

Joy's house when Clive walks her home or that shot when Betty arrives at her house, when you pan round to the front door and then track back at great speed – that's the sort of shot Roger very much egged me on to do. It wasn't the sort of shot I'd used much previously, a counter-track like that, a camera moving on its own volition.

You wouldn't have wanted to do it before, or you wouldn't have felt comfortable?

Both. And the fact is that as you progress from *Bleak Moments* through all the television films, you can see they're all shot in a very disciplined and controlled way. By the time, for example, you get to the opening shot of *Naked* . . . the journey certainly from *The Short and Curlies* to *Naked* was important in terms of being adventurous. But still, my taste is for unobtrusive, controlled shots.

High Hopes (1988)

Wayne (Jason Watkins) arrives in London with a small suitcase and a scrap of paper detailing his sister's address. Clearly lost, he sees motorcycle courier Cyril (Phil Davis) tinkering with his motorbike outside a small block of flats in King's Cross and asks for directions. Cyril doesn't recognise the address and invites Wayne into his flat so he can look it up in the A-Z. Shirley (Ruth Sheen), Cyril's partner, is kind to the helpless Wayne. There's passing reference to a cactus called Thatcher because it's 'a pain in the arse'.

Cyril and Shirley visit Cyril's mother, Mrs Bender (Edna Doré), in her dark, quiet house and sit close to one another on the sofa. She is a lonely widow prone to complaining about everything, including her son's scruffiness; Cyril is simply fulfilling his duty and has little to say to her other than inappropriate comments about gunning down the royal family. He is anxious to leave. Cyril tells Shirley that the street was very different when he was growing up. She thinks his mother may be the only council tenant left in a gentrified street. They look through the letterbox of Mrs Bender's posh next-door neighbours, who are in the country.

Shirley talks about having children and the option of going back to work. Cyril thinks the world is already overpopulated. Wayne turns up again with nowhere to go and is offered a bed. He watches wide-eyed as Cyril builds a joint, and lets Shirley zip him up in a sleeping bag as though he were a child.

Cyril's sister Valerie (Heather Tobias) is highly strung, neurotic and aspirational. Her dog is her baby, her marriage is in trouble and her house is a garish clash of styles. She visits her mother from time to time but is even less interested than Cyril.

When Mrs Bender locks herself out of her home, her snobby upper-class neighbour Laetitia Boothe-Braine (Lesley Manville) is unsympathetic and initially reluctant to let her wait in her house. When Laetitia's husband Rupert (David Bamber) comes home, he suggests she smarten up her house, fails to hear when she says her husband is dead and talks of his £150 seats for the opera. Valerie comes to pick her mother up but has forgotten the key. Then Cyril and Shirley arrive. Brother and sister rarely have contact and it's a desperately awkward moment.

Later, while Valerie tries to initiate sex with her husband Martin (Philip Jackson), we see Cyril and Shirley returning from the pub, giggling. Shirley soon becomes serious: she doesn't want to use her cap when they have sex. Cyril counters that families are out of date and concludes that 'two's company'. We also see the Boothe-Braines engaging in playful, slightly strange sex which involves a teddy bear.

Cyril and Shirley visit Highgate Cemetery. Cyril contemplates Karl Marx's tomb and announces that without him 'there wouldn't have been nothing'. He berates Shirley, who works for the council as a gardener, for looking at some flowers instead of showing more interest in Marx.

Shirley's friend Suzi (Judith Scott) visits the King's Cross flat. She wonders why they don't have a baby, given that there's a spare room. There is talk of politics, of meetings, of revolutions. Later, Cyril tells Shirley he wants everyone to have enough to eat before having a baby. He declares himself a dead loss and wonders why Shirley doesn't 'clear off'. She says she would if she didn't love him.

Valerie has organised a surprise party for Mrs Bender's seventieth birthday. Martin picks his mother-in-law up, leaving her in the car while he pops in to see his lover (Cheryl Prime). The party is a showcase for Valerie to display her relative wealth and for Cyril in turn to wonder how they can be related. Valerie, a woman on the verge of a nervous breakdown, tells her mother to shut up, swigs from a bottle of champagne and has a huge row with her husband. The camera lingers on the old woman's expressionless face as things fall apart. Shirley asks Mrs Bender if she's all right. 'I'm still alive,' she says.

