

# Revisiting 'Little Britain' in *Don't Forget the Driver* (BBC 2019)

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# Outline

- The impact of Brexit on the British film industry
- Brexit in films and series
- *Don't Forget the Driver* (BBC 2019) :  
“the Brexit show we need right now.”
  - Adam Bloodworth, April 9, 2019,
  - <https://www.thejackalmagazine.com/dont-forget-the-driver-tim-crouch>



HOUSE OF COMMONS

## Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Oral evidence: British film and high-end television,  
HC 157

Wednesday 21 February 2024

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 21 February 2024.

[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Dame Caroline Dinenage (Chair); Steve Brine; Clive Efford; Julie Elliott; Damian Green; Simon Jupp; John Nicolson; Alex Sobel; Giles Watling.

Questions 80-192

### Witnesses

I: James Hawes, Director and Vice-Chair, Directors UK.

II: Rebecca O'Brien, Producer, Sixteen Films.

III: Ollie Madden, Director, Film 4, and Eva Yates, Director, BBC Film.

# An Economic Review of UK Independent Film

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A report commissioned by the BFI

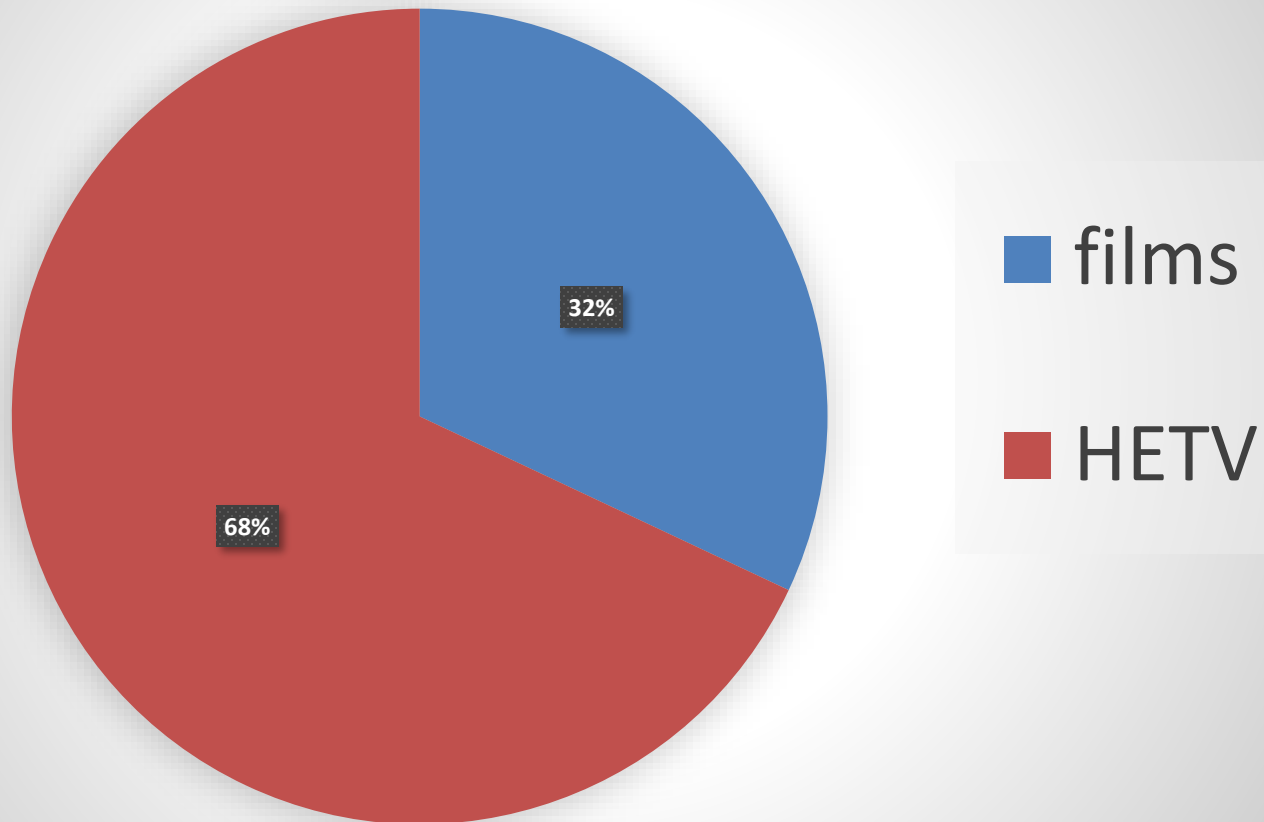
July 2022



# Total spend on film and HETV production 2023: £4.23bn

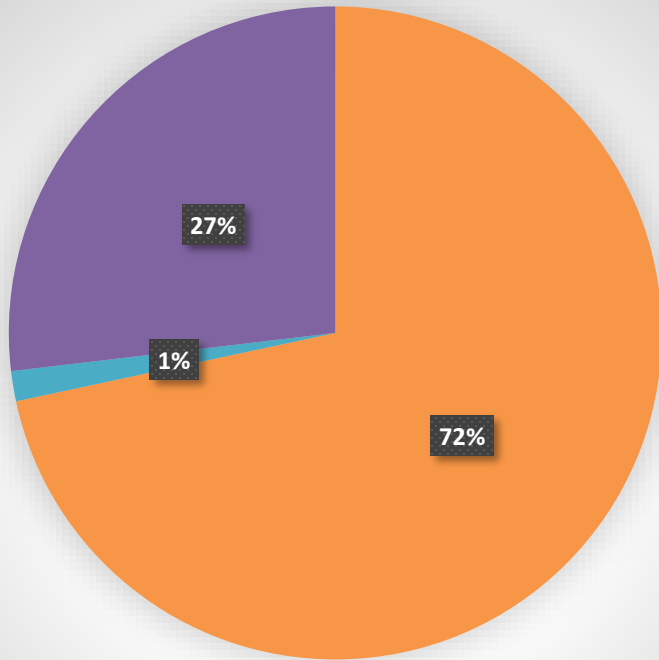
<https://www.bfi.org.uk/news/official-bfi-2023-statistics>

