 a three @-@ disc DVD set titled " Rock & Chips - The Complete Collection " was released , comprising all three of the episodes .