Shirley takes Mrs Bender to their flat, where she comes to life – although it is increasingly clear that she is suffering from prema-

ture senile dementia. In bed that night, Shirley tells Cyril she hasn't got her cap in, and he only jokingly protests.

The next morning, Cyril, Shirley and Mrs Bender stand on the roof of their King's Cross flat looking out across London. 'It's the top of the world,' exclaims Mrs Bender.

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AMY RAPHAEL: *Where does High Hopes sit in your canon of work? Is it a favourite?*

MIKE LEIGH: No. I've got a soft spot for aspects of it. *High Hopes* and *Life Is Sweet* sit together in a separate section from that which went before and that which follows. It would be wrong of me to say that any real pressure has ever been put on any film I've made, including those two. However, because of the glitch of 1986's abandoned film, I felt as though things had changed by the time I made *High Hopes*. There seemed to be a received expectation of the commercial possibilities of a film I might make.

What displeases you about the film?

When people criticise my work for caricature, or when satire is talked about, *High Hopes* is the only legitimate target in my view, apart from *Who's Who*. It's the only film I've made that (a) involves anything that you could really call satire, (b) is culpable of caricature, and (c), most importantly, is certainly the only film where the deliberate device is employed of heightening in a comic way some characters against others in order to make an implicit statement. That said, it still works within the conventions of what I do.

When I was in Hollywood promoting it, the *LA Times* review talked about a 'mixture of acting styles'. I was vehement at the time – and I remain so – that there's not a mixture of acting styles. In fact, it's perfectly consistent – more so than many a film. The sophisticated and rigorous discipline and the choices that have gone into how actors play characters are consistent across the board. However, it may well be possible to criticise the choice of behavioural characteristics and the way those are heightened or brought out.

Why do you mention High Hopes in conjunction with Life Is Sweet?

With both films there's a distinction between the question of performances and the choices of what goes on. Of the two films, I'm less comfortable with *Life Is Sweet*. In fact, in some ways I'm least comfortable with that film. All the stuff about the Regret Rien restaurant and Aubrey is inherently funny and plainly has something to say about entrepreneurial activity – apart from all the other stuff about individuals and isolation – but if I'm honest there's a degree of strain on my part in the rendering of that side of the story. I suppose, looking at the two films from a post-*Naked* perspective, I find the construction and the narrative on the clumsy side. More so in *Life Is Sweet*. It's difficult because *High Hopes* – taken on its own terms, where it came from and where I was at – is fine, and I don't really have a problem with it.

High Hopes has some strong performances – notably by Phil Davis, Ruth Sheen and Edna Doré – and some memorable scenes. I love the King's Cross setting and the very real parts of London that are shown. The yuppies are pretty unbearable, but I like the dynamic between Cyril and Shirley and the possibilities their relationship offers. Which is not to say I value it as a complete film like, say, Secrets & Lies.

What you've just said absolutely squares with what I've been trying to say. Incidentally, just as a sociological quibble, I don't think the neighbours are yuppies. They're certainly not upwardly mobile, on the way up. They're already there. They're posh.

Unlike Valerie, who is desperate to show how well she's doing and how fabulous her life is.

Absolutely. That's the whole point. You need that contrast. You say the posh people are pretty unbearable, and, of course, they are. Nevertheless, Lesley Manville's performance and characterisation are totally accurate. She researched those women and she gets it spot on. The scene where she takes in Mrs Bender, plays *Così fan Tutte* and bullies the old lady about moving away from the street is, for all its awfulness and appalling behaviour, actually rather real, which, of course, owes much to Lesley's brilliance.

Let's return to your 'world view': it's seventeen years on from Bleak Moments. You are now forty-five and living with your young family in Thatcher's Britain. How had things changed?

Ever get the feeling that you are going to fail your GCEs again? God, that's a tough question! It's easier to talk about world views at twenty-eight. First of all, since you mention the young family, the films do divide up and fall on the pre- and post-parent phases of my existence.

But were you still an angry young man?

Of course. I still am. There's anger on the go in *High Hopes*, of course there is. But it's an obvious anger really. The sense of disappointment at the notion of socialism . . .