Production spend 2023



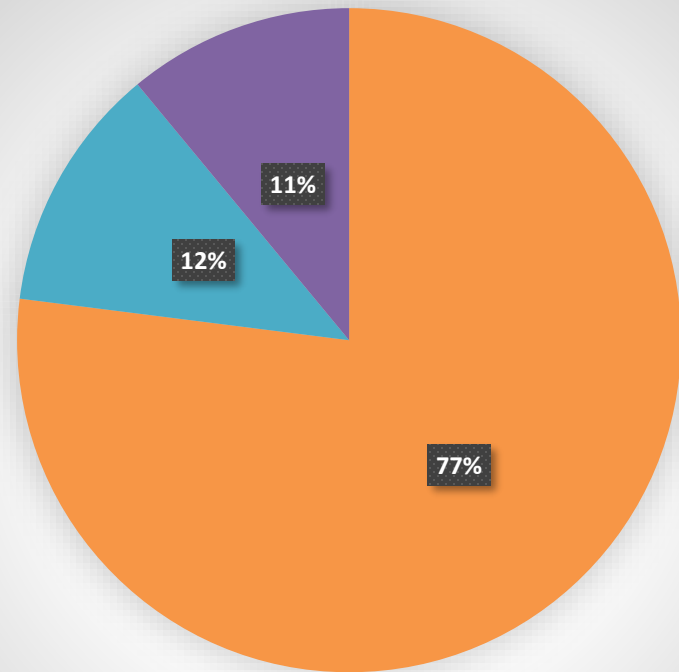
From <https://www.bfi.org.uk/news/official-bfi-2023-statistics>

production spend on HETV 2013



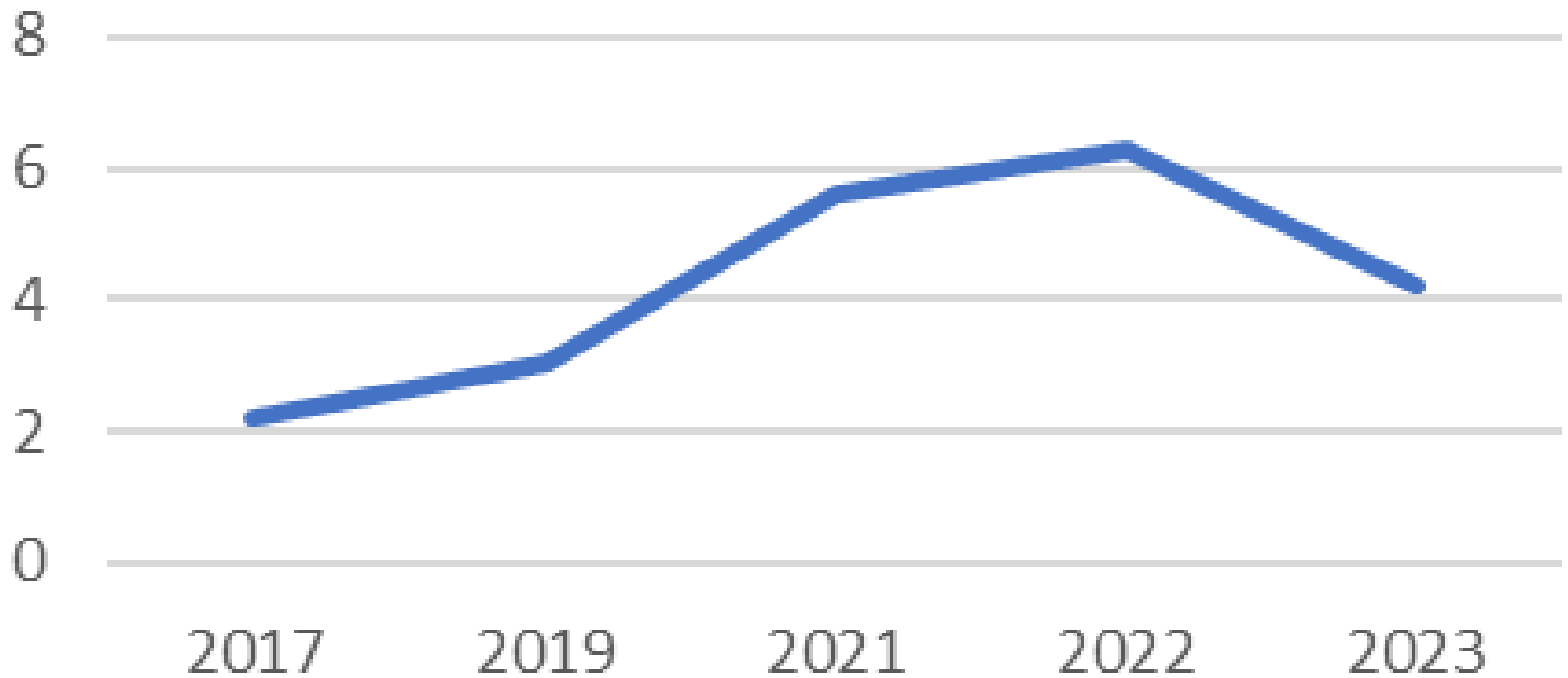
■ Inward investment ■ coproduction ■ domestic