I went to Poland with the film in 1989. In a way, this experience defines the historical moment. There was a British film week in Warsaw and Kraków, organised by the British Council. In each city the mini-season kicked off with *High Hopes*; in Warsaw there was a gala screening with a Q&A. It was the week at the end of which Lech Wałęsa was going to be elected – the great events at Gdansk with Solidarity had been going on while we were making the film. In other words, the film came out at the time the Berlin Wall came down. You ask about my world view: well, I stood up in Warsaw at the end of this screening in a state of what I can only describe as deeply stupid western insular naivety and smugness. I was used to Q&As where I'd be asked, 'What was the budget?' and 'Is it true there isn't a script?' The first question was, 'Are you a Christian?' Which came whacking out of nowhere like an Exocet missile.

Some of the audience were passionately moved by the film, but many others were deeply offended and thought it was obscene to see the good guys go to Highgate Cemetery and genuflect at the shrine of Karl Marx. They thought it was absolutely filthy. There was a serious row in the audience. It was chaos. It wasn't wanky intellectuals like those who stood up at the Rio in Dalston or in Sydney and castigated *Meantime* for not being heavier or not containing more obvious propaganda. This was serious: these people had lived through it. They were on the front line.

When we went to Kraków a few days later, there was another

such battle in the audience after the screening. It went on long after the public transport had stopped, even though, as it was the middle of winter, there was thick snow everywhere.

Now, what *High Hopes* is about – at the level of Cyril's frustration about being a socialist – is these changes that were taking place. At that time it also seemed impossible to imagine how the Tories would ever be voted out, although it proved to be only eighteen months away from Thatcher's demise. If you'd told me in 1988, when we made *High Hopes*, that the celebratory champagne moment when Labour finally swept to victory wouldn't be until 1997, I'd have been horrified. But not as horrified as I would've been had I known what Labour were to do – or, more precisely, fail to do – in the subsequent ten years.

Returning to British Film Week in Poland for a moment, did you feel you had to defend High Hopes?

No, I didn't at all actually, because it wasn't about that. I did grab several opportunities to do live radio interviews where I was extremely rude – as I always was – about Thatcher, which shocked some people. But you can't argue with people who are on the front line. And besides, their arguments weren't actually with me or the film.

That said, a Polish person asked me, with complete seriousness, something along these lines: 'We are fed propaganda about homeless people sleeping rough on the streets of London; will you confirm that this is a lie?' Of course, I wouldn't and didn't. It is totally true, I explained, come to London and see for yourself. Stefan Laudyn, a Polish film journalist who later went on to direct the Warsaw Film Festival, was subsequently at the London Film Festival at the NFT, and we had a similar conversation. He wouldn't believe there were homeless people, so I showed him cardboard city, just a few metres away, on the site where the BFI Imax cinema now stands. He was shocked.

What provoked debate about *High Hopes* in Poland was the way in which it warms to socialism, when they wanted to embrace a liberal society. Socialism was a dirty word for many Poles, and the political culture gap between our perspective and theirs is not one you can glibly argue across.

At its most serious and intelligent level, *High Hopes* sits on what turns out to be a historic cusp and moment of change, but more because of my intuition than any political nous. My instinctive sense of what was rumbling and going on.

How far did you feel you had travelled at this point in your film-making career?

I had, by that time, directed a dozen films for television; I'd had a pretty rigorous and sophisticated training. I'd obviously improved as a film-maker and was able to be more adventurous. But it's easy to forget that *High Hopes* was my first proper feature film. The only films that would qualify prior to this would be *Bleak Moments* and *Meantime*, but neither were regular feature films. When *High Hopes* was screened for distributors in London, it got a lot of negative response and it took a while for Palace to pick it up. So in many respects it was made in a state of innocence. It didn't feel particularly different on the ground, just that the scale was bigger and therefore the disciplines greater.

One mustn't forget that, from *Meantime* onwards, my assumption was that Roger Pratt was going to shoot all my films. But in fact *High Hopes* proved to be our final collaboration. When it came to what turned out to be *Life Is Sweet*, Roger had to choose between it and *The Fisher King*. He knew Terry Gilliam because he'd worked on all the Python films and they were close friends. So he chose *The Fisher King*.

I'd heard about Dick Pope over the years, and he has actually gone on to shoot everything else I've done. Still, I think it's a great shame that I stopped working with Roger because you develop a private language with a cinematographer. You do with other crew members and actors, of course, but with the cinematographer it's a particularly special relationship. Roger's experience of feature films was crucial to *High Hopes* because it was experience I hadn't had.

Does the title of the film refer in any way to the Frank Sinatra song?