production spend on film 2013

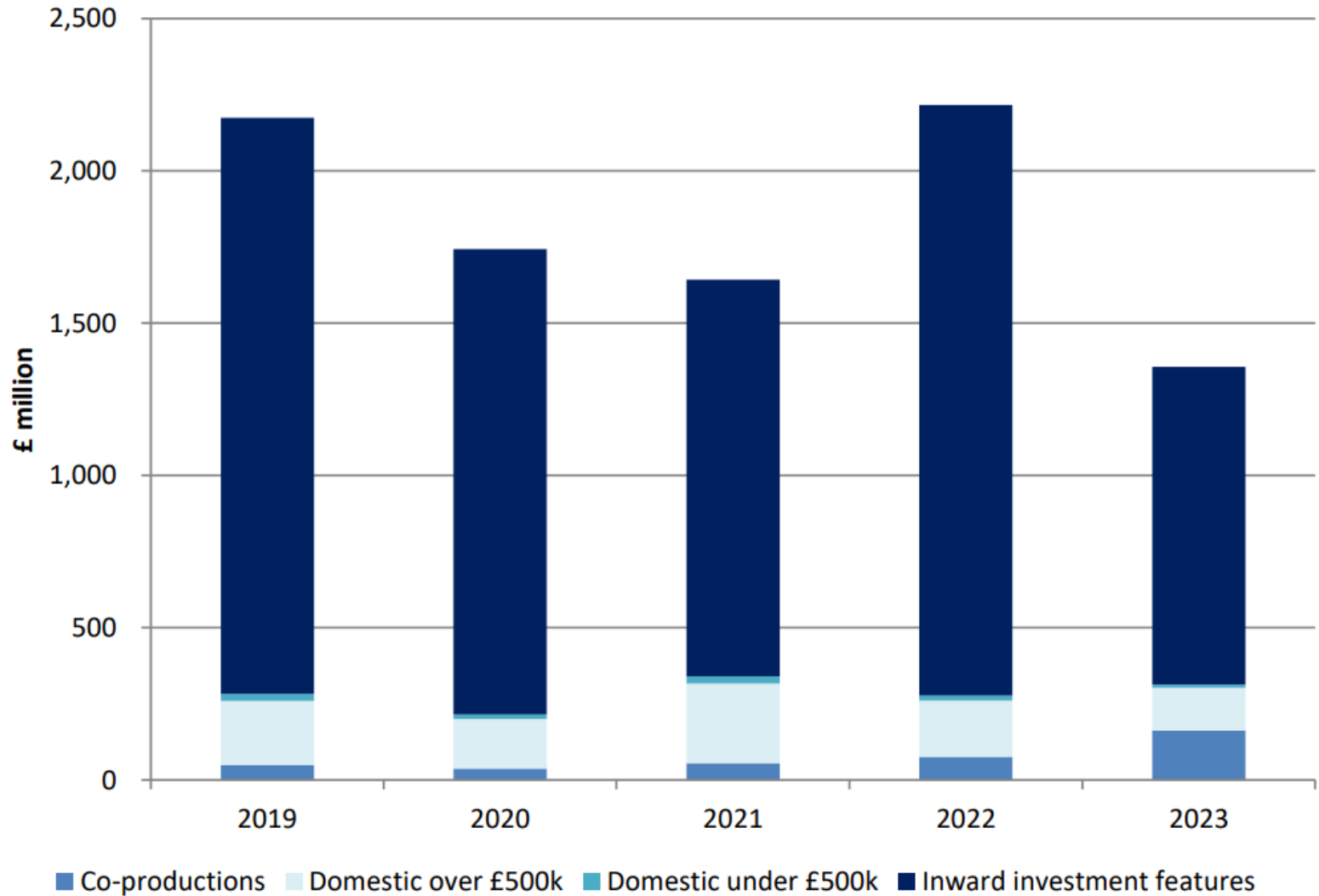


■ Inward investment ■ coproduction ■ domestic

# Total spend on film and HETV production in bn of pounds



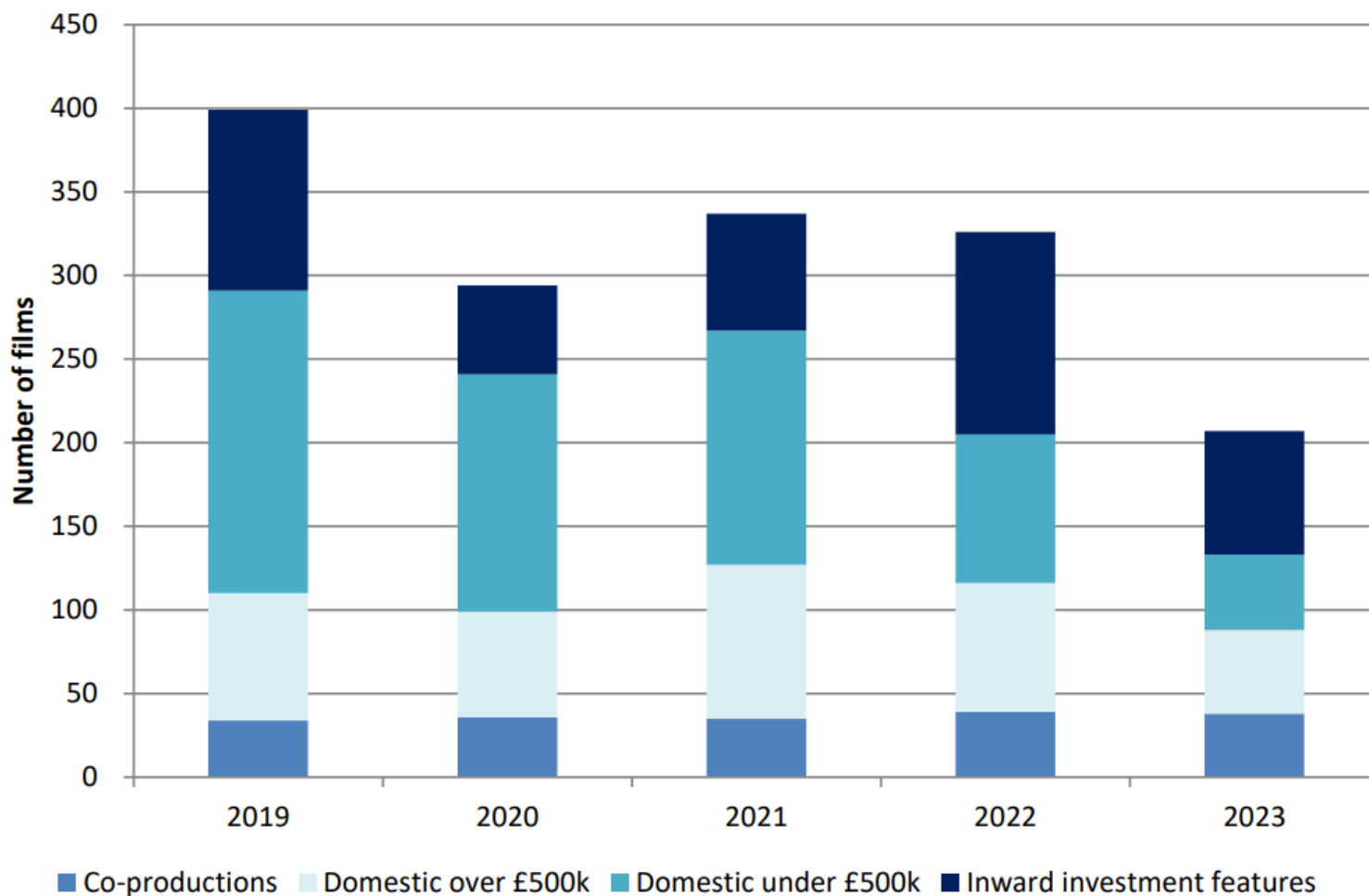
**Figure 1 – UK spend (millions) of features produced in the UK, calendar years 2019-2023**



Source: BFI



**Figure 2 – Number of features produced in the UK, calendar years 2019-2023**



Source: BFI

Films are allocated to the calendar year in which principal photography commenced.

\* The low numbers for domestic productions with budgets under £500,000 is partially attributable to a time lag in obtaining complete information on all low and micro-budget activity in the UK.

## Adapted from BFI yearly statistics

Box office	2023	2022	2019 (before Covid)
<b>Top 20 films of which 10 coproductions UK/US</b>	61% £588.6 million Top film with £95.6 million	67% £644.6 million	60% £753 million
<b>Top 20 independent UK films</b>	3.5% £33.7 million Only 1 film over £5 m at the box office with £5.3 m		17% £151.6 million 10 films over £5 m at the box office with peak at £28.2 m
<b>UK-qualifying films including US-studio backed films (for ex Barbie in 2023)</b>	41.1% £401.9 million	29.6% £279.7 million	41% £620.5 million
<b>UK independent film</b>	3.8% £37.8 million	7.9% £74.7 million	19% £174.3 million

# An Economic Review of UK Independent Film

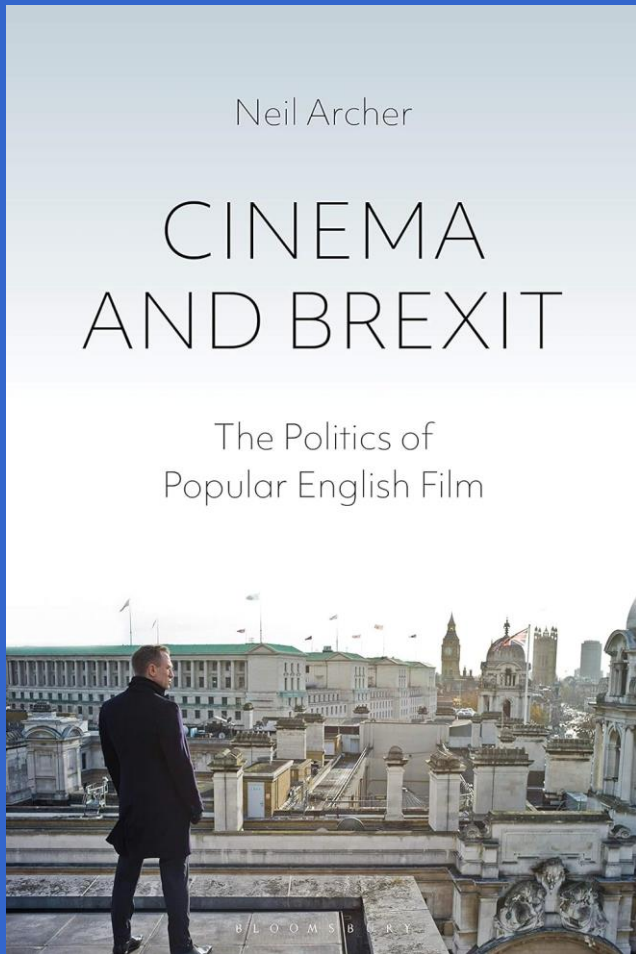
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A report commissioned by the BFI

July 2022



**Neil Archer, *Cinema and Brexit. The Politics of Popular English Film*, London: Bloomsbury, 2020**



“any tendency to discuss the films in terms of a ‘popular national cinema’ confronts the fact that they can only represent a national body in a very limited sense of the term. Most films are made withing a nexus of industrial practices and already-globalized strategies of production and marketing.” (11-12)

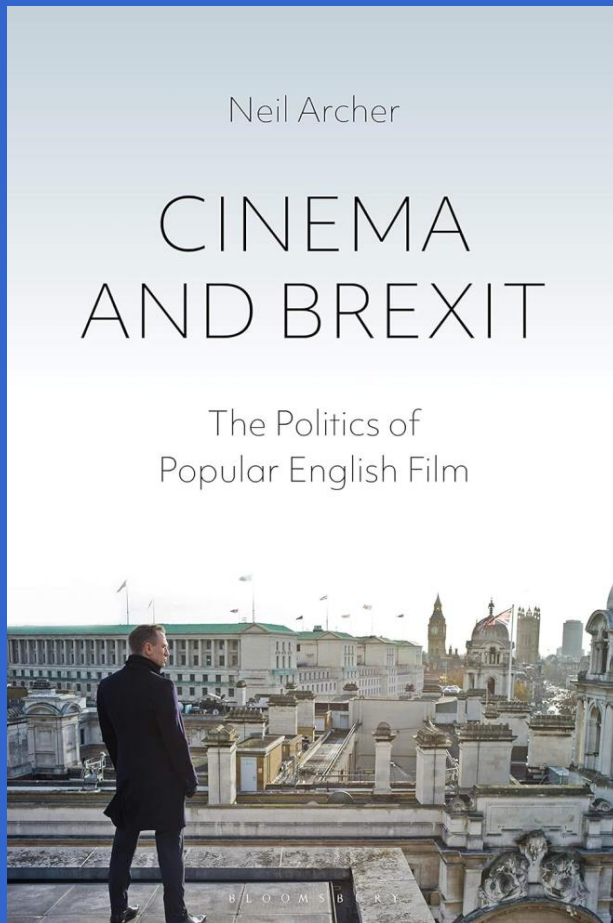


“Which film, in the context of the EU referendum, tells us more about modern Britain, and its relationship to Europe? A film shot in England, feted at Cannes and seen by twice as many people in France as in its own country? or a film shot partly in Cannes, feted by no one in particular and which reaped \$20m at the UK box office [...]?”