No, not consciously. I have a lot of trouble with the titles of my films and I'm pretty relentless about it. I often go right up to the deadline with it. I invariably wind up going to bed with *Roget's*

Thesaurus, which is how I came up with *High Hopes*. But within days everyone was saying, 'Oh yes, the Sinatra song . . .'

You changed your credit at this point from 'devised and directed' to 'written and directed'.

Well . . . look at the poster for *Bleak Moments*: it says 'written and directed by Mike Leigh'. Way back when I started these projects in the fringe-theatre context – before I really understood what I was doing – I'd always had aspirations to write but did the film-making 'thing' instead. So, out of respect to 'proper' writers, a feeling that I wasn't really writing – which is rubbish, but there you go – I started to use 'devised and directed by'. I kept it when I started to work for television. I talked about all this earlier, when we were discussing *Hard Labour*. Before I got to the end of that period it became abundantly obvious that the plays I made in the theatre were by me and, more importantly, that auteur films are written and directed by the auteur. So, at the time of *High Hopes*, I decided once and for all to fix this thing that had been bugging me for years. The notion that I changed it is not at all accurate; it's more a case of finally fixing it up properly.

High Hopes is similar in many ways to Grown-Ups: council house next to private house, girlfriend trying to convince boyfriend to get on with having first baby. These are obviously recurring themes, but did you want specifically to revisit and expand upon them?

I didn't think twice about it. It is and has been a running theme. Things related to having or not having babies, baby substitutes, families or lack of families have run all the way down the line from *Bleak Moments*. If I did stop to think, 'Hang on! I've already dealt with that!' I'd become extremely cramped. I don't quite know what I'd be doing. I think I'd suffer serious block – and block is very much denying what you really want to do.

In terms of a biographical element to High Hopes, I presume growing old was on your mind following your father's death?

Yeah, it was. The new issue in my life was my widowed mother and my responsibility for her. In 1988 she would have been about



16 *High Hopes*: council house and private house, cheek-by-jowl.

seventy-two and she was fine. It so happens that the actual issues raised in the film, in terms of looking after an ageing geriatric mother, became real some years later, before she finally died.

Did you feel a sense of guilt and duty towards your mother?

Yeah, definitely.

Did your mother see High Hopes?

She saw all the films. It was *Naked* she had the hardest time with, not surprisingly. What did she think of *High Hopes*? Along with her friends, who were also over seventy, she thought the old lady seemed much older than seventy. Retrospectively, I think they might have been right. We created a character with Alzheimer's disease. The true explanation is that my father was in fact only seventy-one when he died in 1985, but between sixty-five – hardly older than I am now – and his death he became a very old man. He could have passed for eighty-nine. Thus, my perception of an old person around seventy was very much reflected in Mrs Bender.

Your father died while you were in Australia. Was High Hopes a direct response to his death?

Very much so. It was my first serious piece of work since his death. My deep grief lies at the emotional core of the film.

How did Edna Doré research the role of Mrs Bender? She was, after all, just sixty-six at the time.

Edna Doré was and remains one of the fittest, healthiest actors around. She'll outlive all of us. She is a famous allotment queen. The only research that's of any interest is that we wheeled in a geriatrician. The rest is standard.

A measure of how much more sophisticated the research becomes as time goes by is that on *Vera Drake* there were two guys at the Imperial War Museum to help everyone fill in their character's background and to work out the experiences they would have had during the Second World War. Edna and I put together Mrs Bender's history during that period, but we didn't go down to the Imperial War Museum. Post-*Topsy-Turvy* our research has become more sophisticated and thorough. I think this is also partly to do with the birth of the internet, which makes research so much quicker and easier.

Cyril doesn't have much in common with his mother, particularly



17 *High Hopes*: Mrs Bender (Edna Doré).

when it comes to politics; as Shirley says at one point, 'I bet your mum did vote Tory.' Yet he seems to be terribly idealistic.

He has ideals and aspirations. He has reached a place where he is realistic. Actually, I think it's more complex than being realistic or idealistic. He's both of those things, but he's also disappointed.

How much does he really understand the theories of Karl Marx? Or is Marx more of an icon?

I think he understands Marx and Marxism in basic terms. I don't think he's overly susceptible to iconography.

When they go to Highgate Cemetery and Cyril becomes exasperated with what he sees as Shirley's lack of interest, is he disappointed?