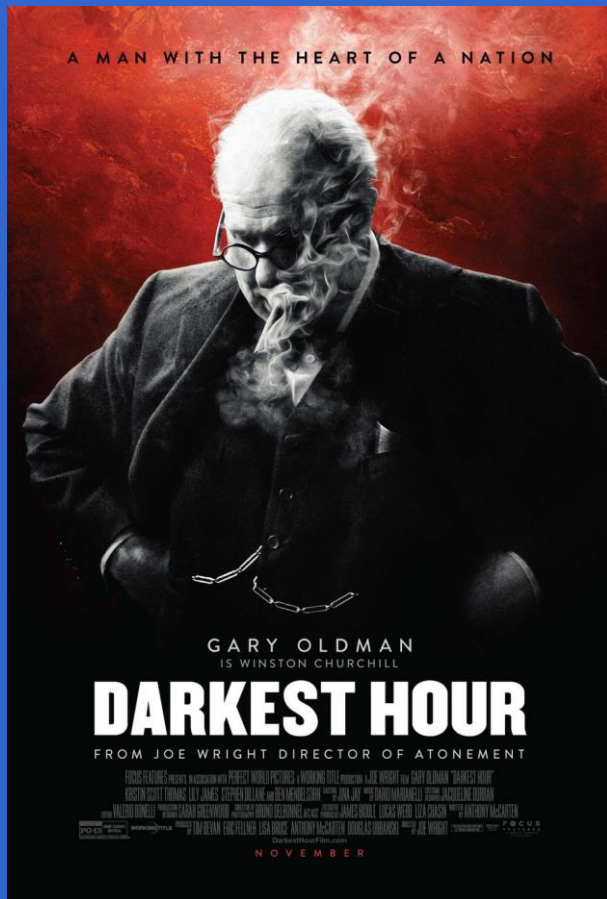
*Archer, Cinema and Brexit, 2*



**Neil Archer, *Cinema and Brexit. The Politics of Popular English Film*, London: Bloomsbury, 2020**



“What we can therefore pursue is the possibility that an English cinema of this period, for whatever motive, is **playing some part in the construction and maintenance of long-standing national myths, founded in self-perceptions of entitlement, self-sufficiency and distinction, especially from the European mainland.**” (17)





*Darkest Hour*  
2018  
On the tube  
extract





“Hounded review – folk-horror class war on the hunting field taps into Brexit disquiet,”

Phil Hoad, *Guardian*, Mon 24 Oct 2022

“Brexit has been conspicuous by its absence so far in British cinema. So for the time being we have to make do with faint echoes in the likes of *Hounded*, which in its B-movie-ish way deals with the current deep divisions in English society and nostalgia for Blighty’s heyday.”



## *To The Manor Born* (BBC, 1979-1981)

Episode 3, season 2 (*Never Be Alone*) October 1980

- Salesman (from the company named 'Oddfit'): "It's about the kitchen floor, Ma'am, we're gonna need 10 square metres of tiling."
- Audrey: "Square metres? – What's wrong with square yards?"
- Salesman: "Good Lord, Ma'am, square yards went out years ago. It's all square metres now."
- Audrey: "Not in this house. They won't fit! This house was built in feet and inches."



BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH

# BREXIT

THE UNCIVIL WAR

EVERYONE KNOWS  
WHO WON

BUT NOT  
EVERYONE KNOWS  
HOW



first broadcast  
January 7, 2019  
Channel 4



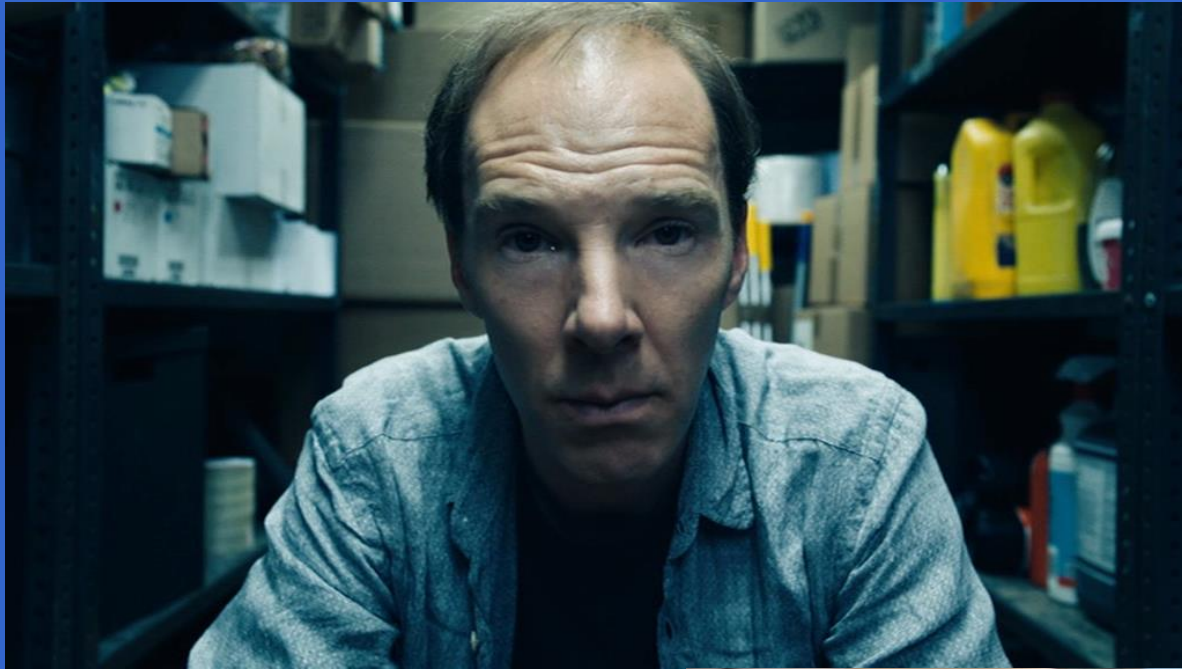
SO  
BACK

ve, take control



# Comic freeze frames



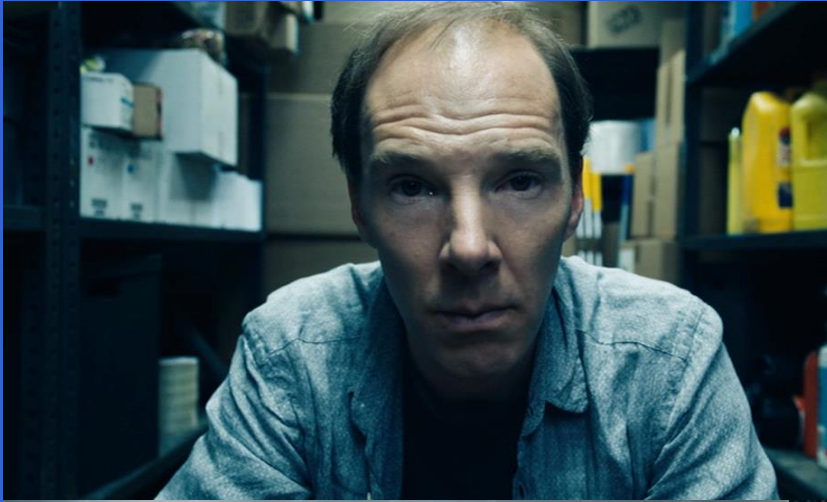


Breaking  
the fourth  
wall





# Opening sequence

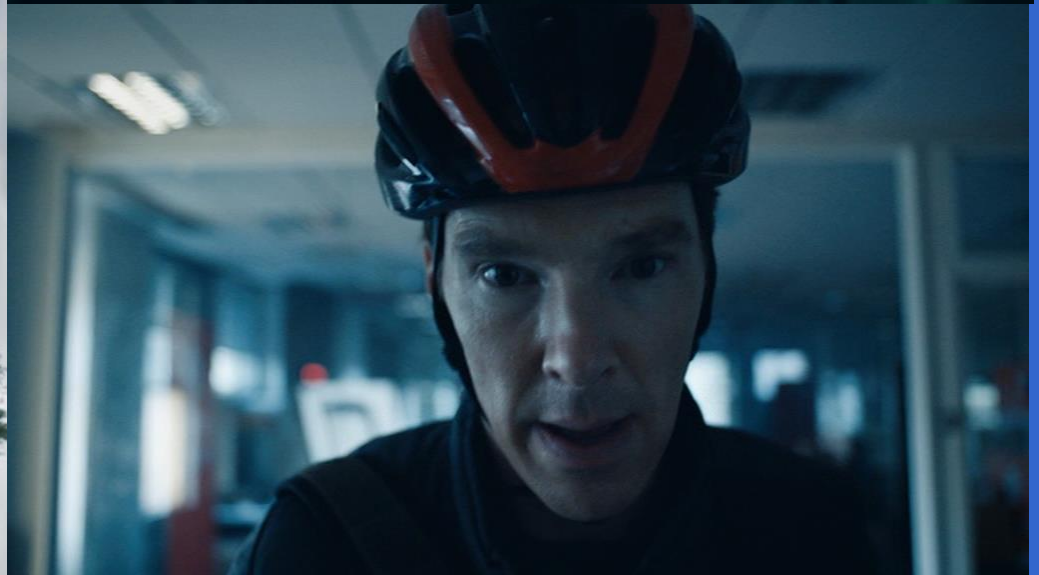
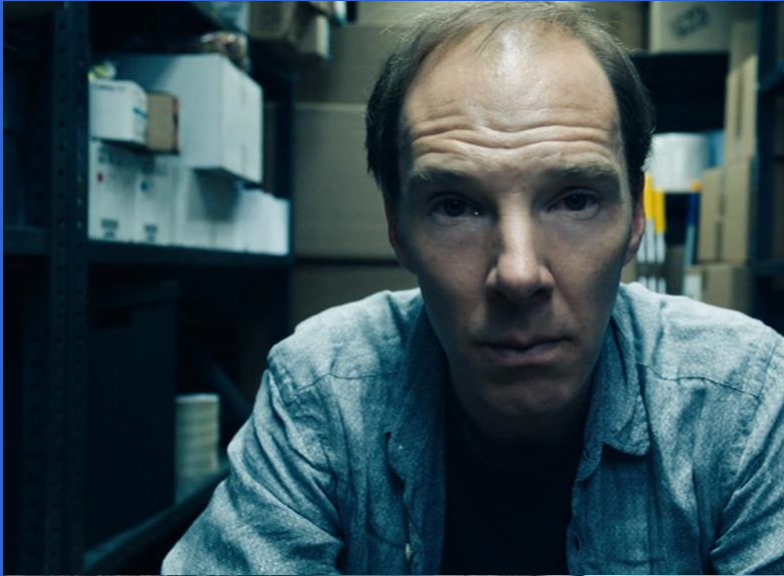


# Cutting on action



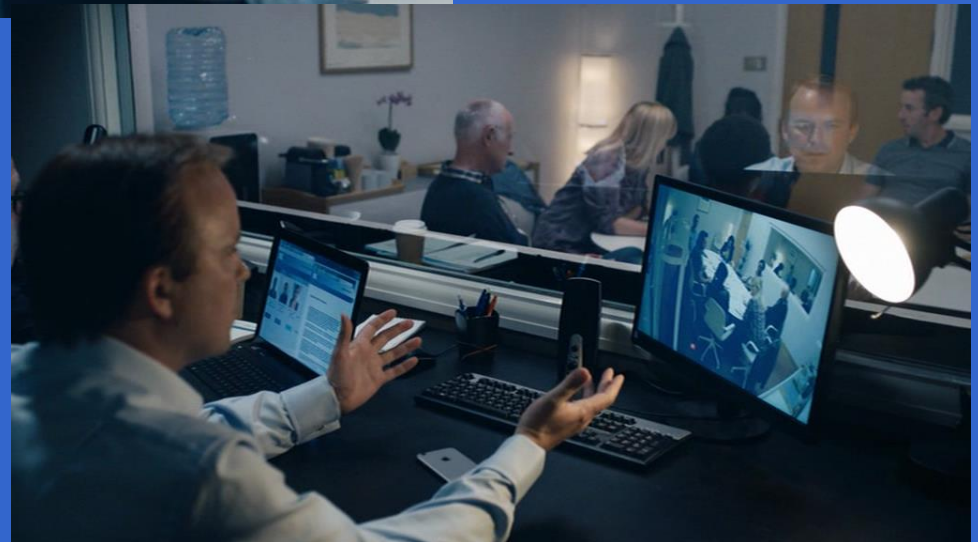


# Self-absorption



- Extract

“nobody listens to each other, they just yell”