It's a mistake to decode what's happening in that scene exclusively in terms of what's happening between them politically. There are, of course, some tensions on the go in the relationship. So when he accuses her of not being interested, it's because she's also interested in the flowers; he's irritated she's not paying complete attention to his analysis of Marx. It's not true to say she's not interested in Marx; she's just looking at the flowers as well – she's a professional gardener!

You could imagine – in a parallel universe or in the hands of a different kind of writer – another version of *High Hopes* where everything was exclusively motivated by the political meaning of the discussion. For me it doesn't matter what's happening on the surface. The characters are like real people, and other stuff is going on that isn't directly related to the main theme in an obvious way.

When they do talk about having a child, Cyril insists the world needs to be a better place first. But he's also scared . . .

. . . about being a parent. Absolutely. We talked earlier about him being an idealist; this is a perfect example.

When the couple are back in their flat, after Suzi's visit Cyril says to Shirley, 'I'm a dead loss, I don't know why you don't clear off.' Is he deeply insecure? Does he lack the confidence to believe he can make her happy or be a good dad?



18, 19 *High Hopes*: Shirley (Ruth Sheen) and Cyril (Phil Davis).

He feels all those things at that moment. Because he's a real person, the fact that he says that in the desperate heat of that moment doesn't actually mean that it's what he totally thinks.

As a couple they are saved, to a degree, by their shared sense of humour.

This is the running theme. Nothing is more dispiriting in life than when you feel you and your partner are divided by a lack of humorous communion.

The contrast between Cyril and Valerie is stark. Would it be fair to say that she's a grotesque reminiscent of Beverly in Abigail's Party, only with even fewer redeeming qualities?

It would be difficult to disagree with that. The point about Beverly is that for all her vulgarity and selfishness, part of her culture is the notion of being nice to people. She has a conception of generosity, whereas I don't think that word actually exists in Valerie's vocabulary. I think she's probably deeply repugnant. But also very sad, lonely and unfulfilled. That would be her defence.

How did she end up being so different to Cyril?

Valerie is, once again, a victim of the received notions of how you should be. Working-class background, upwardly mobile, aspirational. She sees it all in terms of material gain. You ask how she differs from her brother: well, she's not bright enough to spot the spiritual truth in life.

You have said earlier that the film is not about three couples, yet at one stage you show three couples in their bedrooms.

Indeed. You've got one couple whose sexual proclivities seem to include a third party – a teddy bear with a gastronomic name. You've got a woman in another couple who seems to need to indulge in fantasy in order to make love, while the guy isn't interested because he's bonking an unfortunate young lady in a rather dingy flat somewhere. And another couple who are entirely wholesome and proper who really have love on the go and who are struggling with their care for the world. Whatever I've said about

it, the juxtaposition of those scenes is interesting. I do hope that whatever else happens in my films they are always interesting. You can't not be interested by what goes on in those bedrooms.

By the way, I love it when the Boothe-Braines return from their night out and Rupert fails to recognise what he's just heard in the opera house. He asks if Laetitia sang it at school. For goodness' sake . . .

When Valerie gasps to her disinterested husband in the throes of passion, 'You're Michael Douglas and I'm a virgin,' it's almost unbearable.

Indeed. She enjoys inventing these fantasies. Somewhere along the line she may be a distant relation of June in *Home Sweet Home*, who reads all those romantic novels.

In fact, most scenes in which Valerie appears are unbearable, as we discussed earlier. Are you prepared to talk about the improvisations that led to Valerie's party for her mother's seventieth birthday, notably the scene in which we only see Mrs Bender's face?

Only to say that Heather Tobias failed to maintain that clear distinction between herself and the character that I always encourage. So she took personal umbrage, walked out of the improvisation and went home in a huff – the only actor ever to do such a thing, incidentally. This left us with no time to prepare the structured scene, so I set up the single tracking shot of the old lady and recorded wild tracks of the others improvising out of vision. Which we edited later.

When we were shooting that shot of Edna, Roger Pratt asked how we were ever going to explain our way out of it. I said, 'Don't be ridiculous. People will write theses about it, it will be regarded as a masterly cinematic stroke.' In fact, I rather suspect that this little scene is more interesting and poignant than it would have been had I done it as I'd intended. And it's perfectly well structured.

After the horrors of Valerie's party it feels at least as if there's an uplifting ending, with Cyril, Shirley and Mrs Bender standing on the roof.

Sure it's a positive ending. But these are people who've got their feet on the ground. It's not the end of their problems, but they're dealing with them within the parameters of what's possible. But don't forget that when Cyril and Shirley go round to see Mrs Bender at the start of the film, Cyril does what we all spend all our lives doing – behaving towards our parents as though we are still disgruntled teenagers.

Somewhere along the line he goes through some sort of change – maybe an epiphany. Or maybe he grows up. It makes him stop having a go at her and feel some responsibility. At the same time, Shirley, having been exposed to Valerie's appalling behaviour, appreciates her own situation. She also has a wobble.

At this point you'd been working with Phil Davis for almost a decade.

The fascinating thing about Phil is that we've worked through from him being a naughty youth to a middle-aged man. He's a really extraordinary actor. He's completely rigorous, intelligent, rooted and with a sense of the real world. He's up for trying anything. Completely creative. And a very nice bloke. The interesting thing about him, however, is this: he's an actor of immense scope and versatility, but don't ask him to do an accent. And Ruth Sheen is the same. She's fantastic; there's nothing she can't do – except accents!

Ruth Sheen's one of the people who wrote to me. I had a very strong instinct about her. She joined in a bit later than the rest of the cast, as I knew I was going to deal with the Bender family first. Of course, she was voted best actress at the European film awards, with Edna Doré getting best supporting actress.

I think I've underused Ruth over the years. She was also in *It's a Great Big Shame!* and *All or Nothing* playing goodies, so when it came to *Vera Drake* I suggested we do a baddie. And she does a rather good baddie. At that time she was doing an Open University general arts degree. She's an expert on Humphrey Jennings and the propaganda cinema of the Second World War, and comes from a working-class East End background.

The bottom line is that the chemistry between Cyril and Shirley is very special, and it was good to get that working on the screen.

What happened with the extras on High Hopes?

The second AD was actually Marc Munden, who's now a very distinguished director in his own right. I'd been to China three years previously, and every time I went to Highgate Cemetery to think about the scene where Cyril and Shirley visit Marx's tomb, there were several groups of people from the People's Republic of China. I wanted a gang of these people to be in the cemetery at the same time as the characters.

So Marc arranges for me to 'audition' some Chinese extras. We're shooting in the East End, and a minibus arrives and out get all these Cantonese-speaking guys who've been Chinamen in any number of movies. They've all peeled rice for decades in the basements of Chinatown restaurants. One even had a little suitcase with a *Chu Chin Chow* costume in it. They didn't look like comrades from the People's Republic of China, and they'd certainly never been to Highgate Cemetery. It was a complete waste of time. In the end, we broke the rule book, went to London University and found a group of people from the PRC, so the group you see in the film had all been to Highgate, they'd all paid homage to Karl Marx. It was organic, for real and kosher.

Life Is Sweet (1990)

Wendy (Alison Steadman), cheerful and energetic, leads a children's dance class. When she returns home her husband Andy (Jim Broadbent), affable but prone to procrastination, is waiting for her. Her twin daughters Natalie (Claire Skinner) and Nicola (Jane Horrocks) are polar opposites: Natalie, a plumber dressed in a bloke's shirt, gets on with life; Nicola, in a baggy Smiths T-shirt and with a cigarette always to hand, is neurotic, angry, sulky and full of self-loathing. She sits around reading Diet Lifestyle, screeching 'Bollocks' and complaining to her chirpy mother, 'Your sandwiches stink . . . I'm going . . . in a minute.'

Andy's friend Patsy (Stephen Rea) takes him to see a ramshackle burger van and talks him into buying it. Wendy and Andy's friend Aubrey (Timothy Spall) arrives at their house in an old red convertible Triumph Spitfire. Dressed up in a baseball cap, Giants baseball jacket and outsize glasses, he chats to Nicola while nervously juggling a pineapple.

As she sits punching her fists inside a 'Bollocks to the Poll Tax' T-shirt, Aubrey tells Nicola that she's an attractive girl, but she immediately insists she's too fat. He talks to Wendy with pride about the opening of his new nouvelle-cuisine restaurant, the Regret Rien. When Andy arrives home with the Hot Snacks van, Wendy is not impressed.

Wendy and Andy visit the Regret Rien. Aubrey tells them a typical dish will be 'jam blended with orange juice, yogurt and one king prawn'. The waitress rings and announces that she can't make it as she is on her way to Prague. Wendy offers to stand in.

At home, Aubrey drums like a maniac and later falls dramati-