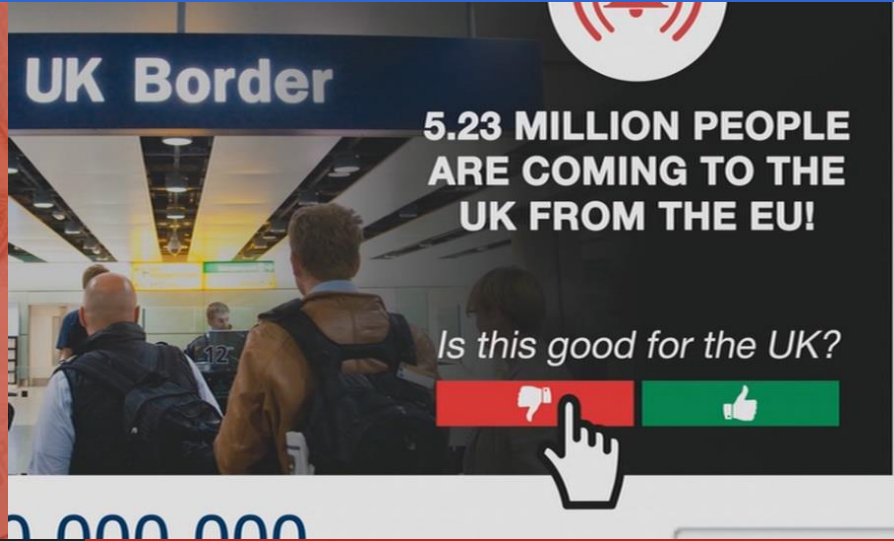




**SPEND OUR MONEY ON OUR PRIORITIES LIKE THE NHS**

**I AGREE**

Vote Leave



**UK Border**

**5.23 MILLION PEOPLE ARE COMING TO THE UK FROM THE EU!**

Is this good for the UK?

**Dislike** **Like**



**Now the EU wants to ban tea kettles!**

**TAKE BACK CONTROL NOW**



**5.23 MILLION more EU IMMIGRANTS**  
coming to the UK by 2030

**It's time for us to TAKE BACK CONTROL!**

EUROPEAN UNION  
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND  
PASSPORT

## *This England*

written by Michael Winterbottom and Kieron Quirke  
first broadcast on September 28, 2022 on Sky Atlantic

- Extract



*The Old Oak*, Ken Loach  
released in the UK on September 29, 2023



THE NORTH OF ENGLAND, 2016



# Daily Express front pages 2011

from Liz Gerard's "The press and immigration: reporting the news or fanning the flames of hatred?" (2016)





Daily Mail front pages 2014  
from Liz Gerard's "The press and immigration: reporting the news or fanning  
the flames of hatred?" (2016)







Tim Crouch

“And then June 2016 happened and the country voted to leave the European Union. We didn’t want to write about Brexit directly, but we wanted to introduce into the story some **ideas around freedom of movement**. Each episode has a nice rhythm, where we see the driver going out and coming back in again, but woven through this is a bigger story about belonging – to a family and to a country,”

Quoted in “Don’t Forget the Driver premieres this week”  
09/04/2019, <https://cbwmagazine.com/dont-forget-the-driver-premieres-this-week/>

## Reviews

“Don’t Forget The Driver is the Brexit show we need right now”

Adam Bloodworth, *The Jackal* , 9 April 2019

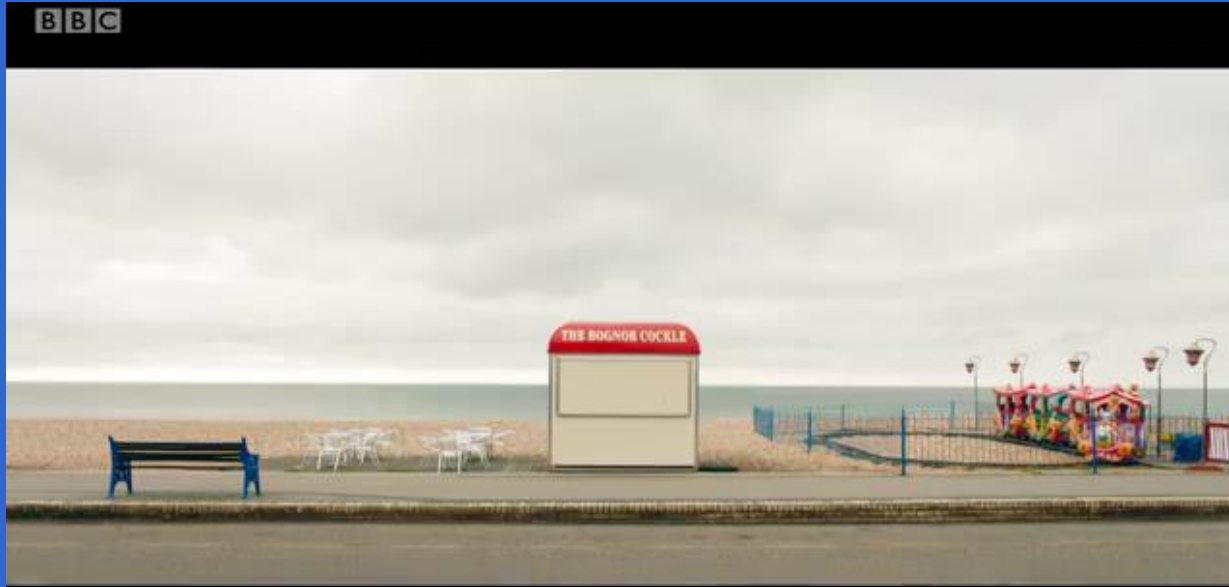
“Don't Forget the Driver: the show to help you come to terms with Brexit”

Mark Lawson, *the Guardian*, 4 Apr 2019

“Review: ‘Don’t Forget the Driver’ Is a Comedy for Our Moment”

Mike Hale, *New York Times*, Sept. 14, 2020

“...setting our first episode on the English coast meant everything became freighted with Brexit...”



- Extract 1

# leitmotiv for each episode





# Soundtrack

- ***From the 1960s***

- Pentangle – “People on the Highway” 1968-71
- The Moody Blues – “Nights In White Satin” 1968
- Procol Harum – “A White Shade of Pale” 1967
- David Bowie – “Did you Ever Have a Dream” 1967

- ***From the 1980s***

- Motorhead – “Overkill” 1979
- Dead or Alive – “You Spin Me Round (Like a Record)” 1985
- Iron Maiden – “Hallowed Be Thy Name” 1982
- Spandau Ballet – “True” 1983
- Madness – “Our House” 1982
- Take That – “Take That” 1992
- Duran Duran – “Wild Boys” – 1984
- Living in a Box – “Living in a Box” 1987
- Shakin’ Stevens – “This ole House” 1981

- ***Others***

- Anon (wrongly attributed to Henry VIII) – “Greensleeves”
- Elgar – *Enigma Variations* “Nimrod” 1898-99
- George Formby – “Oh Don’t the Wind Blow Cold” 1941





BBC

Don't  
Forget  
the  
driver



BBC



BBC



BBC



BBC



# Opening shot

BBC



# Each episode structured around daytrip

- Episode 1 – Commonwealth war cemetery - Dunkirk
- Episode 2 – The Donkey Sanctuary (Devon)
- Episode 3 – Swimming pool
- Episode 4 – Hampton Court Palace
- Episode 5 – Babbacombe model village (Devon)
- Episode 6 – School band to Crawley (West Sussex)

# Babbacombe Model Village - Devon

BBC

Meet Gulliver  
A Real Live Giant



Stonehenge  
Explained





# Babbacombe Model Village

BBC



BBC



BBC



BBC





# Flags

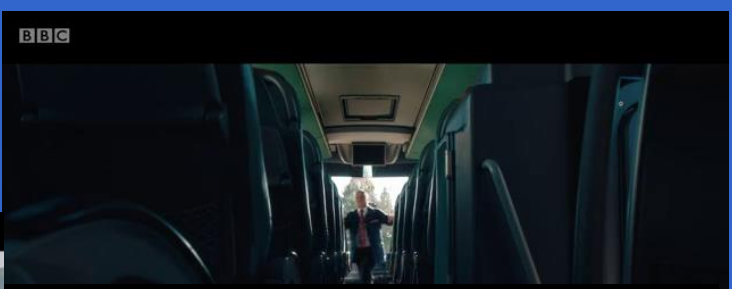
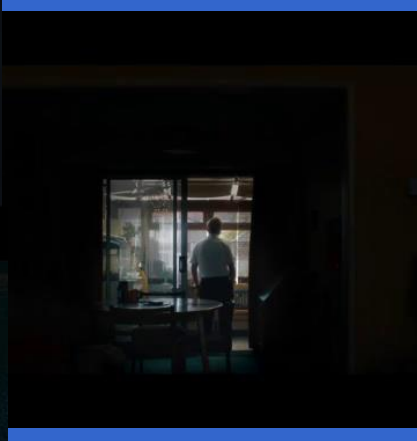


- Extract 2 & 3

# Martin Parr, Hypermarché Auchan, Calais, France, 1988







# actuality & nightmare

BBC



BBC



BBC



BBC



# Rita

BBC

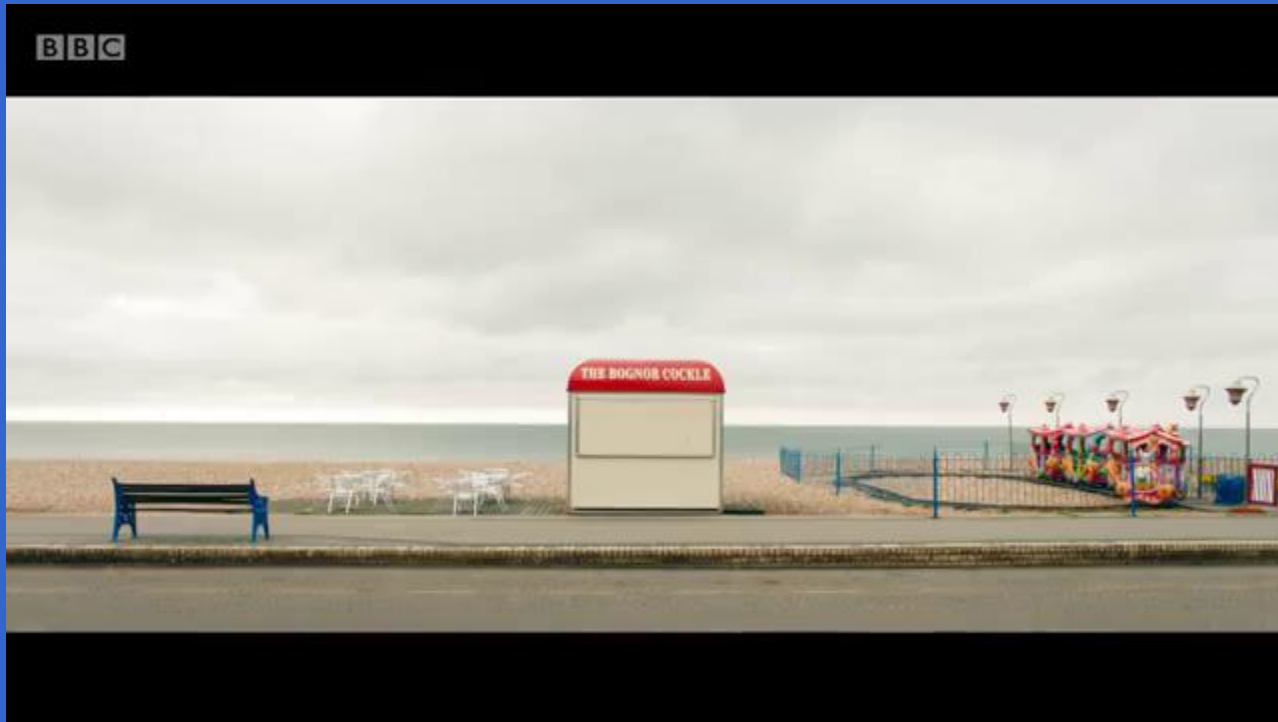


BBC





- Extract 4 & 5



# Reflexivity

BBC



BBC



BBC



LIVE STREAMING FROM BOGNOR REGIS PIER - WEST SUSSEX UK



- Extract 6



# Inclusive casting



- Extract 7 – end of last episode


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anglophonie  
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Don't Forget  
the driver ↓